Psycholigical and Theological Theories of Addiction Towards an Integrated Study

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PSYCHOLOGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL THEORIES OF ADDICTION: TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED STUDY

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I have been supervised by:

The thesis is dedicated to Leo and Tim, and all who have, and continue to, struggle with substance dependency.

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

This thesis undertakes a study of human addictions, particularly drug and alcohol dependency, from the disciplines of psychology and theology, working towards an integrated study.

In the first instance it sets out to understand the aetiology of addictive behaviour, as an important stage in the process of helping addicted people to overcome their substance dependency. Secondly, it aims to provide a well-researched and robust framework for the pastoral care of people who are addicted as part of the Christian Churches' response to serious social problems both for individuals and families.

It is argued that confusion about the aetiology of addiction, and how best to treat addicted people, contributes to the failure of many treatment modalities to provide effective long term relief.

A <u>new model</u> for understanding addiction is proposed. This model begins in a different place: it argues that we would have a better understanding of addiction and how to treat it if we began by investigating human desires and aspirations, before attempting to understand why for some people desire for drugs becomes excessive or distorted.

It is suggested in the final section of the thesis that, in line with Augustinian thought, all human longing has its roots in desire for God, even though people may not be aware that the ultimate goal of their quest is an experience of the divine.

In the concluding discussion and conclusion, we suggest that this model has important contributions to make as a discrete element in the clinical care of addicts and in the area of pastoral and spiritual care whether in parishes or other institutions where pastoral care is provided.

The new model is then related to existing models of pastoral care, and examples are given of how the model is currently being presented in training programmes for pastoral ministry.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

<u>The Meaning Of 'Addiction', and Explanation of The Reasons For This Choice of Subject</u>

This thesis investigates the phenomenon of addiction from psychological and theological perspectives. To clarify the meaning of 'addiction', we will give some recent examples from the literature of health care psychology[1]. We argue that there is confusion in the world of health care psychology about addiction. Similar confusions appear in the religious and theological literature on this subject. Some authors suggest that we are all addicted to something; others deny this. Some view alcoholism as a lifelong condition, which will always need careful attention; others believe that spontaneous remission can occur, not least when problematic life situations change for the better.

Can this confusion be satisfactorily resolved? This thesis proposes a <u>new model</u>: instead of beginning with the 'problem' of addiction, we suggest that it is more advantageous to individuals who are using drugs or alcohol in a harmful way to begin by asking what they see as their aims and desires in life, and how those goals might be realised. The 'problem' of their drinking or drug taking can then be situated within this nexus of personal goals. When that process has been initiated first, it is argued, the desire for artificial stimulation through drugs may recede. And from a theological point of view, we might be justified in looking at human desire, longing, appetite, in terms of longing for God, in line with Saint Augustine of Hippo's statement that: 'You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you'[2]. Is addiction then in some sense a frustrated <u>external</u> attempt to satisfy desire which, if Augustine is right, can only be found in an <u>internal</u> search that is ultimately God-focussed rather than by the pursuit of external

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[1] Two important classifications of addiction symptomatology are included as an appendix to this thesis, one from the World Health Organisation (WHO), 1992, and one from the American Psychiatric Association (DSM-IV), 1995. This information can be found in: Robert West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.15.
[2] Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, p.3.

objects? This thesis will argue that that approach might well help people who seem unable to abandon the misuse of drugs or alcohol without assistance.

What is emerging from the description of the research project is that we are looking at two related concepts: the nature and aetiology of addiction and the ways in which it can be satisfactorily treated in a clinical environment. But beside the more clinical aspects of this investigation we are placing a quest for appropriate pastoral intervention in the care of people with addiction problems, in the belief that a spiritual approach to their care may well have an important role to play in this process. This must be offered in a way that is knowledgeable and professionally delivered, with the help of well researched teaching provided to those who are involved in pastoral ministry on this topic. This thesis is offered as a contribution to this educational endeavour.

It is important to define the term addiction: not every drinker of alcohol is addicted to alcohol and not all those who use drugs, either for therapeutic, ampliative or 'recreational' purposes are addicted to them. Two recent definitions share certain components:

a)   Griffith Edwards[3] speaks of 'an impairment of an individual's power to choose, a state of inner duress, something alien'. This is contrasted by Edwards[4] with the non-addict's capacity to 'take it or leave it'.
b)   Robert West[5] defines addiction as 'a syndrome in which a reward-seeking behaviour has become out of control'.

Both writers argue that an addicted person has lost the power to decide whether to perform a certain action or not. What they do not do at this stage is to provide a system of guidance as to how to identify such an individual compared with a normal user of alcohol, for example. Edwards later in his introduction provides a check list to facilitate this comparison. He identifies seven observable symptoms of addiction, which are as follows[6]:

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[3] Griffith Edwards, *Matters of Substance,* p. xxii.
[4] ibid.
[5] Robert West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.10.
[6] Edwards, op. cit., p. xxiv.

- The subjective awareness of a changed relationship with a drug.

- Tolerance – the increasing amounts of a substance or behaviour needed to achieve the same reward.

- Withdrawal symptoms – which vary in intensity, and can be relatively trivial, or as with *delirium tremens* can be literally life-threatening.

- Taking more of the drug to relieve withdrawal symptoms

- Increased 'salience' of the use of the drug compared with other activities, such as spending time socialising.

- Narrowing of the drinking repertoire.

- Rapid reinstatement after abstinent period.

When some or all of these factors can be observed in an individual's behaviour, Edwards suggests, the individual concerned is likely to be addicted, or to use the terminology that he favours, 'substance dependent'.

We will now explain why this research has been undertaken.

- Although there have been many studies of addiction from a psychological point of view, and some, though not as many, from a theological point of view, searches of the relevant literature indicate that no-one in recent times has attempted to discuss the relationship between psychology and theology on this topic in detail. Seeking to generate and enhance such an alliance is part of what this thesis intends to achieve.

It is perhaps relevant in this context to recognise the work of one writer from the eighteenth century, Stephen Hales (1677-1761), a Church of England clergyman who achieved distinction in the medical sciences, and was, in recognition of this, awarded a Fellowship of the Royal Society. He was vicar of Teddington near London for fifty seven years: he has a monument to commemorate his life in the south transept of Westminster Abbey. His life can be studied in a book entitled *Science, Philanthropy and*

Religion in eighteenth century Teddington, Stephen Hales, DD, FRS[7]. The reason for including him in this introductory section of the present thesis is that one of the subjects that he studied, particularly during the last twenty seven years of his life, was alcohol misuse. He studied the effects of alcohol on his parishioners, both as a medical expert with detailed knowledge of the damage caused to the human body by excessive alcohol consumption, and also in terms of the spiritual and ethical problems associated with such excess. It is in this sense of approaching the topic from two separate disciplines that he is of importance to the writer of this thesis as he attempts, as Hales did successfully in his lifetime, to find a way of integrating scientific and theological views of the subject of substance dependency and addiction as demonstrated in his book *A Friendly Admonition to the drinkers of gin, brandy, and other distilled spirituous liquors*[8].

The importance of this eighteenth century contribution to the study of alcohol misuse for this thesis is therefore that Hales recognised the significance of the problem from two distinct professional bases, that of the research scientist, and that of the working parson. It is greatly to his credit that he made this 'dual diagnosis' of a medical, but also a spiritual and ethical phenomenon.

We will argue therefore that there are advantages to be gained by bringing together two distinct approaches to addiction, one from psychology, providing a scientific approach, and the other from theology, and the next section of this introduction explores the relationship between science and theology in detail. There are four elements to this which are as follows:

1) <u>Scientific language</u>. At the most fundamental, ontological level of discourse, scientific language explores the nature of reality through a process of observation and measurement of the natural world. McGrath recognises[9]: 'The explicability of the world – that is to say, the

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[7] David G. C. Allan, *Science, Philanthropy and Religion in eighteenth century Teddington, Stephen Hales, DD, FRS*.
[8] Stephen Hales *A friendly admonition to the drinkers of gin, brandy, and other spiritous Liquors,* sixth edition.
[9] McGrath*, Foundations of Dialogue in Science and Religion* p.34f. He does not ignore, however, the attacks on this approach brought by critics such as Nancy C Murphey, who tends towards a post-modern view of reality.

simple fact that there is, or appears to be, some form of ordering of the world, and that human beings are capable of uncovering such an order', making the foundational claim, based on a critical realist understanding of reality, that all that we know of the physical world is in principle capable of being explained in intelligible human language. He also points out, however, that the observations that we make are limited by the reality of the external world as it is. So, on this basis, there is an order that governs the way the world is, and in principle this order can be discovered and described by humans. Two additional comments need to be made in this context:

1. There is a need to consider to what extent scientific discourse has its own distinctive and irreducible ontology. McGrath examines this in detail[10] on the basis of an essentially critical realist understanding of both religion and science: and Roy Bhaskar[11] examines how scientific language presents us at a variety of levels with a vocabulary that is universal and intelligible, in which ontology precedes epistemology in the discernment process, while allowing for a stratification principle, such that each discrete scientific discipline is ultimately irreducible, but helps us to build a comprehensive picture of reality.

2. There is a need to consider to what extent scientific observation, whether made by observation alone, or by the use of experimental processes, leading to observation and interpretation, can be considered to be objective. Thus, for example, the 'Hawthorne Effect' makes the point that in the case of a survey that is used by a scientific researcher the willingness of the participants to please the researcher may to some degree affect the results obtained. This point is made because it is tempting, though simplistic, to suppose that science deals with objective truth whereas theology deals with interpretation on a purely subjective basis[12].

2) <u>Theological language</u>. Attempts to define what we mean when we are talking about God are complex, as Rowan Williams has pointed out, not least in his recent book *The Edge of*

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[10] See McGrath, *A Fine-tuned Universe*, p.212ff.
[11] R. Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism*, p. 3, cited by McGrath, *A Fine-tuned Universe*, p.214f.
[12] More will be said on this complex issue later in this chapter.

Words, reminding us that we cannot define God, but can only attempt to find a linguistic methodology that moves in the direction of providing us with an understanding of the nature of God, an enterprise which can never be anything but partial and temporary. Williams recognises in theological language two fundamental levels of communication, i.e. description and representation[13]. <u>Description</u> involves a 'mapping exercise in which we assume that the task is to produce a certain traceable structural parallel between what we say and what we perceive'. The <u>representational</u> use of language refers to 'a way of speaking that may variously be said to seek to embody, translate, make present or re-form what is perceived'. What is particularly important for us here is the observation that what Williams helpfully says about these two terms in relation to theology might also be said about scientific communication.

In *Christian Doctrine*, Mike Higton observes[14] that there are two fundamental ways of describing God, based on God's immanence and economy. This refers to the distinction that we make between claims about God as God is perceived in terms of the divine relationship with the world, and God 'himself' as Trinity of persons, involved in but separate from the world, and regarded perichoretically as creator, redeemer and inspirer <u>within Godself</u>.[15]

There are difficulties with this distinction with regard to the Immanentist argument, because it could be objected that the only way that we can know anything about God's being is via some kind of interaction with the world, including spiritual awareness. Yet Higton is surely right to seek to preserve a sense of God's ontological otherness from the origins of the created world. Higton addresses this problem[16] by suggesting that 'to learn to know God is to learn to know oneself and one's world as bathed in God's love, and that to know God is to learn to recognise oneself and one's world as called to participate in that love'.

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[13] R. Williams, *The Edge of Words*, p.22.
[14] M. Higton, *Christian Doctrine*, pp.65-68.
[15] op. cit, p.67f.
[16] op cit., p.68.

3) <u>Reasons for linking science and theology</u>.   We have suggested some definitions of science and theology, while remaining cautious about such claims as the objectivity of scientific interpretations of the known world and the possibility of finding a viable definition of God. It might be argued that the epistemological procedures of the two approaches are in a sense mutually exclusive; against this, arguments exist such as the well-known comment of R. W. Emerson that 'science does not know its debt to imagination', because imaginative reflection on what has been shown to be the case leads to new discoveries. This section of the chapter will look at the first of these two questions, i.e. the potential value of looking at some issues from both intellectual perspectives.

  One particularly important reason for looking at scientific issues from both disciplines lies in the domain of morality. Many NHS hospitals in the UK have clinical ethics committees, both for general and psychiatric medicine, and they frequently invite hospital chaplains to be members of those committees. In addition to having an input to general issues and specific cases from a spiritual and pastoral perspective, they can be helpful when issues arise concerning the willingness of patients to accept certain kinds of treatment, when religious beliefs may argue against the practices of blood transfusion, or termination of pregnancy, to give two examples. Clinicians usually know what they can do for a patient from a purely scientific angle: they sometimes depend on non-clinicians to help them with difficult decisions about what they ought – or ought not – to do for their patients: and chaplains, along with others, play a useful part in these deliberations. Thus science and theology often find themselves in dialogue in order to provide the best and most ethically sound methods of treatment. Secondly, we have offered evidence in this thesis that psychological clinical medicine alone often fails to cure patients of addiction to toxic substances such as heroin or alcohol. But we have also suggested that psychological <u>and</u> religious and spiritual counselling, particularly of the kind which begins with helping to see the positive options for the patient, may together be one of the most

powerful tools we have for helping people who are substance dependent to find a way out of slavery to drugs and begin a new and more healthy life, in its personal, professional and social dimensions.

3. Possibilities for and objections to working with scientific and theological ideas together. In the 1960's, Ian Barbour began to look at these, and identified four procedural pathways. They are to be found in his book *Religion in an Age of Science*, beginning on page 4. They are founded on the 'critical realism' approach to knowledge, and they can be briefly identified as follows:

1. Conflict. On this view science and theology cannot address the same issues because they essentially have no common language for this task, 'scientific method is the only reliable path to knowledge'[17] whereas religion is a subjective matter of faith.

2. Independence. The two approaches can only operate on their own discrete territory, functioning in a way that is 'totally independent and autonomous'[18].

3. Dialogue. On a more positive note, Barbour says that some people argue in favour of dialogue between the two disciplines, without ignoring the 'intertextual' problems.

4. The fourth model is Integration. This is where the concept of natural theology comes in to the reckoning, i.e. the belief that scientific observation of the natural world and its functioning can help us to move towards an understanding of God.

On the assumption that the critical realist approach has something of value to contribute to this interdisciplinary enterprise, the work of John Polkinghorne and Michael Welker has some useful guidelines to help us to avoid certain possible pitfalls in relating the two approaches to one another. We will briefly note four of these[19]:

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[17] Barbour, p.4.
[18] Barbour, p.10.
[19] See: Welker in J. Polkinghorne and M. Welker, *Faith in the Living God*, chapter 8.

1) The Modernist trap – this problem lies in the assumption that it ought to be possible to find one overarching epistemology that works equally well for both science and theology.

2) The reductionist trap – if we concentrate on form and ignore the content of two disciplines when looking at them side by side we will avoid unnecessary debate and conflict.

3) The Dualistic trap – this is caused by a process whereby we ignore the internal complexities of the two disciplines under review, whereas in reality just as there many branches of science, each with its own norms and procedures, the same can be said of theology.

4) The Cliché trap. Put at its simplest, this approach makes statements such as:

> Science deals with facts – theology deals with meaning:
>
> Science deals with objectivity – theology deals with individual
>
> feeling.[20]

(As Welker points out, part of the problem with this trap is that there is some superficial attractiveness to what it suggests, but it falls down through overgeneralisation and overstatement.)

There are thus on this view, as expressed by Welker, advantages to looking at reality through the eyes of both science and theology, but care must be taken to avoid the problems that he has identified.

4). A methodology for integrating scientific and theological approaches with particular relevance to the subject matter of this thesis. An integrated approach to the alignment of scientific and theological approaches to a variety of issues depends, as we have argued above, on a capacity for looking at the issue in question synoptically, with both points of view taken into consideration, but with neither seen as adequate on its own or superior to the other. In

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[20] op. cit., p.116ff.

the case of addiction, we shall be exploring later in the thesis a number of approaches from the human sciences, particularly health care psychology, and spiritual and pastoral counselling techniques. One important example that we shall examine at greater length later on is the work of Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger[21], who describes in detail her own integrated theory, combining scientific psychological (Object Relations) and pastoral theological (Barthian) therapeutic insights, while taking care to see them entirely on their own terms rather than confusing them: she gives as a major case study the account of using this type of combined therapy when working with a client who has psychological problems and substance dependency.

In summary, and bearing in mind the caveats expressed, for example, by Welker, the interdisciplinary view of the relationship between science and pastoral theology could well be highly useful in the case of the care of addicted people. But care must be taken to use the two disciplines on their own terms, and without confusing them or ignoring the possible traps that can occur when they are related in this way.

Before discussing the practical, pastoral, applications of what will be addressed in this thesis concerning addiction, it may be helpful to the reader to have a brief account of political and social action on drugs and alcohol in UK, including some information about the history of legislation on these matters.

Legislation on the uses and misuses of alcohol and non-therapeutic forms of medication goes back to the thirteenth century in the case of alcohol, and the mid nineteenth century in the case of what are now classified as 'illicit' drugs (the Pharmacy Act came into being in 1868). In 1266 an Assize of Bread and Ale act had 'pegged the price of ale to the price of bread, but it was a law that was only applied in the most ad hoc way'[22]. The history of legislation about drinking hours in public houses and other public venues has a long history, and the twentieth century saw 14 acts on alcohol control passed. The twenty first century

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[21] Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger. *Theology and Pastoral Counseling.*
[22] James Nicholls, *The Politics of Alcohol*, p.6.

saw the 2003 act which attempted to deal with what came to be known as 'binge drinking', although it has also been suggested that regular excessive drinking on a regular basis over a long period of time may be a more harmful activity than the occasional, though often more public, misuse of alcoholic beverages.

Other ingestible substances such as cannabis and heroin have also been classified and those who use them are subject to prosecution, but that has only been the case since the Pharmacy Act 'introduced national controls on the sale of 15 substances regarded as poisons. These included cocaine, opium, and opium based products'[23]. Cannabis, classified for many years as a class B drug, has been, during the last ten years, removed to the less serious class C, and then put back into class B, because of the perceived dangers of new strains of the drug (such as sinsemilla or 'skunk') which are thought to be more toxic than the purer form.

All of this reflects a major concern in government about the dangers of the use and misuse of alcohol and drugs, and a perception that the people of the UK demand that strong action be taken against those who indulge in the use of these 'forbidden fruits'. Out of that has come what has sometimes been referred to as the 'war on drugs'. Most legislation on alcohol licensing hours has, paradoxically perhaps, tended in an increasingly liberal direction[24].

What then is the intention of this legislative activity, and how far has it been successful? The intention is to protect people, perhaps the young in particular, from exposure to drugs that may have unforeseen consequences. As Robert West pointed out in *Theory of Addiction*,[25] one of the problems we encounter in helping people to give up harmful behaviours is the 'cost-benefit' analysis, because 'the pleasure or escape that the addict obtains from a drug is worth whatever short- and long-term costs there might be for the individual'.

In recent times, several countries, including The Netherlands, Portugal, Uruguay, and several states in the USA, have decriminalised many types of formerly controlled drugs, and

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[23] Leonard Jason-Lloyd, *Misuse of Drugs*, p.2.
[24] The change in the law about opening hours on Sundays for public houses in 1995 meant that they could now, for the first time since the middle of the nineteenth century open all day. See Nicholls, op. cit., p.217.
[25] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.30f.

although it may be too soon to evaluate these experiments, there is a likelihood that treating the misuse of drugs as a clinical rather than a forensic issue may be more effective. 'Legalise and control' might well be the slogan of this approach, although, with the exception of the Liberal Democrat party in the UK, this proposal does not seem to be gaining much ground here as yet, perhaps because politicians believe that such a policy would not be popular with the all-important electorate. As our current Prime Minister David Cameron is reported to have claimed in 2013, "We have a drugs policy that actually is working in Britain"[26]. One wonders where he derives that evidence from: it certainly does not appear to come from clinical investigation as reports such as that of Professor David Nutt's committee in 2009[27] on the rationality of drug criminalisation have usually been set aside, and their authors removed from office. Nutt was sacked by the then minister of health Alan Johnson, and two of Nutt's professional colleagues promptly resigned.

In the thesis there is some discussion, particularly in relation to Kenneth Leech's book *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, about the legal and political aspects of drug use and misuse. Perhaps this is a debate in which the Churches should take a more leading (prophetic?) social and political role in terms of the formation and evolution of public policy.

