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Beliefs, meaning, and object representations in young adults

Roth, Judith S., Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1991

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BELIEFS, MEANING, AND OBJECT REPRESENTATIONS IN YOUNG ADULTS

by

Judith S. Roth

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1991

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Date

Chair of Examining Committee

1-31-91
Date

Herbert D. Saltzstein
Executive Officer

Steven Tuber

Laurence Gould

Louis J. Gerstman
Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

Abstract

BELIEFS, MEANING, AND OBJECT REPRESENTATIONS IN YOUNG ADULTS

by

Judith S. Roth

Advisor: Professor Steven Tuber

The present study is an attempt to conceptualize beliefs as object ties and to investigate beliefs using a methodology employed in empirical object relations research. As relational theories have come to the forefront of psychoanalytic theorizing, those aspects of human experience that have been conceptualized using more mechanistic models of personality functioning are being reformulated to fit relational models. This study argues that beliefs and other "autonomous ego functions" may be reconceptualized as object ties that both parallel and diverge from attachments to people. D.W. Winnicott's understanding of how people personalize culture and how they develop the capacities to be creative and spiritual provided the theoretical underpinnigs for the conceptualization used in the study.

As psychoanalytic inquiry broadens its scope from a model that has focused primarily on psychopathology to a model that attempts to account for resiliency, those aspects of people's lives that help them transform difficult experience are being explored. This study was rooted in an assumption that people form multiple attachments which are crucial to resiliency. The study suggests that people's ties to religious and secular beliefs, creative ventures, work, and avocations can facilitate transforming the travails of living into growth-enhancing opportunities.

Thirty-two people were interviewed for the study. The Early Memories Test and a qualitative interview that asks about beliefs and values, designed by this author, were used. Both sets of data were evaluated for style of representation using the Krohn scale. Findings support the hypothesis that prototypes of beliefs overlap with personifications. While modal levels of representation were not correlated, other interesting findings emerged: People with fragmented and primitive personifications were more likely to have beliefs that were unidimensional, stereotyped, and that served narcissistic functions. In addition, findings suggest that the capacity to mourn and integrate painful affects is related to the capacity to develop multidimensional beliefs. Finally, findings indicate that representational styles reflect developmental and maturational processes.

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I would like to express my gratitude to the people who participated in the study for their thoughtfulness and willingness to openly share their ideas. Similarly to the people I worked with in psychotherapy. While their voices are not directly heard in this dissertation, many of the questions and ideas emerged from our dialogues.

I wish to thank my core committee: My deep appreciation to Steve Tuber, my advisor, who taught me the value and richness of psychoanalytic research and introduced me to the realm of empirical object relations. His respect and support for operationalizing new ideas facilitated the design of a study that was "doable". Larry Gould introduced me to the theories of adult development and contributed thoughtful and critical comments throughout. Lou Gerstman gave tirelessly of himself and made the quantitative realm accessible. He told me to "trust", a word that is now part of my representational repertoire. I would also like to thank my readers for their comments on the final manuscript: Gilead Nachmani's commitment to integrating other disciplines with psychoanalytic theory has been enriching and instructive. Michael Moskowitz's depth of vision and willingness to question the status quo have been inspiring.

Over the course of the dissertating process, I worked closely with several people. My discussions with Lauren Levine taught me how dyadic work enhances creativity. Her comments during the initial conceptualization phase and on the later draft of the dissertation were perceptive and sensitive. Jo Anne Sirey taught me the art of blending a collegial relationship with a close friendship. Her belief in my ideas and her constructive feedback on all drafts of the dissertation helped me to clarify my thinking. Paul Donahue helped breathe life into the coding process and made a year of data analysis an enjoyable learning experience. Anne Adelman coded the interviews with much sensitivity.

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Thoughout the years of training, my family has been my mainstay. Ari, Katie and Isabel, and Miriam and Mark helped to fill the years with love and play. Their determination to give life to their beliefs has been truly inspiring.

Finally, to my parents, Chaya and Walter, for their love, patience, and encouragement. Their lives have been a testimony to the ways by which personal histories revolve around ideals and convictions. This dissertation is dedicated to them.

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Chapter One: Introduction

"I do not feel alive, psychologically alive, except insofar as a stream of feeling---perceiving, imagining, remembering, reflecting, revising, recategorizing runs through me. I am that stream---that stream is me."

Oliver Saks, 1990

"...cultural symbols and symbolic activities constitute a third world that transcends the extreme interiority of the private mind and the extreme exteriority of the physical world. It is the world of ideas and skill, of arts and sciences, of religion and ethics---all of which can be seen as a serious kind-of playing in which positivism or the flatfootedness of ordinary reality testing are kept at bay."

Paul Pruyser, 1979

Increasingly, relational theories of psychoanalysis have come to the forefront of psychoanalytic conceptualizations of human experience. These theories include a variety of differing theoretical models that have in common the relational and experiential aspects of human development (Ghent, 1989). Relational theories consider relations with others, "the basic stuff of mental life" (Mitchell, 1988; Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983). From a relational perspective the meaning of experience is understood in terms of how people perceive the world, how they negotiate it, and how they engage with it (Levenson, 1989). The relational perspective views reality as a dynamic interchange

between intrapsychic and interpersonal realms which continuously transform each other (Mitchell,1988). The mind, from this perspective, is seen as consisting of a repertoire of personifications that are the prisms through which the outside world is organized and understood and through which thoughts and feelings about the self and other are filtered.

The shift to relational models requires a reconceptualization of key aspects of human experience that have previously been conceptualized along more mechanistic models of personality functioning. In particular, those aspects of human experience that have been referred to as "autonomous ego functions" (Hartmann, 1950) need to be reformulated to fit relational models. Several theoreticians have argued that artistic tendencies, occupational endeavors, intellectual pursuits, and religious expressions, which can fall within the realm of autonomous ego functions, be reconceptualized as object ties (Rizzuto, 1979; Eagle, 1981; Meissner, 1981; Beit-Hallahmi, 1986; Storr, 1988). They underscore the deep emotional bonds that people develop to their work, hobbies, talents, theories, and ideals. These bonds are like attachments to other people, although by no means are they identical. Unlike ties to people the salient feature of cultural expressions is how they simultaneously embrace a private, idiosyncratic reality and a public, shared reality (Winnicott, 1971; Grolnick, Barkin, Mustenberger, 1978; Meissner, 1984). Cultural endeavors weave internal and external experience together and become the vehicles through which people envisage their relationship to all facets of life and death (Rose, 1978).

From this relational perspective, cultural expressions are viewed as object ties that emerge within relationships, and their nature reflects the quality of an individual's relational history. The supposition that people's beliefs, talents, and creative tendencies emerge and are maintained within a social milieu is rooted in the work of Winnicott (1969). According to Winnicott and those who elaborated upon his theories the capacity to develop a meaningful and authentic life is set in motion by people's early

childhood experiences with parents and other key figures. They believed that the solitary processes inherent in cultivating a creative and authentic life originate, paradoxically, within relationships. According to Winnicott, children's deepest desires and feelings are first discovered in the presence of a nurturant other, most often the mother. Later, when children have sufficiently experienced the process of self-discovery in the presence of another, they develop the capacity to be alone (1958). Creative living, according to Winnicott, is predicated upon this capacity.

While psychoanalytic inquiry has shifted to a relational focus it has also begun to broaden its scope from a model that focused primarily on psychopathology to a model that attempts to account for those aspects of people's lives that contribute to resiliency (Block, Petersen, Stechler, and Vaillant, 1990; Nachmani, 1990; Meltzer, 1990; Anthony and Cohler, 1987). One piece of the resiliency puzzle involves understanding how people's object ties, whether they consist of attachments to people and/or to creative ventures, mitigate or minimize the effects of adversity, specifically in terms of how these ties enable people to transform the travails of living into growth-enhancing opportunities (Kris, 1952; Storr,1988; Storr, 1988). The capacity to reframe difficult internal and external experiences, to have the internal freedom to imagine alternatives is a hallmark of mental health. The nature of the creative outlets that a person has developed may increase the likelihood that this reframing can happen.

In addition, people's involvements with their work, the causes and political philosophies that they fight for, the religious beliefs that they espouse or denounce, and the talents that they develop or stifle, will reflect whether they believe that life is purposeful. A number of theoreticians from differing schools of thought have explored how people grapple with existential questions. They assert that people's capacity to develop a system of belief and to imbue life with meaning promotes a sense of hope and well-being (Frankl, 1959; Kohut, 1977; Yalom, 1980; Meissner, 1981; Hymer, 1983; Storr, 1988). From their perspective, commitments to creative endeavors and

spiritual soul-searching, whether it is religious or secular in nature, are integral components of resiliency (Coles, 1989; Dugan and Coles, 1989).

The shift to relational paradigms has also had implications regarding conceptualizations of the therapeutic process. Relational theories highlight the interactive nature of psychotherapy and the process by which the therapist and patient necessarily transform each other (Mitchell, 1988; Ghent, 1989; Aron, 1990). Yet, there has been relatively little discussion about the ways by which the therapist's and patient's beliefs and values enter into their interactions and influence the nature and direction of their work. This discussion may have been neglected because psychoanalytic theories did not provide the conceptual models and methodological tools to fully investigate the rich but hazy sphere of beliefs and values (Lichtenberg, 1981). Yet, many believe that a primary goal of the therapeutic process entails acquiring a capacity to evolve and shape beliefs that reflect one's authentic desires, concerns, and aspirations (Yalom, 1980; Meissner, 1981). The capacity to shape and integrate a coherent set of beliefs may be a component of the patient's ability to resolve underlying dynamic conflicts (Meissner, 1981). In addition, the negotiation between therapist and patient of their differing beliefs and values, while difficult, may promote compassion. A relational perspective that explores the process by which beliefs enter into the therapeutic dialogue, may contribute to understanding how the capacity to evolve a coherent set of beliefs emerges.

The reframing of beliefs, values, and other creative expressions as reflections of the relational world provides a skeletal model by which to both conceptualize and investigate cultural expressions. A fuller integration of relational theory with empirical object relations research may enhance the conceptual framework and provide the methodological tools to study "cultural object ties". Empirical object relations research has studied the ways by which people develop enduring prototypes of themselves and others, as these emerge on projective material (Hatcher and Krohn,

1980). By and large, this research has focused on those dimensions of people's sense of self and other that pertain to the thoughts, feelings, and motivations experienced in regards to exchanges with either real and/or imagined others. With but a few exceptions (Rizzuto, 1979; Westen, 1988) there has been little exploration of those aspects of experience that are involved in the cultivation of beliefs, values, and creative endeavors. This study will suggest that conceptualizing beliefs as object ties provides a methodology with which to capture those elements of people's experience that come to play in the capacity to develop the creative and existential domain.

Statement of Purpose

My study begins with the assumption that beliefs, values, and creative involvements are born, transformed, and maintained within a relational context. I will suggest that the nature and integrity of people's most cherished beliefs are linked to the ways in which they internally represent and experience themselves and others. However, while ties to beliefs may reflect the nature of people's attachments to others, I will also suggest that beliefs are <u>not</u> identical to involvements with people. I will propose that people whose sense of themselves and others is whole, varied, integrated, and lively will be more likely to have beliefs that are cohesive, inspiring, consistent, and genuine. The flexibility of their personifications will enable them to periodically update and renew their beliefs and to use their beliefs to serve a variety of psychological ends. For example, their beliefs may be a motivating force, a means to regulate self-esteem, a medium through which to connect to a community of others, and a lens through which to make sense of the purposefulness of their lives. Similarly, I will suggest that people whose sense of themselves and others is fragmented, one-dimensional, and stereotyped will be more likely to have beliefs and attitudes that are inconsistent, highly idealized or devalued, and not authentic. The fluidity, the lack of richness, and the unidimensionality of their personifications interferes with the ability to use beliefs

more flexibly and fully. They may use their beliefs more rigidly, often to bolster a fragile sense of self, or their beliefs may lack articulation and coherency, such that beliefs do not have a clear psychological purpose.

People's beliefs evolve over the course of their lives and reflect the concerns, anxieties, and desires of a given life stage. The present study will focus on young adulthood, a lengthy period of time which begins roughly around the age of seventeen and ends around the age of thirty-five. Young adulthood is a developmental stage in which people are articulating their dreams and visions and finding a place for themselves in society. During this time, people are defining and negotiating their professional aspirations, the types of intimate relationships and lifestyles that they seek, and adult relationships with families of origin (Levinson, 1979). The present study will explore how young adults articulate and use their beliefs in order to gain a beginning understanding of the place beliefs have in people's psychological worlds.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Theoretical Literature

The emergence and development of beliefs have been conceptualized from a number of different theoretical perspectives. These conceptual models differ fundamentally in their assumptions about the very nature of reality and in their view of human nature. The following section will review how the classical, the interpersonal, and the existential perspectives view the development and psychological function of beliefs.

The Classical Perspective

Beliefs and values are acquired, created, and transformed within the family. The family, which serves as a mediator of cultural beliefs, highlights those that it seeks to transmit and discourages others. Freud posited the superego and the ego ideal as the internal repositories of parental prohibitions and ideals (Freud, 1914; 1923; Novey,1955; Lampl-De Groot, 1962). These personality structures develop through the process of internalization as the child wrestles with the Oedipus complex. According to Freud, " a portion of the external world, has, at least partially been abandoned as an object and has instead, by identification, been taken into the ego and thus become part of the internal world. This new psychical agency continues to carry on the functions which have hitherto been performed by the people in the external world" (Freud, 1938/1964; p.205). It is this notion of internalization that accounts for how cultural and familial phenomena become part of the self (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983; Blatt and Lerner, 1983).

From Freud's perspective, human nature is shaped by inherent, underlying drive pressures and is ultimately bestial (Freud, 1924; 1930). As such, the internalization

of familial (and cultural) values and beliefs is understood as a process whose aim is to tame. Freud believed that people internalize beliefs in order to prevent the expression of more basic drives. As such, he regarded the internalization of beliefs as a necessary means for civilizing people. Because family life and culture are in conflict with true human nature, people search for outlets to release the build-up of instinctual tension. According to Freud, sublimation is the most progressive means for reducing the pressure of the drives, and work and art are arenas for sublimating. Instinctual tension can also be alleviated through less progressive defensive styles, such as substitute gratification and displacement. Religious beliefs and ideologies are regarded as defensive operations that make use of these less mature modes of reducing tension. They are vehicles for displacing and gratifying infantile wishes and conflicts, particularly those that reflect Oedipal dynamics (Freud, 1927; Reich, 1953; Novey, 1955; Lampl-De Groot. 1962; Ritvo and Solnit, 1960; Blos, 1974: Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1976,1985; Parkin, 1985).

Thus, from a Freudian perspective, beliefs, values, and abiding interests are defensive creations that enable people to channel and relieve sexual and aggressive impulses. The gratification of these drives must be delayed of people are to live in a civilized society. The classical perspective differentiates between the defensive operations involved in religious beliefs and ideologies versus those involved in the cultivation of more secular pursuits, such as artistic endeavors and intellectual occupations. While both the religious and secular expressions can then fluctuate between more progressive and less adaptive modes, ultimately, their functions are to distort the world in the service of wish fulfillment and, by doing so, to recapture less differentiated stages of development.

Some of the first empirical studies that explored the relationship between early development and the later values that emerged in adulthood were designed using the classical psychoanalytic, structural and instinctual models. These studies demonstrated

how people's political, economic, and social orientations and ideologies reflect their underlying personality trends. Accordingly, intrapsychic conflicts involving the id, ego, and superego were seen as related to the beliefs and ideologies that people espouse (Adorno, Frenkl-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford, 1950; Frenkl-Brunswick and Sanford, 1945; Frenkl-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford, 1947). Specifically, these studies explored how people's anxieties, fears, hopes, and aspirations disposed them to specific beliefs, while making them "resistant" to others (Adorno, et.al, 1950). The concern was really with the contents of an individual's belief system, particularly in terms of whether the individual had authoritarian or fascistic beliefs versus more democratic, egalitarian beliefs . While this body of research was framed in the language of drive theory, its goals bear semblance to the current study, which uses relational models to understand beliefs. These studies were the first attempts to systematically explore the relationship between early development and later beliefs.

The Interpersonal Perspective

The cultural, or interpersonal, school of psychoanalysis asserted an alternative model of human nature that underscored the interplay between cultural forces and personality development and that dispensed with the drive model. The interpersonal school refers to differing theories that view human nature as interactive and drawn towards relatedness (Mitchell, 1988). While interpersonalists agreed with Freud that societies control social behavior, they believed that culture creates people's desires and anxieties (Adler, 1931; Horney, 1937; Thompson, 1950). Sullivan maintained that, " a personality can never be isolated from the complex of interpersonal relations in which the person lives and has his being" (1940). For Sullivan, familial and cultural values constitute personality (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983). Like Freud, Sullivan believed that attitudes and beliefs are transmitted to children through significant people in their lives. He postulated six stages of personality development in which this occurs. These

six stages, according to Thompson, are really descriptions of the process of acculturation (Thompson, 1950).

Fromm agreed with Sullivan that people's passions and anxieties are products of the familial and socio-cultural contexts in which they live and that personality consists of these passions and anxieties (Fromm, 1941). Fromm believed that people create and perpetuate beliefs and attitudes in order to deal with the human condition: the idea that one is fundamentally alone (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983). Fromm was particularly concerned with how people's personal perspectives on life parallel those of the communities in which they live. People, he thought, are drawn into the world view of their particular culture so that they will want to do the work of their society. This leads to people "wanting to act as they have to act" (Fromm, 1955). Unlike Freud, Fromm did not believe that people's central problems are related to the gratification of instincts. Instead, distress stems from destructive cultural attitudes that people acquire and make their own. For Fromm, people's passions reflect both historical and cultural currents as well as their own psychodynamic struggles. He viewed beliefs that lead to a denial of separateness and vulnerability as regressive because their purpose is to gain an imagined safety. This denial may take the form of beliefs in omnipotent and omniscient saviors, magical substances, or measures of self-protection (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983). Beliefs that are progressive involve an acceptance of aloneness and mortality. Fromm believed that this acceptance of aloneness, in turn, facilitates the development of true potential.

The Existential Perspective

Fromm's perspective reflects both the interpersonal and existential schools of thought. Like other existential psychotherapists, Fromm was concerned with how people's beliefs reflected their confrontation with the anxieties of living. Similarly, the existential perspective asserts that people's values and beliefs are a response to the

ultimate conditions of existence. These anxieties of existence include concerns about freedom, human will, isolation, and meaninglessness (Fromm, 1941; Allport, 1955; Buber,1958; Frankl, 1959; May, 1961; Becker,1973). People's convictions are viewed as attempts to grapple with the anxiety that these concerns evoke and are viewed as attempts to make life meaningful. The existential perspective, which is rooted in existential philosophy, holds that people must invent their own meaning in life. The search for meaning is seen as a quest for coherence and purpose, and the absence of coherence and direction is seen as indicative of psychological neurosis (Frankl, 1959; Yalom, 1980).