- In terms of 'practical theology'[28], those who engage in Christian ministry need to have a good understanding of the pastoral problems caused by a variety of human situations and difficulties. Drug and alcohol misuse feature frequently in our current society: These, alongside addictions such as gambling addiction, are phenomena which pastoral ministers encounter in their work, whether in parishes, schools, colleges and universities, in prisons, in hospitals or the armed forces. In offering a training course on the pastoral care of people with drug and alcohol addiction problems, at their request, for the Anglican Diocese of Southwark, between 2005 and 2010, and more

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[26] Article in the (London) Evening Standard by Amol Rajan, 05.08.2013.
[27] For the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs.
[28] The subject of alcohol addiction features to a considerable degree as an example of the application of good pastoral care in, for example, Richard Osmer, *Practical Theology*.

recently in the Dioceses of Guildford[29], and London[30], it has become apparent to this writer that many clergy and other ministers value training on the pastoral care of people with addiction problems: when these courses have been evaluated by the participants, they have generally been regarded as helpful. Those who give the training must be well informed about the subject: it is believed that this thesis will help the researcher and other colleagues to deliver a soundly researched, and evidence based, training module. In this way the thesis being offered here is a contribution towards helping the Church to have greater awareness of addiction, an understanding of its causes, and current methods of treating those who are dependent on drugs, alcohol, or both.

- Another reason for undertaking this study one is the factor of health care costs. The National Audit Office website[31] provides detailed analysis of the financial cost to this nation of treating people who require health care because of their excessive or inappropriate use of drugs or alcohol, or both. Many of the people who misuse these substances also receive treatment for concurrent illnesses, both physical and psychiatric.

    - <u>Drugs</u>. Let us look at some statistics that are available on the NAO website: The 2008 Drug Strategy Report entitled *'Drugs, Protecting Families and Communities'* made the following assertions about the misuse of drugs in the UK –

        ❖ There are an estimated 332,000 problem drug users in England

        ❖ Class A drug use generates an estimated £15.4 billion in crime and health costs each year, of which 99% is accounted for by problem drug users

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[29] In April, 2010.
[30] In March, 2011.
[31] National Audit Office, htpp://www.nao.org.uk in the <u>health and social care</u> sector of this website, last consulted on May 21, 2010.

❖ Between a third and a half of acquisitive crime is estimated to be drug related

❖ 17% of school children aged 11-15 have used an illegal drug in the last year.

These statistics indicate that there is a problem in this country in terms of the use of illicit drugs and its impact on the life of the country in many ways, not least in relation to the amount of money that is spent each year in giving clinical care to people who are having problems with drugs. There are other factors, too, such as the impact of drug use on families, and the crime that is committed to obtain money for obtaining illicit substances. This thesis sets out to explore the reasons for drug misuse and addiction from theological and health care perspectives. We suggest that whereas there are many factors that combine to cause addiction in any individual, there is value in looking at the spiritual components of the subject, and the part that religious and spiritual practices may play in helping people to overcome their dependency on drugs[32].

- Alcohol. The report *Statistics on Alcohol, England 2009*, produced by the Health and Social Care Information Centre looked at the number of deaths in England in 2007 that were directly related to alcohol consumption, which was 6,541, the majority of them as a result of alcoholic liver disease. This represents a steady growth (by a factor of 19%) in such deaths between 2001 and 2007[33]. In health care costs, this amounts to £1.7 billion per year[34], not including other alcohol related costs as a result of accidents, for example. This financial cost and the amount of time spent by health care professionals in caring for people with

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[32] Jim Orford, who speaks from a psychological perspective, is particularly open to the exploration of spiritual values as a possible factor in recovery. See *Excessive Appetites* 2nd edition, pp. 327ff.
[33] A 'News Release' by the *Department of National Statistics* (Health and Care section) on January 25, 2008, presents the evidence for the year on year growth in deaths between 1991 and 2006 occurring directly as a result of alcohol use. The statistics show, for example, that there was a far steeper gradient in the case of men than women during that period. This information can be consulted on the following website, www.statistics.gov.uk
[34] See the Cabinet Office Report (2003) *Alcohol Misuse, How Much Does It Cost?*

alcohol problems suggest that the subject has considerable importance in terms of the health of this nation in the widest interpretation of the concept of health, and is therefore one that clergy would benefit from understanding to help them in caring for their parishioners, particularly when they find evidence of drug or alcohol related problems such as domestic neglect, breakdown of families, or actual violence towards partners or children.

There is therefore also a cost to society in terms of the disruption of the lives of individuals, families and communities, and these social costs have been investigated in detail by Marina Barnard.[35]

- Two aspects of this subject present themselves for attention in the light of what has already been mentioned, that is to say, firstly aspects of human health and flourishing, and the things that hinder these, and secondly the nature and fulfilment of human desire and its relationship to the human body and the human will.

We will therefore pay attention to Christian writers such as Saint Paul and St. Augustine who explored human anthropology in terms of health and flourishing, human desire, and its housing within the Christian church, and those factors which inhibit health, including spiritual factors. Here a significant link with addiction can be made, as people who are addicted frequently experience their addiction in terms of conflict: this reveals itself as a desire to find a way of conquering their addiction on the one hand, but also a difficulty in doing so, which may well have physiological, psychological and spiritual components.

The idea of the divided will introduces another important theological dimension to the study. Saint Paul, in his *Letter to the Romans*, chapter 7, explores the nature of the human will, in relation to the nature of conflicting desire[36]: the desire to do the will of

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[35] Marina Barnard, *Drug Addiction and Families*.
[36] The word 'desire' is a translation of the Greek word *epithumia*, which occurs several times in *Romans*, chapter 7.

God as it is perceived by the individual on the one hand, contrasted with the desire to do one's own will on the other. This concern of Paul's will lead us into a major theological exploration of the subject of human will, longing and desire, and the way in which Paul relates these ideas to the satisfaction of the needs and desires of human beings in the context of their commitment to the Christian 'Way'. We will therefore look at the reception history of Paul's thought on *epithumia* and related concepts, including Krister Stendahl[37], who rejected the psychological conflict model of interpretation of Romans 7 that has been prevalent in the work of New Testament interpreters since the days of Augustine and Luther in their understanding of what Paul is arguing in chapter 7 of Romans.

We will also look in detail at Augustine's study in his *Confessions*[38] in order to achieve a better understanding of the phenomenon of the 'divided will' and how later commentators have interpreted his theology on this subject.

A key factor in what is presented here is that addiction may also indicate a deep and positive desire, appetite and longing for something good, especially desire for God, which has become side-tracked or distorted by the belief that other things (alcohol, drugs, sex, gambling etc.) can achieve the kind of emotional or even spiritual 'high' that Christians and those of other faiths understand as to be found ultimately only in relationship with God. These secondary activities may then be seen as taking a short cut to the achievement of pleasure or the avoidance of pain.

Only two forms of addiction have mainly been referred to, that is to say, addiction to alcohol and illicit drugs, such as heroin or cocaine. That choice has been made in awareness that there are many different kinds of addiction[39]. Why then are we focussing only on two of them? In the first place, it would be possible to write a

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[37] Krister Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles and other Essays*, in the chapter entitled "Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West", pp.78-96.
[38] Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, Book VIII, pp. 147ff.
[39] Orford, (*Excessive Appetites*, p.3), lists a range of activities that can be or become addictive for some people. This list includes for example, sex, gambling, shopping, etc.

dissertation on each addiction, and there would certainly not be space within this thesis to cover all of them, so a choice has had to be made. The researcher has, as has been noted in this chapter, prepared and delivered training for clergy on the subject of alcohol and drug addiction for three Anglican dioceses, and it is therefore those two aspects of addiction that are being explored in depth here, without ignoring the very considerable variety and importance of other forms of addiction such as to sex or gambling or even the taking of exercise.

Summary

This investigation is concerned with the subject of <u>addiction</u>. It has been observed that although addictive behaviour can take many forms, such as addiction to gambling, sex, exercise, food etc., this thesis deals specifically with dependency on alcohol and illicit drugs. These two subjects are those with which this author has most personal acquaintance through personal study, teaching, and experience as a hospital chaplain working in the National Health Service.

Clarification of the word 'dependency' is needed at this point: this word has several meanings and must therefore be interpreted according to context. Although the addiction literature that we shall be investigating regards dependency as a problem, the concept of dependency is far more complex than this usage might imply. Dependency is not necessarily problematic. Human beings depend on one another for many things, at the personal, social, political and economic strata of living. And in the specifically theological sense, we may be justified in asserting that dependence on God should be regarded not as a negative or problematic phenomenon but one that is in some ways descriptive of an entirely good and appropriate relationship. It is necessary to be careful here therefore to recognise this ambiguity if we wish to employ the vocabulary of dependency in the context of addiction.

<u>Methodology</u>

The study of addiction in the thesis will address five principal research questions, which are as follows:

1) What do we mean by addiction? We are here enquiring about ontological considerations of the meaning of the term, and whether in fact addiction does really exist, or whether it is, as J B Davies claims[40], a 'myth'. And if it does exist, then at a more epistemological level of discourse, can we make a robust, indisputable distinction between normal and abnormal levels of consumption of alcohol and other substances?

2) How does the literature of health care psychology understand the aetiology involved in the pathway to alcohol and drug dependency and 'process' addictions such as gambling?

3) How does the literature of Christian theology understand the process by which people become addicted to alcohol and illicit drugs? This will entail consideration of human responsibility and sinfulness, and God's response to this in terms of forgiveness and grace. It raises questions also about whether addiction is seen as a disease or a lifestyle choice, and whether an alcoholic is an alcoholic 'for life'.

4) Recognising the conflicting opinions that we have observed in both the psychological and theological literature, what solution can be found? We will look at the possibility of providing a New Model for understanding the causes of addiction, and its treatment. This model <u>begins</u> with questions about the addiction sufferer's personal longings, desires and aspirations.

5) From this new starting point, we will ask how the new model could be incorporated into forms of treatment of people with addiction problems in the pastoral care given by clergy and others in parishes, hospitals, prisons, and schools etc. We suggest that the model could also be useful in clinical practice in hospitals and clinics.

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[40] See: John Booth Davies, *The Myth of Addiction*, 2nd edition.

We have already begun to address the first of these questions in the introduction, and references to the question of addiction as a valid term will be addressed in what follows, particularly in the review of a variety of theories based on 'choice' and 'disease' models of addiction presented by Robert West in *Theory of Addiction*.

The Structure Of The Thesis

Having established the questions that the research attempts to answer, we will now outline the way in which the answers to them are presented in this thesis, on a chapter by chapter basis. We aim to present, at each stage, information that is derived from the psychological literature on the one hand and the theological contribution on the other, beginning with a review of how the two disciplines seek to explain the concept of addiction. We will be looking for similarities and differences in what is presented, both within the two disciplines (intratextually) and between them (intertextually).

Chapter 1: The Psychological literature. This offers a study of addiction from the world of secular health psychology, and the definitions of substance addiction already given in this chapter evidence the conceptualisation of addiction on this basis as well as suggesting how addiction can be detected from a clinical point of view. We will explore the ideas of psychologists, who give a range of explanations of addiction. They do not however present a coherent and univocal opinion: in fact the competing theories they present suggest continuing confusion in the way health care psychology understands addictive behaviour.

Chapter 2: Theological perspective. This chapter investigates addiction using the language of Christian theology and ethics. We will look for example at the work of:

Gerald May. In *Addiction and Grace* he identifies 'attachment' as the root of the problem: 'Addiction sidetracks and eclipses the energy of our deepest, truest desire for love and goodness. We succumb because the energy of our desire becomes attached, nailed, to specific

behaviors, objects, or people'[41]. These attachments have, he suggests, the character of idolatry, as they divert attention from what is truly worthwhile to what is enslaving and destructive. Taking this book as a starting point we will then look at other Christian theologians such as James B. Nelson and Kenneth Leech who have presented their own views of addiction: here too, however, we find some confusion – such as in the highly contestable suggestion of May that we are <u>all</u> addicted to something, and the suggestion of Nelson that alcoholics must be regarded as alcoholics for life, as argued by Alcoholics Anonymous.

Chapter 3: <u>A new model</u>. Having looked at addiction from two discrete but potentially related disciplines, that is to say psychology and theology, we will engage in a deeper reflection on the concerns that arise out of what has been presented, with particular reference to the theological understanding of the human body and its needs, and the role of desire and longing, and how these can be housed within a Christian understanding of desire, and the relationship between this and addiction.

We thus propose the hypothesis that the psychological and theological literature assessed here does not adequately answer a number of questions such as:

- Does addiction exist or is the concept a 'myth'? (J. B. Davies' hypothesis)
- If addiction does exist, is it a disease, or in some way a chosen behaviour?
- Are alcoholics (and other addicts) alcoholics for life, or can they be cured?
- What treatment models are most helpful?

In the light of this unsatisfactory picture we need to find a new and more hopeful starting place for the understanding of addiction and the best way to help people with addiction problems. What might that starting point be?

The answer proposed here is that we are unwise to start by looking at the 'problem of addiction'. What is needed is an approach based not on the premise that something has gone wrong, so that people become addicted to drugs, alcohol, gambling or whatever, but on an examination of the nature of human desire. The important preliminary question would then

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[41] Gerald May, *Addiction and Grace*, p.14.

become 'What do you want out of life?'. This question could then lead to regarding the person who is addicted as an individual with desires, longings, aspirations, rather than starting by seeing him or her as a problem. Once this has been addressed, it is argued here, then a number of other questions follow, including ones about how that person views his alcohol misuse (to use one example) in relation to his stated goals. It also leads to questions, from a theological perspective, about the proper housing of desire within a Christian context, particularly about the relationship between the longing for external goods and the interior spiritual goods of which, among many others, Saint Augustine of Hippo wrote at length.

Chapter 4:   Discussion and reflections. In the last part of the thesis, the 'discussion and reflections chapter', we will review the ideas that have been presented, and suggest a practical application of the New Model in terms of pastoral care for those who have problems with dependency on drugs, or alcohol, or indeed both.

Some Other Important Ideas In The Literature

Before looking at the work of the main authors with whom we shall be engaging, it is necessary to mention one aspect of the subject of addiction that has become more important in the last thirty years or so in line with developing understanding of the relationship between genetics and human personality[42]. Robert Plomin[43] and his colleagues engage with genetics specifically in relation to addiction. In *Behavioral Genetics*, Plomin's team studied the hypothesis that monozygotic twins would be more likely to develop alcohol related problems in adult life than fraternal twins, even when they had not lived together in childhood. This led to the proposition that although genes do not determine the likelihood of developing alcoholism in isolation from environmental factors, there is a strong possibility that they play a part in the development of alcohol misuse. And David Ball's article "Addiction science and its genetics" sets out to explore the hypothesis 'that genes are involved in addiction' and to

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[42] One of the key findings on this subject has been the mapping of the human genome.
[43] Robert Plomin, *Behavioral Genetics*.

'trace the attempts to identify specific genes, thereby to validate this approach as a means of identifying contributing, but not causal, factors'[44].

It is increasingly being accepted by health care professionals that this kind of research indicates a link between certain genetic elements and the likelihood of people with particular genetic profiles being vulnerable to substance misuse, although it would be going too far to suggest that genes 'cause' alcoholism, for example.

There is also some positive evidence from the psychological literature for spiritual aspects of treatment for addiction. There are some important references to religious practices in Jim Orford's book *Excessive Appetites*, and in the journals, such as an article by John D. Sellman, Michael P. Baker et al.[45], which looks at the ways in which the discovery of a higher power can assist the recovery process: reference to religious ideas also comes in the form of instantiation of a particular type of approach to drug and alcohol pastoral counselling, as in Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger's book *Theology and Pastoral Counseling*[46], which will be discussed later.

We now turn to the first major chapter of the thesis, which investigates recent literature on addiction from the perspective of health care psychology.

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[44] David Ball, "Addiction science and its genetics", p.360.
[45] John D. Sellman, Michael P. Baker et al., **"**Future of God in recovery from drug addiction".
[46] Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, *Theology and Pastoral Counseling*.

1. CHAPTER 1   PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF ADDICTION

<u>Introduction To The Chapter</u>

This chapter critically assesses the contributions of three writers who are concerned with the aetiology of addiction and the ways in which the health care professions try to bring relief to those who suffer from addiction, particularly to alcohol or 'illicit' drugs, such as cannabis, heroin and crack cocaine and other substances and processes[47]. The writers assessed here are John Booth Davies, Jim Orford, and Robert West. We will conclude that none of these writings on its own is ultimately satisfactory, before moving towards a radically new model that this author believes has a better chance of providing a satisfactory methodology for understanding addiction and providing effective care for those who are affected by it.

The three authors discussed in this chapter have been chosen for these reasons:

- They are all well respected authors in the field of health care psychology, especially in the specific context of the study of addiction. And as well as writing on the subject from a theoretical perspective, they have all worked professionally in the care of addicted people.

- They all address the five research questions we are asking, and so have specific relevance to the research project. This is particularly important when we consider whether addiction exists, how people become substance dependent, and the kind of professional intervention that is likely to be most effective, including spiritual aspects of change.

- They represent very clear but widely differing positions on questions such as:

  - Is there such a thing as addiction, or do people in reality freely choose to use drugs, alcohol and other behaviours? Davies argues that the concept of addiction is in itself

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[47] The word 'process' in this specific context of addiction refers to forms of behaviour such as shopping, gambling, or use of the internet.

meaningless; Orford takes the opposite view, arguing that addiction does exist; West accepts the reality of addiction and provides an integrative model of his own for understanding and treating it. We are asking, then:

- Is addiction, assuming it does in fact exist, a disease, or a lifestyle choice, however potentially destructive?

 - Do people need help to end such behaviour, or is it rather a phenomenon that generally ceases to be important to the individual quite spontaneously?

Already, underlying what has been said, there is at least an implicit suggestion that in some sense addiction both exists substantively as a health condition, and that it can be treated as an illness or disease. In his book *The Addictive Personality*, Craig Nakken seems to take this point of view for granted[48]:

> Addiction must be viewed as a process that is progressive. Addiction must be seen as an illness that undergoes continuous development from a definite, though often unclear, beginning towards an end point.

What follows in this chapter will provide the reader with viewpoints that, in principle, support what Nakken is arguing, on the one hand, and on the other, opposition to the belief that there really is a disease called addiction that can be treated by members of the health care professions whether by psychopharmacological intervention, psychotherapy, or both of these approaches working together.

1.1   John Booth Davies: *The Myth of Addiction*[49]

John Booth Davies was at the time of writing this book Professor of Psychology and the director of the Centre for Applied Social Psychology at Strathclyde. He had been studying alcohol and drug problems in Glasgow for twenty two years at the time, and in light of his contribution to the understanding

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[48] Craig Nakken, *The Addictive Personality,* 2nd edition, p.2.
[49] John Booth Davies, *The Myth of Addiction*, 2nd edition.

of the ways in which people use alcohol and what are commonly referred to as 'illicit' drugs, he became a researcher for the Scottish Office, the Scottish Prison Service, and the Home Office. His work also includes editorship of the journal *Addiction Research*, and he has published many contributions to this field of study. Among these is *Drugspeak: The Analysis of Drug Discourse*[50], and an article entitled, and specifically on the question of 'attribution' in addiction research – "*Life stress and the use of illicit drugs, alcohol and tobacco*"[51]. As Nick Heather, another well-known writer on addiction commented on *The Myth of Addiction*, it has had the effect of reviving 'debate about the fundamental nature of addiction and its causes, and this cannot be anything other than a good thing'.

Exposition Of The Argument Proposed By Davies

'*A Question of Attribution*' - the title of Alan Bennett's play[52] focuses well the theme of Davies' book, which rejects the 'disease' model of addiction in favour of the concept of 'choice' – we drink, smoke or take drugs or engage in types of behaviour such as gambling because we enjoy doing so. We are also free to stop doing any of these things by an equivalent act of the will. Davies argues that when people speak of themselves as addicted to drugs, such as heroin or crack cocaine, they are <u>attributing</u> their condition to something called addiction, which does not in fact exist; it is better understood as a 'myth'.

Davies argues that by using disease models of drug dependency, and calling the person who has this alleged disease a 'patient' we are putting that person into a sociologically significant group of people who are helpless, unable to choose their condition, which has been visited on them like cancer or diabetes. We then

[50] *Drugspeak: The Analysis of Drug Discourse.*
[51] "Life stress and the use of illicit drugs, alcohol and tobacco: empirical findings, methodological problems and attributions" in D. Warburton, *Addiction Controversies*, chapter 22.)
[52] Alan Bennett, "A Question of Attribution", in *Single Spies*.

treat the 'disease' clinically. What this ignores, in the case of drug 'addiction', Davies argues, is the fact that many people enjoy drug use and it can seem to be the best way of coping with a social situation that feels desperate and hopeless. They see no way out of a cycle of social and economic deprivation, and the use of drugs is one way of coping with the psychological impact of that situation. If that is true, then it is the situation that needs to be changed: the use of drugs may be discarded should the circumstances of the user improve significantly. It is worth remembering that Davies' clinical experience was largely in Glasgow, a city with a particularly high incidence of unemployment and social and economic hardship. If that analysis is true for Glasgow, may it not also be more generally replicated among the drug using population at large? Davies then asserts that the so called 'disease' of addiction is created in a medical environment, and thus becomes predictive of behaviour.

We will now explore this theory in detail. In doing so we will be looking for factors that relate the analysis of the meaning of addiction as presented by Davies to our attempt in this thesis to generate a viable and robust approach to the pastoral care of people who are in some sense dependent on either drugs or alcohol, or perhaps both: in relation to this, it will be argued here that Davies's book is very important because it powerfully challenges the 'disease' model of addiction, thereby identifying important questions about the appropriateness and possibly even the danger of treating those who are dependent on alcohol, drugs, gambling, or other equivalent behaviours as in some sense 'sick'. To call someone sick, ill, or the victim of a disease, suggests an external force, such as may be entailed for example by the notion of bacterial infection: in alleged 'addiction', Davies argues, there is no such external factor: the impulse to behave in a certain way in relation to such behaviours has nothing to do with external forces, and a great deal to do with personal choice. This is an important

contribution to the debate about what addiction really is, when stripped to its ontological essentials; we however contend that he has not in fact proved his case, although he has important ideas to contribute.

The Myth of Addiction is cited here as a psychological theory which takes an extreme view by regarding the excessive use of drugs and alcohol as a <u>choice</u> made by the person concerned[53]. Davies redefines and redescribes the concept of addiction by using the word <u>myth</u> to do so. In its original sense, the word myth refers to a collection of ideas about the human condition that are universal and basic to the conduct of all human life, ideas that have been explored by religions and philosophies for thousands of years[54], and which therefore seek to account for what is most universally and fundamentally true in human experience. But Davies is using the term in a different sense, that is to say, in a demotic or colloquial sense, indicating a concept that is demonstrably false.

<u>Attribution Theory</u>

So how does Davies argue that addiction does not really exist? His argument concerns the manner in which people who are supposedly 'addicted' to illicit drugs such as heroin or crack cocaine talk about their situation and the vocabulary that they adopt when speaking with others. This attribution argument refers not only to the substance user, but also to others in her social environment. We refer to this aspect of Davies' theory as the 'vested interest' element in attribution behaviour, used by both health care workers and the family of the person who uses the drug in question. We begin with looking at the role of health care workers in promoting the idea that addiction exists.

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[53] Other examples of this group include Vuchinich and Heather's Behavioural Economics model, and Prochaska's Transtheoretical 'Stages of Change' model, both of which are cited with approval by J. B. Davies: see Davies, *Myth of Addiction*, p.155.
[54] There are many excellent books that deal with these matters, such as Carl Gustav Jung's *Man and His Symbols*, Mircea Eliade's *Myths Dreams and Mysteries*, and H. D. F. Kitto, *The Greeks*, especially chapter 11).

In a highly significant trope to his 'choice' theory, Davies suggests that other people than the supposedly addicted individual have a vested interest in maintaining the idea of addictive behaviour as pathological and thus beyond the control of the individual's control. That group of people includes all the personnel involved in the caring professions, such as doctors, nurses and social workers, who make a living from labelling addicts as 'sick', and then providing 'treatment'. If the disease model were to be replaced by one of choice, then, Davies argues, the need for these professional helpers would disappear as would their jobs. As Davies comments, professional workers are attuned to seeing cause and effect relationships between drugs and addiction; but in this regard, the alternative explanations based on attribution 'are not difficult to find if one is prepared to concede the possibility of their existence and to look for them'[55].

One further group is affected by this argument in favour of addiction as choice: i.e. the addicted persons' families. To speak of a member of their family as ill may well feel easier to cope with than seeing them as making a life choice that is both *harmful* to the family as a whole (as Marina Barnard argues[56]) and also *illegal* and *immoral*.

As these groups - the addict, the social environment of the addict, and the professional carers – all, in Davies' view, make use of attribution language, we will now examine this concept in greater detail.

The key word here is <u>attribution</u>. Davies makes extensive use of attribution theory, as defined by psychologists such as Weiner[57], who analyses the

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[55] J. B. Davies, *The Myth of Addiction*, p.155.
[56] Marina Barnard, *Drug Addiction and Families*, p.11.
She points out that 'even a sideways glance at what it might be like to be the son or daughter, mother or father, brother or sister of a loved one whose drug problem takes them into danger or strife, debilitates their health and wellbeing, and leads them to steal and fight, can't help but indicate the price it exacts on families'.
[57] On page 16 of *The Myth of Addiction* Davies draws the reader' attention to the following: B. Weiner, et al. "Perceiving the Causes of Success and Failure", in E.E. Jones et al. (eds.) *Attribution, Perceiving the Causes of Behaviour*, B. Weiner, *Achievement Motivation and Attribution Theory*, and D. Bar-Tal, "The Effects of Teachers' Behaviours on Pupils' Attributions: a review", in C. Antaki and C. Brewin, *Attributions and Psychological Change*, where Weiner's theories are summarised.

relationship between people's behaviour and the explanations they give, in relation in particular to the perceived internal and external loci of control of behaviour. Weiner provides us with a threefold model of attribution, which Davies expounds as follows:[58]

a)   *locus* – is the cause of the behaviour seen as originating within the person (i.e. drive, energy, ability, enthusiasm, effort etc.) or within the environment (family, friends, opportunity, 'background' etc.)? If the former, the locus is said to be *internal*; if the latter, *external*.

b)   *stability* – is the cause of the behaviour seen as fluctuating and variable over time (i.e. a cold, luck, the weather, a chance meeting etc.) or is it a permanent feature? (non-curable illness, enduring family situation, nationality, etc.). If the former, the perceived cause is *unstable*; if the latter, *stable*.

c)   *controllability* – is the cause of the behaviour seen as under the volitional control of the individual (effort, obtaining resources, making friends) or as outwith that control? (task difficulty, victimisation, lack of opportunity etc.). If the former applies, the cause is seen as *controllable*; if the latter, *uncontrollable*.

This model is central to Davies' view of addiction as a form of attributional behaviour. If the behaviour of a substance user is unstable, and based on internal and controllable factors, then the concept of addiction collapses and should be replaced by choice theory; if it is based on factors such as uncontrollability, with an external impetus such as the supposedly addictive nature of the substance itself or the insuperable pressure of life circumstances, then addiction is a reasonable description.

Addiction: A Matter Of Choice.

The rest of Davies' book sets out to show that the personal choice model is a more accurate explanation of substance misuse than concepts of addiction based on external factors. For Davies, the person who exemplifies substance misuse –

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[58] J. B. Davies, *The Myth of Addiction*, p.16f.

which he agrees can be a genuine problem – uses the language of attribution, as we have observed, to explain his or her 'addictive' behaviour, because there are benefits to be gained from so doing, rather than by acceptance that this behaviour comes about as a result of free choice, however unwise that choice may seem to be.

To what then does the addicted person <u>attribute</u> his or her inappropriate use of drugs or alcohol? This language varies in content – and this point is essential to Davies' argument – it depends on whom the addicted person is talking to. There is a highly circumstantial or 'functional' element to the choice of language used. Speaking with people who are professionally involved in the care of addicts, police or health workers, for example, addicts' choice of language tends to be weighted towards a view of addiction that puts addictive behaviour beyond personal control; speaking to their friends and acquaintances however, the choice of language loses this 'pathological' element and tends towards the inclusion of addictive behaviour as an ordinary part of their lives, relative to their personal circumstances[59]. Davies cites his own experiment, undertaken with a group of heroin users in Glasgow[60]. This provided evidence that 'answers to questions depend on the way the interviewee perceives the interviewer, and this is especially the case when the behaviour in question involves a moral dimension, like theft or illicit drug use'.[61]

This variability factor based on the perceptions of the interviewee about the interviewer and the interviewer's motives highlights an important aspect of

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[59] One important experiment cited by Davies involved the use of a survey conducted with the same group of subjects by two researchers, one a clinician, the other a drug user, and a comparison of the data received by the two. One element of this is, understandably, the assumptions that the subjects made about the motives of the questioners in each case, and how this may have affected their replies to the questions they were asked. See: Davies, *The Myth of Addiction*, p.86ff.

[60] J. B. Davies and R. Baker, "The Impact of Self-presentation and Interviewer Bias Effects on self-reported Heroin Use", 907-912)

[61] J. B. Davies, *The Myth of Addiction*, p.88. This idea is intensified when the behaviour in question is not only possibly viewed as immoral, but also may have consequences in terms of law enforcement, as in the case of heroin use etc.

Davies' thesis, namely the ways in which we remember events and the insecure relationship between those memories and the truth. Of great significance here in terms of Davies' hypothesis are the ways in which researchers within the discipline of health care psychology obtain information: much of their data collection relies on self-reporting by the person with the drink, drug or tobacco related problem.

As Davies correctly points out, there are difficulties with self-reporting, and it is unwise to regard these reports as wholly accurate just because the subjects are recalling their own experiences. Our memories are not entirely dependable, he argues, and human beings also tend to lie or distort the facts for many reasons. One such reason, as we have seen, is that interviews between researchers and subjects are not 'neutral', they have a context. In a research project with mothers who had given birth to babies with Downs Syndrome for example[62], when the mothers were encouraged to look for possible reasons for their babies' condition - in terms of stressful events during pregnancy, for example – they were easily able to produce such 'memories': the idea of there being a cause for the Downs Syndrome helped them to 'understand' what had happened, whether or not the explanation was true. The "I see what you are getting at" factor was therefore thought to be at work here: the mothers identified the researcher's agenda, and found it <u>helpful to themselves</u> to proceed as if the suggested explanation were true.

The same applies, Davies argues, to the concept of addiction. The person who is being questioned may well tailor his replies to the context of the interview, giving answers that he thinks the interviewer wants to hear, or that will help him to gain access to the medical help he is hoping for, and the avoidance of being

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[62] See Davies, *The Myth of Addiction*, p.95

seen as engaging in 'bad' behaviour that he <u>chooses to engage in</u> and thereby risking social disapproval or legal penalties.

Davies also argues that we must recognise the difficulties involved in remembering events of varying degrees of significance in our lives. He describes in chapter eight a number of experiments designed and carried out with the intention of monitoring human capacity for accurate memory of events in our lives. These suggest that human beings are not particularly good at remembering these things with a high degree of accuracy for a number of reasons. One such reason, as common sense would suggest, is the length of time from the events. The closer we are to the events we describe, the more likely we are to remember them accurately, unless there are other variable factors at work, such as dementia. Furthermore, our emotional responses to those events can distort them, such as endowing them with more or less significance than they originally had. Therefore, Davies argues, we must be cautious about accepting any attribution of the cause of addiction to external circumstances or memories of events in the addict's life history which may be distorted by the process of time or other factors.

<u>Critical Evaluation Of Davies' Theory.</u>

Although there is much here that seems compelling, Davies's argument, challenging those who readily accept the 'disease' model of understanding addiction, is not without its problems. Davies' work follows on from what had already been said by writers about alcoholism, and as such it finds its most detailed expression in the work of Herbert Fingarette, writing in a book entitled

Controversies in the Addiction's Field, published in 1990, for the American Council on Alcoholism about the so-called <u>disease</u> of alcoholism[63].

Fingarette seeks to demonstrate that with regard to the idea of uncontrollable drinking, the concept of control is such a vague one that it no longer has any significant content – it can range in intensity from a 'mild inclination' to an 'overwhelming and irresistible desire'. So why does alcoholism come to be regarded as a disease? One answer given by Fingarette is that using this kind of terminology makes it easier for people to seek treatment. As he puts it in the chapter already cited: (p.52)

> When behaviour is labelled a disease it becomes excusable because it is regarded as involuntary. This is an important reason for its promulgation. Thus special benefits are provided to alcoholics in employment, health and civil rights law provided they can prove that their drinking is persistent and heavy. The effect is to reward people who continue to drink heavily. This policy is insidious precisely because it is well intended, and those who criticise it may seem to lack compassion.

Fingarette argues that we need to recover the concept of alcoholism from the disease model and see it much more as a reflection of psychological and social problems, with appropriate treatment to help those whose drinking is problematic.

So does this argument have traction? We will look at some critical observations about the suggestion that substance dependency is not a valid concept.

<u>The Concept Of Memory</u>

With regard to self-reporting, although it is undoubtedly true that some people distort the truth in reporting events relating to their experience of their addiction to drugs or alcohol, nevertheless medical intervention, from that of the general practitioner onwards, begins with self-reporting, so what is true about the

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[63] H. Fingarette, "Why We should reject the Disease Concept of Alcoholism" in Ruth C. Engs (ed.) *Controversies in the Addiction's Field*, volume 1, chapter 6.

questionable nature of such reports from addicts is also true *a fortiori* of the population as a whole in terms of primary medical care. Would it, on this basis, be a sound argument automatically to mistrust or exclude all patients' self-reporting as a principal route to diagnosis?

Clinical Judgement And Treatment

A further comment might be made that even allowing for the deliberate choice of the addict to use the language of disease for self-serving purposes, in the experience of many health care professionals many of their clients show a determination to give up the destructive habit of taking heroin, for example, but cannot do so without help, whether from drug therapies such as methadone, with the use of self-help groups such as Narcotics Anonymous with its invocation, in the first instance, of a Higher Power such as God, to deal with one's own personal inability to change unaided, or the support and encouragement – and needs – of their families. No matter why the use of the drug began, there comes a point for many when the choice to give up is no longer possible, because of changes in the chemistry of the brain for example, which inhibit the process of positive change in a way that the sufferer cannot overcome without help[64]. At such a point it is, in the opinion of the present author, reasonable to refer to the individual's condition as one of being addicted, with a consequent need for treatment. Perhaps the best way of looking at this is to see both choice (initially) and disease models (at a later stage) as contributing jointly to the production of demonstrably addicted conditions.

The Problem Of Universalisation

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[64] On this physiological argument see for example Avram Goldstein, *Addiction: from Biology to Drug Policy*, especially chapter 6.

There are also questions about the universalisation that is implicit in many theories of addiction, both those that emphasize the pathological nature of addictive behaviour for some people – across a vast range of such activities, including shopping, gambling and sex – and those who prefer to see such behaviour as chosen, and to a large extent under the control of the individual concerned. It may be that in reality there are those who for whom such behaviours are chosen, in the sense that in terms of a 'cost benefit analysis', to use Davies' terminology, the life lived under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or both, appears to be a better choice than life lived without it, whereas for others it would be truer to say that addiction is a disease or condition that is largely or entirely outwith their capacity for personal control. Another factor that may need to be taken into account here is that of denial. Many people who are truly dependent on one or more of a number of substances or activities are not consciously aware of the activity in question as being problematic, or hide the reality of their situation from others, through shame or other reasons. This also suggests, *pace* Davies, that there is here a behaviour that is out of control. Generalisation, on the basis of this argument, may prove to be an unhelpful procedure.

The Belief Of The Addicted Person About Addiction

People who attend addiction clinics or self-help groups do so because they believe they need help, or because someone else, a family member, or a court officer, convinces them that they do. They believe there is something wrong with them which requires and can benefit from treatment. The experience of professionals tends to support this theory: the people who consult them are clearly having problems with their lives, or may have been referred to them for treatment by the courts because their lifestyle has brought them into conflict

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with the Law. Although remission of addictive behaviour may be partial[65] or even temporary[66], there is clinical evidence that people do get better, and to that extent at least, it can be asserted that such treatments are effective.

Davies is right to question the assertion that an addicted person is ill. He argues that people who take drugs should be allowed to do so. If their actions cause problems for society, as in the case of criminal behaviour to obtain money for drugs, then that is a criminal matter. On the other hand, we have suggested that regarding addiction as pathological can be shown to be not only a heuristic tool for providing help, but also, in a more theoretical sense, a 'true' statement. Maybe part of the 'truth' that Davies is seeking may well have to do with truth in a wider sense, that is to say, the truth of what has been experienced by many health care professionals to be in the best interests of their clients. Even allowing for the danger of collusively 'pathologising' such clients, a danger which Davies rightly draws attention to, if labelling the individual who has the problem as ill rather than bad, immoral, or even criminal makes it easier for them to seek and receive treatment, then perhaps part of the 'truth' is that using this kind of language has, on balance, certain advantages.

Genetic Factors

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[65] There are situations in which an addicted person may be able to gain better control of their behaviour than before treatment, while not accomplishing a complete process of detoxification. This is sometimes achieved through the medium, in the case of heroin addicts for example, of the prescribed use of heroin substitutes such as methadone or buprenorphine.

[66] It must be acknowledged that although a high percentage of people who present for inpatient detoxification treatment at centres such as the Maudsley Hospital in South London can be successfully treated, (in as many as 95% of cases) in many cases (70-80%) the remission achieved is temporary, and such patients may well need in such cases to be retreated once or more often. Despite this, there is a clear understanding on the part of the staff there that they are treating – by clinical means such as the use of Librium and cognitive behavioural therapy – people who have a 'genuine' illness.

Davies also largely ignores the genetic factor in addiction. While it would be gross exaggeration to suggest that genes 'cause' addiction in the way that pressure on an electric switch 'causes' a light to go on or off, there is nevertheless a well-researched body of literature that demonstrates a connection between genetics and certain kinds of addiction, particularly addiction to alcohol[67]. The research that David Ball and his colleagues have done in recent years at the Institute of Psychiatry[68] strongly suggests that some individuals do have a genetic vulnerability to addiction to alcohol, and a recent paper from the USA makes a further link with genetic influences on drunkenness[69]. Such research is certainly not suggesting that anyone who has a certain genetic marker will automatically become addicted to alcohol, but they recognise a link between certain genetic sequences and a propensity towards addiction. On the assumption that this is an accurate evidence based observation, we suggest that such findings weaken the argument of Davies and others who think that addiction is largely or entirely to do with human choice.

Conscious And Unconscious Factors In The Psychology Of Addiction

Perhaps the biggest question that Davies raises, although he does not deal with it specifically, is that of the true nature of human choice and volition. Given the possibility that people choose their substance dependent state, and attribute it to addiction, this seems to invite discussion of a vastly complicated subject. What factors motivate us to make choices? There are – as Robert West demonstrates,

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[67] See, for example, David M. Ball, "Genetic Approaches to Alcohol Dependence". Also Robert Plomin et al., *Behavioral Genetics*, especially pp. 264-27.

[68] The IOP is part of the Teaching Hospital group that is part of King's College London, based at the Maudsley Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5.

[69] The article entitled "The Investigation into CYP2E1 in Relation to the Level of Response to Alcohol Through a Combination of Linkage and Association Analysis", Amy Webb, Penelope A Lind et al. demonstrates that 'sequence changes in or near CYP2E1 affect the level of response to alcohol, providing a predictor of risk for alcoholism'. At its simplest, this finding about the genetic influence of CYP2E1 can help as part of a complex study of why some people get drunk more quickly than others.

and we will examine his arguments in greater detail later in this chapter – both

conscious and unconscious factors in human choice making. As West observes[70]

> Only a very small proportion of information and forces that act on our
> behaviour are represented consciously at any one time. The conscious
> mind has a very limited capacity. What happens [in addiction] is that
> non-conscious processing of the information creates a representation
> that has particular properties, often called salience, that cause conscious
> attention to be focussed on it.

This partially conscious salience is problematic, West argues, because 'most of

the time we are not self-conscious'[71]. We do not always have in mind a clear self-

representation of the nature of our interests and motivating drives. These are

relatively unstable, in the sense that they are 'held in mind for a while, and then

replaced when other representations come to our attention'[72]. Thus West

recognises the highly complex interaction of conscious awareness and

unconscious formation of the will to take action of whatever kind, and Davies

does not appear to allow sufficient weight to the sheer complexity of such

processes from a psychological point of view[73].

Psychodynamic Approaches To The Unconscious

One further dimension of this element of conscious and unconscious forces

at work in human choice making lies in the psychodynamic view of addiction, a

subject which has not until recently been systematically addressed by the

successors of Freud and Jung in the psychoanalytic literature. Some writers from

within this group have now however begun to explore addiction from a

psychodynamic perspective[74].

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[70] Robert West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.161.

[71] ibid.

[72] ibid.

[73] There are also considerable theological issues about the nature of the human will and volition. We will look that those issues in greater depth in the later chapter on volition as understood in terms of theological anthropology.