A small body of research rooted in existential psychology emerged to systematically investigate the clincial implications of being able to imbue life with meaning. This research suggests that people's sense of purpose changes over the course of their lifetimes. Further, this research suggests that when people find life fulfilling they are more likely to have clear life goals and to dedicate themselves to a cause. Finally, studies in this area report that the absence of a sense that life is meaningful is associated with psychopathology (Braun and Dolmino, 1978; Battista and Almond, 1973; Yalom, 1980).

The Precursors From Which Beliefs Emerge

A number of theorists from differing psychoanalytic orientations have tried to describe the early childhood experiences that give birth to the capacities to develop beliefs, values, and ideals. These theorists using classical, relational, existential, and developmental perspectives have tried to isolate the precursors that make these capacities possible. Erikson (1950) linked the emergence of faith to the trustworthiness that develops between the infant and parent. Through attunement and consistency in caretaking, parents convey to infants that their activities are meaningful (Erikson,1950). The trust that develops gives way to hope which he saw as, "...the

ontogenetic basis for faith, and is nourished by the adult faith that pervades patterns of care" (Erikson, 1964, p.118).

Winnicott also suggested that the precursors for developing beliefs and values emerge within the mother-child relationship. He isolated four states of being that begin to develop in childhood given adequate parenting. They are, the capacity to be alone, the capacity to play symbolically, transitional phenomena, and, what he calls, "belief-in".

The capacity to be alone develops in the relationship with the parent, most often the mother, and emerges as the child internalizes her. This capacity develops after the child has had sufficient experience being alone in the presence of someone who is nurturant, whose presence enables the child to experience his or her own thoughts, feelings, and motivations without anxiety (Winnicott, 1958). The capacity to be alone enables the child to develop a curiosity about his or her inner experience, as well as a curiosity about the outside world (Benjamin, 1988). It is a state of being in which people can discover and contemplate their deepest desires, feelings, and needs. Within this state people experience a sense of agency and authenticity. The capacity to be alone thus facilitates the finding and articulation of beliefs and values that are truly one's own.

For Winnicott the ability to cultivate beliefs and values is also an outgrowth of the child's capacity to play symbolically (Winnicott, 1967). Play and cultural phenomena, under which beliefs and values fall, are both experiences that attempt to bridge subjective and objective experience--the "me" and the "not-me" (Winnicott, 1971). Through the mediums of play and beliefs, people express the tension between separateness and union--between inner and outer reality. As in the more classical approach, play and beliefs have an illusory quality and are used as vehicles to express frustration. Yet, from Winnicott's perspective, the content of this frustration does not pertain primarily to the press of the drives; tension stems from the discrepancy between the private world and the public shared reality. Beliefs and play enable people

to bridge these two realities. For Winnicott, the comingling of inner and outer reality is illusory but not necessarily regressive. Instead, illusion and the ability to play with illusion are viewed as central aspects of well-being that humanize the world in which we live (Meissner, 1984; Pruyser, 1979).

In summarizing Winnicott's conceptualization of cultural phenomenon, Pruyser writes: "...cultural symbols and symbolic activities constitutes a third world that transcends the extreme interiority of the private mind and the extreme exteriority of the physical world. It is the world of ideas and skill, of arts and sciences, of religion and ethics---all of which can be seen as a serious kind of playing in which positivism or the flatfootedness of ordinary reality testing is temporarily kept at bay" (Pruyser, 1979, p. 314).

According to Winnicott, the ability to let fantasy and reality comingle is also an extension of the transitional phenomena that develop in childhood. Transitional objects, which are neither external nor internal, are children's first symbols. These objects enable children to become increasingly independent, while maintaining contact with their parents. Children find and create their own transitional symbols. Winnicott suggested that the paradox of discovering and creating that which already exists is retained throughout life and facilitates the development of an emotional and spiritual life. Transitional phenomena are dispersed over, "...the whole intermediate territory between 'inner psychic reality' and 'the external world as perceived by two persons in common,' that is to say the whole cultural field" (Winnicott, 1953, p.5). These phenomena are later expressed through the, "intense experiencing that belongs to the arts and to religion and to imaginative living and to creative work" (Winnicott, 1953, p.14).

Finally, Winnicott uses his concept of "belief-in" to capture how people develop hope for the future and a sense of life's purpose. Belief-in is a poetic term that Winnicott uses to describe how people develop ideals and beliefs. Belief-in entails a

capacity to personalize aspects of society and to believe in these (Winnicott, 1963). Like Erikson's notion of faith, belief-in develops through consistent and reliable parenting, but does not fully emerge until later childhood. Often the aspects of society that children personalize pertain to religion, specifically to the creation of a personal god. But children can also personalize secular ideals. Through both religious and secular beliefs, children learn to express their hope and visions for the future.

Each of these four states of being that Winnicott describes, captures a state of being that enables people to create and develop coherent, authentic, and meaningful beliefs. The ability to discover and to give voice to one's deepest beliefs will be hindered when there is conflict and anxiety that compromise the capacity to experience these four ways of being and that truncate their full development.

Winnicott believed that clinicians often have trouble gaining access to the private worlds of people's deepest beliefs, in part because beliefs live within the domain of transitional phenomena. He stated,

"It is my opinion that the psycho-analyst has no other language in which to refer to cultural phenomena. He can talk about the mental mechanisms of the artist but not about the experience of communication in art and religion unless he is willing to peddle in the intermediate area whose ancestor is the infant's transitional object" (1965, p.184).

Thus, the challenge for clinicians is to find both a medium and mode of inquiry that will enable them to enter the transitional realm with their patients, a realm that is private, idiosyncratic, and often difficult to communicate through language.

The Transitional Nature of Beliefs

The notion that beliefs, whether religious or secular, gain their psychic vitality in the potential space of transitional relatedness has been further elaborated upon by a number of psychoanalysts who have developed Winnicott's theories (Pruyser, 1976;

Rose,1978; Rizzuto, 1979; Meissner, 1984; Beit-Hallahmi, 1986). Some have proposed a lifelong transitional process, in which people create unique, private worlds where cultural phenomena is imbued with subjective meanings and feelings (Rose,1978; Rizzuto, 1979; Meissner, 1984). These personal and idiosyncratic realms reflect people's ongoing attempts to find a place in which their inner lives can shape, create, and transform their external worlds.

These theorists argue that the psychological processes involved in art, religion, and other cultural expressions are similar, even though the content of each of these activities differ. From their perspective, cultural expressions are human activities that give voice to people's underlying needs, desires, conflicts, developmental levels, and creative potentials (Meissner, 1984). They are expressions that involve a process of creating order, as well as meaning (Beit-Hallahmi, 1986). Finally, they are expressions that develop in response to the tension between illusion and disillusionment.

Theorists who have extended Winnicott's original conceptualizations regarding transitional phenomena and potential space do not believe that people's cultural beliefs are created in order to escape the world through wishful distortion. Rather, they view beliefs as ideas that orient people to the world, by enabling people to envisage their relationship to the many different aspects of nature, society, life, and death (Rose,1978). Like child's play, which enables children to imagine their own fairy tales, religion, art, and other cultural activities enable adults to create a niche for themselves that reflects their deepest longings within the context of a shared reality. These mediums also enable people to imagine new ways of viewing and approaching the confines to conventional reality.

The capacity to develop beliefs that reflect "good" transitional relatedness depends on the early experiences with significant caretakers. When transitional processes have gone awry they no longer serve as expressions of fantasy and as attempts to create something new. Instead, when transitional processes are dysfunctional, beliefs

are used in a ritualistic and/or fetishistic fashion. Beliefs that reflect these dysfunctional processes can either be rigid, unimaginative, and repetitive or disorganized, bizarre, and primitive (Greenacre, 1971; Deri, 1978; Meissner, 1984). While beliefs that have these qualities serve important psychological functions, in that they help to quell severe anxiety, they lack a transitional quality. This means that beliefs no longer orient people to the world and its possibilities nor are they used to imagine alternatives that can be expressed and communicated to others. Instead, beliefs that have these more perseverative and/or primitive qualities distance people from a shared reality.

A Developmental Line of Faith

Fowler's description of the development of faith (1981) resembles Winnicott's notion of "belief-in". Fowler also links the emergence of faith to the trustworthiness that develops between infant and child. His work, however, builds most directly on Erikson's model of psychosocial development. Drawing on extensive life interviews, Fowler traces a developmental line of faith that continues throughout the life cycle. He isolates six stages, each capturing a different level of how people conceptualize and articulate their experience of faith. Fowler links his six stages to Erikson's psychosocial stages and to Levinson's elaboration of these stages in adulthood (1978). He posits that transitions in psychosocial development may be related to transformations in the nature and structure of beliefs. Fowler also uses Piaget's stages of cognitive development and Kohlberg's stages of moral development to explicate the developmental prerequisites for each level of faith articulation.

Fowler asserts that beliefs are expressions of faith, which he defines as any "center of value" that "exerts an ordering force in our lives" (1981, p.25). Further, he believes that beliefs are attempts to make sense of the conditions of existence. These centers of value are systems of meaning that consist of the "causes, concerns, or people

that consciously or unconsciously have the greatest worth to us" (p.276). While traditionally faith has centered around religious beliefs, there are many other compelling systems of meaning, such as political ideologies or artistic strivings, that form the hub around which beliefs evolve.

In the earliest stage of faith development that Fowler describes faith is undifferentiated. This stage begins in infancy. Gradually, the child begins to imitate the stories, moods, and actions that are the visible expressions of the parents' (and other significant figures) faith. At this early stage faith is also filled with fantasy. As children mature and move beyond the family, so that their lives include involvements within a number of different communities and activities, they develop a personal "myth" or ideology that weaves disparate beliefs and values together. This personal ideology or myth is often unconscious and, as yet, cannot be reflected upon. The ability to consciously contemplate one's values and beliefs sometimes does not emerge until adulthood. With time, and given life experiences, this capacity to reflect on one's identity and outlook on life emerges. Optimally, this occurs in young adulthood. The later stages of faith development involve an increasing ability to live with paradox and contradiction, while gaining a greater access to one's "deeper self" (Fowler, 1981). People wrestling with the later stages of faith, often struggle with the pull towards passivity and cynical withdrawal that the knowledge of paradox and contradiction evokes. The most mature form of faith takes the shape of a scheme or philosophy of life that enables one to accept the paradoxical nature of life. At this level of faith development people are secure and yet flexible in their ways of perceiving themselves and the world and, optimally, have acquired a sense of intergenerational responsibility (Fowler, 1981).

Fowler suggests that the most mature stages of faith are linked to the later stages of adult development. However, he found that many people's faith never develops past the mid-stages. The passage to the more mature levels of faith is marked by a capacity to

reflect on one's outlook on life. Fowler proposes that there is a critical period in development, sometime before or during the mid-life transition (typically, between the ages of 40-45), in which this passage to a more reflective form of faith must take place if it is to occur at all. The likelihood that a more mature level of faith will be attained after the mid-life transition greatly diminishes.

Summary

The development of a cradle of beliefs is a complex process beginning early in life. It is a process that is intimately linked to the early experiences of parent-child interaction, as well as to relationships with significant others. Systems of belief, like many other human involvements and expressions, reflect underlying personality dynamics. People's experience of the early interpersonal milieu sets the range for the ways of being around which later experience evolves. These different ways of being are the foundations from which the causes and concerns that are most valuable emerge.

The early experience with significant others lays the groundwork from which cultural play and faith in the world emerge. These experiences also set the foundation from which people develop mental schemas which filter, organize, and makes sense of their feelings, thoughts, and perceptions. This next section will discuss how these mental templates correspond to people's ongoing sense of themselves and others. I will then review the literature that explores how people's mental representations correspond to how they claim and personalize beliefs.

Background : Object Representations and the Experience of Self and Other

The literature on object representation argues that internal images of self and other are enduring personality dimensions that are central to aspects of well-being (Krohn and Mayman, 1974; Blatt and Lerner, 1983). Studies indicate that representations of self and other provide important information about people's level of

psychological organization and their capacity for interpersonal relationships. Internal images of self and other filter and organize thoughts, feelings, and perceptions about the self and others. They are the blueprints that guide the nature of people's interactions and interpretations of events. Object representations essentially map out an interpersonal terrain, consisting of the relational patterns that people believe are possible (Mitchell, 1988; Greenberg, 1989). When representations of the self and other are complex, differentiated, varied, and alive individuals are able to comprehend and appreciate the richness of their experiences and the multi-faceted nature of the experiences of other people (Hatcher and Krohn, 1980).

The literature on mental representation draws on developmental theory, specifically the work of Werner and Kaplan (1963), and on object relations theory, employing particularly the ideas of Fairbairn (1952) and Kernberg (1966). The representational process is conceptualized as developmental, involving successive levels of internalization. Representations begin as global and diffuse and gradually become increasingly clear, differentiated, integrated, and accurate (Blatt and Lerner, 1983). Earlier representations draw on action sequences that are associated with need gratification. Later representations, which emerge during adolescence, are less literal and concrete and become more symbolic and conceptual (Blatt, 1974). Each level of representation changes the experience of self and other; new meanings become attached to these representations, their psychic functions shift, and their relationship to each other changes. Kernberg, postulated a developmental sequence of representation that consists of three stages. He suggests that levels of representation involve an increasing ability to integrate affect with an image of the self, an image of the other, and an image of the self in interaction with the other (Kernberg, 1966). With each new level of representation, the way people think about themselves, the manner by which they interact with their environments, and the meaning and significance that people attribute to these are transformed (Schimek, 1975).

Empirical studies of object representation attempt to explore the relationship between level of representation and degree of psychopathology, type of character structure, and the capacity to benefit from psychotherapy (Blatt and Lerner, 1983). Two different approaches to the study of mental representation have emerged. Both approaches attempt to assess the structural and thematic aspects of object representation, although each differs in its emphasis. Blatt and his research team at Yale University have developed an approach that focuses predominantly on the structural aspects of representations. Mayman and his students at the University of Michigan have developed an approach that underscores the content and affective themes of representations. Studies from both these groups have shown that level of object representation is a valid, internally consistent, enduring dimension of personality that emerges across a diverse range of projective productions (Mayman and Krohn, 1974; Urist, 1973; Blatt, 1974; Blatt, Wein, Chevron, and Quinlan, 1981). These studies have investigated the relationship between level of object representation and specific personality dimensions, such as mode of defenses (Mayman, 1968), coping styles (Mayman, 1968), level of psychosexual development (Mayman,1968; Mayman and Ryan, 1972), boundary differentiation (Krohn and Mayman, 1974; Blatt and Ritzler,1974), thought patterns (Urist, 1973; Blatt and Ritzler,1974) and the capacity to experience mutuality in relationships (Urist, 1973). Finally, these studies have attempted to demonstrate how level of object representation can be used to draw clinically meaningful distinctions among differing types of psychopathology, such as depression, psychoses, and borderline states (Blatt and Lerner,1982; Blatt and Lerner, 1983; Blatt, 1974).

Object Representations and Autonomous Ego Functions

Until recently, little was known about how the integrity of object representations interplay with the nature and organization of, what has traditionally

been known as, "autonomous ego functions" (Hartmann, 1950; Blatt and Lerner, 1983). Among these functions are the capacities to develop intellectual pursuits, creative talents, enduring avocations, and abiding beliefs. Implicit in many of the writings of relational theorists is the observation that people's representations of self and other impact upon not only their capacity to love--to form mutually enhancing relationships--but on their capacity to create--to find meaningful work, creative expressions, and spiritual involvements (Eagle, 1981). Yet, with but a few exceptions, empirical studies of object representation have not investigated how people's styles of representation relate to the nature of their creative activities.

Storr (1988) charges that relational theorists have minimized how important these activities are to well-being. Storr argues that we need to broaden the clinical lens so as to capture how the dynamics involved in the development of attachments interplay with the processes inherent in the development of a life of creative and existential fulfillment (Storr, 1988). He suggests that Winnicott's notions of symbolic play, transitional phenomena, and the capacity to be alone be more fully integrated into our conceptualization of psychological functioning. Similarly, Eagle has proposed that we think of our intellectual, vocational, creative, and spiritual aspirations as " a critical independent aspect of development which expresses an inborn propensity to establish cognitive and affective links to objects in the world" (Eagle, 1981, p.537). As such, Eagle suggests conceptualizing these creative aspirations as object relations that have a similar function in psychic life as other object ties.

Summary

Empirical studies of object representation suggest that it is a powerful personality dimension that corresponds with people's capacity for intimacy, and that can, in part, discriminate between differing psychological disorders. Little is known about whether differing styles of representation impact upon other aspects of

psychological functioning, particularly those involved in developing meaningful interests, ambitions, beliefs, and values. This next section will review the few contributions that do link the nature of people's representations of themselves and others with the integrity of their beliefs.

The Link Between Mental Representations, Beliefs, and Attitudes

A number of theoreticians, studying the development of cultural and religious beliefs and values, assert that an object representational perspective provides a useful tool for understanding their emergence and unfolding. These theoreticians are particularly interested in the ways beliefs and values become part of our inner worlds. "Through the process of internalization there is a restructuring and a synthesis of social, cultural, and moral norms into the individual's ego, so that they become part of the 'me'. They are not felt as something apart from the person, 'out there' in the social realm. When talking about himself, the individual is simultaneously communicating something about his society, which is part and parcel of himself" (Atkins, 1979, p.135).

The Mythicoreligious World

Spiro, a cultural anthropologist, suggests that people construct mental representations that are based on cultural and religious beliefs and traditions. These representations, which have both conscious and unconscious meanings, are part of, what he calls, a "mythicoreligious" world (Spiro, 1987). They embrace both personal concerns and desires, as well as shared issues and priorities of the culture.in which people live. Spiro underscores that the meaning of these cultural representations are located in the minds of the individuals who hold and transmit the belief associated with the representation (Spiro, 1987). Spiro asserts that representations of beliefs and values are first based on parental representations. Internal images of gods, demons,

saviors, and other superhuman figures, are highly similar to representations of family members. Essentially, children's projections of parental images become assimilated with images of superhuman beings. Through development and maturation, representations of beliefs and values become increasingly differentiated, and complex. Like Freud, Spiro believes that cultural beliefs and traditions retain their connection to infantile attachments and desires. Similarly, the functions of cultural and religious beliefs involve providing a medium through which infantile desires can be satisfied and through which inner conflicts can be resolved (Spiro, 1965).

Spiro suggests that the meaning people attribute to religious and cultural symbols, beliefs, and traditions can be discovered similarly to the latent content of dreams. He likens the images of the mythicoreligious world to the images in the manifest content of dreams: the mythicoreligious world consists of private images that embrace idiosyncratic meanings or projections. However, unlike dream images, the images of the mythicoreligious world are not solely private; they are also the public, symbols and traditions of a given culture (Spiro, 1987).

In addition, Spiro asserts that the meaning and function of a particular belief, can only be understood in terms of its cognitive salience . When the valency of a belief is high, the belief serves to guide the individual's behavior. Beliefs with high cognitive salience "...inform the behavioral environment of social actors, serving to structure their perceptual world, and consequently, to guide their actions" (Spiro, 1987, p.103-4). Spiro maintains that beliefs of high cognitive valency are "genuine" serve as a source of motivation.