[74] Examples include Marcus West, *Feeling, Being, and the Sense of Self*, p.110, which relates addiction and its treatment via Alcoholics Anonymous as related directly to a loss of a sense of personal identity and the

Davies is not alone in his objection to the <u>concept</u> of addiction. Prochaska et al.[75] also claim that the term addiction is a false or misleading one[76]. There is however a substantial body of work that offers either explicitly or implicitly a critique of the 'choice' theory employed by Davies, Prochaska et al. and others who express similar opinions. We will therefore address some of these critical comments now.

<u>Jim Orford</u>

In *Excessive Appetites*[77], Jim Orford strongly criticises Davies' view of addiction as a myth or a social construct – a concept that has no reality except that which is given to it in order to fulfil certain objectives, such as the receipt of health care or the avoidance of criticism. Orford argues that although the idea of addiction as an illness or disease becomes problematic if applied too literally, there is nevertheless a reality to the concept of addiction – it is not a 'myth', and often, though not always, requires some form of intervention[78]:

> Some writers have vigorously attacked the concept of addiction. One of the most cogent of such arguments was marshalled by Davies (1992) in his book, *The Myth of Addiction*. There is a tendency, however, for a straw man to be set up and knocked down in the course of his criticism. The word 'addiction' is taken to imply that control over appetitive behaviour

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powerlessness that people feel when this occurs, and Jean Knox, *Archetype, Attachment, Analysis*, pp. 149ff., which suggests that certain forms of 'somaticisation' such as bulimia can be a kind of diversionary tactic the unconscious purpose of which is to 'block out all the painful thoughts' that such a person may have about being a 'bad person' (Knox, op. cit. p.152).

[75] J. O. Prochaska, C. C. DiClemente and J. C. Norcross, "In Search of How People Change". Their 'Transtheoretical' or 'Stages of Change' model is a clear statement of the view that people change their minds about the use of drugs and in particular the use of nicotine associated with smoking cigarettes in observable patterns or stages, but always on the basis of some kind of deliberate cost/benefit analysis in relation to the substance in question.

[76] See, for example, Hans Eysenck, in *Rebel with a Cause*, quoted by Orford, *Excessive Appetites* p. 5 etc. and Craig Reinarman, "Addiction as Accomplishment: the Discursive Construction of Disease". Reinarman argues strongly that the labelling of addiction as a disease confuses the treatment of what is undoubtedly a serious condition by placing it in an unhealthy alliance, lying between health services and state controlled drug policies, which undermines the possible positive contribution of both.

[77] Jim Orford, *Excessive Appetites* (2nd Edition).

[78] Orford, *Excessive Appetites*, p.345f.

is totally lost, and that ability to modify behaviour in the light of external constraints (e.g. to smoke less if price rises) or to give up appetitive behaviour without treatment is inexplicable if addiction is said to exist. This may be true of an extreme 'disease' view of addiction, but it is certainly not true of most views of addiction including the present one.

Although this choice model is attractive in some ways – its insistence on personal responsibility both for using drugs and for stopping doing so provides an important counterbalance to views of addiction that emphasize the helplessness of the person with the problem – it fails, as Orford correctly observes, to explain the entire phenomenon of addictive behaviour which is such an evident feature of contemporary society.

Robert West

Robert West's *Theory of Addiction* provides an encyclopaedic view of addiction theories, some based on 'disease' models, some on 'choice' models (such as Davies'), others using a mixture of choice and disease theories. In reality, as Robert West points out[79], it is not always easy for young people in particular to recognise the <u>long-term danger</u> that they may be exposing themselves to, because the immediate pleasure of smoking, drinking or taking drugs is too potent for other more 'sober' considerations of long-term health damage to have sufficient impact.

West's comments on Davies' *The Myth of Addiction* are highly critical. He begins his evaluation of Davies' model by recognising[80] the importance of his insight that '[addiction] terminology … serves a function for the user. In this case, attributing certain activities to addiction enables the addict or other members of society to meet their physical or emotional needs regarding help and understanding'[81]. Nevertheless, West argues, the suggestion that addiction

[79] Robert West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.32.
[80] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.31.
[81] ibid.

language is <u>entirely functional</u> and has no basis in reality flies in the face of the evidence. What is being ignored here by Davies and others who argue along similar lines is the demonstrable fact that 'denial of the reality of the phenomena of addiction, including the feelings of craving and compulsion are contradicted by observation. These phenomena are not myths'.[82] West does not want to rule choice out altogether. The choices we make in respect of our appetites, including economical (in the broadest sense) cost benefit analyses of behaviours, with their conscious and unconscious elements remain potent in his analysis.

There are also, he claims, pharmacological factors relating to memories of pleasant experiences of use of the drug of choice. Ultimately, however, West argues that choice alone is not sufficient to explain addictive behaviour, and he develops in the course of his own book, as we shall see, a composite analysis of addiction that integrates a number of models into one comprehensive theory.

Conclusion

It may be that Davies' use of the word 'myth' provides more of a semantic re-interpretation of the concept of addiction than one that is truly scientific. Mythical or not, many hundreds of people come for treatment at clinics where non-judgmental care is provided, and in many cases return over and over again in the hope that they will conquer the dependency that is eroding the quality of their lives: some achieve this without professional help, many cannot. We are therefore right to be wary of accepting the whole of Davies' argument, as West, Orford and others point out.

Perhaps the most important contribution of Davies' approach is his observation that providing 'treatment' for the 'disease' of addiction often seems

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[82] West, p.32

to fail, or to require many episodes of intervention in order to change the behaviour of a drug user. So it is right to question the 'disease' concept of addiction: if something is not a pathological condition, treating it as such will be of no value. This is a valuable caveat which health care workers and public policy makers such as Government agencies and lawmakers would be unwise to ignore.

Although Davies' warnings about the fallacy of treating something as an illness or disease when it is not an illness are important, there is an alternative body of evidence from the world of clinical intervention for those who are addicted for the use of medical language regarding their situation and its potential improvement or cure. What remains to be attempted in this part of the chapter is the relating of the addiction concept as critiqued by Davies in relation to the main driving force behind this thesis, which is concerned not only with medical or scientific approached to addiction but also to the religious and spiritual concerns that are also involved. It is hoped that this process will be helpful when addressing the needs of those who offer pastoral care to addicted individuals and their families, friends and colleagues – and also in matters of public policy[83]. Unlike Orford, Davies does not present a spiritual analysis of the issues surrounding addiction as a major theme. He does however bring spiritual ideas into the argument at one significant point in his discussion of the allegedly addictive properties of certain substances such as alcohol. On this view, Alcoholics Anonymous, which began as a religious response to alcoholism, regards any suggestion that an alcoholic can return to 'normal' levels of drinking as a theory that 'strikes at the heart' of their approach[84]. Why might this be the case? The problem is stated quite clearly in Davies' comparison of alcoholism

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[83] Public policy concerns relate for example to the classification of illicit drugs and issues such as licensing laws and the pricing of alcoholic beverages according to the number of units of alcohol they contain.
[84] Davies, *The Myth of Addiction*, p.66.

and gambling[85]: 'like the notion of addiction as applied to alcohol (and other drugs) the notion of addiction to gambling removes the personal responsibility of the heavy gambler for his/her single-minded pursuit of gambling activity'. The gambler or alcoholic is in the view of these self-help organisations 'in the grip of a progressive illness'. A small amount of drink, or money spent on gambling, leads to further and successively larger amounts, it is argued, and the inevitable chain of compulsion can only be broken by acknowledging a sense of helplessness and acquiring a sense of dependence on God or some form of 'higher power'[86]. One corollary of this explanation of substance or process dependency is then that by the use of disease terminology, the person with the problem can both avoid being regarded as 'bad' or 'sinful', because addiction is equivalent to other acquired diseases and not the fault of the sufferer, who cannot overcome the dependency without assistance. By implication, Davies argues, if we abandon the language of the disease of addiction, because it can be shown to be fallacious from a psycho-pharmacological perspective, then we can return to the dependent person both the responsibility for their activity, and for taking action to overcome it. There is here then in relation to religious thought, a challenge to the addicted person to accept responsibility for his or her problem, and to take action to avoid the activity in question, a process which might well, in conventional religious terms, include the invocation of divine grace to assist in the recovery.

What is entailed in such an approach however is not simply an appeal to any individual to take responsibility for his or her drug use (and by extension use of other potentially harmful substances such as alcohol or tobacco). There is clearly

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[85] Davies, op. cit., p.71f.
[86] The Second Step of Alcoholics Anonymous' Twelve Step Programme states that:
'We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity'. This Power might be seen as God, but does not necessarily have a religious connotation. See: *The Oxford Group and Alcoholics Anonymous*, Dick B, p.302ff.

within Davies' analysis of drug misuse recognition that the use of drugs is often associated with problems that are generated by society. This is particularly true, he argues, where in certain parts of the country (Glasgow being an obvious case) a part of that society is characterised by social and economic deprivation which plays a considerable part in generating drug use as a way of coping with a sense of human defeat and despair. A society that wishes to reduce the consumption of such substances, and the crime that is often generated by the process of obtaining them, needs therefore, in Davies' view to address the social problems which often lead to drug misuse.

In conclusion, it will be apparent to the reader that Davies represents an extreme point of view. For him, there is no such thing as addiction. People choose to take drugs, drink excessive amounts of alcohol or engage in other activities that can seem to be addictive, but they do so from choice. Often they stop the activity of their own volition. Others, like Orford and West, criticise his theory. They too have theories, which are incompatible with that of Davies. So which is correct? Or could it be, that, as the author of this thesis contends, none of them has the whole picture because they start from the wrong place? If so, perhaps what we need to do is to revisit the question of addictive behaviour beginning from a new starting point, which is concerned not with the problem of addiction, but by asking questions about the individual who is arguably misusing certain substances, in terms of his or her own personal desires and longings, and then trying to see how the substance misuse related to those personal goals. That suggestion will be developed in the final chapter of the thesis.

For now, we will turn to the second conversation partner in this review of psychological theories, Jim Orford.

1.2   Jim Orford *Excessive Appetites*

The second writer we are going to describe and evaluate in this chapter of

the thesis is Jim Orford.

Introduction

Orford is emeritus Professor of Addiction in the department of Psychology in

the University of Birmingham, having worked previously on research into

addiction problems at the Institute of Psychiatry. While working at the Addiction

Research Unit there he obtained his doctorate. After moving to Exeter he

established a programme of development of services for people with alcohol

problems there, before moving to the University of Birmingham. He has a

special interest in gambling as an addictive behaviour and his most recent book

explores this in detail[87].

He describes his work as follows[88]

> I lead a group within the School of Psychology who are studying various
> aspects of alcohol and drug use and addiction from clinical and
> community psychology perspectives. The group's research includes:
> study of untreated heavy drinkers; studies of how families cope with
> alcohol or drug problems and how such family problems are responded
> to in primary health care settings; a multi-centre study of treatment for
> alcohol problems; a national study of gambling; and a survey of drinking
> amongst members of ethnic minority groups in the West Midlands.

Orford's other publications include contributions to the *Journal of Community*

and Applied Social Psychology, and in addition to the book that this chapter of the

thesis assesses, i.e. *Excessive Appetites*, "Empowering family and friends: a new

approach to the prevention of alcohol and drug problems", and *Community*

Psychology: Theory and Practice.

Orford's View Of Addiction

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[87] Jim Orford, *An Unsafe Bet – the Dangerous Rise of Gambling and the Debate we Should Be Having*.
[88] www.bham.ac.uk/people-pages/detail.php last consulted 06.06.2011.

Of central importance for Orford is the context within which addictive behaviour happens. This approach avoids seeing people in isolation and regards them rather as persons living within one form or another of community structure. The dysfunctional aspects of such structures may then to some extent help to explain the individual addict's substance or activity (e.g. gambling) behaviour. This community based approach is one that has also led him to co-operate with others doing similar work in Mexico, Northern Territory Australia, and Cuba.

Orford represents the view that allows for the role of choice in the initial stages of drug or process dependency[89], but he moves on to suggest that what begins as choice, in relation to the use of illicit drugs, for example, becomes, for some people, a necessity, and therefore in some sense a symptom of dis-ease, although he is careful to reject any suggestion that addiction is to be regarded as a 'physical' disease in the usual sense of that word[90]. His book[91] and article on addiction as excessive appetite[92] therefore take a very different point of view from that of J. B. Davies[93], in that, as Orford critiques him, 'addiction is "a myth"; some have claimed (Davies, 1992). Addiction…is no myth. Each of the excessive appetites…spoils many lives, and often shortens them'[94].

Definition Of Addiction

At the beginning of his 2001 article for *Addiction* journal, Orford quotes John Downame, a seventeenth century English parson who wrote about some of his parishioners who were having problems with controlling their intake of alcohol.

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[89] In this sense he shares some of the ideas of J. B. Davies whom we discussed in the last chapter.
[90] Jim Orford, *Excessive Appetites*, p. 344.
[91] Jim Orford, *Excessive Appetites*.
[92] Jim Orford, "Addiction as Excessive Appetite".
[93] Orford, "Addiction as Excessive Appetite", p.28.
[94] For J. B. Davies's important contribution, which has already been evaluated in this 'psychological theories' section of the thesis, see: John Booth Davies, *The Myth of Addiction*, 2nd edition.

It is worth quoting this clergyman *in extenso*, because, as Orford observes, he provides an excellent (and possibly unsurpassed) definition of what addiction means[95]:

> they who addict themselves to this vice, do find it so sweete and pleasing to the flesh that they are loth to part with it, and by long custome they turne delight into necessity and bring vpon themselues such an vnsatiable thirst that they will as willingly leaue to liue as leaue their excessiue drinking, and howsoeuer the manifold mischiefes into which they plunge themselues serue as so manie forceful arguments to disswade them from this vice, yet against all rules of reason they hold fast their conclusion that come what come may, they will not leaue their drunkenness.

The key words here are 'delight' and 'necessity', as they show how in Downame's enlightened perception of the problem, an activity which is at first harmless and enjoyable can become something over which the individual concerned has incrementally little or no choice or control.

Orford's article, which develops the ideas in his first edition,[96] and introduces its 2007 edition[97], focuses on a number of related issues, but three in particular have relevance to this thesis, i.e.:

1) The widening of the concept of addiction to include gambling, eating and sex as well as alcohol and drugs

2) An interpretation of the concept of addiction based on strong attachment to a particular substance (e.g. alcohol) and a sense of 'dissonance', that is to say a wish to give up or reduce the activity

3) The observation, based on good research evidence, that varying forms of treatment seem to have comparable outcomes, and that often spontaneous remission seems to occur without professional intervention of any kind[98]

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[95] Orford, Addiction as Excessive Appetite, p.16. This quotation comes from J. Warner, "Resolv'd to Drink No More: addiction as a preindustrial construct", *Journal of Studies in Alcohol*, 1994, volume 55, pp. 685-691.
[96] Jim Orford, *Excessive Appetites: a Psychological View of Addiction*, 1992.
[97] Orford, *Excessive Appetites: a Psychological View of Addiction,* 2nd edition, 2007..
[98] Orford looks at a number of such spontaneous remission outcomes, and, significantly from the point of view of this research, includes concepts such as spirituality and morality as pressures for change: see "Addiction as Excessive Appetite", p.26.

This recognises that these pleasurable activities, many of which, such as sex, are perfectly good in themselves, do for some people have the potential to move from the category of 'pleasurable', to that of 'compulsive':

'Here we have recognition that, by long usage, an activity that was originally pleasurable has become a 'necessity'; that a strong craving is part of the experience; and that despite the many harms that it has brought, neither the exercise of reason nor encouragement from others have been sufficient to bring about control'.[99]

For Orford the use of substances like alcohol may well be regarded as perfectly healthy in itself. There is nevertheless the possibility that in the context of interlocking personal and social factors, a point may be reached at which a once controllable activity passes beyond the control of the individuals concerned, so that they are no longer able to stop the behaviour at will. This is a very different model from Davies' hypothesis, which concentrates exclusively on the role of choice, even when to outside eyes those choices (to use heroin frequently, for example) seem disastrous for the individual, her family, and for society as whole. Orford, like others who start from the basic premise that addiction is in some sense a disease, and definitely not a 'myth'[100], acknowledges the role of choice as part of the process of addiction, but also suggests that, in line with Parson Downame's observations, some people move from the enjoyment of alcohol as a chosen source of pleasure – 'delight', to use his own word – to a point where its consumption becomes a necessity, or even a vice, to introduce an ethical element into the discussion. At this point, the concept of compulsiveness has traction, because the behaviour in question cannot now be controlled at will. At this point, Orford suggests, what is generated is a feeling of 'dissonance' about

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[99] Orford, "Addiction as Excessive Appetite", p.16.
[100] See, for example, E. M. Jellinek, *The Disease Concept of Alcoholism*.

the drug taking activity, and about the need for treatment, combined with a sense of needing to change[101].

What then are the factors that interact to cause addiction? Orford identifies a number of these. It is important to recognise that Orford is careful not to generalise the way in which drugs and activities become addictive. There are however, in Orford's words, certain 'core addictions' that bring the syndrome and its description into sharper focus, and these include, as we have already observed: drinking, gambling, drug taking, eating, smoking, exercise and sex.

In order to examine this 'excessive appetite' syndrome in more depth, let us now look at one of those activities and the means by which an activity changes from one over which the individual has full control to one in which there is partial or no control. In analysing nicotine dependency, Orford recalls the work of McKennell and Thomas in the 1960's, whose Government authorised survey[102] looked at the smoking habits of adolescent and adult smoking patterns. They introduced the phrase 'dissonant smoking', and Orford regards this phrase as highly significant in helping to understand the nature of addictive or substance dependent behaviours. As the ideas of McKennell and Thomas have relevance for more than one such behaviour, it is worth quoting their findings:

> Dissonant smokers appear to be people who are trapped by the smoking habit, somewhat against their will. The majority of them have in fact tried several times to give up smoking. One of the most remarkable findings that emerges from social surveys of smokers' habits and attitudes is the very large number who express a wish to give up smoking or else have tried to do so.

So what is the reason for this dissonance? In defining addiction Orford suggests that the key factor is the degree of difficulty that a person experiences in giving up an activity that he knows to be 'causing harm'[103]. How does an

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[101] Orford, *Excessive Appetites*, p.254-255.

[102] A. McKennell and R. Thomas, *"Adults' and Adolescents' Smoking Habits and Attitudes"*, cited by Orford: "Addiction as Excessive Appetite", p.17.

[103] Orford, *Addiction as Excessive Appetite*, p.18.

acceptable desire for sex, for example, become excessive? One important factor, Orford suggests, is that if there were no societal restraints on behaviours, many more people would graduate from moderate, enjoyable engagement in them to excessive and potentially harmful indulgence. It is the presence of deterrence and restraint elements in our societies that prevents this from happening. Evidence for this theory can be found in the research carried out by Jessor et al.[104] who discovered a relatively high degree of substance misuse among school and university students who are often associated with unconventional or non-conforming behaviour patterns; the obverse of this also appears to be true – where people exhibit a high degree of conformity to the norms of a specialised group (such as a religious movement) the prevalence of addictive behaviour is correspondingly low [105].

Another factor, Orford suggests, is what he terms the developmental theory. This suggests that the likelihood of developing addictive behaviour is cumulative: in Orford's words, 'the chances of proceeding to the next stage, or of responding to the next positive influence inclining towards further 'consumption' are greater the more previous 'stages' have been passed through or the greater the number of previous influences that have been effective'[106].

The Relationship Between Addiction And Spirituality In Orford's Work

In relation to the topic of this current research, namely the generation of an integrated psychological and theological theory of addiction and care for people with addiction problems, we note that Orford also includes spiritual ideas. In the final section of his article[107] Orford introduces aspects of addiction and care for

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[104] See: R. Jessor, J. E. Donovan and F. M. Costa, *Beyond Adolescence: Problem Behaviour and Young Adult Development.*
[105] See: W. R. Miller, "Researching the Spiritual Dimensions of Alcohol and other Drug Problems".
[106] Orford, "Addiction as Excessive Appetite*"*, p.20.
[107] op. cit

the addicted using the language of <u>spirituality and morality</u>. Two brief quotations

will reflect this interest[108]:

1)   Miller (1998)[109] has written of the neglect of the spiritual component in the theory and practice of addictive behaviour change despite its clear presence in the philosophy of Alcoholics Anonymous and other 12-step programmes…. [Miller strengthens] the argument that the change process is not to be understood most readily by accepting the supposed rationales of modern physical or psychological treatments, or by taking too seriously their techniques, but rather by an appreciation of the factors that are common to a variety of forms, whether religious, medical, psychological or unaided.