The Birth of a God Representation

Rizzuto (1979), a clinician, also explored the mental representations of cultural beliefs, primarily the representation of a personal God. Unlike Spiro though, she does not view the representation of beliefs as a medium whose sole functions are to

retain and gratify infantile desires. Rizzuto, drawing on Freud's work, agrees that internal images of religious and cultural beliefs derive their "substance", at least initially, from the projections of parental qualities. Yet, her conceptualization integrates Winnicott's notions of transitional phenomena: beliefs are a kind-of play through which people create and express their own response to the question of what life is about. Rizzuto asserts that people create and use religious and cultural beliefs to understand their purpose and to link themselves to communities that share similar beliefs. For Rizzuto, beliefs come to embrace both internal reality and infantile attachments, as well as the new, external, meanings that individuals continuously confront. Like Winnicott, she believes that the capacity to bridge private and public realms and to play with illusion are necessary components of well-being. She suggests that beliefs are well-formed and cohesive when they can include both the private and shared realities and are flexible when they can be updated and renewed. Ultimately, people's beliefs become differentiated from parental imagos and, acquire their own distinct qualities and characteristics.

Using clinical cases Rizzuto describes a life-long developmental process, in which the representation of God is periodically transformed. She illustrates how the fully-formed representation of God has all the psychodynamic functions of other mental representations The God representation is similarly used to guide perceptions and interpretations of particular events. However, God representations also differ from other representations, such as parental imagos: They are born in the potential space where transitional objects are created. As such they serve as a link between the individual and the larger culture. Further, Rizzuto argues that representations of God embrace people's capacities to "create nonvisible realities capable of containing our potential for imaginative expansion beyond the boundaries of the senses" (Rizzuto, 1979, p.90). Without these spiritual, creative, and illusory realities life becomes dull. Rizzuto suggests that when representations of beliefs cannot successfully include

people's personal dynamics as well as the beliefs and traditions of their community, people become vulnerable to difficulties in living and to "raising family tragedies to a cosmic level" (Rizzuto, 1979, p.90).

Through a clinical analysis of case studies Rizzuto attempts to demonstrate how conscious and unconscious processes of object representation and of psychosexual and psychosocial development can facilitate or interfere with the process of forming a representation of God. She believes that the formation of a God representation is a normal unfolding process. Rizzuto asserts that this representation can be used in the service of psychic equilibrium or as an impediment to it. She states:

"If the relevant objects of everyday life are a source of pain, God may be used, through complex modification of his representation to comfort and supply hope. If they are accepting and supportive, God may be used to displace ambivalence and angry feelings, or as a target for disturbing and forbidden libidinal longings. This use of the God representation for regulation and modulation of object love and related self-representations begins in childhood, [and] continues throughout life..." (1979, pp.88-89).

Finally, Rizzuto illustrates compellingly how representations of God are transformed over the course of life and how a God representation can both be influenced by life's changes, as well as impact on the interpretation of these changes.

Throughout Rizzuto's discussion she underscores that the presence or absence of a belief in God is not indicative of psychopathology. Rather, its presence is indicative of the balance one has established psychologically in relation to oneself and to significant others. Like Winnicott, she believes that it is often difficult for clinicians to talk with patients about their belief in God because it means entering the domain of transitional phenomena, which is a realm of being and relating that is difficult to put into language.

Ritzler and Ritzler (unpublished manuscript) wanted to further explore the dimensions of God representations. They developed a more standardized interview to

empirically explore Rizzuto's ideas. They were less interested in the intrapsychic and interpersonal functions of representations of religious beliefs. Rather, they wanted to explore whether representations of God could be used as indicators of the levels of differentiation, articulation, integration, and reality testing associated with internal representations of self and other (Ritzler and Ritzler, unpublished manuscript). They also explored the relationship between levels of object representations, derived from studying internal images of God, and styles of object representations as seen on the Rorschach. Finally, Ritzler and Ritzler hypothesized that people with similar styles of object representation have similar concepts of God.

Ritzler and Ritzler refined Rizzuto's interview and developed a semi-structured written questionnaire that asks people directly about the feelings and ideas they have about God. They also developed a five-point developmental scale for assessing representations of God. This scale is based, almost exclusively, on an object relational conceptualization of how representations develop. Ritzler and Ritzler draw heavily on Mahler (1968) and Jacobson's (1964) formulations. As such, they view the formation of object representations as progressing from a distorted and pathological orientation to a more reality-based one. Ritzler and Ritzler's lower levels of God representations are characterized by a "schizoid orientation" to the concept of God, use of primitive defenses, an affect tone which is malevolent and/or highly ambivalent, and the attribution of qualities to the God image that are unintegrated. The higher levels involve a portrayal of God as whole and humane, an affect tone which is primarily benevolent, a perception of God which is not overly dominated by need, anxiety, and ambivalence, and the use of higher level defenses. Descriptions of God that fall within the highest levels of representation sound like descriptions of significant people with whom one has a reciprocal relationship.

Ritzler and Ritzler administered the God Questionnaire and the Rorschach to 40 college students. The Rorschach was assessed using Blatt's Concept of the Object Scale

(Blatt, Brenneis, Schimek, and Glick, 1976) and Cooper's Defense Scales (in Press). Results indicated that students whose representations of God were at the lowest levels produced human responses on the Rorschach that were either highly articulated but of poor form level, or human responses that were less differentiated but of higher form level. In addition, students at the lower levels, had concepts of God that were indicative of less mature defenses. Students whose representations of God were at the higher levels produced well-differentiated human responses that were of high form level. Their concepts of God also indicated the use of more progressive defenses.

Ritzler and Ritzler concluded that representations of God develop along a continuum of object relations maturity. Further, they found a correspondence between the object representational styles on more traditional projective measures, such as the Rorschach, and styles of representing God as elicited on a semi-structured questionnaire.

Summary

Spiro and Rizzuto's work and Ritzler and Ritzler's empirical study have investigated how people personalize cultural traditions, symbols, and values. Their work highlights the powerful psychic reality cultural beliefs can have and suggests that these beliefs be given "'equal time' in psychoanalysis" (Rizzuto, 1979, p.47). As Rizzuto states, cultural and religious expressions are " an integral part of being human, truly human in our capacity to create nonvisible but meaningful realities capable of containing our potential for imaginative expansion beyond the boundaries of the senses" (1979, p.47).

However, Rizzuto and Ritzler and Ritzler are primarily interested in religious beliefs, specifically those pertaining to God. They believe that important information can be gained through an investigation of people's representation of God that pertains to those aspects of experience that provide comfort, inspiration, courage, as well as

anxiety and fear (Rizzuto, 1979). Their work is based on an assumption that during some period of life people cultivate a private relationship with God. Yet, as Spiro suggests, people create mental templates, not only of superhuman figures, but of other cultural symbols and ideas that are secular.

The Current Study

The present study begins with the premise that cultural beliefs, religious and secular, have an important psychological function, although which beliefs are most salient for a particular individual will only be discovered through inquiry. I try to let people state for themselves which values, beliefs, or traditions define their source of faith.

One of the main differences between representations of secular beliefs and representations of superhuman figures is that representations of God, or godlike figures, are frequently conceptualized in vivid anthropomorphic terms. However, many ideologies and sources of meaning are not usually imagined as separate beings. Like imagos of significant others, the God representation can be described with clear characteristics and features, and one can inquire about them in much the way one inquires about parental imagos. Many representations of beliefs are more abstract and lack clear definition. In addition, beliefs are embedded in many different types of relationships--in the ways we think about people, nature, art, community, and the like--and are, therefore, difficult to isolate. In this dissertation I hypothesize that we create mental images of our beliefs that can serve a powerful psychic function, though how we tap these belief representations so as to see their full dimensions is a methodological challenge.

The Empirical Study

The empirical study builds on the studies of Rizzuto and Ritzler and Ritzler but also poses different questions. Like these studies, I will suggest that people create mental imagos of beliefs that can be accessed and evaluated similarly to other representations. However, this study will focus, specifically, on the ways in which ties to beliefs are both similar to and different from other object ties, such as parental imagos.

The empirical study also draws from Fowler's work on the development of faith (1981) and Krohn and Mayman's work on object representation (1974). To explore the relationship between people's representations of themselves and others and their representations of their salient beliefs two interview schedules will be administered. One interview, the Early Memories Test (Mayman and Ryan, 1972), is designed to elicit representations of self and other. The other interview protocol is designed to elicit those beliefs that people consciously experience as most meaningful. Both interviews will be evaluated using a scale that is designed to assess differing styles of representation. This measure, known as the Krohn scale (Krohn and Mayman,1974), has been applied to a number of different projective tests, in order to assess its reliability and construct validity. Using this scale, Krohn and Mayman demonstrated that level of representation is a valid, internally consistent, enduring personality dimension that emerges across a diverse range of personality productions. This study will explore whether representational styles also emerge in descriptions of people's beliefs.

Review of the Empirical Literature

Early Memories Test (EMT)

Early memories express people's enduring view of themselves and their expectations of others (Mayman, 1968; Saul, Snyder, and Sheppard, 1956). They are not conceptualized as autobiographical truths but, rather, as "retrospective inventions developed to express psychological truths" (Mayman, 1968, p.305). According to

Mayman and Krohn, "the themes which bind together the dramatis personae of a person's early memories define nuclear relationship patterns that are likely to recur repetitively in a wide range of other life situations. They intrude projectively into the structure and content of his early memories, just as they intrude repetitively into his evolving relations with significant persons in his life" (Mayman and Krohn, 1975, p.160). Early memories are the dominant interpersonal themes which express our past experiences with others, the current patterns of interaction that we are predisposed to, and our anticipations of what future interactions and relationships will be like.

The use of early memories as projective data is well documented (Adler, 1931; Dudycha and Dudycha, 1941; Meltzer, 1950; Eisenstein and Ryerson, 1951; Saul, Snyder, and Sheppard, 1956; Mayman and Faris, 1960). Several different researchers have designed measures to elicit and assess early memories (Bruhn, 1985; Bruhn and Last, 1983; Mayman, 1968; Mayman and Ryan, 1972). Both Last and Bruhn and Mayman and Ryan underscore the diagnostic usefulness of early memories and have used them to distinguish among varying levels of psychological functioning. Last and Bruhn (1983) have developed a "cognitive-perceptual" method for interpreting early memories. Mayman (1968) and Mayman and Ryan (1972) designed a standardized measure to elicit and assess memories according to levels of psychosexual development. Later, object representation scales were applied to their questionnaire (Mayman and Krohn, 1975). The current study will use Mayman and Ryan's method for eliciting early memories and Mayman and Krohn's object representation scale to assess the memories.

Mayman and Ryan's questionnaire is a semi-structured projective interview with questions and probes. The test is designed to elicit a series of early memories along with the feelings, thoughts, and visual images that are associated with them. The early memories elicited include the earliest memory recalled, specific memories involving relationship experiences with each parent, favorite and least favorite memories, and

frequently told family stories. In addition, Mayman and Ryan collect memories reflecting particular affect states. For each memory, people are asked how they picture themselves in the memory, how they picture others in the recollection, and what they are feeling in the memory. These probes attempt to capture object relational experiences that are parallel to the object relational units described by Kernberg (Kissen, 1986). These units include a self-representation, a representation of the other, and an associated affect state.

Mayman's original interview elicits all nine memories and probes. Later studies have used abridged or augmented versions of the original interview (Harder, 1979; Monahan. 1983; Kissen, 1986). Studies indicate that the first two memories elicited on the Early Memories Test are the "purest" responses reflecting the individual's dominant style of representation, since the first two questions are the least structured questions on the interview (Tuber, personal communication). The first memory elicited is the earliest childhood memory the respondent can recall. The second memory elicited is the respondent's next earliest recollection. The current study will ask for these two memories. In addition, two other memories from the Early Memories Test will be elicited: the most pleasant and comfortable memory of childhood and the least pleasant memory.

Mayman advocates using a "clinically based empathic-intuition" to assess object representations (Hatcher and Krohn, 1980; Blatt and Lerner,1983). This approach to the data is similar to the way psychodynamically-oriented clinicians listen to their patients and entails immersing oneself in the data and drawing liberally on one's inferential capacities (Hatcher and Krohn, 1980). Mayman and Ryan's scale for assessing object representations in early memories was designed using this philosophy. Their scale assesses early memories on the basis of psychosexual themes, relationship paradigms, self-structure, modes of defense, and coping styles.

Krohn and Mayman (1974) and Hatcher and Krohn (1980) applied an object representation scale, which was initially designed to assess the manifest content of dreams, to early memories as well (see below for further description). The Object Representation Scale for Dreams integrates many of Mayman and Ryan's subscales into one scale. The focus, however, of Krohn and Mayman's measure is on evaluating increasing levels of interpersonal relatedness.

The Relational Images and Beliefs Interview (RIB)

The Relational Images and Beliefs Interview (RIB) was designed to elicit those beliefs, interests, and values that an individual consciously experiences as most meaningful. The interview was developed using the assumption that when people describe these beliefs and interests they not only convey information about the content of a particular belief, but they also convey information about the ways they experience themselves and others.

The interview, designed by this author, was inspired by Fowler's faith interview (1981) and by previous pilot studies (see Pilot Study section). Questions were formulated with the help of Wachtel (1987-88, personal communication) and Tuber (1989, personal communication). The interview consists of nine questions and probes. The questions are general, asking people to talk about those things that are most important and valuable to them (see appendix). The questions were designed using the hypothesis that inquiries into existential issues could be formulated using the projective assumption. This assumption states that given a relatively vague situation people will " ...set in motion a reparative process, the aim of which is to replace formlessness with reminders of the palpably real world" (Mayman, 1967, p.17). The questions for the interview were then designed using the supposition that people would impose their central ways of thinking about themselves and others when asked general and open-ended questions about existential concerns.

The questions ask people to reflect upon what gives them a sense of meaning in life, what has shaken that meaning, and why they think people are born. Questions also ask people to think about how they enact the cultural or religious beliefs that are most important to them and how their creative aspirations find expression. Finally, interview questions encourage people to imagine their lives in the future and the kinds-of involvements and developments they hope will be part of their lives. The RIB uses the same probes that are used in the Early Memories Test to capture prototypes of the self and other, as well as the affect states associated with these images.

Since these questions are difficult, two "cool down" questions end the interview. These last two questions enable respondents to reflect on the interview experience and to amend and add to anything they have said. These two questions also function as means for "testing the limits", for tapping the outer bounds of what individuals experience and feel comfortable with.

The following section will discuss the applicability of Krohn and Mayman's object representation scale for assessing qualitative interview material.

The Krohn Scale: Reapplied

Krohn and Mayman's Object Representation Scale for Dreams, which will be referred to as the Krohn scale, is a thematic and ordinal scale that assesses increasing levels of interpersonal relatedness. The scale assesses the extent to which people are experienced as whole, alive, differentiated, complex, and motivated beings. The scale includes a series of global descriptions of levels of representation, each designated by a scale point. The scale consists of eight levels, ranging from the least to the most interpersonally related. While the scale evaluates thematic aspects of internalized relationship paradigms, it also assesses structural aspects: the extent to which representations are differentiated, stable, and richly defined. Unlike other measures

that attempt to differentiate between the thematic and structural elements, this scale integrates them into each level of representation.

The Krohn scale was initially designed to assess the manifest content of dreams. Earlier studies had demonstrated that the manifest content could be used to assess modes of defense, and perceptual and activity styles (Erikson, 1954; Adelson, 1960; Krohn and Gutmann, 1971). Krohn views the imagery in dreams as similar to the imagery elicited in Rorschach responses. Imagery that is multifaceted, differentiated, human, and warm is understood as reflecting more advanced levels of internalization. Similarly, imagery that is vague, impoverished, bizarre, and highly malevolent reflects primitive internalizations. (Krohn and Mayman, 1974). According to the theory of internalization, higher levels of internalization lead to an experience of self and other that involves an awareness of the many aspects of relationships, the complexity of other people's motivations, as well as one's own, and increasing awareness of the purpose and meaning of human actions. With lower levels of internalization, the experience of self and other is highly idealized or empty and persecutory (Krohn and Mayman,1974).

The Krohn scale consists of eight scale points ranging from the least to the most interpersonally related. Each scale point attempts to capture the individual's capacity to experience both himself and others as multidimensional. The eight scale points are as follows: (1) The person's world is lifeless, vacant, strange and devoid of people. The world is experienced as barren and static or fluid and formless. The world is felt to be unpredictable, bizarre, and incomprehensible. (2) The person's world involves others, but people are not experienced as alive, human, or benevolent. People are seen as insubstantial and are prone to seem malevolent, violent, cold, and mechanical. When the person becomes enraged, people can be transformed into malevolent, animalistic beings. (3) People are experienced as fluid, vague, confusing, and interchangeable but are not as malevolent as #2. The person cannot articulate what others mean to him, because he has an undifferentiated sense of other people's motivations, feelings, and actions. The

person lacks an enduring and cohesive sense of him/herself and others. (4) People are experienced in terms of how they gratify the individual or in terms of how the individual can please others. People are also experienced as extensions of the self. The tremendous importance of other people as gratifiers prevents the person from being fully aware of other qualities that exist. (5) The person's world includes other people who are not greatly distorted by unintegrated feelings. However, people are not seen as having real identities. People are experienced as flat, shadowy, stereotyped, anonymous, and interchangeable. In addition, the person does not understand other people's motivations. (6) The person has a richer experience of people, and is more attuned to their needs, motives, and individual differences. However, the person does not easily, either for defensive or characterological reasons, try to understand the subjective experience of others. The person wants to be with others yet, due to internal conflicts avoids the more intense involvements that would exacerbate these conflicts. Mutual, complementary interactions are difficult. (7) People are experienced vividly, sensitively, and are central to the person's inner life. They are seen as unique, varied, and well defined. Subtle differences among people are also noted. The person is emotionally involved with others, though conflicts may lead him to experience them in childish, transference-dominated ways. (8) The person has a multi-faceted understanding of him/herself and others. The person can appreciate the depth and richness of other people's feelings, thoughts, and conflicts. The person has a clear model of people being involved with each other that includes an understanding of the varying contours of relationships: why people become engaged with others, why people may disengage, and what interferes with relationships. The person is also psychologically-minded.

Levels of representation are assessed using Mayman's "empathic clinical-intuitive approach". Raters are asked to immerse themselves in the data, to let their "clinical feel", their intuition and empathy, guide their assessments. Each memory is assigned one score. From the ratings collected from each subject, three summary object

representation scores are generated: the highest score given to a dream , the lowest score assigned, and the modal score. Highest and lowest scores have been found to have less validity than the modal scores (Krohn and Mayman, 1974). Although the scale relies heavily on the trained intuition of clinicians, Krohn and Mayman and Hatcher and Krohn have demonstrated high inter-rater reliability (Hatcher and Krohn, 1980).

Krohn and Mayman and Hatcher and Krohn applied the scale to Rorschach responses, early memories, and therapists' assessments of their patients. They found that the scale captures a "purer index" of level of object representation on early memories and dreams than it does on Rorschach responses. As with ratings on dream reports, inter-rater reliability on the Early Memories Test was high. Percentage of agreement within one scale point was 74%. The correlation between object representation scores assigned to dreams and those assigned to early memories was .62 ($p<.001$). Object representation scores assigned to dream reports and to early memories provide, essentially, redundant information.