2)   Is it too fanciful, then, to go one step further and conclude that giving up an excessive appetite is essentially a process of *moral reform*, or, as Gusfield (1962)[110] put it, one of 'moral passage out of deviance'? [111] (emphasis added).

In the last chapter of his book[112] Orford summarises the point he has made

earlier about the inclusion of spiritual and ethical aspects of change by suggesting

a two stage process of change from addictive behaviour, one which is cognitive

– a perceived wish to change - and one that has an important social dimension,

conceived in terms that clearly include spiritual and moral elements[113].

There are resonances here with aspects of more specifically religious thought,

and in particular the forms of pastoral ministry that involve a theology of social,

spiritual and moral interaction as the basis of their work; for the Christian

theologian, this also must take account of the concept of <u>human sinfulness,</u> with

its counterbalancing features of repentance, forgiveness and redemption, which

will form an important part of our later discussion of pastoral responses to the

problems of addiction. For the moment the reader's attention is drawn to the

already cited study[114] of religious aspects of the recovery from drug addiction by

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[108] Orford, op. cit.p.27.

[109] W. R. Miller, "Researching the Spiritual Dimensions of Alcohol and other Drug Problems", cited by Orford, "Addiction as Excessive Appetite", p.27.

[110] "Status Conflicts and the Changing Ideologies of the American Temperance Movement".

[111] Orford, *Excessive Appetites*, p.332.

[112] op. cit., chapter 14 on 'Giving Up Excess'

[113] op. cit., p.343.

[114] John D. Sellman, Michael P. Baker et al., "Future of God in Recovery from Drug Addiction".

John D. Sellman, Michael Baker et al., which concludes that the belief of the addicted person in a Higher Power can be shown to have a positive effect on recovery.

Moral Issues

On the moral aspects of addiction, although Orford at several points introduces an ethical element[115], he does not provide a basis for ethical discrimination as to what varieties and amounts of addictive behaviour can be considered immoral, and on what philosophical basis this may be inferred. A later chapter of this thesis (on theological aspects of addiction) will further investigate this moral dimension, particularly as instantiated by the work of Christopher Cook. It is also a fair criticism of Orford's ethical stance that he emphasizes the role of the individual within society in terms of moral duty, and the way in which societies may help to control anti-social or unhealthy behaviour, but does not look, as for example Christopher Cook does[116], at the role of <u>society itself</u> as a determinant in relation to addictive behaviour, not least in terms of the arguably collusive behaviour of governments which enact laws designed to reduce drunkenness, while at the same time benefiting greatly through tax generated income via the sale of intoxicating beverages. We will devote further space to this highly important element of the morality of alcohol addiction in the chapter on theology and its contribution to our understanding of addiction.

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[115] Orford, *Excessive Appetites* p. 270, records the attitude of religious (specifically Christian) churches to excessive activity in relation to a number of behaviour patterns. Although this particular section is concerned with attitudes to sexual excess, he acknowledges that 'the same may be said to differing degrees about indulgence in gambling, drinking, some other forms of drug taking and even of over-indulgence in eating'.
[116] See Christopher C. H. Cook, *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics*, particularly in chapter 7 of this book, which we will analyse in greater detail in the theological section of this thesis.

As one purpose of this thesis is however to look for analogies between clinical and theological concepts to be found within a comprehensive and integrative study of addiction it will be worth raising at this juncture some points at which the psychological theory of Orford and his understanding of the spiritual dimension coincide. What conceptual Christian theological language might be available to guide us towards a deeper understanding of addiction from a spiritual and ethical perspective?

The key word here may well prove to be 'sin'. As Downame[117] observed, there is within the phenomenon of addiction a turning away from modes of living that are essentially life enhancing to those which have a capacity rather for generating a lifestyle characterised by 'manifold mischiefes'[118] and even the danger of death. Some people have therefore, in Downame's view, taken the kind of wrong turning in their lives that is, in essence, what Christian theology regards as sinful behaviour.

There are many ways of interpreting the concept of sin. We will be investigating the concept in the theological chapter of this thesis, with particular reference to Saint Paul, and Saint Augustine of Hippo, who both have important contributions to make to the idea of the proper housing of desire in a Christian context. It is noteworthy that Orford draws significantly on the ethical and spiritual elements that are often viewed side by side in contemporary attempts to give help to addicted people, and although as he puts it via a quotation from Glasser[119] the 'mental health professions' are 'famously and fashionably irreligious', many of the helping professions draw equally on religious and secular models to deliver their care – speaking of the treatment of 'skid-row' alcoholics

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[117] See Orford, *Excessive Appetites*, p.14, quoting the parish priest of that name writing about the behaviour of some members of his congregation in 1609.
[118] ibid.
[119] F. Glasser, "Some historical aspects of the drug-free therapeutic community", pp. 9-10.

in a United States city on the west coast, it was clear that 'Among these [agencies] were the county jail, the state mental hospital, a welfare home for homeless men, and, among a variety of others, a Christian missionaries' work and residence centre for handicapped men'[120]. And in the conclusion to the chapter in which this quotation is to be found, Orford advances the theory that because the inner conflicts which so often lie at the heart of addiction include 'mental, social and spiritual-moral ones, we should not be surprised that the change process involves all these elements as well as changes in behaviour'[121]. There is then a holistic view taken by Orford, recognising the potential of both clinical and spiritual/moral intervention to bring help to addiction sufferers.

Critical Views Of Orford's Work

Has Orford's view an important contribution to make to the debate about the origins of addictive behaviours? Reviewing the second edition of *Excessive Appetites*,[122] John Macleod observes that this book:

> informs some of these questions. It develops a comprehensive theory encompassing problem substance abuse, gambling, eating and drinking disorders and 'sex addiction'. Orford argues convincingly that all these problem behaviours have more characteristics in common than those that separate them. Centrally, they all involve strong attachment to an activity, once positive, that is now costly and associated with personal conflict.

This is an excellent description of what Orford intends, and accomplishes with a great deal of success. Its value as a contribution to the theory of addiction is also emphasised by Robert West in *Theory of Addiction*[123] in which he says that 'this model is extraordinary in its scope and captures features of addiction that others do not….combining ideas from Learning Theory with those from Choice

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[120] Orford, op. cit., p.339.
[121] op. cit., p.340.
[122] John Macleod, review article, *Family Practice Journal.*
[123] Robert West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.116f.

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Theory as well as social psychology and sociology.' At the heart of the theory, he notes, is the concept of personal conflict in addicted behaviour, rather than the attachment to such activities in itself.

West suggests however that the radical nature and the scope of his theory has so far made it difficult for the theory to be satisfactorily tested by researchers: although it remains intuitively strong as an approach, there is as yet insufficient experimental evidence to test its efficacy. But the theory seems to be one that has intrinsic value and is well respected by addiction theorists.

The internal consistency of Orford's theory and the potential for making use of it in a therapeutic environment lead the author of this thesis to think that of the psychologically based addiction theories presented in this chapter Orford has the best claim to a clear understanding of addiction. He also recognises that in addition to purely psychological theories, it may be of considerable importance to include attention to 'social', i.e. spiritual and ethical considerations in looking at the needs of the addicted person. But there remain some problems with his theory which despite its heuristic practicality leave it open to intellectual challenge, and these will now be addressed.

In the first place, it is striking that Orford does not make any attempt in the book *Excessive Appetites* to evaluate – or even acknowledge to any significant extent – the part that is possibly played by heredity in the aetiology of addiction[124]. It is true that when he first published the book, in 2001, genetic theories of addiction were very much in their infancy, and so it is possible to understand his reluctance to enter that field of scholarly debate at that time. By the time of his second edition in 2007, however, the scientific appraisal of the

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[124] On page 344 he does acknowledge briefly and parenthetically that there is a debate to be had about the role of heritability in the aetiology of addiction. '[T]his is not to deny the probable contribution genetic determinants at many points in developing and giving up addictions', but he does not analyse the genetic contribution in any detail.

contributory role of genetic heritability of a disposition towards addictive behaviour, in the case of alcohol dependency, for example, was much further advanced and important links were being made between genes and addiction[125]. One therefore wonders whether Orford's reluctance to acknowledge the contribution of genetic research to addiction study was caused by ignorance of the subject, disagreement with its provisional findings, or the belief that what it was suggesting, although interesting, was not of great importance. Genetics has an increasingly important role in the understanding of addiction, and to that extent Orford's omission of any information on this aspect of addiction seems regrettable.

In the second place, and again looking at Orford's work in general rather than particular terms, he is clearly in principle on the side of those who believe that addiction is a form of sickness or disease such as the model put forward by Jellinek and Gelkopf[126], in that, as Robert West expresses it,[127] addiction 'involves an abnormality of structure or function in the CNS that results in an impairment… It can be diagnosed using standard criteria and in principle it can be treated'. In this sense Orford, although he is reluctant to define addiction as a disease, recognises it as something that is treatable by clinical intervention, among other possible treatment methods such as social pressure, and that people who are addicted need therefore to be <u>treated</u> either by conventional clinical interventions or by the influence of environmental social factors. But is this true?

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[125] See, for example, David Ball's research on the genetics of alcohol addiction: "Addiction science and its genetics", which builds on earlier genetic research such as Tsuang et al. "Genetic influences on DSM III R drug abuse and dependence: a study of 3372 twin pairs", and describes his own research and its implications: and Robert Plomin, whose major work *Genetics and Experience* pointed to the complexity of the relationship between genetic determination and experiential factors in terms of their power to predict a wide range of personality and behavioural factors in the understanding of human motivation. Griffith Edwards in *Matters of Substance*, p.258 also refers to the likelihood of genetic involvement in the adoption of alcoholism.

[126] E. M. Jellinek, *The Disease Concept of Alcoholism*, and M. Gelkopf and S. Levitt et al., "An Integration of three approaches to addiction and methadone maintenance treatment: the self –medication hypothesis, the disease model and social criticism".

[127] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.76

It is a vitally important question, because to treat something as an illness when it is not one is clearly a case of misdirected clinical care. It is as foolish as plastering a leg that is not broken in the belief that the leg will somehow benefit from this inappropriate treatment. Furthermore, as J. B. Davies correctly observes in *The Myth of Addiction*[128] the attribution of a disease concept to something which is not in fact a disease places the person who is so diagnosed in a 'patient' role in which his or her activities are seen as having little to do with personal choice, but rather to see them as largely or entirely compelled by forces that are beyond their control. This questionable approach may have advantages for the 'patient' in terms of self-understanding in terms of powerlessness, for the individual's family and other members of the social environment, and for those who, from a professional point of view, set out to treat the individual through a variety of methods, psycho-pharmaceutical, psychotherapeutic and the methodology of the social worker and their contribution. So has Orford, contra Davies and others who think like him[129] made the case for a clinically based understanding of addiction?

In answer to Davies, Orford has this to say:[130]

> Although it is argued that, under the right conditions appetites can become so strong that they seem disease-like, there are too many ways in which an excessive appetite is unlike a physical disease for that analogy to be very useful…. At the same time, the excessive appetites model is clear on one central point, and in this it is in agreement with disease models. Addiction does exist. It is a reality. There is something that cannot be explained simply in terms of reactions to deviant behaviours or self-attributions about behaviour that serve to reduce censure.

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[128] J. B. Davies, (*The Myth of Addiction*, p.170) argues that the best way to achieve a better a degree of control of chaotic drug misuse is not by labelling people as addicts but by abandoning 'a response based on an escalating and ineffective tariff of legal sanctions against drug use… while handing personal control back to those who are involved'.

[129] See for example J. O. Prochaska, C. C. Di Clemente and J. C. Norcross, "In search of how people change". Their work explicates a theory of addiction and its treatment in a conceptual approach usually referred to as the 'transtheoretical model'.

[130] Orford, *Excessive Appetites*, p.344.

This firm assertion of the reality of addiction as a phenomenon that genuinely exists is welcome: what seems problematic for Orford, in a way that he does not satisfactorily resolve, is the question of whether addictive behaviour is or can be a form of clinical disturbance that can to some extent be treated by clinical intervention such as cognitive behavioural therapy, or whether, as he suggests in relation to the decision by an entire village in a Fijian village to give up smoking[131], the most important factor towards the abandoning of a harmful practice is more likely to be that which occurs as a result of social pressures to conform to a more beneficial lifestyle. At times Orford seems to be claiming that addiction is a treatable disease, and at others that it is a personal lifestyle which, as it is experienced as excessive, leads to internal conflict because it is perceived by the individual concerned as harmful or by the society in which the individual lives. It is questionable whether Orford ultimately comes down on one side or the other, and this leads to some confusion in his understanding of addiction.

Two additional issues require some comment. The first is his use of the term 'excessive'. How are we to assess whether the practice of drinking alcohol or the use of cannabis is excessive? Who makes the distinction between normal and excessive? And in the case of some illicit drugs such as heroin (except in its medically authorised use for the control of the symptoms of disease such as cancer or heart attack) it is possible to question whether there can actually be a meaningful distinction between normal and excessive use. The only reliable measure offered by Orford seems to be either the highly subjective awareness of excess which leads someone to try to overcome their habit, (the 'dissonance' factor), or the disapproval of a particular society. These are important elements in the recognition of addiction but are arguably too subjective and culture

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[131] Orford, op. cit., p.308.

specific to operate successfully as universal guides to a robust definition of what excess actually means.

The word appetite also needs careful interpretation. Human appetite ranges over many normal and acceptable activities, eating, drinking alcohol, sex, gambling, etc. Some of these activities, such as eating and sexual activity, are vital to human survival: others, such as the use of alcohol, are matters of personal choice at least in societies which do not proscribe them completely, as is the case with alcohol in some Muslim countries. What is troubling about Orford's use of the word appetite in relation to addiction is that, for many people who have addiction problems, it could be argued that the word appetite does not really describe the experience of someone who is under the power of addiction. Appetite suggests something essentially pleasant and rewarding. For many addicts however there is only one persistent appetite and that is the desire to <u>abandon</u> what is at some level of awareness seen as a harmful activity, even if that desire is occluded by a conflicting need to continue it. In this sense it is perhaps worth asking the question whether Orford's use of this ambiguous word 'appetite' in his attempt to define addiction actually clouds the definition rather than clarifying it.

Some Conclusions: Addiction – A Disease?

There is for the present writer a highly significant question that arises from the concerns expressed in this chapter on Orford's contribution about, for example, whether addiction should be seen as a disease or not, and to what extent the word appetite is helpful in defining addiction as a clinical or social phenomenon. Is it then ultimately more realistic to suggest that neither the disease based models of addiction, nor those of the excessive appetite model, nor the choice based 'myth of addiction' model adequately explain addiction in its entirety, and

whether in reality different approaches work best in different situations and with different people? For some people, on this view, there may well be a propensity to addiction that is determined by both genetic and environmental factors in a way which that they cannot easily overcome by their own efforts or without clinical intervention, while for others, in difficult circumstances, life with the use of alcohol or an illicit drug is more bearable than life without it. However strange or illogical such a choice may seem to the onlooker, that may still be the best explanation in some cases. It has been observed[132] that no particular treatment seems better than any other, and it may be that this observation in itself lends some support to the supposition that a generalised theory of the causes of addiction may well prove to be more of a hindrance than a help in determining what addiction really is, and how to give appropriate treatment where it is considered necessary.

What is perhaps most important in our search for a reliable guide to the nature of addiction is the fundamental disagreement between Orford and Davies as to whether addiction is a disease or not. Both have strong opinions, and there is much to be said on both sides of the argument, one which is so far unresolved in the psychological approaches to addiction. Such considerations may perhaps encourage us to look for a radically different starting point in approaching the subject of addiction. If so, and if, as this thesis will argue, we need to start from the position of trying to understand human desire and longing in a positive sense, then Orford's 'appetite' based model may well prove to be a strong indicator that such an approach may be effective, because it begins with a more positive appraisal of the role that appetite plays in the choices human beings make to

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[132] 'Project MATCH' is a case in point where different forms of clinical intervention and no intervention at all have been demonstrated to have no significance in the sense that they all produce roughly the same outcome – see: Project MATCH Research Group (1977a) matching alcoholism treatments to client heterogeneity: project MATCH post-treatment drinking outcome.

engage positively or destructively with activities that can become for some individuals a prison from which they find it hard to escape.

1.3   Robert West: *Theory of Addiction*

Introduction

Robert West is currently Professor of Health Care Psychology at University College London, and editor in chief of the journal *Addiction*, which is one of the most important current scholarly contributions to the study of the subject. He has a particular interest in nicotine addiction, as suggested by a number of publications, beginning in 1993, with an article entitled "Beneficial effects of nicotine: fact or fiction?"[133], and in 1995, an article entitled "Nicotine is addictive: the issues of free choice"[134], and more recently, a book entitled *Smoking Cessation*[135]. His personal contribution to the subject of addiction, which can be studied in detail on the website www.primetheory.com[136], provides the student of addiction with an integrated methodology for studying the phenomenon and aetiology of addiction in terms of human motivation.

Exposition Of West's *Theory Of Addiction*

Robert West has provided a comprehensive survey and critical analysis of a variety of currently espoused psychological theories of addiction that underpin clinical practice. He looks at the various genres of theory, those which regard addictive behaviour as a choice, based on a cost-benefit analysis relative to

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[133] Robert West, **"**Beneficial effects of nicotine: fact or fiction?".
[134] Robert West, **"**Nicotine is addictive: the issue of free choice", in *The Effects of Nicotine on Biological Systems II*.
[135] Robert West and S. Shiffman, *Smoking Cessation*.
[136] www.primetheory.com Website last consulted on 14.06.2013.

people's situation in life, and those which emphasise the pathological, compulsive factors that arguably play a significant role in causing addiction. He also looks at theories which incorporate both 'choice' and 'disease' concepts.

Having analysed the many available theories, he provides us with his own theory, which synthesizes what he regards as the most compelling arguments he has explored into a motivational model, which he calls p.r.i.m.e theory.

The Main Elements Of West's Book Described

West's approach in this book is to look at individual theories, evaluate them, and then use them to build up a theoretical framework, including what he considers to be the useful elements in each, while rejecting those elements which he regards as unsubstantiated. In essence, he is discussing choice based and disease based theories of addiction and we will look at both of these in turn.

1)   Choice based theories of addiction

West's earlier chapters deal with the role that choice plays in initiating and establishing addictive behaviour – to the addict, life with the substance of choice is preferable to life without it, because the substance provides excitement, or relief from unpleasant symptoms such as anxiety[137].

One representative of this choice based theory of substance dependency identified by West is John Booth Davies' book, *The Myth of Addiction*, which we explored earlier in this chapter of the thesis, noting critical comments on Davies' work from West himself[138]. Davies claims in his book, as we observed, that people who drink too much alcohol or take mind altering

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[137] On symptomatic relief and addiction as a form of self-medication, West cites P.F. Buckley, "Substance Abuse in Schizophrenia, a review".

[138] See West, *Theory of Addiction*, p. 31f, where West describes Davies' 'myth of addiction' approach by recognising the importance of its contribution, while ultimately regarding it as inadequate because clinical observation of the effects of substance misuse on sufferers make it, in West's analysis, impossible to disregard the part played by 'craving and compulsion'.

drugs such as heroin or crack cocaine do so because they want to, perhaps because so doing brings some relief in a distressing or seemingly hopeless social situation. They do not have a disease: no-one is forcing them to behave in this way.

West also mentions Prochaska and Di Clemente[139], whose 'transtheoretical' choice model suggests a step by step journey towards recovery from addiction rather than focussing on the aetiology of addiction itself: a journey involving a number of 'stages' in the sense of travelling through a number of internal experiences in the attempt to give up using the drug of choice, from 'pre-contemplation' to positive action to give up, and the maintenance of that state of abstinence when it has been achieved. Therapeutic input according to Prochaska does not 'pathologise' or excuse the behaviour, but provides reinforcement at each stage of movement away from the use of the behaviour or substance. West acknowledges[140] that 'the model has revolutionised health promotion, claiming that interventions that are tailored to the particular state of the individual improve their effectiveness', as Prochaska and Velicer tried to demonstrate[141]. But he addresses problems with the model, the most telling of these being the criticism that 'it neglects the roles of reward and punishment and of associative learning in developing habits that are hard to break'[142]. He concludes his analysis of this model by suggesting that it is the wrong kind of intervention, partly because of its own internal inconsistencies, and partly because the application of the theory as a clinical intervention may mask the fact that there may be more effective

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[139] J. O. Prochaska and C. C. Di Clemente et al. "Predicting changes in smoking status for self-changers". This model is referred to in the literature either as the 'transtheoretical' or 'stages of change' model.
[140] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.68
[141] J. O. Prochaska and W. F. Velicer, "The transtheoretical model of health behavior change".
[142] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.69.

treatments available, particularly those which emphasize 'the strong situational determinants of behaviour'[143].

Another element of choice theory explores the role of <u>desire</u> in relation to addiction, and this section of West's chapter on choice models is important for two reasons.

In the first place it has a common sense feel to it – it seems intuitive to suppose that people decide to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, use illicit drugs and perform other behaviours because they enjoy them, at least at the stage when they have active control over them.

Secondly, in trying to discover analogies with theological concepts, desire and the 'education of desire' have an important place in theological reflections on human life[144]. This will be explored in greater detail in the chapter on theological approaches to the theory of addiction. For the moment, however, we will look at how West understands the role of desire in the aetiology of addiction from a psychological point of view.

The decision whether or not to act on the basis of desire is influenced by several factors, West says. There is a 'weighing up of the costs and benefits of the behaviour, which change over time, and the appreciation of which changes over time'[145]. The problem that we call addiction arises because these 'costs and benefits may involve mental representations to which we do not have full conscious access'[146]. There are influences on such behaviours which are propelled by both 'pharmacological and non-pharmacological factors', the latter involving 'one's own sense of self and

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[143] West, op. cit., p.71.
[144] See, for example, David F. Ford, *Christian Wisdom, Desiring God and Learning in Love*. Commenting on I Corinthians 13:12, he makes the point (p.178) that the completion of an individual's capacity for love in the presence of God is 'the fulfilment of transformed desire. It is the deepest motivation for the disciplines of desire and action in ordinary life'.
[145] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.73.
[146] ibid.

what one wants to be, and possibly by biases in attention to and memory for stimuli related to the addictive behaviour' [147]. In West's analysis, however, a choice based model of addiction is not ultimately adequate. 'The problem with this [choice based theory] is that it does not accord with the experiences of many addicts'[148], such as feelings of compulsion, which as West observes, often occur when the person with the problem is actively trying to stop the addictive behaviour[149]. At such times what is felt is not something which can be attributed solely to desire, however forceful: something else is happening, which constitutes a craving that cannot easily be overcome. In moving from choice based to more disease based theories, West seeks to explain this phenomenon in detail, and it is to this section of his book that we therefore now turn our attention.

2) <u>Disease Models of the aetiology of addiction</u>

Beginning in chapter 4, West looks at other elements in the aetiology of addiction, namely those based not on choice but on some form of pathological compulsion. There are issues of non-conscious 'impulse and control', that is to say, a range of psychological determinants of addictive behaviour, including factors related to personality types[150], and consequent conflicts between cravings and the desire for self-control. There is also the question of the influence of drugs themselves on addiction, in relation, for example to the ways in which, in neurological terms, substances such as heroin, tobacco, and alcohol provide a reward, but also help to generate a

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[147] ibid.
[148] West, op.cit. p.75.
[149] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.75.
[150] See in particular, C.R. Cloninger, "A Systematic method for Clinical Description and Classification of Personality Variants". A connected theory, with clinical evidence in support, can be found in an article by Natalie Castellanos and Patricia Conrod: "Brief interventions targeting personality risk factors for adolescent substance misuse reduce depression, panic and risk-taking behaviours".

physiological tolerance, and therefore the craving for them, which in time becomes definable as addiction.

West addresses the failure of the 'choice' theory, in its purest form, to deal with the actual experience of people who are addicted and who experience, when they try to give up their habit, 'a feeling of compulsion that is distinct from simple desire. It is not even that it is a "strong desire": it is an urge that they are trying to resist'.[151] Here the disease model begins to have traction. What then is the reason for these 'urges' that are more powerful than 'strong desire'?

This disease concept is based on the work of E. M. Jellinek[152], who proposed 'that the *pathology* underlying addiction involves changes in the brain that lead people to do things against their will'.[153] This cluster of symptoms West describes as Irrational Choice Theory[154]. They still involve choice, but also recognition that choice can be eroded by a form of compulsion.

The chapter on concepts of <u>impulse and self–control</u>[155] explains this from a psychological point of view. The one that follows it[156] addresses the question by taking the reader into the area of <u>conditioning</u> and <u>instrumental learning</u> processes as examples of what West calls Irrational Choice Theory.

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[151] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.75.

[152] E. M. Jellinek, *The Disease Concept of Alcoholism*. J. B. Davies in *The Myth of Addiction* unsurprisingly refers unfavourably to this work, because it starts from the unwarranted assumption that there is such a thing as a disease of alcoholism, which in some way forces people to abuse alcohol: they do not, so to speak, 'do it on purpose'. See Davies, op.cit. p.107.

[153] West, *Theory of Addiction* p.75. The word *pathology* has been emphasized here by the author of this thesis in order to mark a change in the language that West is using from one based exclusively on aspects of (conscious and unconscious) choice to one that is tending towards a 'disease' model of addiction.

[154] West, op. cit., p.75. By contrast, he describes the choice based option that has been previously discussed as a Rational Choice Theory.

[155] op. cit., chapter 4.

[156] op. cit., chapter 5.

<u>Conditioning</u>

The foundational work that underlies modern conditioning theories originates in the work of Pavlov, who famously experimented with salivation of dogs in response to the sound of a bell that they associated with the delivery of food. In West's adaptation of this theory, in terms of motivation to use drugs to achieve a certain psychological state of arousal or satisfaction, it is what the drug will achieve for the user that makes it desirable. The process is described in the psychology of addiction literature, for example, by D. C. Drummond[157]. The process with regard to alcohol is described in this way by West, paraphrasing Drummond:[158]

> For example, falling blood alcohol level (an unconditioned stimulus) induces a withdrawal syndrome including craving (unconditioned responses). After a period of abstinence it is possible for the stimuli associated with falling blood alcohol levels (conditioned stimuli) to elicit a conditioned withdrawal response which resembles alcohol withdrawal.

In a development of this model[159], Drummond replaces the withdrawal related craving language, substituting for it the idea of 'cue elicited craving'. By this is meant response to environmental stimuli, rather than simply to internally generated moves towards homeostasis. These cues, it is argued, are good predictors of a relapse into drug misuse, as they only generate relapse when sources of the drug are available. West is sympathetic to the principles that are being proposed here, in terms of the initiation of drug dependent activity; he is however less convinced of the therapeutic value of these observations[160].

<u>Instrumental Learning</u>

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[157] D.C. Drummond, T. Cooper et al. "Conditioned learning in alcohol dependence", and Drummond D.C. "Theories of drug craving, ancient and modern".
[158] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.99.
[159] Drummond, "Theories of drug craving…".
[160] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.100.

The second category of theories West explores at this point are defined as instrumental learning types. Examples given by West include the analysis of these learning types given by N. M. White[161]. According to White, 'all changes in behaviour, including the development of drug addiction, involve storage of new "information" in the nervous system'[162]. There are three reinforcers at work here: those that trigger 'approach' or 'avoidance' responses: those that produce states of feeling that are 'rewarding' or 'aversive': and those which strengthen or weaken the ways in which the information received by the neural system is represented[163]. West points out that in this theory the addictive power of the drug is generated to a large extent by its mimetic characteristics, as it replicates the action of these three reinforcers.

West shows how this theory helpfully integrates classical (conditioning) and instrumental learning processes and the ways in which both conscious and unconscious mental representations work together in the development of addictive behaviour patterns. It also paves the way for other theories, such as the Incentive Sensitisation theory as proposed for example by Robinson and Berridge in their article "Addiction"[164], demonstrating a pathway by means of which the use of a particular drug can become <u>compulsive</u>, and therefore can be accurately described as pathological. They investigate what types of cues initiate behaviours that are generated by appetite, in its widest sense. There is the pleasurable effect of the drug on the one hand, but working concurrently there is a process of sensitisation which leads in time to a dichotomy between the amount of pleasure achieved and the extent to which the individual seeks the experience. There is thus a motivation that develops (which is part of the

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[161] N. M. White, "Addictive drugs as reinforcers: multiple partial actions on memory systems".
[162] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.101.
[163] ibid. The diagram that West provides in the text at this point (p.102) comes from White, N.M, op. cit., with a discussion of his argument on pp. 981-5.
[164] T. E Robinson and K. C. Berridge, "Addiction".

addictive process) which overrides the reality of how much actual enjoyment the use of the drug provides. There is, that is to say, an indirect proportion between the two aspects of the behaviour, the hedonic and the acquisitive: its neurological locus is in fact within the circuitry of the *Nucleus Accumbens* of the brain. Robinson and Berridge define this phenomenon as 'incentive salience'.

In the next chapter West looks at the part played by drugs themselves in generating a substance dependent lifestyle. This is essentially a neurological approach, according to which the use of drugs has an effect on the structure of the brain itself, which is why, with this physiological change process, it can be so difficult for an alcoholic (for example) to voluntarily give up alcohol.

We are considering disease models of addiction presented by West in this chapter: these argue that addiction is only under the control of the sufferer to a limited degree. We are now approaching the position that West himself proposes as his own contribution to the debate about the aetiology of addiction. In this section, leading to his own theory, he identifies and discusses a number of theories, including Orford's 'excessive appetites' theory which he suggests has much to offer, although as we have seen, the theory has not yet been sufficiently tested to demonstrate its universal potential[165]. This is partly because unlike many other writers, West suggests, Orford deals with a very wide range of addictions both to substances and behaviours, and this contributes to the difficulties in scientific, i.e. evidence based, testing of the theory and how it works in practical, clinical settings, although that does not rule it out as a possibly important theory.

West now suggests a model of his own, which avoids seeing addiction either as chosen behaviour, for which neither 'treatment' nor legal penalties are required, rather an effort to minimise the risks both to society and to the user,

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[165] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.117f.

or as a disease, for which the user has no responsibility and no hope of recovery without regarding himself as a helpless victim, as in the 'Alcoholics Anonymous' approach.

West's Personal Contribution To Addiction Theory

West identifies a decision making process, in which both impulses and urges on the one hand, and inhibitory forces on the other, act as accelerators and brakes in terms of behaviour. It is perfectly reasonable, as West points out[166], to say of someone 'He was hungry but he did not want to eat'. This raises the concept of <u>competing motives</u>. A key factor is the evaluation of the effects produced in the individual by the behaviour concerned. In relation to addiction, the conflict is between the desire for the experience or sensation provided by the substance or activity on the one hand, and the associated dangers on the other. The individual can then formulate a plan, requiring a decision about whether or not to engage in the activity in question. The problem in addiction is that there is a disjunction, as West points out[167], between the wish to change a lifestyle that is regarded as detrimental to health and ability to initiate that change.

There is in his view a sense in which the human mind should be seen as fundamentally unstable, and responsive to minute changes in its environment. This assertion is an important element in his working towards a theory of addiction, and therefore needs to be clearly understood. West explains the concept in these terms[168]:

> [T]he functioning of the brain has evolved to be *inherently unstable*; the motivational system is built like a 'fly-by-wire' aircraft with built-in instability that requires constant balancing input to keep it 'on the straight and narrow'.

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[166] West, op. cit., p.149.
[167] op. cit, p.156.
[168] op. cit., p.4. Italicisation original.

In the chapter of his book where these ideas are identified[169], West points out that he is attempting to 'provide a common framework for conscious choice processes and non-conscious motivational systems'[170]. The word <u>motivation</u> is the focal idea in West's theory. In setting out his ideas in this way, West suggests that although both 'choice' and 'disease' models of understanding of addiction have something of value to contribute to the discussion, it is only when elements of the two fundamental positions represented by them are combined into a synthetic theory that an accurate understanding can be reached. How does he reach this conclusion?

West argues that what may start as choice to begin using drugs, or to stop using them, may in time, with changes in brain chemistry, become behaviour that is increasingly harder, or ultimately impossible to end without professional help. With this in view, we will now turn to West's own distinctive contribution to the subject of addiction, based on <u>chaos theory</u>.

For West, the relationship between chaos theory and human psychology is the idea that the human mind is fundamentally unstable: even though the course of our decision making may be relatively predictable on the basis of past experience, there can be abrupt changes that are hard to explain. This view is based on the concept of the 'epigenetic landscape', a term coined by Conrad Waddington in his book *Tools for Thought: How to Understand and Apply the latest Scientific Techniques of Problem Solving*[171]. This book originated, West observes, in the quest to understand the environment in which embryos develop and the many ways in which embryos are affected by their environment during gestation. Of importance here is his use of the word 'chreods' which signifies a number of

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[169] op. cit., chapter 8: "A Synthetic Theory of Motivation".
[170] op. cit., p.146, italicisation original.
[171] Conrad H. Waddington, *Tools for Thought: How to Understand and Apply the Latest Scientific Techniques of Problem Solving.*

quasi geological features of the internal environment best understood as valleys. Down these valleys the organism travels, like a falling ball. The actual pathway that the ball follows will have determinants that are directly related to its environment. This landscape may take many different forms, as West observes[172]

> The landscape may be quite flat in which case small environmental forces can send behaviour in markedly different directions. At the other extreme it may constitute a deep V-shaped valley in which case powerful motivational forces will move the behaviour some way off its original path but as soon as the forces are removed it will revert to its original course. The landscape may involve a valley with a flat bottom in which case small environmental forces will easily move behaviour about within a certain range but it would require a very powerful force to move it outside that 'normative' range. The landscape may involve a bifurcation so that a very small environmental force at a critical period can send the behaviour down very different paths.

Tiny alterations in local conditions can have in a mathematical sense a disproportionate effect on objects in that environment[173]. With regard to weather observations in particular, although weather patterns are generally stable over time, there are moments when what is observed is, by contrast, experienced as 'violent instability'.

This phenomenon, observed from time to time in the natural world with respect to climatic conditions, has for West its counterpart in human motivation. 'We can find ourselves heading inexorably down a particular path without any obvious difference except perhaps for *something minor* that happened in the past'[174]. This involves a dramatic change in our way of life, such as the experience of religious conversion, to use the example that West chooses at this point. Similarly, he argues, we 'are also prone to sudden outbursts that seem to come

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[172] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.171.
[173] West draws attention (*Theory of Addiction*, p.172) to a computer programme 'designed to model atmospheric conditions' that showed a highly significant change in outcome when the programme was changed slightly. It was this accidental discovery that led to the now famous prediction that the beat of a butterfly wing somewhere in Asia might have the potential to cause storms in America. The mathematical model for this can be investigated, West notes, at www.imho.com/grae/chaos/chaos.html
[174] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.173, emphasis added.

from nowhere' or sudden unexpected fluctuations in terms of 'preferences, opinions, or how we see ourselves and behave'[175].

From an experiential point of view, this kind of theory has much in its favour. In particular it suggests possible answers to two questions:

1) Why did I, at some point in my life, start drinking, gambling, taking drugs etc. in a way that was no longer under my conscious control, and that could not have been predicted?

2) Why does it appear to be the case that no one theory of addiction, based on 'choice' or 'disease' models, appears to explain, in every case, why an individual became addicted?

West points out in relation to the disease model that just as the choice model can be criticised for overemphasizing the role of choice, so the disease model can be criticised for failing to take into account 'issues of choice and identity'[176]. Bringing the two sets of ideas into a creative collaboration avoids the pitfalls of blaming the addicted person for their self-destructive and socially detrimental behaviour on the one hand, and on the other taking power and control out of the individual's hands by an excessively 'medicalised' approach such as that of AA which arguably overemphasizes the powerlessness of the addicted person.

West's Solution To The Problematic Of Addiction – P.R.I.M.E Theory

As we observed earlier, West attempted more than a survey of existing theories of addictions, which as his reviewers pointed out at the time of publication[177], he did with exceptional skill. While this task in itself would have been extremely

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[175] ibid.

[176] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.77.

[177] One example of such a positive comment comes from a colleague of West's who makes the point that 'When reading the chapters that describe West's theory of addiction you have a feeling that: "it all seems to fit, somehow". The use of very real examples compliments and highlights the theoretical content of this book and encourages the reader to test the theory against their reality: it works. This book has changed the way that I think about addictive behaviours and my approach to modifying or treating them'. Andy McEwen, review downloaded from Amazon website www.amazon.co.uk/...ref=dp_top_cm_cr... Consulted 03.12.2010.

impressive, he provides his own methodology. His achievement in chapter 8 of the book is the provision of a system that uses existing theoretical understandings, but moulds them into a comprehensive and original schema of his own, which he designates p.r.i.m.e theory. We will now therefore describe and evaluate this theory in detail. The word itself is an acronym, which we will now explain.

The letter 'p' stands in this context for 'plans'. In describing what he means by this term, West says: 'Plans provide a structure to our actions but can only influence them through motives and evaluations operating at the time when they are to be executed'.

The second letter, 'r', stands for 'responses'. Reflex response - the simplest level of motivation involves 'reflexes' in which stimuli directly elicit responses (such as a flinch in response to pain). This level of motivation is of limited interest here.

The next letter, 'i', takes us to the next aspect of motivation which he calls 'impulses'. This level, which allows greater flexibility of responding, involves positive drives or 'impulses' and 'inhibitory forces'. These are motivational forces that compete or combine to generate a 'resultant force' that starts, modifies or stops an action (such as the impulse to laugh in response to a joke), generated by internal and external stimuli/information, drives and emotional states and by 'instructions' emanating from higher levels of the motivational system. Impulses become conscious when for some reason they are not immediately translated into action. They are then experienced as 'urges'. The next paragraph is concerned with impulses: with urges and inhibitory forces. In this theory urges are not the same as desires although in practice they are often confused, and often mistaken for one another.

The next feature of this theory is characterised by the letter 'm', which stands for 'motives'. Of great importance here in the context of addiction is the recognition that as West says[178], 'More than one motive can co-exist at one time – even for the same target'[179]. The implication of this in the current context is that a person may well desire or feel an urge to smoke, drink, gamble or take drugs, but be at the same time aware of an urge not to do so, either for health reasons, or because of some form of social pressure from family or community, or because of legal sanctions involved in their use. There is a cost benefit analysis that may come into play here, he suggests, in the obvious sense that 'The more contentment something has created, the more we like the thought of it and the more we want it; the more distress it has created the more we are repelled by the thought of it; the hungrier we are the more we want to eat and so on'. These are 'co-occurring motives'. They are emotionally driven, and those with the greater valence will influence the decision, for or against the activity in question.

Letter 'e' is for 'evaluations'. Evaluations are the final stop on this journey. Evaluations of things that we have done come, West points out, in several forms, of a broadly aesthetic, utilitarian and ethical kind. West suggests[180] that 'evaluations do not influence behaviour directly, but only through motives. Thus believing something to be good will not cause us to act unless something turns that into a motive (e.g. a desire) to do so. Put another way, beliefs drive actions by way of feelings'. There is, he concludes, a complex relationship between competing evaluations, depending on whether they are all positive, all negative, or a mixture of the two. When there is conflict or 'dissonance' between these evaluations then avoidance action may have to be taken to reduce discomfort, and the route that is most likely to be taken is that of a changed belief about the

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[178] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.151.
[179] ibid.
[180] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.152.

activity and how that new belief can change the pattern of our motivation. This suggestion resonates to a considerable extent with Orford's dissonance theory of addiction[181].

There is here then a feedback loop, in which the various levels of experience and reflection take us, via impulses, both positive and negative, and evaluations of desire in relation to possible costly results of our behaviour, back to the level of planning our lives in accordance with what we have observed in terms of consequences. The obvious problem here is that even when a course of action is recognised to be contrary to our perceived needs and interests, it can be difficult to avoid the action because a dependency has been set up which in time may have a physiological as well as a psychological basis. West explores this aspect of the problem in his final chapter[182], and offers some helpful suggestions about appropriate clinical interventions[183].

Criticisms of West, And Conclusions.

It is greatly to the credit of Robert West[184] that he provides us at a number of points in his book with examples of how individual drug users known to him interpret their individual experiences[185]. This gives us an experiential perspective to set alongside more theoretical approaches.

And West's *Theory of Addiction* presents his integrated theory in a way that is admirably lucid and clear, avoiding technical expressions when possible and giving explanations of technical terms such as 'epigenetic landscape' when it

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[181] See for example his discussion of the dissonance between over eating and the desire to stop, in Jim Orford, *Excessive Appetites*, p.105-6.

[182] West, *Theory of Addiction*, pp. 174-192.

[183] ibid. These suggestions include, for example, the use of substitutes for heroin such as methadone and buprenorphine, acamprasate for alcohol dependency, and nicotine patches for smokers, alongside psychological interventions. See West, p.181.

[184] Robert West, op. cit., particularly chapter 8, where p.r.i.m.e. theory is analysed in detail.