Until recently, the Krohn scale had not been applied to qualitative interview material. Levine (1990) applied the scale to individual questions from the Adult Attachment Interview (George, Kaplan, and Main, 1985) and was able to successfully evaluate the quality of object representation as reflected in the qualitative interview material of teenage mothers. Other object representation scales have been more widely applied to interview material. Blatt, Chevron, Quinlan, and Wein (1981) developed scales for analyzing people's oral and written descriptions of themselves and significant others. Urist (1977; 1981) applied his object relations scales to a semi-structured autobiographical interview that asked people about important relationships in their lives. The interview asked people to talk about those relationships and to reflect upon themselves in the past, present, and future. Urist used three scales to assess the level of representation reflected in the interview material. The scales were designed to evaluate three distinct aspects of object representation: differentiation, complexity, and

mutuality of autonomy. Using these scales Urist was able to assess the quality of object representation in the interview material.

Urist's scales were developed using a similar theoretical framework as the Krohn scale (Blatt and Lerner, 1983). As such, many of the descriptions of scale points on Urist's scales resemble descriptions of scale points on the Krohn scale. The similarities in these two sets of scales increases the likelihood that Krohn and Mayman's scale might be able to assess level of representation on interview material as Urist's scales do. The current study will use Krohn and Mayman's scale instead of Urist's scales for several reasons: While both sets of scales were developed using a similar theoretical perspective, Urist's scale points tend to be defined in the language of metapsychology, while scale points on the Krohn scale are defined in more descriptive and phenomenological terms. As such, Krohn's scale closely reflects the internal experience characteristic of differing styles of object relatedness. In addition, the Krohn scale incorporates into one scale the three distinct aspects of object representation that Urist isolates in each of his scales. While incorporating these into one scale may appear less empirically "clean", I think it more accurately captures the complexity and phenomenology of clinical experience.

In the current study, Krohn's scale will be applied to the RIB and the EMT. The current study will suggest that 1) the RIB elicits those beliefs that people experience as most meaningful to them; 2) these beliefs can be evaluated applying scales that have been used to assess other mental representations; and 3) the Krohn scale will be able to assess these prototypes of beliefs.

CONCLUSION

Personifications of the self and other are the threads from which the texture of beliefs are woven. These limit the nature and integrity of the beliefs that are created. The extent to which beliefs are consistent, authentic, and coherent may be related to

whether representations of the self and other are flexible, varied, multifaceted, and human.

Because beliefs fall within the transitional realm, they may give voice to aspects of the self and other that do not get expressed in other personality productions (Pfiefer and Weinstock-Savoy, 1984). As such, assessing prototypes of beliefs may enhance our understanding of how people experience themselves and others, particularly when questioned about the uncertainty of life.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted, in order to assess the validity of applying the Krohn scale to the RIB. Since the Krohn scale has been applied to dreams, early memories, the Rorschach, and by therapists to evaluate their patients' levels of object representation, the purpose of the pilot study was to assess whether the Krohn scale could be applied to autobiographical interview material that pulls for higher levels of abstraction. In addition, the pilot study was used to see if meaningful relationships exist between the object representation scores generated from the EMT and those generated from the RIB. The study was also used to tighten the RIB and to reframe questions so that they would elicit those values and beliefs that are most important to people. Finally, the pilot study was used to develop an addendum to Krohn's scoring manual, to facilitate the rating of interview material using the scale.

Ten interviews were conducted using the EMT and a version of the RIB. Three interviews were conducted using an earlier version of the RIB and seven were conducted using the final version. These interviews indicated that the Krohn scale could be applied to interview material. As in previous studies (Tuber, 1983; Krohn and Hatcher, 1980) the highest object representation score, the modal object representation score, and the lowest object representation score were generated from subscores. In addition, the

range of scores on both the EMT and the RIB were examined. While ten interviews did not provide enough data for comparison, they did indicate possible relationships. Object representation scores on the EMT were similar to those on the RIB in the following way: Modal and highest object representation scores on both measures were the same. However, lowest object representation scores differed. The EMT seemed to elicit lower object representation scores than the interview. This makes sense, given that the EMT is a less structured projective measure and, hence, pulls for greater primary process ideation.

A pilot study was conducted earlier, as well. Initially, the focus of this study dealt with ethnic beliefs and values. At that time, the questions of the study related to the specific intrapsychic functions of ethnicity. The impetus for the earlier focus was similar to the current study: an attempt to understand how people cultivate beliefs and values that are cohesive and sustaining and, in turn, how this capacity then contributes to mental health. However, by focusing solely on ethnicity, a bias was imposed regarding the importance of ethnic beliefs and values versus other cultural ideals. The more I interviewed the more I found that people's cultural identities involved multi-group memberships, such as to family, occupational, religious, political, recreational, and national groups. People's beliefs were more like collages that were put together using a mixture of all these different cultural systems. Since I was most interested in people's primary beliefs, I shifted the focus so that I could let people define for themselves those beliefs and values that were most meaningful.

For the earlier studies, four interviews of people involved in interfaith relationships were conducted using Blatt, Wein, Chevron, and Quinlan's measure of object representation (1981) and an earlier version of the RIB. Eight interviews were conducted with Argentinian immigrants, 6 interviews with Arab-Israelis, and fourteen interviews with North Americans---all living in Israel. In these interviews, TAT cards, early memories, and the earliest version of the Interview were used. These

interviews were meant to generate an interview schedule that could elicit the role cultural identity played in people's lives.

By examining those who were involved in interfaith relationships, people who had immigrated, and people who could not express their ethnicity freely, I had hoped to gain a clearer understanding of the role ethnicity played in psychic functioning. The pilot interviews suggested that many people have powerful relationships with their ethnic beliefs that resemble internalized relationships to significant others. People who I interviewed used their ethnic ties to serve a variety of psychic functions: For some, their ethnicity served a compensatory or reparative function, healing deep intrapsychic wounds. The ethnic tie served to provide a sense of meaningfulness, direction, and/or to increase self-esteem. For others, their ethnic ties were a source of deep conflict and served either a punitive or restrictive function, preventing them from becoming involved with activities or people that seemed too dangerous. There were also those with strong ethnic ties for whom ethnicity was an arena to both gain a sense of solidarity with a larger community and to express their cultural "play", whether it was through ethnic music, dance, literature, tradition, or ritual. Finally, there were those whose ethnic ties served as an integrating force which synthesized competing desires, concerns, and goals (Roth, 1989). The pilot interviews, thus, seem to suggest that when ethnic ties are formative, they contribute significantly to people's psychological realities.

While the focus of the study shifted, the pilot studies were very influential in giving shape to the conceptual frame for this dissertation. These studies also helped to refine and sharpen the focus so as to concentrate on those clinical questions that were most compelling. Finally, the pilot work was influential in the development of the RIB interview as it is now.

Aims of the Present Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the similarities and differences between internal ties to people and internal ties to beliefs. The study is predicated upon the supposition that people form deep emotional bonds to their cherished beliefs that bear semblance to other object ties and yet also differ from these attachments. The methodology of the study was designed using the assumption that autobiographical statements about beliefs and values can be treated as other, more traditional projective material.

HYPOTHESES

1) People whose sense of themselves and others is characterized by a particular level of representation will create beliefs that tend to be characterized by a similar style of representation. Operationally, this means that modal object representation scores on the EMT will be similar to modal object representation scores on the RIB.

2) People whose internal worlds can become malevolent and primitive will be more likely to have difficulty constructing beliefs that are cohesive, alive, and multifaceted. They will tend to use their beliefs to maintain a sense of self integrity. Operationally this means that people whose lowest level of object representation on the EMT is primitive (a score of two on the Krohn scale) will be more likely to have a modal style of representation on the RIB that is characterized by self-regulatory and narcissistic features (a score of four on the Krohn scale).

3) People with healthier object representation scores will tend to use beliefs to serve a range of psychological functions. Their beliefs will not solely serve narcissistic needs. Thus, people whose modal object representation scores on the EMT are within the

healthier range (a score of six or above) will be more likely to have a wider distribution of Krohn scores on the RIB, reflecting the differing ways they use their beliefs.

4) The EMT is a less structured measure than the RIB and so, may elicit a greater degree of primary process ideation than the RIB. Since the RIB is a more structured measure, that primarily elicits secondary process ideation, people's lowest levels of object representation will not be reflected on the RIB. This means that lowest object representation scores on the EMT will be lower than the lowest object representation scores on the RIB.

Since the RIB is more abstract and seems to elicit greater secondary process elaborations, the answers to interview questions on the RIB may be more sophisticated and/or intellectualized than those on the EMT. Thus, highest object representation scores on the RIB may be higher than the highest object representation scores on the EMT.

5) Because style of representation reflects developmental and maturational processes, older participants' styles of representation will tend to be more vibrant and multi-dimensional than the levels of representation reflected in the responses of younger participants. Operationally this means that older participants will be more likely to have higher modal object representation scores on the EMT than younger participants.

6) The articulation of consistent and authentic beliefs is a process that continues throughout adult development as people become increasingly sensitized to life's value. Simultaneously, people's styles of representation are evolving and becoming more dimensional. As such, not only might there be a discrepancy between younger and older participants' levels of representation on the EMT, but this discrepancy might also

manifest itself on the RIB. Specifically, younger participants may not be as likely to have beliefs that are characterized by a high level of representation. As such, younger participants may have lower modal object representation scores on the RIB than older participants. There may also be a discrepancy between younger participants' modal scores on the EMT and their modal scores on the RIB, such that the former scores will be higher than the later ones.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Subjects

Thirty-two adults, between the ages of 19-38, were interviewed for the present study, with the mean age of 26. The sample included thirteen men (41%) and nineteen women (59%). Sixty-three percent were single, 22% married, and 16% either separated or divorced. Seventy-eight percent of the participants grew-up in families whose income level was above $20,000, although only 41% currently had an income over $20,000. This reflects the fact that twelve were full-time students. Four were freshmen in college, ten were sophomores, eleven were juniors, and four were seniors. Three were either masters or doctoral students. Forty percent of the interviewees' fathers had gone to college, while 16% of their mothers had gone to college.

It is interesting to note the demographic distribution of the interviewees cultural backgrounds. Nineteen (59%) were born in the United States. The other participants had been in the United States for at least five years when they were interviewed. Participants defined their ethnic identities as follows: 5 (16%) identified themselves as Afro-Americans, 5 (16%) as West Indians, 5 (16%) as South American, 4 (13%) as Puerto Rican, 2 (6%) as Jewish, 2 (6%) as African, 3 (9%) as European, and 5 (16%) did not identify themselves with any ethnic group. Twenty (63%) identified themselves as having some religious affiliation: 6 (19%) were Catholic, 5 (16%) were Protestant, 4 (13%) were Christian, and 5 (16%) were fundamentalists.

People were recruited through presentations in classes and through word of mouth at college and university campuses. Requests for volunteer subjects were given in person or over the telephone. Students were told that their participation was requested for a study in psychology. They were told that the study is about those beliefs and attitudes that are most important to them and the kinds-of experiences that helped shape their beliefs. (Fowler, 1981, uses this description for his study.) Potential

participants were also told that the interview would be like a conversation and that it would take approximately one hour and fifteen minutes. They were told that in exchange for their participation they would have the opportunity to discuss all facets of the study and/or other aspects of clinical research and training following the interview. Students who were interested in participating were asked to sign their name on a sheet or to contact me personally.

Setting

Interviews were carried out in the Department of Clinical Psychology at City College, and at City University. Interviews were transcribed verbatim.

Procedure

Participants were first given a general description of the study and questions about the procedure were answered. Participants were then asked to read and sign an informed consent form. They were told that if, for any reason, they wished to withdraw from the study they would be able to do so, and their interviews would not be used. Participants were asked to complete a general questionnaire designed to obtain information about socio-economic demographics. Participants then were given four questions from the EMT (Mayman and Ryan, 1972), and they were then given the RIB. Following the RIB, any questions about the experience of being interviewed or about the study, itself, were discussed. In addition, questions about clinical research and training were answered.

Measures

The Early Memories Test

The EMT is a semi-structured interview (Mayman and Ryan, 1972). For this study, four question were used along with probes. Participants were asked to describe

their earliest memory from childhood, their next earliest memory, their happiest memory from childhood, and their most unpleasant memory. Participants were asked to describe how they picture themselves and others in the memories and the feelings associated with the memories recalled. The interview took, approximately, twenty minutes to administer.

The Relational Images in Beliefs Interview (RIB)

This interview was designed to elicit the feelings and memories that are associated with the beliefs and values that people consciously experience as most important to them. The RIB is a semi-structured interview consisting of nine questions and probes (See Appendix I). The interview takes, approximately, one hour to administer.

The Krohn Scale

The Krohn scale consists of eight scale points ranging from the least to the most interpersonally related. Each scale point attempts to capture the individual's capacity to experience both himself and others as multidimensional. The Krohn scale was used to score both the EMT and RIB. Each memory on the EMT and each question on the RIB was assigned a Krohn score. From these subscores, highest object representation scores, modal object representation scores, and lowest object representation scores were generated for each interview.

Scoring each interview required reliability training. Two raters were trained to score both the EMT and the RIB. The raters were trained to use the scale on each set of data. The raters coded approximately half of the RIB interviews and half of the EMT interviews. They were blind to the participants' identifying information.

Following Krohn's instructions, raters were asked to immerse themselves in the interview material and to use their clinical "feel" to guide their evaluations (Krohn and

Mayman, 1972). Raters were also told to think of the interview as a dyadic process: to be sensitive to the ebb and flow of the interview as the respondent and interviewer interacted. Raters then determined the extent to which the people in the respondent's world were vibrant, distinct, differentiated, motivated and interpersonally related beings.

An addendum to the Krohn scale was designed to facilitate scoring (see appendix). The addendum consisted of a decision tree, such that raters were asked to score first for level of differentiation and then for the level of elaboration. The addendum also highlighted the most salient features of each score point. Raters were trained to used the addendum to guide their use of the scale.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Reliability and the Krohn Scale

Reliability was assessed as follows: For both the RIB and the EMT percentages were generated for exact agreement and agreement within one scale point. After correcting for raters' biases reliability was as follows: EMT exact agreement was 81%, and reliability within one scale point was 91%. Exact agreement on the RIB was 69%, and reliability within one scale point was 89%. Krohn and Mayman's(1974) reported reliability for the EMT was 67% exact agreement and 74% within one scale point. They do not, however, report having to correct for raters' biases.

Descriptive Data: Young Adult Object Representations

Participants' level of object representation on the EMT ranged from the high to the low ends of the Krohn scale (range 2-7, with 1 the lowest and 8 the highest). For each EMT interview the highest, the modal, and the lowest object representation scores were generated. Of the group of highest object representation scores the mean was 5.10 (range 3-7). Of the group of modal object representation scores the mean was 4.43 (range 3-6). Of the group of lowest object representation scores on the EMT the mean was 3.34 (range 2-6).

Participants' level of object representation on the RIB also ranged from the high to low ends of the Krohn scale. As with the EMT the highest, the modal, and the lowest object representation scores were generated. Of the group of highest object representation scores the mean was 5.90 (range 4-7). Of the group of modal object representation scores the mean was 4.94 (range 3-6). Of the group of lowest object representation scores the mean was 3.72 (range 3-6). (See Table 1).

Distribution of Modal Scores

Participants received two modal scores when subscores occurred with equal frequency. On the EMT, 25% received two modal scores. It is noteworthy that of all the participants who received one modal score on the EMT, only three (13%) had modal scores in which the modes were higher than five, and no one received a modal score higher than six. It is also significant that over half of all the participants (53%) had at least one modal score of four on the Krohn scale.

On the RIB 19% received two modal scores when subscores occurred with equal frequency. Again, of all the participants no one received modal scores above six, although a greater percentage were assigned a six than with the EMT (25%).

Correlations

Correlations of Summary Scores on the EMT and RIB

I hypothesized that people's sense of themselves and others tends to be characterized by a particular style of representation, a style which is also characteristic of how they represent their beliefs. Thus, I hypothesized that modal object representation scores on the EMT and modal object representation scores on the RIB would be significantly correlated. A Spearman rank-order correlation was used to test this hypothesis. No significant correlation was found. Spearman rank-order correlations were also used to test whether there were any relationships between highest object representation scores on the EMT and highest object representation scores on the RIB and between lowest object representation scores on the EMT and lowest object representation scores on the RIB. Again, no significant or even near significant correlations were found.

Correlations of Subscores

Since no significant correlations were found between modal, lowest, and highest object representation scores on the EMT and the RIB, correlations were also run to see if subscores on the EMT correlated with subscores on the RIB (see Table 2). There were significant correlations between memories and the RIB questions suggesting that the style of object representation that emerges on the EMT overlaps with the style or representation that emerges on the RIB.

Correlations of Subscores on the EMT

Interestingly, Krohn scores describing the most unhappy memory were most significantly correlated with the following RIB questions: what is most meaningful in life ($p<.01$), what is the purpose of being born ($p<.01$), what beliefs and/or values are most central($p<.05$), what memory is most important ($p<.05$), and what will life be like during the mid-life era ($p<.05$). The fact that the unhappiest memory is significantly correlated with the more powerful RIB questions suggests a relationship between how participants experience loss and pain and how they think about the purposefulness and value of their lives. It is also interesting to note that of the 25% who had object representation scores on the unhappiest memory of either six or seven, none had modal scores on the RIB reflecting primitive or fluid beliefs. This finding suggests that how the experience of loss and pain is integrated may be associated with the nature of beliefs.

The Krohn scores describing the happiest memory was also significantly correlated with the RIB question that asks what is most meaningful in life ($p<.05$) but was weakly correlated with the other RIB questions, although a trend level of significance was attained. This may suggest a relationship, as well, between the experience of self and others during pleasurable moments and the way participants think about the meaning of their lives.

Krohn scores describing the earliest memory and the next earliest memory were least correlated with RIB questions, which raises questions about the different experiences of self and other that emerge on less structured memories versus those than arise on the RIB. It is of note that the earliest and next earliest memories are the least structured questions, while the happiest and least happiest memories are the most structured. Similarly, the RIB is a more structured projective measure and may elicit material that requires respondents to imagine themselves under pleasurable and unpleasant circumstances.

Correlations of Subscores on the RIB

The highest correlation was between the unhappiest memory and the question on the RIB that asks why people are born, accounting for half of the variance (.49, $p \leq .01$). This relationship may further suggest that how people think about the purpose of their lives is related to how they have integrated their past experiences of pain and loss.

The question that asks people to imagine their lives during the mid-life era was correlated with all the memories and was most strongly correlated with the next earliest and most unhappy memories (see Table 2). Again, this may suggest that people's representational styles are reflected in varying projective productions: How people then imagine their futures may be linked to the richness and clarity of their object world.

The question that asks people to think about what is appealing about their religion and/or cultural affiliations was not correlated with any of the memories. The reasons for the lack of relationship are not completely clear, although this question is one of the most structured questions on the RIB. In addition, many of the participants had difficulty understanding and answering the question, possibly because the question was worded in such a way that it was confusing and unclear: It asked for something very specific and concrete using language that was general and abstract.

Rank-Sum Tests

I hypothesized that the EMT pulls for a greater degree of primary process ideation, while the RIB elicits greater secondary process elaborations. Specifically, I hypothesized that lowest object representation scores on the EMT would be lower than the lowest object representation scores on the RIB. This hypothesis was confirmed: A significant difference was demonstrated using a Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test ($Z= 1.673$, $P< .047$, one-tailed test of significance). The mean lowest object representation score on the EMT was 3.34 with a standard deviation of 1.096, while the mean lowest object representation score on the RIB was 3.72, with a standard deviation of 0.851.

Similarly, I hypothesized that the RIB elicits greater secondary process ideation, such that responses on the RIB would be less primitive and more sophisticated and/or intellectualized than responses on the EMT which, like the Rorschach, elicits the more primitive personality productions. Thus, I hypothesized that highest object representation scores on the RIB would be higher than the highest object representation score on the EMT. This hypothesis was also confirmed: Significant differences were found using the Wilcoxon test ($Z=3.28$, $P<.001$, one-tailed test of significance). The mean highest object representation score on the EMT was 5.06 with a standard deviation of 1.16, while the mean highest object representation score on the RIB was 5.88 with a standard deviation of 0.06.

Frequencies

Modal Scores and the Impact of Age

I hypothesized that object representational styles reflect both developmental and maturational processes. Specifically, I hypothesized that younger participants would have lower modal object representation scores than older participants on both the EMT and the RIB The median age of the population studied was 25. For the purposes of

analyses, two subgroups were formed: One included participants who were less than 25 years old, and the other group included the participants who were older than 25 years old. This hypothesis was partially supported:

As Table 3 demonstrates, participants who were less than 25 years old did not have lower modal object representation scores on the EMT. The mean modal object representation score for the younger participants was 4.3, while the mean modal object representation score for the older participants was 3.6.

However, the younger participants did have lower modal object representation scores on the RIB. The mean modal object representation score for participants less than 25 was 4.4, with 67% of the younger participants receiving a score of four. The mean for participants over 25 was 5, with 43% receiving a score of 6. (See Table 3)

The Relationship Between Lowest Scores on the EMT and Modal Scores on the RIB

I also hypothesized that people whose representational styles can become more primitive and malevolent would be less likely to have beliefs that were multidimensional. Specifically, I hypothesized that participants who had a two as the lowest object representation score for the EMT would have modal object representation scores on the RIB that were less than six. This hypothesis was supported: Twenty-five percent, or eight of the participants, received a 2 as the lowest object representation score. Of those, five (63%) received a 4 as the modal object representation score on the RIB, two (25%)received a 3 as the modal score, and one (8%) received a 6 as the modal object representation score. (See Table 4)

The Relationship Between Modal Scores on the EMT and the Range of RIB Scores

Finally, I hypothesized that people who have a rich experience of themselves and others have greater flexibility in the ways they use their beliefs psychically. Specifically, I hypothesized that people whose modal object representation scores on the

EMT were six or above would have a greater range in the distribution of their RIB subscores than people whose modal EMT scores were below a six on the Krohn scale. For the purposes of comparison, people who received two modal scores on the EMT (25%) were examined separately from those who received one modal score on the EMT.

Of the group who received one modal score on the EMT four (17%) received a score of six or above. While this is too small a percentage from which to draw conclusions in support of the above hypothesis, the distribution of scores is interesting to note: There were no differences in the range of RIB subscores between people whose modal scores were greater than six and those whose scores were lower. Both groups consisted of individuals who received a variety of different Krohn subscores, and both groups consisted of individuals who received only one or two different subscores. However, there was one interesting difference between the two groups in regards to the lower scores that they received: Of those who received a modal score on the EMT of six or above, no one received a score below a four as their lowest object representation score on the RIB. Of the people whose modal scores on the EMT were below a six, 50% had a three as their lowest object representation score on the RIB. In addition, of the group who received modal score on the EMT that were lower than six, the majority had modal scores on the RIB of four, the level of representation that is characterized by narcissistic features. The probability of getting this distribution by chance alone is .094 , a trend level of significance (Fisher's Exact Test).

Of the group who received two modal scores on the EMT, all had at least one modal score that was below a six. Sixty-three percent of the bi-modal group had a score of 3 as their lowest object representation score. (See Table 5).

Intercorrelations

Intercorrelations Among EMT Subscores

Intercorrelations of the subscores on the EMT were also investigated using Spearman rank-order correlations. High intercorrelations were found between questions on the EMT (see Table 6). The mean correlation was .47. These findings further validate Krohn and Mayman's reported results (1974) and confirm the hypothesis that level of object representation is a consistent and enduring personality dimension that emerges across a range of projective productions.

As demonstrated in Table 6, the highest correlations were between the earliest and next earliest memories (.63 , P<.001) and between the earliest memory and the most pleasant memory (.70 P<.001). It is interesting to note that the most unpleasant memory was only significantly correlated with the happiest memory (p<.01), while the happiest memory was significantly correlated with the earliest and next earliest memories (p<.01). This suggests that the happiest and unhappiest memories are not eliciting redundant information. That is, different aspects of the representations of self and other emerge on the happiest and unhappiest memories that may not be elicited on the earliest and next earliest memories. Dimensions that are elicited on the happiest memory overlap with dimensions that emerge on the earliest and next earliest memories, but the happiest memory clearly elicits other aspects, as well. Finally, the unhappiest memory elicits aspects of experience that are not captured by the earliest and next earliest memories.

Intercorrelations Among RIB Subscores

Spearman correlations were computed for RIB questions, as well. As table 7 indicates many of these correlations were significant. The mean RIB intercorrelation was .41. The RIB questions that were most highly intercorrelated were the following: The question that asks what memory is most important was correlated with the question

that asks what life will be like in the mid-life era ($p<.001$), which suggests that people experience that which they value about their pasts similarly to what they imagine they will value about themselves in the future. The question that asks what beliefs are most central was significantly correlated with six of the following RIB questions: what is most meaningful ($p<.05$), what is the purpose of being born ($p<.05$), what is captivating about religion or culture ($p<.05$), how are beliefs enacted ($p<.05$), what memory is most important ($p<.01$), what will life be like during the mid-life era ($p<.01$), and what stands out from the interview ($p<.01$). These correlations suggest that the question about what beliefs are most central is a fruitful one that elicits similar dimensions of people's inner worlds that many of the subsequent RIB questions elicit. This is important, for if some of the RIB questions are eliciting redundant information, the RIB could be shortened.

Many of the RIB correlations suggest that the while some questions elicit redundant information, others elicit differing aspects of people's sense of themselves that revolves around that which is deeply valued. The question about what is most meaningful was correlated with the questions that ask what is the purpose of being born ($p<.01$) and how are important beliefs enacted ($p<.01$). The question about why people are born was also correlated with questions regarding what is appealing about religion and culture (.01), how are important beliefs enacted ($p<.05$), and what will life be like during the mid-life era ($p<.05$).

The question that tested the limits, that asks participants what should be remembered from the interview was significantly correlated with the following questions: how are important beliefs enacted ($p<.001$), what will life be like during the mid-life era ($p<.001$), what beliefs are most central ($p<.01$), and what memory captures what is most important ($p<.01$). These correlations may suggest that the question that tests the limits elicits dominant dimensions of self/other representations that recur when people think about that which they value.

Table I
Distribution of Object Representation Scores on the EMT

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Highest Obj. Rep. Score	5.10	1.16	3 - 7
Modal Obj. Rep. Score	4.43	1.04	3 - 6
Lowest Obj. Rep. Score	3.34	1.10	2 - 6

Distribution of Object Representation Scores on the RIB

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Highest Obj. Rep. Score	5.90	.66	4 - 7
Modal Obj. Rep. Score	4.94	1.14	3 - 6
Lowest Obj. Rep. Score	3.72	.85	3 - 6

Table 2
Spearman Correlations of EMT Memories and RIB Questions:

	RIB							
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	# 8
Earliest	---	---	---	---	---	---	.29~	---
Next Earliest	---	---	---	---	---	.24~	.35*	.28~
Happiest	.37*	---	---	---	---	.25~	.27~	.27~
Unhappiest	.40**	.37*	.49**	---	.27~	.30*	.32*	---

**p<.01
*p<.05
~p<.10, trend level of significance.

Table 3
Distribution of Modal Object Representation Scores on the EMT

MOR scores:	Participants <25 years old	Participants >25 years old
3	30%	43%
4	40%	36%
5	- - -	14%
6	30%	7%

Distribution of Modal Object Representation Scores on the RIB

MOR scores:	Participants <25 years old	Participants >25 years old
3	17%	7%
4	67%	29%
5	- - -	21%
6	17%	43%

Footnote: Two modal object representation scores were generated when subscores occurred with equal frequency. This complicated statistical analyses. To test the above hypothesis, people who had two modal scores were excluded from the analysis. There were fourteen participants younger than 25 and eighteen who were older. Four participants in both the younger and older groups had two modal object representation scores on the EMT. With the RIB, two participants in the younger group and four participants in the older group had two modal scores.

Table 4
Distribution of Modal Object Representation Scores on the EMT=2 and Modal Scores on the RIB

Modal Scores on the RIB	Modal Score of 2 on the EMT
3	25%
4	63%
6	8%

Footnote: 25% of all participants received a modal score of 2 on the EMT.

Table 5
Distribution of Modal Object Representation Scores on the EMT and Lowest Object Representation Scores on the RIB for participants who received one modal score on the EMT.

	Lowest RIB ≥ 4	Lowest RIB ≤ 3
Modal EMT ≥ 6	17%	0
Modal EMT ≤ 6	50%	50%

Distribution of Modal Object Representation Scores on the EMT and Lowest Object Representation Scores on the RIB for participants who received two modal scores on the EMT.

	Lowest RIB ≥ 4	Lowest RIB ≤ 3
Bi-Modal EMT		
3 - 4	0	13%
4 - 5	13%	25%
4-6	25%	25%

Footnote: Two modal object representation scores were generated when subscores occurred with equal frequency.

Table 6
Spearman Correlation Coefficients of EMT Questions

		EMT			
		Earliest	Next Earliest	Happiest	Unhappiest
EMT	Earliest		.63**	.70**	.28~
	Next Earliest			.51*	.28~
	Happiest				.44*
	Unhappiest				

**p<.001
*p<.01
~p<.10

Table 7: Spearman Correlations of RIB Questions

		RIB 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	1		.32*	.41**	---	.42**	---	---	---
	2			.31*	.31*	.33*	.46**	.43**	.42**
	3				.48**	.35*	.29~	.34*	.23~
R	4					.47**	.36*	.38*	.25~
I	5						---	.35*	.57***
B	6							.67***	.47**
	7								.75***

***p<.001
**p<.01
*p<.05
~p<.10, trend level of significance.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

The present study was an attempt to explore the role beliefs have in people's lives and the ways by which people weave their beliefs into the fabric of their psychological realities. The study was also an attempt to discover how people can be engaged in a discussion about their most valued beliefs. In addition, I wanted to explore how prototypes of beliefs might parallel representations of the self and other and how these sets of representations might also differ. The projective assumption, guiding empirical object relations research, suggested that people's dominant ways for organizing and making sense of their experience of themselves and others would be reflected in many differing personality productions. As such, I expected the nature and integrity of peoples beliefs to be similar to people's enduring sense of themselves and others. However, Winnicott's theory also suggested that the transitional nature of beliefs distinguishes them from other mental creations. As such, I thought that representations of beliefs would not be identical to personifications of the self and other. Hypotheses for the study were rooted in the assumption that beliefs have projective qualities that reflect people's psychodynamics, their representational styles, and the ways in which they dialogue with a larger world.

In the following discussion I will examine the implications of the empirical findings. I will then use clinical vignettes from the interviews conducted to more fully explore people's relationship to their beliefs. Finally, the limitations of the present study will be discussed, as well as the relevance of the study for clinical research and practice.

The Findings

Differences Among Representations

The Question of a Pervasive Level of Representation

I hypothesized that people's experience of themselves and others tends to be characterized by a dominant style of representation that emerges in their descriptions of their beliefs. This hypothesis stemmed from two underlying assumptions that guide empirical object representation research (Tuber, 1989). One assumption asserts that when people are presented with a context that is relatively amorphous, like being asked to talk about their most valuable beliefs, they will recreate and project their predominant ways for organizing and viewing events in order to "recall, recapture, reconstitute" the world as they know it (Mayman, 1967, p.17). The second assumption asserts that people's experience of themselves and others will only be as "differentiated or varied as the internal representations with which [they] can match them up" (Hatcher and Krohn, 1980, p.299). Both these assumptions assert that object representations define the qualities and contours of people's experience of themselves and others.

To test the hypothesis that a pervasive stye of representation would characterize people's descriptions of their beliefs, modal object representation scores on the EMT and on the RIB were contrasted. There was no significant relationship between these scores. Several explanations may account for the lack of relationship between modal EMT and RIB scores: First, the RIB is not a standardized measure and is also a more structured interview than the EMT. As such, the RIB may not elicit the same levels of representation with the same frequency as those elicited by the EMT. Second, I used an abridged version of the EMT, which limited the number of Krohn subscores from which to generate summary scores (highest, lowest, and modal scores). As such, my summary scores on the EMT may not have been an accurate reflection of people's styles of representation; additional subscores would have strengthened the summary scores.

Finally, the lack of relationship between modal EMT and RIB scores may be an indication that pervasive representational styles are not singular, uniform, or linearly replicated. The fact that there were significant relationships between specific memories on the EMT and specific questions on the RIB suggests some relationship between representational styles that emerge on the these two measures. Modal scores assume that representational levels emerge with the same frequency on two very different types of measures. However, the EMT is less structured than the RIB, and the RIB focuses primarily on one realm of the relational world. As such, modal scores may not be able to capture similarities and differences between styles of representation that emerge on these two sets of data. While subscores are less powerful statistically, they may tap into differences in nuance between representations on the EMT and representations of the RIB.

Primary and Secondary Process Ideation as Related to the Representational World

I hypothesized that semi-structured qualitative interviews elicit representational levels that are more conscious and subject to secondary process elaborations than projective tests, which elicit more primitive and primary process ideation. To substantiate this hypothesis lowest and highest object representation scores on the EMT would have to be different from those on the RIB. Significant differences were found: The EMT pulls for a greater degree of primary process ideation, as reflected by the finding that the lowest object representation scores were lower on the EMT than on the RIB. Conversely, the RIB elicits greater secondary process elaborations, as reflected by the finding that highest object representation scores were higher on the RIB than on the EMT.

As such, less structured projective measures may capture the more primitive aspects of people's representational worlds, while more structured projective measures capture the more integrated dimensions of people's representational worlds.

Similarities Among Representations

The Relationship Between Beliefs and the Experience of Pain

The unhappiest memory was most significantly related to five of the RIB questions. This finding was not predicted. It implies an interesting and important relationship between people's experience of pain and loss and how they think about existential concerns. Specifically, this finding suggests that the aspects of self/other representations that pertain to loss are related to those features of the representational world that attempt to imbue life with value and meaning. This finding makes intuitive sense and is supported by a large body of literature that finds that past experience of loss and pain sensitizes people to issues pertaining to the value and worth of life, in part, because it confronts them with their own mortality (Bakan, 1968; Modell, 1968; Becker, 1973; Lifton, 1979; Fowler, 1981; Hubner, 1984). Painful and traumatic experiences may galvanize people to make sense of the purposefulness of their lives. Object loss can also propel people to search the world for that which has been lost, as well as for those aspects of the self that were complemented by the lost object (Lerner, 1990). While this search can take many forms, in its most developed or constructive form the search for that which has been lost, may promote a great deal of creativity (Storr, 1988). As the findings of this study suggest, the search for the lost object may foster an awareness and appreciation for those aspects of life that are precious and valuable and a sense that one's life is purposeful.

In the present study people with higher object representation scores on the unhappiest memory did not have modal scores on the RIB that are indicative of fluid, confusing, or, primitive representational styles. This finding implies that the degree to which people have acknowledged, mourned, and integrated experiences involving loss and pain has some bearing on the nature of their beliefs and orientation to their future.

Primitive Representations and the Compensatory Use of Beliefs

I hypothesized that participants whose representational styles were primitive would be less likely to have beliefs that included representations of the self and other that were multifaceted. Indeed, the majority of this group did not have multidimensional beliefs. Many of their beliefs were characterized by narcissistic features, which included an idealization or devaluation of the self or others and a preoccupation with being recognized, acknowledged, and validated. This finding suggests that people with more primitive representational styles tend to use their beliefs in the service of self-regulation. While their beliefs might be less vibrant, sophisticated and cohesive, their beliefs may be used to promote well-being, as restitution and/or to buttress an irresolute sense of self.

Multidimensional Object Representations and the Nature of Beliefs

I hypothesized that people whose object representations were stable and multifaceted would tend to use their beliefs more flexibly than people whose object representations were less colorful. Their beliefs would have a variety of psychological meanings and implications: For example, their beliefs may be used as a source of motivation, support, self-esteem, and solidarity. The capacity to use beliefs flexibly would be reflected in the range of RIB subscores, specifically in the number of different scores received. This hypothesis was not substantiated: The group of people whose representations were multidimensional and the group whose representations were less colorful each consisted of individuals who had a variety of Krohn scores---that is , a variety of ways of experiencing themselves and others, and each group consisted of individuals who had only one or two primary modes of experiencing the world.

However, people whose internal worlds were richer did not have beliefs that were fluid or primitive. They did not receive the lower Krohn scores. People whose object relations were less vibrant were more likely to have beliefs that were

inconsistent, insubstantial, and confused. While this finding is based on a comparison in which the majority of the participants did not have multidimensional representations, it does suggest a relationship between level of object relations and the nature and integrity of beliefs.

Developmental Considerations

The Impact of Development on Object Relations

It is of significance that only a small percentage of the participants had object representations that were solidly multidimensional. Another small percentage had representational styles which fluctuated between the more multidimensional levels and the levels which were characterized by less differentiated and complex styles. Over half of the participants had styles of representation in which people were not seen as independent beings but, rather, were utilized to regulate self-esteem, and in which the self was preoccupied with narcissistic concerns. These findings may suggest that different representational styles characterize particular developmental periods. Specifically, young adults' sense of themselves and others may entail a narcissistic experience of the world that is developmentally wired.

Young adulthood is a period of change that may lead to self-involvement, as the idealism of adolescence is challenged and as adults confront a new level of separation from parental imagos. This change may leave young adults narcissistically vulnerable (Bemporad, Ratey, and Hallowell, 1986). In addition, the vulnerability experienced during the shift into adulthood often precipitates a greater use of idealization and selfobjects, which are considered normative means for negotiating developmental shifts (Goldberg, 1984). As such young adults look towards highly valued others, which may include people, ideals, vocations, hobbies, and other creative expressions, to assist in self-regulation and self-definition (Goldberg, 1984).

Because the young adult population in this study spanned a large age range I hypothesized that the younger participants would have different representational styles than the older ones. Specifically, I hypothesized that younger participants might have lower modal object representation scores on the EMT . This hypothesis was based on the developmental theory of adulthood which posits that the object relations of adults are reorganized periodically in response to the changing responsibilities and confrontations with life circumstances.