[185] West, op. cit. Various examples are given by West: see for example p. 47, discussing 'rational ill-informed choice with unstable preferences'.

seems unlikely that all of his readers will be familiar with such an expression in this context.

His overview discards arguments that over simplify, or in his view provide insufficient evidence for their claims – particularly in the case of some of the more extreme 'choice' based theories such as that of J. B. Davies. He takes all that is most helpful from each theory he presents, and skilfully weaves it into a schematic whole in a manner that is well researched and elegantly presented. The crowning glory of his book, as we have seen, is his own personal contribution, p.r.i.m.e theory, which takes us to the heart of the problem of addiction, and points to ways in which we might take this model forward as a procedural basis for providing help for those people who have the misfortune to be addiction sufferers[186].

Specific Criticisms Of *Theory Of Addiction*

The first of these criticisms has to do with his omission of an engagement with issues of heritability. In his second chapter, he does look briefly at the relationship between addiction and the individual, various sociologically definable strata in society, and ethnic groups and cultures. Thus for example he states that prevalence 'of addictions is higher in men than women, but this is subject to cultural and temporal variation'[187]. He also mentions environmental factors such as economic deprivation as an important contributory factor. He mentions psychological characteristics such as the propensity to addiction, especially to illicit drugs, among types of people who are likely to engage in anti-social behaviour, or who are vulnerable to anxiety and depression. Childhood experiences of abuse and deprivation may also make a contribution to

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[186] See West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.186ff.
[187] West, op.cit. p.23.

vulnerability to addiction, he argues, as is suggested in the 'Pathways' Model of pathological gambling[188]. What he does not acknowledge is the likelihood that these sociological or psychological factors have some connection with genetics. As Matt McGue observes in his discussion of addiction[189], genetic factors can be shown, via animal and human twin and adoption studies, to play a significant, though by no means determinant, role in the aetiology of the dependence syndrome. So it seems strange that West appears to ignore the heritability question when looking at the aetiology of addiction.

Secondly, there is in West's work some inadequacy in his use of the problematic word 'conscious' as it relates to addiction. It seems likely that we are all motivated by a mixture of propelling or restrictive forces. Of some of these we will be consciously aware. If I am hungry, it is likely that I will be aware of that fact, and will usually attend to it by eating. On the other hand, most of us know what it means to say either to ourselves or to someone else, 'I really don't know why I did that', or 'I can't believe I said that to so-and-so'. Here we are dealing with an act the motivational origins of which are beyond our immediate knowledge or self-understanding. With a certain amount of deliberate self-inspection, the reason often becomes clear, whether it be tiredness, a moment of inattention, or even perhaps a somewhat subliminal dislike of the person we have offended. That process of self-inspection can be highly beneficial in helping people who are 'hooked' on drugs, for example, to change their behaviour, and some forms of psychotherapy that are currently in use in detoxification clinics make use of this in treating patients through Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

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[188] This important suggestion is based on a number of articles, such as Blaszczynski and Nower, "A pathways model of problem and pathological gambling".
[189] Matt McGue, in *Behavioral Genetics*, Robert Plomin, et al., pp.264ff. He is particularly concerned with causative factors in the development of alcoholism.

The difficulty here is that within a substantial section of human psychology, words like 'conscious' and 'non-conscious', or in a more technical sense 'unconscious'[190], have a different meaning from this. To the classically trained psychoanalyst, the word unconscious does not refer to a set of ideas, thoughts or memories to which we have access, even though recovering them may involve some effort on our part. To such a person, and to those of their intellectual inheritors, Jungian, Kleinian, and those from the Object Relations school associated with such British psychologists as Ronald Fairbairn and Donald Winnicott, the world of the unconscious is one to which the client has no access without professional assistance: through the process known as 'repression', the individual has relegated such material to an area of the mind that is inaccessible. It is noteworthy in this context that by contrast Orford, whose work we discussed earlier, offers a section on psychoanalytic writing that is relevant to addiction[191].

It is therefore argued here that West's avoidance of any mention of the psychoanalytic approach to unconscious motivation in relation to addiction is surprising, and to that extent weakens his claim to provide a total theory of addiction.

Finally, although West provides us with a wide ranging exploration of the psychology of addiction, it is perhaps a weakness of his book that he does not, unlike Jim Orford, look at the interpenetration of other factors in the world of addiction and its treatment, such as religious or ethical ideas. This might well have had a role to play, especially in the final section of chapter 9, in which he

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[190] In his *Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*, Charles Rycroft observes that Freud uses the term 'id' to refer to the unconscious, meaning by that essentially mental processes of which the subject is not aware.
[191] See Orford, *Excessive Appetites*, pp. 176ff., in which he concludes (p.180) that for many psychoanalytically oriented writers there is no need to generate a term such as 'the addictive personality'; it may be better to talk instead of aspects of the human personality that make some people particularly vulnerable to addictive behaviours.

applies his theory to the task of providing clinical help for those who have addiction problems, but West restricts his recommendations to treatments which are based on psychopharmacology and behaviourally oriented approaches without referencing treatment guidelines of a more holistic nature, including spiritual concepts.

1.4   Conclusions: The relevance of this chapter to the thesis

One fundamental aim of this thesis is to demonstrate, from a number of points of view, including the religious and spiritual dimensions, the complexity of the concept of addiction and the multi-factorial aspects of its aetiology. We have drawn attention to the competing theories of psychologies about what addiction is. In this endeavour West is particularly helpful, in his refusal to adopt a 'monothematic' approach to the subject, preferring one that acknowledges the complexity of the ideas behind addiction and the range of treatments available to those who suffer from it. As he comments towards the end of his discussion[192]:

> Individual susceptibility to addiction involves a large number of potential factors. These include a drive to explore new experiences and so be exposed to a potentially harmful addictive behaviour; a lower propensity or ability to exercise restraint; a greater propensity to form associative links with rewards rather than punishments; an identity in which engaging in the addictive activity is valued positively; an identity in which being addicted is viewed positively; a propensity to emotional states that make the addictive behaviour rewarding; and a physiological susceptibility to the effects of the addictive activity.

At one level the relevance of this chapter on the theory presented by Robert West to the flow of this thesis is relatively obvious because we are trying to establish a clear understanding of what addiction is. West helpfully reminds us of the complexity of this task, as it is understood by psychologists in a variety of

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[192] West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.183.

ways. But there are implications which go beyond the merely psychological, and indications have been given during the present chapter about directions in which we will wish to turn, particularly when our journey of exploration pursues more specifically theological lines of enquiry, such as in analysing, from a theological perspective, the concept of <u>desire</u>. At the heart of this endeavour this one word stands out above many others. In Robert West's work there is a clear understanding that motivation is a central element in the understanding of why we desire to behave in certain ways, and the counter claims of society when that society feels in some way threatened – by public exhibitions of drunkenness for example. We will now turn our attention to the theologically and ethically oriented writings on addiction of Gerald May, James B. Nelson, Ken Leech, and Christopher Cook.

2.   CHAPTER 2   THEOLOGICAL WRITING ON ADDICTION

<u>Introduction</u>

This chapter examines the concept of addiction from a theological perspective. Although psychology can provide one half of the equation – that of the clinical perspective – there is in the attempt to provide holistic pastoral care a need for an interface between the scientific and the religious elements of the problem of ingested substances.

Compared with the vast literature relating to the psychology of addiction relatively few have been written from a theological point of view. A number of recent books deal with the pastoral care of addicted people bringing in to that work theological and ethical considerations, however. In the present chapter, we shall consider four of these: Gerald May's *Addiction and Grace* Kenneth Leech's *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, James B. Nelson's *Thirst,* and Christopher Cook's *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics*. These four books have been chosen because each makes a uniquely valuable contribution to the subject.

We have mentioned Gerald May first because he was a pioneer in the attempt to give a theological infrastructure to the concept of addiction, and to explore the subject fully from the dual perspective of a clinician and a religious writer, which is helpful in terms of this thesis, which seeks to explore possible links between the two disciplines.

Kenneth Leech is of importance because, as we shall demonstrate in the text of the chapter, he writes as a highly respected author of books on Christian spirituality and pastoral care, including work with addicted people, but has the added advantage of having worked for many years with drug and alcohol dependent people in a number of parishes in central London, from 1967 until his retirement in 2003.

James Nelson also has a double qualification for inclusion in this trio, but for a different reason. As a Christian minister, with a record of writing well on theological and ethical issues, he engages with demonstrable knowledge and insight about the theological understanding of addiction, with particular reference to alcohol dependent behaviour. But secondly, as he

states himself, he does so from the personal perspective not just of a Christian theologian and pastor, but as a 'recovering alcoholic'. This makes his understanding of the subject personal as well as theoretical.

Christopher Cook is concerned both with the theological approach to addiction (particularly alcohol dependency) and also with the ways in which, historically speaking, the Christian churches have addressed the social and ethical problems associated with alcohol misuse. He also – and this is a very important contribution – makes it clear that in addition to <u>personal</u> responsibility for the use of alcoholic beverages, there is also a <u>corporate</u> responsibility when, for example, governments attempt to engage with the social aspects of alcoholic excess while at the same time benefiting greatly from taxation received through the sale of such commodities.

2.1   <u>Gerald May, *Addiction and Grace*</u>

Gerald May was the first Christian writer to deal systematically and critically with issues of addiction from both clinical and spiritual points of view. He lived from 1940 to 2005 when he died from a number of contributory causes including cancer. He had been in medical work, particularly psychiatry, for many years before turning his attention more towards spiritual matters, and became in 1983 Director of Spiritual Guidance at the Shalem Institute in Washington DC. The Shalem Institute has been providing for over thirty years what their website describes as 'hospitable and inspiring opportunities for people to listen and respond more boldly to the Spirit at work in them'[193] In this way, guidance is offered to 'spiritual directors, clergy, lay-leaders and individuals who want to open themselves more fully to God in their daily lives and work'[194] Gerald May was also Director for their Research and Program Development, and became

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[193] See: Shalem Institute website, www.shalem.org last accessed on 16.10.2011.
[194] www.shalem.org

senior fellow in Contemplative Theology and Psychology. Among his publications are, in addition to *Addiction and Grace*, such books as *Will and Spirit*, *The Awakened Heart*, and *Dark Night of the Soul*.

May was a practising American psychiatrist at the time that he wrote *Addiction and Grace*, which was first published in the USA in 1988. He explains his interest in addiction in terms of self-observation, as well as through trying to treat patients with dependency problems, such as misuse of LSD, marijuana and cocaine, but also less obviously problematic substances such as generic analgesics: other addictive symptoms that came to his attention included the overuse of anti-depressants and tranquilisers. Then he began to recognise dependency symptoms in himself, including attachment to 'nicotine, caffeine, sugar and chocolate, to name a few'[195]. He also recognised attachments to 'work, performance, responsibility, intimacy, being liked, helping others, and an almost endless list of other behaviors'[196]. This is not to suggest that for him any of these things are essentially inappropriate goals in life, but to recognise that they can become attachments that, for the Christian in particular, can take the place of attachment to what is of ultimate significance, namely God. But for those who have such attachments, whether religious or not, and without the need to be judgemental of them or their problems, the word 'addict' is an appropriate description for May.

From a critical perspective, some key criticisms of his book are:

1) <u>The nature of addiction itself</u>. May often uses the word 'attachment' as a synonym for addiction. But how accurate is this from an ontological point of view? Whereas attachment can suggest or indicate a range of emotional or physical longings, addiction is a far more technical term,

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[195] Gerald May, *Addiction and Grace*, p.9.
[196] ibid.

implying not a desire for a substance or activity that can be overcome relatively easily, but something far more powerful and mysterious and needing medical treatment[197]. Equating attachment with addiction thus weakens his argument.

2) Grace. The other word in his title is grace, a technical religious term found at many points in the Christian Scriptures and theological writing. May is to be commended for seeing the potential relevance of the concept in terms of divine initiative in providing strength for the individual with problems. But it is questionable whether he has adequately understood and presented a theology of grace that is soundly based. We will comment further on this later in the chapter.

3) There is a suggestion in May's book that all attachment is to be seen as at least potentially bad. Even the relationship between a mother and her child, he suggests, can be problematic if the level of attachment is too strong. But is this true? The affectional bonds between mothers and children might perhaps be seen in much more positive light, as the work of John Bowlby[198], Donald Winnicott and others with a professional interest in child development and its impact on the future psychological health of the individual would indicate. We therefore question May's assertion that attachment is necessarily always a bad thing in itself.

4) May insists that there is a sense in which everyone is addicted to something. This is a highly contestable suggestion. On what evidence is it based? Perhaps May is really drawing our attention to the notion (equally contestable, perhaps, in the light of modern genetics) that we all have a vulnerability to addiction in certain circumstances within the trajectory of

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[197] We may be reminded here perhaps of the Alcoholics Anonymous view of addiction to alcohol as 'cunning, powerful and baffling'.

[198] See J. Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss*, 3 volumes, Donald W. Winnicott, *The Family and Individual Development*.

our lives. But given our highlighting of the ambiguity of his use of the terms 'addicted' and 'attached', we may wonder whether this suggestion of universal addiction is really just another illustration of the problems May gives himself by conflating, and arguably confusing, these two terms.

Addictive Substances And Behaviours

May includes two diagrams that list the substances and activities that he regards as <u>potentially</u> addictive[199]. Although many of them may be regarded as harmless in themselves, when their salience becomes exaggerated, or if they involve the likelihood of self-harm (such as in the case of alcohol misuse) then they can be regarded as having an addictive potential for the individual concerned.

It is worth noting at this point that May divides these activities into two classes, which he defines as <u>attraction addictions</u> and <u>aversion addictions</u>. Attraction addictions are those where a substance or activity such as gambling has a high positive value for the individual; aversion addictions are those in which the individual puts effort into avoidance – of anger, for example. May points out that although many of the activities mentioned in his list seem superficially to be positive (such as a mother's love for her children) a line can be crossed at which point the activity specified has become an addiction rather than something freely chosen. As May puts it[200]:

> *no* addiction is good; *no* attachment is beneficial. To be sure, some are more destructive than others; alcoholism cannot be compared with chocolate addiction in degrees of destructiveness, and fear of spiders pales in comparison to racial bigotry. But if we accept that there are differences in the degree of tragedy imposed upon us by our addictions, we must also recognize what they have in common: they impede human freedom and diminish the human spirit.

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[199] Gerald May, *Addiction and Grace*, p.38-39.
[200] op. cit., p.39

This paragraph contains the whole of May's argument in terms of the importance of addictions and the damage that they do to people in spiritual terms. Addictions are aspects of functioning that limit human freedom, and they act, in the specifically spiritual sense, as barriers between the person and God.

The idea of all attachment as a bad thing – even attachment between children and parents, to use his limiting case, – is however not universally accepted. We mentioned for example in the work of the psychoanalytically oriented psychologist John Bowlby a defence of the need for attachment between a mother and her child in order to give the child 'a secure base'[201]. Bowlby's work is not without its critics[202], but it provides an important corrective to the view that all attachment is necessarily dangerous. Some positive attachment, in the early stages of infancy especially, seems to be essential to satisfactory psychological developmental processes.

Definition Of Addiction And Its Aetiology

How then does May conceptualise addiction, and how does addiction happen? May pays particular attention to the idea of attachment: 'It comes from the old French *attaché*, meaning "nailed to". 'Attachment "nails" our desire to specific objects and creates addiction'[203]. This is the core of his argument. These attachments 'enslave us with chains that are of our own making and yet that, paradoxically, are virtually beyond our control'[204]. The chapter entitled "The Psychological nature of Addiction" [205] explores this idea in depth and detail. As

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[201] John Bowlby, *A Secure Base, Clinical Applications of Attachment Theory*. This theme of attachment as providing a secure base and thus guarding against pathological childhood anxiety is the major theme of this book (see in particular pp.29-31).
[202] See, for example Jean Knox, *Archetype, Attachment, Analysis*, p.120, and Michael Rutter, *Maternal Deprivation Re-assessed*.
[203] Gerald May, *Addiction and Grace*, p.3.
[204] May, op. cit., p.4.
[205] op. cit., chapter 3.

it is one of the two chapters[206] that contain the main focal ideas of the book, we will devote some space to expounding his argument in the two chapters sequentially, thereby recognising that they work very closely together rather than completely independently of one another – that is part of the subtlety of the book.

<u>'The Psychological Nature Of Addiction'</u>[207]

Chapter 3 sets out May's argument that addiction has an important psychological component. What does he mean by this assertion? He begins his discussion by introducing two categories that are crucial to his argument – <u>the will</u>, and <u>self-esteem</u>[208]. The will represents in psychological terms 'our capacity to choose and direct our behaviour'[209], and self-esteem speaks of the 'respect and value with which we view ourselves'[210]. In addiction, he suggests, a process occurs in which there is a splitting of the will into two, so that part of it wants to continue the activity and another part wants to relinquish it, so that a <u>conflict</u> is set up which then in turn damages self-esteem[211]. This undermining process is strengthened by the attempts people make to relinquish addictive behaviour but fail to do so. In some cultures, he points out, this failure might have a positive component, because it would make people more aware of their oneness with the creation and issues of dependency that are not simply weakness but are affirmative and positive experiences. In this way, <u>addiction arises out of the attempt to control certain forms of behaviour</u> such as the use of drugs or alcohol

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[206] op. cit., chapters 3 and 6.

[207] op. cit., chapter 3, pp. 140-161.

[208] op. cit., p.42.

[209] ibid.

[210] ibid.

[211] In the previous section it was pointed out that in Jim Orford's book *Excessive Appetites* this concept of conflict has an important place, as it does in the work of May. For Orford it is very much the experience of conflict or 'dissonance' on the part of the addiction sufferer that constitutes the basis of the pathological understanding of what addiction is.

(and many other examples could be given) and the awareness of the individual of failure to do so. This process is central to May's attachment argument, and the psychological aspect of addiction is, as he explains in a later chapter[212], reinforced by the chemical dependencies that involve changes in the neurological structures of the brain through substance use.

Analysing this process further, May identifies in this chapter a number of what he describes as 'mind tricks'[213] that promote or reinforce addictive forms of behaviour. These take, he suggests, two principal forms, i.e. <u>Self-deception</u>, and <u>Collusion</u>.

1. Self-Deception

May provides examples of seven kinds of self-deception: denial and repression, rationalization, hiding, delaying tactics, the 'I <u>can't</u> handle it' ploy, the 'I <u>can</u> handle it' ploy, and, ultimately, breakdown.

The phenomenon of denial is self-explanatory.[214]. Like Robert West, he sees denial as an unconscious process. Linking the physiological changes that can come about through chemical dependency to spiritual states of mind, May makes the observation that in what he describes as a 'perfect irony, the drug becomes its own camouflage; its effects cloud and alter awareness sufficiently to prevent realization of the person's addiction to it'.

Breakdown

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[212] See: *Addiction and Grace*, especially chapter 4, "The Neurological Nature of Addiction", p.64ff.
[213] op.cit., p.43ff.
[214] See: Robert West, *Theory of Addiction*, e.g. the chapter entitled 'Addiction, Habit and Instrumental Learning', pp.91-108, which focuses on the 'stimulus-response' theories of decision making that function without the involvement of a <u>conscious</u> choice process. West regards this as a particularly helpful contribution to the psychological study of addiction.

This is the point at which real danger is encountered. At this stage the person's reason has been 'cruelly eroded'[215]. This may lead to other forms of addiction, and to manic strategies for dealing with the problems, such as the well-known 'geographic' fantasy – "If I left and went to live somewhere else I could start again". This process can then lead to total psychotic breakdown and other, physical health problems, including accidental or intentional self-harm.

2. Collusion

In the collusive state of functioning, others unwittingly collude with the addict in supporting rather than challenging the addictive behaviour: these may be family or friends, or professional helpers from the medical and psychological disciplines. Whether or not May knew the work of J. B. Davies[216] which we commented on in chapter one, there is an echo of his argument here, in the suggestion that addiction can be a term that is invented unwittingly by people in the 'addicted' person's environment, and is, to that extent at least, to be regarded as a 'myth'. They do so, Davies suggested, for a variety of reasons, including the wish to see the addicted person as sick in order to excuse their behaviour. In May's experience as a psychiatrist, this collusion appears because of 'contradictory motivations'[217]. On the one hand, there is the genuine wish on the part of the addicted person to stop the behaviour concerned, and this is shared by his or her family and by society as a whole. But on the other hand a different set of motivations is at work: there is another level of *desire* in the individual concerned that militates against this positive wish. There is, he points out, not just a psychological reason for this, but also a biological reason, a quasi physical

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[215] *Addiction and Grace*, p.50.
[216] J. B. Davies, *The Myth of Addiction*.
[217] *Addiction and Grace*, p.51.

force residing within the individual that ensures that 'the addictive process never sleeps'[218].