In the present study participants younger than 25 years of age did not have lower modal object representations scores on the EMT than participants who were older than 25. In fact, the younger participants had higher scores. The reasons for this finding are not immediately apparent. Younger participants' object relations on the EMT were characterized by the level of representation in which experience revolves around narcissistic preoccupation. This may again reflect the developmentally appropriate self-absorption of young adults. The older participants' object relations were equally split between the level of representation in which experience is fluid and less comprehensible and the level in which narcissistic issues predominate. It is possible that the younger participants use narcissistic preoccupations to defend against the chaotic shift that accompanies the move from late adolescence to adulthood and that older participants have greater ego strength to tolerate the internal disorganization that is a consequence of genuinely accepting adulthood. This speculation is substantiated by adult developmental theory, which posits that the idealism of early adulthood is characterized by a need to defend against the more disorganizing experience of becoming an adult (Jacques, 1965). This reasoning is also substantiated by empirical object relations theory, which suggests that more advanced and benign representations can be used to ward off more dangerous representations of the self and other (Tuber, 1989).

The Impact of Development on Representations of Beliefs

I hypothesized that younger participants in the study would have beliefs that, on average, were less multifaceted than the beliefs of the older participants. The hypothesis was also based on the theory that over the course of adulthood, people gain an increasing awareness of their own mortality (Yalom, 1980). This awareness contributes to the reorganization of people's internal worlds and, as such, leads to the reordering of priorities and transformations in values (Calarusso and Nemiroff, 1979). While the awareness of one's own mortality typically begins in late adolescence and does not reach its full force until the mid-life era (Calarusso and Nemiroff, 1979; Jaques, 1965, Levenson, 1986), it was hypothesized that this awareness gradually gains prominence in the internal worlds of young adults and might impact upon the nature of their beliefs.

Younger participants did have lower modal object representations on the RIB, and again the majority had representations that were characterized by a narcissistic preoccupation. The older participants had representations that were richer and reflected a greater awareness of the differing needs, desires, and motivations of the self and the other. This finding supports the hypothesis that with age comes an increasing ability to develop beliefs that are multidimensional.

In addition, I hypothesized that if the articulation of beliefs reflects developmental processes, there might be a discrepancy for the younger participants between their style of representation on the EMT and their style of representation on the RIB, such that they would demonstrate higher modal scores on the EMT. This hypothesis was not substantiated: There was no significant discrepancy between younger participants' modal scores on the EMT and their scores on the RIB.

A Representational Model of Beliefs?

From a relational perspective, beliefs are dimensions of the representational world that are entwined with how we experience ourselves and others. While the statistical findings are not powerful enough to suggest whether it is clinically meaningful to conceptualize beliefs as discrete mental prototypes which are separate from other personifications, the findings do suggest that it may be useful to broaden our conceptualizations of personifications to include constructions of what people value.

The findings also suggest that the RIB is accessing some entity that overlaps with the representational styles elicited by the EMT but is also accessing aspects of people's experience that do not emerge on the EMT. The intercorrelations among many of the RIB questions suggest that when people are confronted with questions about what they value, particular facets of their beliefs will be expressed recurrently. Whether the RIB pulls for people's deepest beliefs is debatable; however, the interview material is compelling and indicates that people's ties to beliefs emerge on the RIB.

Object Representations and Early Memories

The strong intercorrelations on the EMT validate the use of the EMT as a projective measure that elicits people's pervasive sense of themselves and others. The correlations also suggest that eliciting memories with specific affective dimensions does not yield redundant information and may, in fact, elicit other aspects of the representational world that are not accessed by the other memories. In addition, the memories that evoke particular affect states yield information about people's capacity to access, tolerate, and integrate various affective experiences.

The Clinical Vignettes

The purpose of the clinical vignettes is to more fully explore the vicissitudes of beliefs within the representational world and to highlight the hypotheses of the present study. While there are a variety of ways people use their beliefs psychically there is a limit to this range of functions, a limit which is linked to the individual's level and style of object representation. The clinical vignettes will illustrate how people whose sense of themselves and others is differentiated, complex, and vibrant are more likely to have beliefs that are authentic and multi-dimensional. They may use their beliefs for a variety of psychic functions: to regulate self-esteem, to induce motivation, to connect with a community of others, and to make sense of the purposefulness of their lives. Unlike people whose style of representation is more primitive and rigid, these folk have the flexibility to update their beliefs and to use them to serve a variety of psychological functions, some of which are more adaptive than others.

However, people whose sense of themselves and others is fluid, flat, and malevolent are more likely to have beliefs that are one-dimensional, rigid, and stereotyped. They have less flexibility in the ways in which they can use their beliefs. By and large, they use their beliefs to bolster a fragile sense of themselves. Their beliefs provide a critical function by enabling them to maintain a sense of self. Their beliefs serve as an inner blueprint that they must follow if they are to continue feeling whole and purposeful. When specific beliefs are threatened, they tend to feel as if their entire world is endangered. For some, beliefs have become so fixed and ritualized that the full development of other psychological abilities, such as creativity and/or intimacy, have been compromised.

There are also those whose inner worlds are peopled but whose sense of themselves and others is vague and undefined. They are not like the people whose inner lives are filled with malevolence. Rather, they are people whose identities are not

cohesive, either for developmental reasons or due to psychological conflicts. They are unclear about who they are, what other people mean to them, and what they want in their lives. Their beliefs are equally indistinct. Their confusion truncates their capacity to use beliefs as an internal gauge with which to guide their perceptions, interpretations of events, and courses of action. They experience themselves to be at sea and may not be able to reflect upon existential concerns as yet.

There is another group of people whose sense of self and others is completely entwined with their primary beliefs. For these people the major dramas of their inner lives are expressed through the medium of their political, religious, ethnic, professional, or artistic beliefs. The most compelling aspect of how they think about themselves and others is defined according to where they and others fit in their ideological systems of belief. This is a way of experiencing the world that may overlap with all three categories that have been described. In the present study people who were absorbed with their beliefs shared qualities with those who were less flexible in how they used their beliefs: for both groups, beliefs were central to maintaining a sense of integrity and purposefulness. However, amongst those who were preoccupied with their ideologies, there were some who had beliefs that were personalized and integrated with their sense of self and other. In addition, these people were actively searching to understand their beliefs and to bring discrepant beliefs into harmony.

Finally, there are people whose beliefs are vehicles for the validation and expression of malevolence. These people experience the world as either a dangerous place in which people are unpredictable and prone to become unexpectedly violent, or as a barren and lifeless place, in which people are incomprehensible and feelings are unacknowledged and disowned. Their beliefs serve as vehicles of self-protection and as means for combating these lethal enemies. There was only one person whom I interviewed who may have fit into this grouping, although his interview was not used for the final analysis. This man made me uncomfortable during the interview: he was

abrupt, easily angered, and encroached on my personal space. His early memories had a vacant and fluid quality. During the RIB his anger escalated, and he quickly lost distance. He spoke about the usefulness of assaultive actions in the fight for a cause. He became quite animated and fluid, such that I began to feel like I was the enemy he had to battle. I ended the interview because I became concerned about his potential for becoming abusive. Since I do not have his full interview, the use of beliefs as vehicles for the expression of malevolence will not be explored further.

The clinical vignettes below will attempt to depict the first four groups of people that I have described. The people chosen for this clinical discussion were chosen because they are representative of each grouping. For ease in reading the groups will be given the following labels: those whose beliefs are multi-dimensional will be referred to as "flexible"; those whose beliefs serve a predominantly self-regulatory function will be referred to as "rigid", those whose beliefs are amorphous and undefined will be referred to as "undefined", and those who were absorbed in their ideological beliefs will be referred to as "preoccupied". While this categorization may imply that these groups are mutually exclusive, they are not. The categories may be best conceptualized as tendencies that we all share. However, what defines whether one is better categorized as flexible versus rigid or undefined depends on the valency of these tendencies.

Most of the people in this study clustered within the rigid, the undefined, and the preoccupied groupings. As mentioned in the previous discussion regarding developmental considerations, the level of integration, differentiation, and perspective on existential concerns that typifies people who use their beliefs more flexibly is, by and large, not developmentally characteristic of young adults.

In the following section, each category will be discussed using a case illustration. With each case, the EMT and the RIB will be studied. The primary focus of each discussion will be on the representational worlds that are accessed by these two interview protocols.

The Flexible Experience: "Steven"

Steven is a 25 year old South African person of color, who came to the United States to pursue his studies in anthropology. He is a warm but reserved man, who is articulate and attentive. He approached questions on the EMT and the RIB with caution, taking time to contemplate each response. Steven projected a rich presence, although this was largely communicated nonverbally. The words he used were simple and his descriptions of events minimal. Instead, his hand gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, and laughter expressed his warmth and depth of feeling. The discrepancy between his engaging demeanor and his terse responses could only be understood in the context of his nonverbal communication, which suggested that there were things that he wanted to say but couldn't. I do not know if his reticence reflected his feelings that we were strangers, who lacked the personal history to share the more intimate realms that the interview taps. His reserved manner may have also reflected his difficulty putting particular feelings into words, and so he used other modes of communication to express these. Finally, Steven's reticence may have reflected a cultural etiquette that precludes sharing openly and/or a skepticism about my trustworthiness.

Steven is the second of five boys. His father is a physician and his mother a psychologist. Steven's family is Baptist and has been active in the community church. Throughout his childhood, Steven's parents were involved in anti-apartheid activities. Steven did not offer much information about the nature of their involvement, but he alluded to their activities frequently. His oldest brother was also active in the anti-apartheid movement, and was tragically killed in an uprising when Steven was 15 years old.

Steven experiences the world through active, sensory exchanges. In his early memories a primary mode through which he engages the world is through his body: he was most energetic when he recalled playing soccer barefoot with his brothers, when he described the foods his parents brought home from work, and when he talked about the

visceral sensation of flying in airplanes. Steven also experiences himself to have a strong presence and a defined role, which often entails taking responsibility for people who are less capable. At times, Steven is concerned that his strong presence may overpower and have a negative impact upon people, particularly when interactions become competitive. This may be another reason why Steven uses language minimally, so as to tone down his presence.

Steven deeply feels for other people and is able to appreciate the many aspects of others people's struggles and triumphs. His empathy enables him to respond to people with tenderness and a great deal of care. When he talked about his brother's untimely death, he described the many aspects and implications of this tragedy: He spoke about his brother's desire to participate in the uprising, the responsibility his brother felt vis-a-vis his family, the awfulness of his brother's death both for his brother and his family, and the effect of his brother's death on his own life, particularly in terms of increasing his sense of responsibility towards his younger brothers. However, at times, Steven becomes too sensitive to other people's distress, such that he loses sight of his own desires and goals. As a result, he may initially keep people at arms length, perceiving them as foreign and abrasive, until he knows them well.

Steven values resiliency both in himself and in others. The impetus to prevail stems from having had role models who were able to overcome difficult times. He feels that much of what matters to him most stems from having observed his parents surmount "obstacles" in the difficult lives they have led in South Africa. These obstacles pertain to the racism and discrimination his parents experienced. Their commitment to fulfilling themselves professionally, to educating their children, and to maintaining their hope for change in the face of discrimination have all been a source of inspiration for Steven:

"Basically, what helped me to shape me into what I am now is the modelling of what my parents were doing, despite the hard times in South Africa. They pulled out and

did things, which left me feeling that if you are determined nothing is impossible. When I look back and see how they---the obstacles they overcame, it's really a motivation for me. If they had been other people, maybe they'd have given-up. But they kept trying, and ultimately they are satisfied with where they are now. And that's a pretty good model for me. (Can you see how that comes to play in your own life?) Yes. There are a lot of challenges in life that you experience, especially as a foreign student. But I don't give-up. I know it won't be easy to go where I want to go, but I've learned from them to take it step by step."

Steven not only uses his parents' courage as a source of strength, but he also uses his own desire to role model for others as a motivating force . He stated that having had his parents as role models inspired him to be a role model for his younger brothers, specifically in the realm of education:

"They (his parents) have given me the attitude that I have towards my brothers, to be a role model. One of my brothers just got a scholarship to study in this country. Another is in a good position at his university. That makes me feel good--that they are striving to get somewhere."

Steven is also clearly grappling with his identification with his parents' legacy of prevailing. He believes that the purpose of life is to have children who can flourish, which he thinks his parents wanted for their children. And yet, as he described this he paused and said,

"It's important for me to live for myself, but I'm part of my parents. They gave me these basic values that I try to understand and that are the pillars in my life. But I don't want to overdo it. It's important to also have my own life experiences, and to live my own life, and find my own values. So, it's a balance."

Because prevailing is such as central theme for Steven, he values self-confidence. When I asked him which belief, value, or attitude is most important to him he stated,

"To be sure of myself. What I mean by that is that I don't limit my abilities. I keep trying; if you are not sure of yourself, no one will be. I try to be confidant, not overly confidant but to guide myself in where I go and what it'll take for me to get there."

I asked Steven to describe an event in which his self-confidence was important and guided his actions. He talked in-depth about having gone to a Western European country to pursue his studies is anthropology. When he arrived at the university he was told by the people who had sponsored his studies that very few students are accepted to the anthropology department. They asked him to choose another, unrelated field of study:

"They wanted me to choose something else, economics, something I never thought of. It was not in my plans for the future. So even though I had nothing in hand, I decided not to do that. I couldn't let them manipulate me. So I went back to South Africa. Eventually I got a scholarship to study here [USA]. (What strikes you about what you did?) The fact that I managed not to be influenced by those people who wanted me to study what they wanted. I stayed with what I thought I wanted and what I thought was good for me. If I had stayed with what they wanted for me, I wouldn't have been happy, despite the qualifications I thought I would get with it."

In order for Steven to feel secure, the other must remain relatively unknown and disliked. For instance, in the above example his sponsors are somewhat unidimensional caricatures. While his beliefs in role-modelling and resiliency serve as a source of motivation and a way of linking with others, his belief in the importance of self-reliance serves to distance him from others, so that he can remain focused on his goals. Steven's self-reliance may also be a response to the vulnerabilities of living in South Africa and the untimely death of his brother.

Steven's family is religious and has prayer services everyday. Steven does not consider himself to be religious but does value the "spiritual nourishment" and sense of community that he feels when he speaks with a pastor or with fellow parishioners. He

feels that his connection with the Baptist religion gives him a sense of belonging. He described an event in which he felt this belonging profoundly:

"It was right before I left my country. All the church members gathered together and made a special contribution for me as a present. They wished me well in whatever I wanted to do. And it evoked mixed feelings for me. I was leaving my friends, but then I was going to a place where I wanted to pursue something. Not good or bad. It was hard to leave friends who I liked and loved, but I was also looking forward to the challenges, trying to educate myself."

Steven's sense of belonging is about being with others who respect him and care for him and whom he cares for deeply. The belonging functions as a source of self-esteem and fellowship. He sees himself as an admired member of this community, and that position vis-a-vis the other members is gratifying. While being admired is important it does not lead Steven to become self-aggrandizing. Instead, being held in esteem evokes a tenderness towards others and an awareness of a conflict between pursuing his dreams and being with people whom he loves.

Steven is an avid athlete and believes that physical exercise is necessary to "refresh" his mind. His description of himself was most detailed when he spoke about his love for exercise, "I don't just want to study my books. I want to refresh my mind by jogging, playing soccer, and sweating. To give my mind a rest by feeling my body". As discussed earlier, Steven experiences himself most richly through physical activity. He is very attuned to his own experience when he is engaged in physical exertion. When he described the importance of exercise, the people in his description were present as co-players and potential competitors. Yet, exercise is also a solitary experience for Steven, which may relieve him of the pressure of social interactions and from other activities that require emotional energy. In addition, athletics may also enable him to interact with people in a more playful and competitive manner.

Steven's beliefs pertaining to the value of role-modelling and resiliency, the importance of self-confidence, the value of belonging to a community, and the priority he places on physical exertion are four core beliefs that surfaced repeatedly in the RIB. While Steven's discussion included other beliefs, as well, these four were primary. As mentioned earlier, what defines whether beliefs are authentic and flexible is really the extent to which beliefs can be used for a variety of psychological functions. Steven uses his beliefs as a source of motivation and strength, as a framework which keeps him goal-oriented and which distances him from others who might interfere with his stated purpose, as a source of self-esteem, as a medium through which to connect with others, and as a vehicle with which to relieve himself of the demands of emotional involvements.

The Rigid Experience:"Lucy"

Lucy is a 25 year old single woman of color, who works part-time as a clerk in a token booth. She is a gregarious, talkative, and proud woman who is forward and opinionated. Lucy has been a devout Jehovah's Witness since she was a child. She used the EMT as a time to talk personally about her earliest experiences, with little inhibition. She was forthcoming about her experiences and had little anxiety about sharing some of their more disturbing aspects. Lucy had a different approach to the RIB: She treated most of the questions as opportunities to proselytize.

Lucy is an only child. Her father is a high school graduate, who was born in Puerto Rico. He is not employed due to a debilitating illness. Lucy's mother was born in the United States and is also a high school graduate. She works as a secretary and has recently become a Jehovah's Witness.

Lucy's sense of herself is linked to the relationships she has to special and fantastical beings. Her own sense of worth and uniqueness stems from being connected to powerful and magical people. In one of her earliest memories she recalls seeing Batman standing next to her crib. When she describes herself it is in relation to Batman: "I realize that

it's impossible for this to be true, but it seems real. I wanted to excel, to be above, not better than, but I wanted to be in that limelight...I kept saying, 'Look at Batman. He came just to see me'". In another early memory she recalls how an angel used to come get her in the middle of the night and take her flying all over the world. She pictures herself in this memory to be "very important" and added, "I've always had a thing about God, angels, and the devil...I always had a real zeal to please God...This [the angel coming to take her] was God's way of saying he approved of me". In both these memories Lucy describes feeling, "like nothing in the world could hurt me".

Lucy is a woman who does feel scarred and yet cannot allow herself to integrate the painful feelings that are connected with old wounds. Instead, the pain arises suddenly at unexpected moments. As she began to describe her happiest memory she stated, " My whole childhood was happy; I have a scar to prove it". As she continued to talk about a specific event, a barbecue which she found enjoyable, her reasoning became difficult to follow: "I remember Susan. Her hair was black, in contrast to the tar on the building , which was also black." Later, she had difficulty recalling any unhappy childhood memories and when she did, she recalled an event with little affect and could only provide a skeletal description.

Lucy's experience of other people is most powerful when she can turn them into fairy tale or Biblical characters. These characters may have been imaginary companions for her. Regardless, she can only experience people as live, active beings when she can think about people in this guise. While people may come alive when they are perceived as superhuman, Lucy does not experience them as psychologically separate from her: she is their extension. Being connected to these powerful characters fosters a sense of vitality and purposefulness, but it extracts a price. The more mortal people in Lucy's world are lifeless and impotent.

Lucy values peace of mind. Her belief in God can be like a balm; it can be soothing and protective, because it is dependable and everlasting: "Nothing to me can

compensate for peace of mind, which is what you get when you serve God. You have an inner peace that nothing can compare to." For Lucy, those aspects of life that are not connected to her religion are temporary and not trustworthy. However, the peace of mind that her God instills is tenuous. If she strays from the rules of her community, she feels a great deal of inner turmoil. She tells a story about having dated a man outside her faith:

"I was seeing this guy who I shouldn't have been seeing, because he was involved in things that were in conflict with what I believed, but I cared about him. He got into faith-healing and supernatural things, that we as Jehovah's Witnesses don't do. I knew I was not in favorable standing in the community. It got to the point that it bothered me so much I couldn't sleep and couldn't eat. If I deviate from my loyalty to God---I'm one of those whose conscience really bothers me--I'd rather have that loyalty. My worst fear is that God will remove the spirit from me...I don't want to lose that spirit, that protection. Nothing is worth losing it...I've had people in my life who have died, and I didn't feel then as bad as I felt about this."

Lucy's God is one that will abandon her if she is disobedient. He may also be a God that protects her from becoming involved with activities and people who are, in some ways, inappropriate for her. The way of life that her God demands is tightly structured, with clear guidelines for what is good and what is evil. Her God also advocates "tough love": He requires a rigorous adherence to his ways of living in return for a promise of redemption, inner peace, and safety.

Lucy's God representation has two polar dimensions: one imparts love, protection, and spiritual rewards, and the other inflicts severe punishment and humiliation. As Lucy describes the peace of mind that she acquires when she is following the rules, she has a sense of herself as worthy, special, and strong: "My religion is my backbone. It gives me my self-esteem. It gives me my hope in spite of all the odds". This idealized view of herself, however, threatens to flip when she thinks about the

possibility of straying from the religious rules. In response to the question of what might make her anxious in the future, she said:

"Fear of messing up my religion. Having to be disfellowshipped, which means falling out of good standing. If you don't have a repentant attitude and you continue to sin, the brothers and sisters have to take you out, in order to keep the purity of the organization. You then lose the fellowship with them, you lose that relationship with God."

Lucy's self-esteem and self-worth are thus bound to both her connection with a special group of people and her relationship with a powerful being.

Lucy also values truth and absolutes. "What grabs me about my religion is that I believe that it is the truth. Despite all the religions on this earth, mine is the only true one." When I asked Lucy what she wanted me to remember about her, she said: "Keep in mind my strong convictions. That my religion is the truth. Maybe that will motivate you to sit down and look at religion for yourself." Lucy's belief that her religion is the only true religion makes her feel "exalted", as though she has "more than what other people have".

When Lucy describes her religious beliefs, she experiences herself and those who partake in them as transcending the boundaries of human nature. All those who do not believe are less worthy. Lucy uses her beliefs to define who people are to one another. These beliefs are also a medium through which she can safely form attachments. Proselytizing, is Lucy's call for intimacy---an invitation to selected others to join her in a special and exalted relationship.

While Lucy's religious beliefs have, indeed, been a source of self-esteem, a medium through which she can form relationships, and a fountain of hope, they are not integrated into the core of her being. Throughout the RIB she contradicted herself frequently. For example, she described the religious restrictions as both hard to follow but also undemanding; the sacrifices that she feels her religion requires necessitate

"giving-up a lot" but are also "not much to ask". In addition, when Lucy described her beliefs, her reasoning often became fluid:

"Every time I speak of my religion what comes to mind is, 'you have to keep the faith'. In the final analysis that is what's important, and everything else isn't. Everything is important, but your loyalty to God is foremost."

The interview suggests that Lucy has desires that she must mute in order to maintain her set of religious beliefs. These desires evoke a great deal of anxiety that interferes with the clarity of her thought processes. These desires pertain to wanting material luxuries, scholastic achievements, and sexual relationships. Lucy disowns these desires rapidly and she disowns the feelings of loss that accompany relinquishing their fulfillment. Yet, these desires and the associated feelings of loss emerge at unexpected moments.

The Undefined Experience: "Greg"

Greg is a 19 year old freshman, who was born and raised in a large metropolitan city in the Northeast. He is a soft-spoken young man with a gentle demeanor. Greg is friendly but reserved and has difficulty expressing his ideas. He approached the questions on both the EMT and the RIB with a great deal of hesitation, as if he was not sure why I was asking the respective questions. As had all potential interviewees, Greg had been told the purpose of the interview both during the recruitment in the classroom and when we spoke on the telephone. Nonetheless, I repeated the stated purpose after the first RIB question, because I sensed that he was confused as to why I was asking about his beliefs, though I was not sure that my explanation clarified matters . Greg is a young man who is just beginning to develop the abilities to reflect and to be introspective. As yet, he is not fully aware that the process of self-reflection is valuable or meaningful.

Greg's parents were divorced when he was two years old, and soon after his mother remarried. He has a brother who is two years older. During the 60's his

mother and stepfather were hippies. The family moved frequently within the same city, often staying for periods of time with friends. Greg's memories of his mother and stepfather are noteworthy because in his most intimate recollections , they each were engaged in playful but childish interactions with him. He recalled how his mother lightly teased him when he was a toddler about whether he knew a card-game, "52 Pick-Up", and then tossed the deck in the air. He also vividly recalled the colorful bedtime stories that his stepfather told while smoking marijuana.

Greg's world has many contours, although most are unexplored. There are pockets of more colorful experience, but there are also stretches that lack depth. He has little sense of why he is drawn to particular people or activities. In the early memories he could not picture himself nor could he imagine what he might have been thinking in a given situation. He was able to recall simple feelings that he might have had but had little idea as to what may have triggered those feelings. This lack of understanding is not just defensive but reflects characterological difficulties: Greg is often unable to fully comprehend his thoughts and feelings.

Greg experiences himself as being actively involved with people, and often playfully interacting with them. In his early memories he recalls the funny card game he played with his mother, making a surprise breakfast for his parents that consisted of candy, dancing with his brother around the table, and listening to his stepfather tell stories. He describes feeling happy during these times but cannot elaborate. The people in each memory are engaged with him, but lack substance. In the memory of his stepfather reading to him, Greg sees him as a "silhouette in a dark room". For Greg, his feelings and actions as well as those of others are ambiguous:

"I remember in the fourth grade, no third grade, no fourth, no third, this guy used to follow me home. No he used to follow me at lunchtime. I don't know if he ever did anything. That scared me. (What about him?) I don't really remember if he threatened

me or pushed me around. I probably started crying, I don't know if I did. Most likely I did."

By and large, Greg experienced the questions on the RIB as inquiries into aspects of life that are foreign. With many of the questions he asked that I rephrase them, but rephrasing was not always helpful, even when I grounded the questions in real events that might be relevant to him. The RIB questions required that Greg contemplate the purposefulness of his life with a distance and perspective with which he was unaccustomed. When we discussed whether he thought life had a purpose he said, "I don't even know how I think about my life. I've never thought about life's purpose before. That's a tough one."

Greg also had difficulty imagining his future. His life dreams and goals are not yet well-articulated. When I asked him to imagine himself at 45 years old, he said:

"I can't. I don't know what the future will be like (Can you pretend that you know?) OK. I don't know what I'll be involved with. I don't have any special hopes (What will make you feel good?) Probably the same things that make me happy now."

Greg values romantic love, specifically the feeling of being loved by another person. He feels that love has recently become important to him, particularly since he is seriously involved with a woman for the first time. He has some sense that being in love and being loved have changed him: relatives have commented on how much more communicative he has become. The recognition of change by others has possibly kindled a beginning curiosity about who he is. However, the information he has about himself does not originate from his own internal experience but rather stems from external feedback.

Greg also values recreation and playful interactions. He enjoys the exchange of gifts on Christmas and dressing-up with other adults on Halloween. Again, he cannot elaborate upon why these are pleasurable, except for acknowledging that he has some awareness that these activities are enjoyable.

As a 20 year old, Greg is making the transition from late adolescence to young adulthood. He is just beginning to broach the tasks of young adulthood, that of articulating a life structure, consolidating his self-identity, and developing intimate relationships. His desire to participate in the present study may reflect his wish to stretch developmentally---to begin to articulate his priorities. While Greg's world revolves around playful exchanges with others, it is a world that lacks definition and subjective elaboration.

The Preoccupied Experience: "Brigitta"

Brigitta is a 30 year old German woman who came to the United States five years ago to work. She is an attractive and introspective woman, who treated the interview as an opportunity to openly discuss conflicting values. Brigitta was looking forward to the interview, because increasingly she had found herself reflecting upon her priorities and the choices she had made in her life.

Brigitta is married to an Israeli man and has a one year old son. She is the primary caregiver and has recently returned to school in order to begin the process of choosing a profession. Brigitta left West Germany when she was 23 years old to travel in Europe, and she made her way to Israel where she lived on a kibbutz for one year. She later resumed her travels, journeying to Central and South America until she came to this country and met her husband. Before she was married she converted to Judaism.

Brigitta was raised in a Lutheran family in a small town in Germany. Her father is an engineer and her mother a secretary. She is the second of three children; her brother is 14 years her senior, while her sister is two years younger. During the RIB, Brigitta spoke about her mother's involvement with the Nazi party during the 30's and 40's but said very little about her father's activities in World War II.

Brigitta experiences her own psychological reality, as well as that of others, as constantly in motion. She is ideational and, at times, has difficulty keeping track of the

focus of a given topic. Her experience of an event can intensify quickly, such that mundane situations may be seen as connected to larger, more dramatic events. Life is alive, immediate, and continuously changing. Her lover may become her enemy, that which she trusts may prove deceitful, that which appears impoverished may later seem adequate, and the like. Identities are always shifting: Her own identity can change drastically, other people may transform themselves by acquiring new priorities and/or attachments, and events that have been categorized or defined along certain lines, can be redefined.

In her ever-shifting world, Brigitta is exquisitely attuned to how historical events and identities, both personal and public, are constantly being redefined and reinterpreted. This leads Brigitta to experience the world as a complicated and dramatic place, where her assumptions about the world are continuously transformed. Yet, this can leave her feeling confused and betrayed by her previous sets of expectations.

Brigitta's sense of herself and others moves between polarities, such as love and hate, safety and danger, evil and good, and impairment and perfection. The lines between these are vague and shift easily. As a result, Brigitta has trouble trusting that her own goodness will not turn into some indescribable evil. She also cannot comfortably rely on others, for their compassion may turn into antagonism unpredictably. In her early memories she recalls a dog whom she loved and cared for. She likened the dog to a sibling, "to someone very close". This warm memory was rapidly transformed into a memory of rage as she associated to a memory of sibling rivalry:

"I don't want to say hate, like disgust, but I hated my sister. I simply wanted to get rid of her...and I think she saw me as the enemy, which I was. She disliked me very much...I regarded my sister as a rival for many years. More a rival than a sister."

For Brigitta interactions are about negotiating polarities; they are also about negotiating accountability. Brigitta struggles with how responsible she should feel for a given action and, subsequently with modulating her feelings of guilt. In addition,

Brigitta wrestles with her perception of danger: she is not confident that the dangers she perceives are real, and she does not feel that she can depend on other people's perceptions to help her make an assessment. Brigitta recalled an early memory in which she was telling her mother that the door of the house was open:

" I could see it from my bed. I would shake my mother and tell her the door was open, and she'd tell me to go back to sleep, that the door was not open. But I could see that it was, though my mother wouldn't pay attention to what I was saying...Many times I told my mother,'Don't ycu see the door is open?' And she'd say, 'No, you were dreaming'...I asked her a thousand times after that if she remembered how the door had been open, but she said I didn't know what I was talking about."

Brigitta's sense of herself and others is multidimensional, but these dimensions are continuously in motion. Brigitta is keenly aware that people do change and that it is difficult to really know someone. She also experiences anxiety and confusion that are related to her sense that she cannot fully trust her own perceptions about herself nor her experience of others.

Brigitta's primary experience of being in the world is expressed through her socio-political beliefs, specifically through her struggle to understand her German identity. She values German culture, particularly the language, the music, and the sense of pride that it evokes. Yet, she is conflicted about her German identity. She has spent much of the first ten years of her adult life experimenting with how to make peace with it. When I interviewed her, she was beginning to feel that she had filtered too much of her experience through her conflict about being German and was questioning how much psychic space she wanted to devote to the issues associated with her German identity. While Brigitta has started to question whether her German heritage should be the sole hub around which her life evolves, it remains the centerpiece and a motivating force.

Brigitta has wrestled with the transmission of evil, the transmission of guilt, and the extent to which she feels that she must repair the pain that she feels was

inflicted by Germans during World War II. Her own sense of integrity is bound with how she views her German identity:

"As a German, having Nazism in me--my parents probably, even though they didn't kill Jewish people, my mother was a Nazi, and they went through the brainwashing, and with this in my background I felt there is something I need to do to show that Germans are good. That they want to make peace with themselves and everybody...I thought that by having an Israeli-Jewish husband and by converting to Judaism, I think I wanted to give-up my German nationality, in order to adapt to something, which I'm not, in order to show that I accept Judaism... And now, I'm disgusted with everything: with the guilt that I chose to carry, with Israelis, their arrogance, and the 'chosen people' stuff. I'm disgusted with the way they treat the Palestinians, and I don't think that they (Jews) are better than Germans...If you want peace in the world, you don't have to marry someone so different, or do something that's not working for you. Making peace with people or within yourself no longer means taking your 'enemy', like my husband...I didn't have to sacrifice myself for something or someone else just because I felt guilty. I didn't have to give-up my life."

As Brigitta wrestles with her German legacy and the question of collective guilt, she also grapples with how to define important people in her life. Brigitta fluctuates between identifying and understanding herself and others according to national and/or ethnic identities and according to individual attributes:

"I find that my German friends are very special. I believe very much in their goodness and in their devotion to make the world better...It makes me feel proud to be German, but I have to live up to it. And then I have to do something. Then it's not about being German but what I am."

For Brigitta, making peace with herself entails knowing that she is a "quality'" person, and her primary goal is to acquire a sense of self-worth. Brigitta does not know what the nature of that worth will entail. She questions whether it is inherent in the

claim to a particular ethnic or religious heritage or if it is contingent on the values and activities that one pursues:

"I think people should work on being better human beings. Not in an international way but in small ways...Being Jewish or being Moslem doesn't guarantee that you are a quality person, and that's what is most important and what I want to practice and teach my children."

Brigitta is not certain whether the pursuit of self-perfection reflects a desire to gain moral superiority. Again, she struggles with whether to view the conflict about her own sense of integrity in terms of her cultural identity:

"Being German makes me feel guilty, but it also makes me feel proud...Sometimes it makes me feel superior, which is very bad. Don't write that down. This I only feel when I'm in my own tiny room. There is a German artist who has drawn a picture of a man, who sits in his small room, with a cap on his head. His small room is his kingdom. That's how I feel when I'm in my small room. Sometimes superior. But I'd never act it out. I don't show it; I don't want to show it. It does not in any way, I do not let it effect me...Being German also makes me feel that I have a special responsibility towards others, towards the world. I feel that Germans are respected in the world, and I have to live up to it. To show why it's a personal duty that I give myself."

Brigitta's German identity has been the main hub around which her life has revolved. Trying to make sense of her heritage and her own sense of responsibility has been a lifelong mission, which she now feels may have prevented her from exploring other venues for understanding herself and others. Until recently, Brigitta's desires, anxieties, conflicts, and sense of moral obligation have been filtered through her cultural and national identity. While Brigitta has been absorbed with understanding herself in terms of the German experience, she is also actively attempting to harmonize conflicting priorities.

Summary

Brigitta, Greg, Lucy, and Steven have taken distinct routes in the process of defining that which matters, and each is at a different juncture along that path. Their beliefs are imbued with varying meanings and functions, which reflect their psychological realities. Steven, Lucy, and Brigitta have developed unique internal dialogues with their beliefs, while Greg has not; he is just beginning to wonder about his priorities. The psychological terrain in which their dialogues take place have differing contours. Their beliefs have particular features that may be described as flexible, rigid, undefined, or preoccupied. These characteristics reflect the richness, complexity, and integrity of their internal worlds.

Limitations of the Present Study

Theoretical Considerations

Limitations of the Relational Perspective

The relational perspective refers to a range of theories that assume that relationships are the building blocks that make up the terrain of mental life. Object relations, particularly the theories of object representation, provided the backbone for the conceptualization of people's beliefs and values that was used in this study. The theoretical hypotheses put forth suggested that people develop mental prototypes of their beliefs, prototypes which have a function in mental life that both parallels and differs from other object representations. By using a relational model, the assumption was that prototypes of beliefs are representations that are peopled. While most, if not all, of psychic life is filled with images of ourselves and others, when people begin to think about their beliefs, especially the meaning of their lives, they begin to walk in territory that is, "lonelier". Often, in the process of reflecting on the meaning of their lives, they enter a contemplative state of mind that is like a trance, particularly if they are relaxed. They begin to introspect and free associate in ways that typify creative thinking, and, as a result, may lose the sense of who they are in relation to others. This self-focus or self-absorption is not necessarily reflective of a narcissistic object world. It might reflect a process of solitude that emerges from the capacity to be alone, a process that relational theories, with the exception of Winnicott, do not account for sufficiently (Storr, 1988). This process of solitude is akin to the absorption in creative works that is so familiar to artists, writers, and academics. It is also a process which may be related to the capacity to soothe and heal oneself emotionally (Modell, 1990).

An object relational perspective that does not include an appreciation for the self-absorption inherent in aspects of negotiating the existential terrain, may not adequately explain these aspects and may pathologize a normative process. Storr

(1988), Eagle(1981), and Krohn (1972) have separately extended the object relational arena to include the notion that people can have internal relationships with inanimate objects, as well as with specific qualities and aspects of the self. In the realm of object relational theory Storr (1988) and Eagle (1981) advocated for a deeper understanding of the cognitive-affective links that people form to their "interests"--their ideologies, hobbies, talents, vocations and the like. In the realm of empirical object relations, the Krohn scale attempted to extend the meaning of object representation to include representations of inanimate objects and events, although the scale is still biased in favor of peopled representations.

While an attempt was made to integrate the extension of object relation theory and empirical work into the design of this study, it was very hard to differentiate a healthy absorption with the self versus a more narcissistic absorption. The heavy emphasis on relationships with people both in my own thinking and in the measure I chose, the Krohn scale, may account for the inability to successfully differentiate these qualitatively different self experiences. As a result, some of the existential quests may have been pathologized.

Empirical Considerations

Limitations of the Methodology

The methodological challenge was to design a study that was empirically sound, where clincial phenomena could be isolated and reliably assessed, and yet which also captured the richness of people's inner worlds. The empathic clinical-intuitive approach to research (Krohn and Mayman, 1974) which greatly inspired the present study, facilitated the gathering and evaluation of rich interview material but was also problematic. This approach to research enables clinicians to use their inferential capacities and to apply them liberally to deep clinical material (Hatcher and Krohn, 1980). However, it is an approach that also requires "supervision". The blind spots

and biases of the interviewer and the raters can creep in and color the data, much as they do in psychological testing (Schafer, 1958). In the present study, the raters were trained to be aware of how the participant's responses on the EMT and the RIB were influenced by the interviewer's questions and probes. The raters' biases also had to be controlled for; the Krohn scale heavily draws on the clinical intuition of the raters, which can lead each rater to have his or her own interpretation of scale points.

Limitations of the Population Studied

The participants in this study formed a heterogeneous population that was culturally diverse. Participants came from the West Indies, Latin America, Western Europe, the rural South, Africa, and Northern U.S. cities. In addition, many of the participants were first generation Americans, which made them bi-cultural. It was beyond the scope of this study to explore the impact of cultural background and the processes of immigration, and acculturation on object representation.

The cultural diversity may have contaminated the empirical results since people's cultural backgrounds clearly impacted upon how they viewed the interview process and how they responded to the interviewer. Many cultures do not place a high a premium on self-disclosure. While people might ultimately be capable of sharing and reflecting on their experience, participants from particular cultural backgrounds might have been wary of this process (Gorkin, Masalha, and Yatziv, 1985) Their hesitancy would have then colored the interview. In fact, there were very few people who received the higher scale points on the Krohn scale, points that can only be assigned if the individual can openly communicate their thoughts and feelings. I tried to be sensitive to this difficulty and informed participants during the recruitment stage that the interview involved talking about oneself in detail. Nonetheless, in future studies it would be valuable to control for cultural background.

It is important to note that I and the people who coded my data are white and middle-class, while the majority of the participants were either black or Hispanic and from lower income homes. How these cultural and class differences impacted upon the interview and the assessments is not known. Future studies that use the EMT, the RIB, and the Krohn scale should include researchers of the same cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Finally, it should be mentioned that participants volunteered for the study, and thus there was a self-selection process which is intriguing to reflect upon. Not everyone would volunteer to talk about their values and beliefs to a graduate student in psychology. During the debriefing, I sometimes asked people why that had volunteered. Many wanted an opportunity to find out if their beliefs were valid; others, wanted to proselytize. Others wanted a referral for psychotherapy. There were also a number of students who were anticipating a career in clinical psychology: some were curious about the nature of dissertation research, and others wanted advice and saw the interview as the exchange for that aid. How these various motivations for participating impacted upon the interview are also not known.

Limitations of the RIB

The RIB assumes that people are able to express in words their ideas about existential concerns. Yet, in fact, people are not that articulate about what they believe. People may become focused on questions about the meaning of their lives and be able to talk about these more easily when they are in crises, that can be triggered by either developmental tasks and/or situational challenges (Gould, personal communication). During these periods, the questions that the RIB poses may be easier to answer because existential concerns are more accessible and in the forefront of people's experience. However, when people are not in these more tumultuous junctures, they may have a much harder time talking about their beliefs. The RIB does not take this into account.

People may give responses to RIB questions that sound fluid and incoherent. For some, this fluidity may be less a reflection of their internal representations of self and other, and more of a reflection of the fact that at this particular time they are not actively absorbed with updating and transforming their values and beliefs.

The RIB was an attempt to access and to give shape to the amorphous and abstract world of beliefs. However, the questions on the RIB are framed in very loose and general terms that may elicit abstract and general responses; instead of pulling for the detailed, personal dimensions of beliefs, the RIB may elicit general statements that seem stereotyped or objectified. The measures used would then penalize participants when, in fact, their responses were really appropriate given the style in which the questions were posed. In addition, it is not clear whether people who had difficulty understanding and answering the RIB questions were struggling with questions that were pulling for a level of abstraction that most people do not engage in when they think about their beliefs, or whether these people were less capable of formal operational reasoning. Future studies might rephrase questions so that they elicit concrete, definable imagery.

As mentioned, the theoretical frame with which the RIB was designed, does not fully account for the processes of solitude that are inherent in "soul-searching" activities, of which the RIB is one. The RIB tends to pull for self-focus. The questions on the RIB are about one's relationship to the world, an abstract world. They ask people how they confront and relate to the anxieties of living. While these anxieties are embedded in anxieties about relationships, the RIB leaves people thinking about these concerns on a much more global level. Raters tried to code the interviewees' responses by thinking about the ways in which object ties were embedded in the descriptions of beliefs and values. This was a difficult task to keep sight of, since the RIB kept pulling for these more self-focused responses.

Another problem with the RIB was that responses often seemed to encompass different levels of object representation. This may reflect the fact that some

interviewees were less articulate initially and became clearer as they spoke. Others, became much more diffuse and inarticulate, which may reflect the mounting anxiety that some of these questions can trigger. Unlike the EMT, which asks for a specific memory of an event, the RIB can elicit a variety of images, some which are more digested than others. Again, the fluidity that is implied by having differing levels of object representation on a single question may be more of a reflection of the ways in which questions were framed.

Limitations of the EMT

The version of the EMT that I used was an abridged version of the original interview designed by Mayman. The four memories that this version elicits offer powerful projective data which are not redundant and which are compelling and useful when used clinically. However, for the purposes of research, specifically the use of the Krohn scale, limiting the EMT to four memories did not provide enough responses by which to adequately generate the summary scores (the highest, modal, and lowest object representation scores).

Limitations of the Krohn Scale

The Krohn scale was chosen to assess representational styles on the RIB and the EMT, because I thought it might best capture the richness, complexity, and essence of people's psychological worlds. Yet, problems arose in using a scale that is so poetic and multidimensional.

Assessing Reliability

Each of Krohn's scale points is holistic and includes a variety of features. While there are distinct qualities to each level of representation, when raters were trained some of these features had to be prioritized so that rater reliability could be attained

(see addendum to Krohn scale). In Krohn's studies he does not report having had to develop a decision-tree to help his raters code early memories (Krohn and Mayman, 1974; Hatcher and Krohn, 1980). I am not clear why an addendum to the Krohn scale was necessary for this study so that raters could reliably code the EMT.

It is more understandable that an addendum would be necessary for the RIB, since each question often elicited several different sets of images and affective states. The application of the Krohn scale to qualitative interview material was an experiment; this was only the second study that has applied the Krohn scale to interview material (Levine, 1990). The Krohn scale was designed to be used on the manifest content of dreams, and later was extended to be used on early memories, the Rorschach, and therapists' evaluations of their patients. Because qualitative interview material is different than material elicited from purer projective measures, it is reasonable to assume that adjustments had to be made to the scale so that it would be applicable to interview material.

As mentioned earlier, the highly subjective nature of the empathic-intuitive approach to research, which the Krohn scale uses, makes it easy for the biases of raters to interfere with assessments. In the present study each rater had a blind spot that impinged upon their abilities to detect certain clinical phenomena. Because the Krohn scale relies so heavily on intuition, it is highly sensitive to countertransference lacunae, which are unavoidable. The reliability of the Krohn scale would be enhanced if a third person arbitrated differences between raters and examined raters' coding styles for patterns that might reflect rater biases.

Threats to the Validity of the Krohn Scale

There were difficulties with the Krohn scale that challenged its validity. Krohn argues that his scale is ordinal, however depending on one's clinical orientation, two of his scale points, level four and five might, be viewed as differing styles of

representation rather than ascending levels of representation. Scale point four captures a more narcissistic object world in which people are not viewed as independent and are often enmeshed. Scale point five depicts a more schizoid object world in which people lack real identities and are not fully alive. Which represents a higher level of relatedness may be more a reflection of one's metapsychology or personal preference than a matter of which style is more debilitating to an individual.

In addition, the boundaries between some of the scale points were not precise. Levels three and five and levels four and six blend into each other. These two sets of scale points suggests continuums, or subscales. One continuum, consisting of levels three and five, depicts a world in which people are "shadowy", interchangeable, and where their motivations are unclear. The difference between the three and the five is reflected in the degree of detachment and anonymity of objects and the fluidity, which is present in level three but absent in level five. Often people who received a five had more fluid, "three-ish" representations when they unravelled. This suggests a continuum with representations that are well-bound though stereotyped and flat on one end and representations that are more anonymous and fluid on the other end. This continuum may be more characteristic of people who have been described as schizoid, detached, and unrelated.

Similarly, levels four and six represent another continuum: Both scale points attempt to depict a world which is colored with affect but in which people do not easily engage in mutual complementary interactions. The difference between the two levels is the degree to which people are experienced as selfobjects. With level four, there is no recognition of an independent other for characterological reasons. With level six, the other is not fully recognizable for defensive reasons. While this is conceptually clear, in practice it was difficult to differentiate between descriptions in which the other was not present or was ancillary due to characterological difficulties versus defensive

reasons. This continuum may represent those people who are often referred to as enmeshed, narcissistically vulnerable, and hysterical.

Augmenting the Krohn Scale

Krohn does not have a scale point that captures the internal world of people who experience themselves and others in intensely emotional colors and dramatic tones. This scale point would have better captured the internal experience of Steven and Brigitta, whose internal worlds could become affectively charged. A scale point could be added that would highlight a highly charged world in which the self and other are human and differentiated, but in which feelings are experienced powerfully. The individual with this style of representation becomes easily stimulated by other people's affect. This scale point might be in the ball park of Krohn's scale point of six, in which the self and other are enduring and clearly defined but in which fantasies, guilt, fears, and conflicts impact on how others are experienced.

Cultural Biases of the Krohn Scale

The Krohn scale equates "psychological-mindedness" with psychological health. Psychological-mindedness is defined as involving a well-developed understanding of people's thoughts, feelings, and conflicts, and the capacity to reflect on one's experience and to entertain alternative perspectives. These capacities are weighted on the Krohn scale and reflect the values of object-relations theory and the larger values of psychoanalysis (Lichtenberg, Lytton, Gedo, Meissner, Michels, 1981; Kleinman, 1988). An anthropological perspective would argue that psychological-mindedness develops in cultures which value self-reflection and viewing the self as a separate individual with a unique history (Gorkin, et. al, 1985).

As yet, the Krohn scale has not been systematically applied to multi-ethnic groups nor to groups of differing socioeconomic classes. Questions arise about the

applicability of the scale to a culturally diverse population. The fact that very few participants in the present study received the highest points on the Krohn scale may reflect developmental considerations, as discussed earlier. However, this distribution might also reflect the values of the scale. Since the population for this study was culturally rich, it is important to interpret these results cautiously.

Implications for Further Studies

In order to substantiate the hypothesis that flexible belief representations are more characteristic of the later stages of adult development, a more systematic comparison of young and older adults is necessary. It would be fascinating to compare the results of the present study with the early memories and RIB interviews of middle-aged and older adults. It is likely that with maturity and greater life experience comes a deeper sense of life's personal value, which may be easier to reflect upon than is characteristic of young adults.

In future studies, it would be useful to alter the methodological design of the present study so as to correct for difficulties that arose. It might be useful to give a large group of people the EMT and from that group to give the RIB to those whose object representations scores are highest and to those whose object representations are lowest. This design would highlight the relationship between differing levels of object representations and the nature of beliefs. A fuller version of Mayman and Ryan's original version of the EMT could be used so that there would be more subscores from which to generate the highest, lowest, and modal object representation scores. Questions on the RIB could be reframed so as to access more concrete and definable memories and ideas. Some of added questions might include: 1) What has been most memorable in your life? 2) What actions are you most proud of, and what actions are you most ashamed of? 3) What events in your life have been most inspirational? 4) If you were to die now what would have gone unlived? 5) If we could live two lives, what would your

second life be like? 6) What do you want your children and grandchildren to remember about the way you lived your life?

In addition, future studies would control for cultural background: The population would either be kept homogeneous or enough participants from differing cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds would be recruited so that meaningful subcategories could be contrasted.

Finally, a measure that assesses intellectual ability, particularly the capacity to reason abstractly, should be administered, since the development of beliefs is linked to cognitive functioning. The Similarities or Comprehension subsections of the WAIS-R or the Conceptual Level of Analysis Test might be appropriate measures.

Relevance for Clinical Research

Empirical object relations research is a clinical method for studying people's enduring sense of the world. It attempts to capture people's dominant experience of themselves and others and to then examine how these impact upon other human phenomena: psychopathology, character structure, the capacity to benefit from psychotherapy, and the nature of one's personal god. The current study adds to this body of research by suggesting that representations of the self and other are also related to the nature and integrity of beliefs.

This study argues for broadening the representational world to include people's prototypes of their artistic, vocational, spiritual, and ideological strivings. The study also asserts that conceptualizing beliefs as aspects of the relational terrain yields important information about people's experience that is not necessarily captured by other personality productions.

In addition, this study suggests that relational theories and empirical object relations methodology can enrich each other: Empirical object relations offers the methodological tools by which to operationalize and investigate relational concepts.

Specifically, empirical object relations provide the tools for studying object ties, which include both ties to people and cultural involvements. Similarly, relational theories inform object representational research, by introducing a broader, more interactive view of psychic life. In particular, a relational perspective suggests that representations be viewed as personality dimensions that are not static structures; instead, they can be conceptualized as dynamic, developmental forces that thrive within an interpersonal milieu.

This study used the empathic-intuitive approach, a method of investigation that most closely resembles the kind-of listening and inferential reasoning that psychoanalytically-informed clinicians use when working with patients. This school of thought focuses on the phenomenological experience of the patient. This method of research can complicate statistical analyses since it draws heavily on clinical intuition and does not use the more precise coding schemes that more "objective" research uses. However, as with other studies that have used this approach, the present study suggests that the clinical-empathic method of research can retain some of the richness and complexity of psychological reality that are often dismissed in other forms of clinical research.

Implications for Clinical Practice

I believe that an essential component of the psychotherapeutic process entails developing the capacities to shape and integrate beliefs and to resolve contradictions in systems of belief. These capacities may , in turn, enable people to live more freely and fully. People form ties to their spiritual longings, artistic endeavors, moral convictions, professional aspirations, and to other ideals which are important to them. These bonds can have deep psychological meanings that reflect the psychological balance that they have created in order to live their lives. The challenge for clinicians entails exploring these multiple attachments, all of which provide important information about

people's emotional resources and their psychological vulnerabilities. People use their ties to beliefs as mediums for transforming distress, as realms in which to define a relationship to a larger community, as sources of security and self-regulation, and as frameworks for containing and, at times, stifling psychological growth that is experienced as dangerous.

Throughout the therapeutic process, patients confront their conflictual beliefs and values. The tasks of articulating and integrating beliefs can become most pronounced when people are in the throes of developmental transitions or crises, or when sources of meaning are no longer compelling. All change requires the relinquishment and transformation of object ties and, hence, requires great courage (Mitchell, 1988). Similarly, the process of articulating and rearticulating sources of meaning involves relinquishing ties to beliefs and experimenting with new systems of value. By conceptualizing beliefs as object ties that contribute substantially to psychological functioning, the challenge and difficulties inherent in defining and integrating beliefs can be more deeply appreciated.

Appendix 1

Early Memories Test

1. What is your earliest memory from childhood?

2. What is your next earliest memory?

3. What is your most pleasant and happiest memory?

4. What is your least happy, or most unpleasant memory?

Probes for all memories:

1. Who stands out in the memory?
2. What do you notice about yourself in the memory?
3. What strikes you about the other in the memory?
4. What are you thinking and feeling in memory?

Appendix 2

Relational Images in Beliefs (RIB) Interview

To begin, I'd like to get oriented about who you are, and so I'm going to ask some general questions about who you are and what's important to you. I am going to write, as we speak, which I know can be uncomfortable.

I. Questions

1. What has happened in your life that has given you a sense of meaning, and has anything happened that has shaken that sense of meaning up?

2. If you had to pick one attitude, value, or belief that is most important to you, what would it be?

3. What do you think the purpose of being born is?

4. Do you follow a particular religion or culture? When you think about your religion or culture what really grabs your about it? Is there a particular tradition or way of being that you follow?

5. Are there things that you do in your everyday life, like a hobby or talent, that enable you to enact your most important beliefs?

6. When your think back over your life, what scene or memory is most important to you---that captures who you are as a person and what makes you tick?

7. Think about what you will be like when you're 45 or 50. What do you think will make you feel good? What do you think will make you feel anxious? What will you be involved with and why?

PROBES: 1. How do you picture the other in the scene/memory?

2. How do you picture yourself in the scene/memory?

3. What did you feel at time of scene/memory?

II. Reflection

1. What from all that you have discussed over the course of the interview stands out for you? What would you want me to remember? And what's most important to you?

2. Are there any things you'd like to add that I have not asked you about?

III. Debriefing

Reactions to the interview---experience of being interviewed.

Questions inspired from:
Fowler, J.W. (1981). Stages of Faith. Harper and Row. p.310-312.,
and discussions with S. Tuber.

Appendix 3

ADDENDUM FOR KROHN SCALE

1. Score for level of boundary differentiation first:

   -How fluid; how vague; how shadowy

   -How stable are feeling states and thoughts

   -How separate are people from each other; how bound

2. Then score for level of richness and elaboration:

   -How rich, complex, and 3-dimensional are self and other

   -Are subjective states of self and other acknowledged (feelings? thoughts? motivations?) and to what extent?

3. If there are narcissistic features ask yourself to differentiate narcissistic themes (which everyone has) from narcissistic boundary problems.

   Narcissistic themes: These pertain to the need for love, gratification, validation, etc... These do not feel primitive.

   Narcissistic boundary problems: These pertain to seeing self as an extension of others. Only one person (usually the self) is present. It feels more primitive. Ask yourself if there is enough room for another or if the person is so overwhelmed and dominated by the self that he/she cannot see beyond.

   A) Score 4 if the person's very integrity and well-being go up and down in relation to the self.

B) Score 6 if themes of gratification are present, but the person's integrity does not oscillate.

4. 2's: Score 2's when:

-the integrity and vitality of the self or other are endangered,

-if malevolence is very raw,

-there's a sense that the person's inner life is filled with danger,

-if there are real distortions (thought disorders).

-if person is very self-destructive.

NOTE: If there is violence but a theme of restoration after injury so that the integrity to self or other is restored, do not score a 2, (i.e., if there is a benevolent other present).

5. 3's: Before scoring a 3 ask yourself if the self or other are fluid OR are the surrounding events fluid. If self and other are stable, it's probably not a 3. Score 3's when:

-memory is fluid: self or other are not well-bounded

-self or other is shadowy,

-descriptions of self or other are made-up of flagrant contradictions,

-if person loses distance in a way that alters the very memory being described.

6. 5's: Think of 5's as the detached mode. People are separate but flat, stereotyped, and detached. Not a lot of relatedness. Little acknowledgement of subjective states. People are interchangeable.

7. 6's, 7's, and 8's: To differentiate these different levels ask yourself questions about how fleshed out subjective states are:

-Do self and other have thoughts and feelings? How deep are they?

-6's: -Self and other have separate thoughts and feelings but they are simple and not elaborate.

-Self and other are separate, but among a group of "others" , people are not differentiated from each other.

-There is an awareness that the other has separate needs and agendas, but the person is not that in touch with the other's subjective state.

-If there is acknowledgement of self and other's feelings and motivations, think of a 7 or 8.

-To get a **7 or 8** the memory has to be rich and elaborated. Do not get seduced by intellectualization! Self and other should be 3-dimensional, complex, and "juicey".

-To get an **8** people have to be really involved with each other: Interdependent.

Self and other's feelings and motivations must be acknowledged and elaborate.

8. If a person cannot access a memory and says so, score **0.**

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