<u>'Psychoanalytic Insights'[219] And Other Psychological Theories</u>

In this section of the chapter on 'mind', May focuses specifically on two major twentieth century contributions to the understanding of human behaviour and motivation, the psychoanalytic view and the behaviourist view.

<u>Psychoanalytic Theory</u>

It would be impossible to do justice to such a vast subject in one chapter of a thesis such as this, but May's section on psychoanalytic insights[220] provides a valuable introduction to the subject which gives an idea of the issues involved, whether or not his readers have personal knowledge of this approach to the human mental processes. At the heart of Freud's theory is the <u>unconscious,</u> and in this present thesis we have already observed both in May's own writing and that of other authors such as Robert West the significance of unconscious forces in the process of becoming addicted to substances or other compulsive behaviour. In May's words, 'The mind uses denial, repression, and a host of other defense mechanisms to keep us unaware of the truth of our motivations or to justify them falsely'[221]. This is the key concept for our understanding of the unconscious in relation to addiction. What is compromised by repression is what May terms 'purity of heart'[222], a highly useful expression, because it brings together both psychological and spiritual ways of understanding how we function. May links this idea with the experience of the Christian saints, who far from conquering their attachments, have found historically that the battle is

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[218] op. cit., p.52.
[219] ibid.
[220] op. cit., p.52ff.
[221] *Addiction and Grace*, p.53.
[222] ibid.

lifelong, and can only be addressed by an increasingly powerful sense of needing God's mercy and grace.

Summarising his section on psychoanalytic insights May observes that human beings invest psychic energy in activities that bring pleasure or avoid pain; equally many of these activities – 'cathexes' to use the technical term – involve a process designed to keep them unconscious 'by means of self-deception, so our motivations are never completely pure and may be quite contradictory'[223].

In a short critical addendum to this section, May deals with one aspect of psychoanalytic thought that he finds unhelpful, that is to say the 'Myth of the Addictive Personality'[224]. His critique of this notion is that personality defects in an individual cannot create a vulnerability to addiction to chemicals such as alcohol or heroin. Those who appear to be, in his words, 'manipulative, devious, and self-centred' did not seem to be like that before they became addicted, rather these phenomena seem to have occurred subsequently, so, in terms of clinical observation, there is no evidence for this form of 'personality disorder' theory[225]. The same applies in terms of the use of drugs as a relief mechanism for symptoms of such neurotic disorders such as anxiety or depression. If the people interviewed seemed to have been anxious or depressed before becoming addicted, the argument would be robust; however this does not seem to be the case. This conclusion is not without contrary opinions[226]. On this basis, it might be wise to keep May's judgement in view, but to recognise that there are many

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[223] *Addiction and Grace*, p.54.
[224] ibid. A book with the title *The Addictive Personality* was written in 1988 by Craig Nakken – the same year as May's book *Addiction and Grace* was published. He suggests, contrary to what May thinks, that some but by no means all people develop addictive personalities, as a response to emotional conflicts over a long period of time, (op. cit., p.29). This is a very different approach from that taken by May, who believes that we are all, in some sense, addicts.
[225] ibid.
[226] See, for example C. R. Cloninger, "A Systematic Method for Clinical Description and Classification of Personality Variants. A Proposal".

different points of view about how personality may or may not be a factor in the aetiology of addiction.

Behavioural Approaches

Behavioural theory, originating, as May observes[227], in the work of Ivan Pavlov, does not look for hidden, unconscious (and therefore questionable) motivations, but restricts itself to what can be observed in terms of an individual's behaviour, the choices that he decides to make, which can be objectively described as behaviour – no matter what interpretation may be attached to it[228].

This way of approaching addiction has the advantage, according to those who practise it, of verifiability. It also makes use of learning theory and the science of the development of habits of behaviour, which as May comments, 'have been somewhat ignored by psychoanalysis'[229]. In behavioural theory what is described as the 'law of effect'[230] comes into the equation: the experience of pleasure or the relief of pain caused by performing an action (such as drinking alcohol) reinforces the performance of that action, whereas its opposite, painful or unrewarding experience generates, for the most part, negative reinforcement, a determination not to repeat the action. Once these habits of behaviour have been learned and become habitual, it can become very difficult to break the pattern that has been learned[231].

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[227] *Addiction and Grace*, p.55.
[228] A variety of conceptual understandings of Pavlovian and Pavlovian derivative behaviour theory are well documented and evaluated in Robert West's book *Theory of Addiction*, chapter 5 as was mentioned in the discussion of West in an earlier chapter.
[229] *Addiction and Grace*, p.56
[230] ibid.
[231] ibid.

May looks at this from a spiritual point of view, observing that the behavioural approach to addiction may seem to spiritually minded people to be 'cold, austere, unresponsive to the subtle feelings of the human heart'[232]. He suggests however that a combination of psychoanalytic and behavioural theories can help the clinician or pastor to understand the attachment process that has propelled a client into the attachments that constitute addiction.

May now provides a three-stage behaviourally oriented programme for the acquisition of attachment behaviour: those stages are <u>Learning</u>, <u>Habit Formation</u>, and <u>Struggle</u>. He begins by showing how these work in terms of positive attachments, and how they work equally effectively in helping us to understand the negative pole of attachment behaviour, that is to say, aversion addictions, such as avoiding even a small amount of exposure to such things as blood, animals, anger, or intimacy, to give some of the examples he provides[233].

<u>Struggle</u>

This is for May the point at which addiction becomes most problematic: the essential difference between this stage and its predecessors, May argues[234], is that what has hitherto been unconscious now becomes available to the individual: there is now awareness of the craving for the experience that brings pleasure or relief. There is a perceived need for frequent repetition of the activity and a need for greater amounts (of alcohol or a particular drug for example)[235], and this increasing need is a symptom of the phenomenon of *tolerance*, which will continue to increase until something interferes with the process, such as the unavailability of the drug[236]. One such interference can be the awareness of the

[232] ibid.
[233] *Addiction and Grace*, p.39.
[234] op.cit., p.59.
[235] ibid.
[236] *Addiction and Grace*, p.59.

individual that there is a problem, and the determination to moderate or abandon the behaviour[237].

The most commonly experienced reaction to stopping the addictive activity is withdrawal[238]. The symptoms of withdrawal range, as May correctly asserts[239], from 'mild uneasiness to true agony'. The word danger is also appropriate here, because withdrawal that is attempted too suddenly (such as going from a large excess of alcohol to none at all in one move) can lead to life threatening physical symptoms[240].

One paradox of addiction, May observes[241], is that because the use of a substance achieves short term relief, the person using it will want to use it more, in spite of awareness that this process is ultimately self-defeating. What is set up in such a scenario is a set of mixed motivations as 'attempts to quit continually increase [the] desire to continue!'[242].

There is also here, May observes[243], reinforcement of the need for a drug or an activity that occurs when that activity is intermittent rather than constant, and the conditioning that results from this is also a factor in the difficulty of stopping the activity, because it does not have an entirely predictable outcome. This unpredictability is a strong reinforcer as it encourages experimentation with the behaviour to maximise the likelihood of obtaining the reward associated with it[244].

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[237] ibid.
[238] The reader will no doubt be aware at this point that a similar pattern was observed in the previous section which investigates the phenomenon of addiction form a predominantly psychological perspective.
[239] *Addiction and Grace*, p.59.
[240] Nicholas Roberts, *Working with Addiction Sufferers, a Handbook for Southwark Clergy*, (not currently in general distribution) 2008, p.18-19.
[241] *Addiction and Grace*, p.59.
[242]op.cit., p.60.
[243] ibid.
[244] See Robert West. In *Theory of Addiction*, p.138, he writes of the 'intermittent reinforcement' syndrome. Because a human or animal does not know in an experiment how many chances out of ten there are of obtaining the reward, the activity will be repeated many times to maximise the possibility of doing so.

May now provides an examination of the physiological processes involved in becoming addicted[245], before considering the possibility of a spiritual answer to the problem, which is not to be seen as an <u>alternative</u> to other forms of intervention, but as a <u>complementary</u> aspect, in which divine grace, as his overall title suggests, has an important part to play in the liberation of the addicted individual. Like most, but not all commentators on the scientific factors, he maps a process of physical neurological change in the brain as part of the natural history of addiction[246].

Physiological and Spiritual Factors

In his chapter on physiological factors, in which he charts the processes in the brain which lead to physical dependency, May includes[247] a reflection on the problems which face the neurologist and the theologian in providing an accurate explanation of spiritual, and indeed mystical, phenomena. He identifies part of this epistemological struggle as having its location in the <u>immanence</u> and <u>transcendence</u> of the human spirit, which, as he puts it, 'is both pervasively indwelling and yet immutably rooted in the eternal; like God it has at once qualities of immanence and transcendence. It is our life force as incarnate beings, and yet is more. According to Genesis, our human spirit is the breath of God in us'[248]. The question that this generates for May is how 'to bring spiritual understanding into meaningful harmony with the hard data of anatomy and physiology'[249]. This collocation of science and theology in his discourse is of great significance in this thesis because it suggests the possibility, perhaps even the need, for an integrated approach, combining insights from both

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[245] *Addiction and Grace*, chapter 4.
[246] May, op. cit., p.64ff.
[247] op. cit., p.65.
[248] ibid.
[249] ibid.

psychological and religious disciplines to construct a satisfactory pastoral strategy in coping with the problems and opportunities raised by addiction issues. This is not necessarily an easy task, as May readily admits[250].

In the two fundamental elements of addiction that May identifies, that is to say self-deception and collusion, we find two theological themes at work, i.e. truth on the one hand and _agape_[251] on the other. Truth matters because one of the characteristics most associated with addiction is denial. The person who is addicted, to alcohol, for example, may well deny the problem, both to himself, and also to others, family, friends and colleagues etc. At the heart of the pastoral ministry to such a person (as indeed might equally be said of a medical treatment) lies the recognition that until the addicted person faces the addiction truthfully, little or nothing can be done to help. For an addicted person to come under the controlling dynamic of the truth suggests that from a religious, spiritual point of view, the way of liberation begins with an encounter with the true situation without denial. The situation of the addict, in a spiritual sense has, among other factors, the character of – to revert for the moment to the thought world of Jim Orford – 'excessive appetite' or disproportionate desire, which in Christian language can be described as sinful[252]. Collusion is also destructive from a theological perspective. True _agape_ requires the helper to behave in the genuine interests of the person for whom concern is being expressed by not colluding with her denial.

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[250] ibid.
[251] This Greek word is one of the four words for love: it can be used in describing love as a willed, chosen form of loving attention. See C. S. Lewis, _The Four Loves_.
[252] The concept of 'desire' and its relevance to theological concerns will be investigated in more detail in a later chapter of this thesis.

<u>Grace</u>

We will now explore the ways in which *Addiction and Grace*, having looked at the psychological mechanisms and neurological aspects of attachment, provides a method of helping those whose lives have been damaged by addiction to find freedom from their predicament: this method, unlike those provided by specifically medical models of care, concentrates on looking for a <u>spiritual</u> approach to healing and liberation, one that is based on the availability of <u>divine grace</u>.

Chapter 3 of the book describes the process by which grace can be a vehicle of this healing potential.

May takes as his starting point not the situation that obtains when human beings 'lose their way', as, for example, in severe cases of addiction to drugs, but the ideal situation, the Garden of Eden described in the book of Genesis[253] before human rebellion against God had converted it into what May calls 'an empty and idolatrous wasteland'[254]. May acknowledges that his exposition of the theological motifs and ideas associated with grace is presented with 'some fear and uncertainty'[255], because he is writing as a doctor with an interest in religious matters rather than as a theologian. This disclaimer is important, because it acknowledges that there are pitfalls in claiming authority in a field of study in which one is not, in a technical sense, an 'expert'. It is good to have that caveat expressed explicitly, but it does create a problem, in a number of ways. Two points will illustrate the reservations being expressed here.

In the first place, much of what May has to say about the workings of God's grace in the soul of the human being is dependent on his earlier assertion that all of us are addicts, excessively or distortedly attached to some kind of substance

[253] See in particular Genesis 3:1-20.
[254] *Addiction and Grace*, p.119.
[255] ibid.

or activities. But as we have commented earlier in this chapter, this assertion is questionable, partly because to attribute addictive behaviour to everyone indiscriminately runs the risk of evacuating the concept of significant meaning.

Secondly, although May wisely recognises his lack of formal qualifications in the field of academic theology, he must have been aware of many books of religious and theological importance written by experts with the non-specialist reader in mind. To give one example – May begins his chapter on 'grace' by quoting from Saint John's Gospel. But in trying to make use of this text in his chapter, he does not refer even to any of the more 'accessible' commentaries. So we are left with a rather inadequate account of the meaning of the verses quoted in relation to grace. And the same could be said more generally about this chapter of May's book. It would have been helpful to have at least been given some sense of the wide and varying definitions of grace to be found in some writers of the patristic and medieval period such as those of Saint Augustine, with his threefold definition of grace[256], or Saint Thomas Aquinas, dividing the idea of grace into 'sanctifying' and 'actual' grace[257]. Had a work from a Protestant source been needed by way of comparison, he might for example have mentioned a book such as Paul Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, volume 2[258], which was well known at the time that May was writing. There is also the work of another fellow American, Rheinhold Niebuhr, who might have contributed to May's understanding of grace[259].

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[256] See: Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology*, an Introduction, 5th edition, p.356.
[257] See: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Prima Secundae, question 110a.1. This reference, presented with appropriate citations, is to be found in Alister McGrath, op. cit. p.356, and *The Christian Theology Reader*, third edition, p.432.
[258] See P. Tillich*, Systematic Theology*, volume 2, p.65f.
[259] On Niebuhr and Grace see J. McQuarrie, *Twentieth Century Religious Thought*, p.347f.

Having made these negative comments, let us look at how May expounds his theory of grace in relation to addiction. The following quotation clearly expresses what he is trying to demonstrate[260]:

> Grace is the active expression of God's love. God's love is the root of grace; grace itself is the dynamic flowering of this love; and the good things that result in life are the fruit of this divine process. Grace appears in many ways, which theologians have attempted to categorize… Jesus spoke of God as being our intimate, loving parent, and he wished for us to receive God's love like little children. Let me try to use that image, at least for a while.

This description of the ideal relationship between God and humanity as having the characteristics of a parent-child interaction is then explored, recognising that human approaches to God are often contaminated by attempts to manipulate God, just as children try to manipulate their human parents. May notes that the human parent image, like all theological images that are founded on analogy, is somewhat weak, because of God's absolute knowledge of each individual human soul and its attempts to manipulate, compared with the wisest or most knowledgeable human parent. Equally, May proposes, God does not control human beings: 'God calls us, invites us, and even commands us, but God does not control our response. We bear responsibility for the choices we make'[261]. This sentence has a great deal of significance in our attempt to understand addiction, because although in the early stages of substance dependency the individual can make choices and so be held responsible for the decision to start or stop the activity concerned, there comes a stage in the process of becoming substance dependent when free choice has been eroded by the substance and its constitutional effects on the individual.

May looks at the ways in which the potential for a grace filled relationship between God and humanity can be compromised. At such times, May suggests,

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[260] Addiction and Grace, p.120
[261] op. cit., p.122.

'[the] immanent God in us becomes wounded with us, suffers, struggles, hopes, and creates with us'[262]. The locus of this reciprocal process is to be found in the Christian church community, where grace is something that is not predominantly, or exclusively a private matter, but finds its expression in the life of that community[263]. This is a most important contribution to the understanding of the worshipping community as a place where channels of healing for addicted people could be available wherever there is in church groups an open and non-judgmental attitude to people with various addiction problems; one criticism of May is that he does not develop this idea in enough detail.

Returning specifically to May's understanding of grace, one crucial aspect of his understanding is the mode of the reception of grace as <u>gift</u>. He makes the point that just as human beings cannot manipulate the 'God-parent', so they cannot earn God's grace, they can only open themselves to receiving it. Grace, and its reception cannot, therefore, be controlled. Here again, there is an interesting analogy with addiction, because addicted people are attempting to control or manipulate their environment through alcohol, drugs, or other forms of addicted behaviour, to produce immediate effects of pleasure or the relief of pain.

In asserting God's freedom in the gift of grace, May is not however suggesting that human beings can only be passive in their receptivity. There is also space for an active form of receptivity, in which prayer plays a part by 'requesting' grace from God, in a way that prepares the soul to receive and act upon that grace when its active presence and availability is particularly apparent. We now

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[262] op. cit., p.124.
[263] Although May is speaking here from a Christian point of view, and using Christian scripture to illustrate his ideas, it is important perhaps to recognise that the same could be said of other non-Christian faith communities.

turn to the specific ways in which, according to May, grace has a part to play in the healing process for people with addiction problems.

Here, however, we meet one of the paradoxes of human freedom, for May insists that there is always room for choice, even for those who seem to have reached a point where choice has been almost obliterated by addictive behaviour. 'Ironically', as May expresses this[264], 'freedom becomes most pure when our addictions have so confused and defeated us that we sense no choice left at all. Here, where we feel absolutely powerless, we have the most real power'. This suggestion is of great importance in what follows, so it will be worth expounding this idea further. The key lies in May's use of one word – opportunity. The person who is, to use a well-known expression in the world of addiction health care, at 'rock bottom' has only two possible choices. One is to stay in that helpless position, the other is to turn towards anything that can hold out the hope of change, however small and unpromising that hope may seem to be. This is what May means by his use of the word faith, which he understands not, as he makes clear, in terms of intellectual assent to religious dogma, but rather by engagement with risk. The content of that risk, in terms of faith, is, in May's words, the possibility of trust.

Trust as the vehicle of grace is the theme of the next section of May's chapter on Grace[265]. This kind of trust is not what might be called a 'leap in the dark'. For May it involves returning to patterns of trusting behaviour that have proved helpful in the past, and which therefore offer similar reliability in the present. This experience of trust can be, so to speak, programmed into the brain, and so the 'cells of the brain become more accepting of it'[266]. It thus becomes predictive that behaviour that has provided assistance in the past will be found helpful

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[264] *Addiction and Grace*, p.127.
[265] op. cit., p.129f.
[266] ibid.

again, and this trust has to do with relationships in both a 'vertical' and 'horizontal' sense, to use metaphorical language – a belief that God will not let down or abandon human beings no matter how low and despondent they may have become, and that fellow human beings will also meet the needs of the person with the addiction. This is a dynamic process, he suggests, because 'For each layer of trust that builds up, another, more challenging risk is offered'[267].

There is here then a reciprocal relationship that lies at the heart of faith and trust: on the one hand there is the offering that God continually makes, and the human response, a movement of the heart at least as much as of the mind, but which must be given freely and without constraint. This reciprocal, free, relationship is the key to May's understanding of the pathway out of addiction that can be provided by the dynamic of faith – so how does he explain this process?

The remainder of the book attempts to do precisely that, and so we will summarise his argument at this point. There is a fundamental question, of a rhetorical kind, that May uses to lead into a consideration of the process we are exploring at this point[268]:

> We have all had the experience of struggling to break a habit, failing repeatedly, and then at some point meeting with success. What was this success, and how did it happen? We can say that it was willpower, but what suddenly empowered our will? We can say it was finding the right strategy, but what enabled that discovery? Did we do it on our own, or did grace break through and deliver us, or was it some mysterious cooperation of will and grace that we could never have engineered?

For May it is when we are at our most helpless and vulnerable, in what he refers to as a spiritual 'desert' that we are most open to the reception of grace. 'The desert', he writes[269], 'is where the battle with attachment takes place. The

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[267] *Addiction and Grace*, p.130.
[268] op. cit., p.132.
[269] op. cit., p.133f.

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again, and this trust has to do with relationships in both a 'vertical' and 'horizontal' sense, to use metaphorical language – a belief that God will not let down or abandon human beings no matter how low and despondent they may have become, and that fellow human beings will also meet the needs of the person with the addiction. This is a dynamic process, he suggests, because 'For each layer of trust that builds up, another, more challenging risk is offered'[267].

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[267] *Addiction and Grace*, p.130.
[268] op. cit., p.132.
[269] op. cit., p.133f.

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saga of the desert tells of a journey out of slavery, through the desert, toward the garden that is home'. This journey involves 'purgation and purification' and a 'loving courtship, a homemaking between the human soul and its Creator'[270]. This experience, he suggests, is one that all people have, but it is brought into a particularly sharp focus through the problems of addictive behaviour. In all cases the same struggle is involved, and the journey, if completed well enough, leads from the slavery of the desert of attachment to the freedom of the 'garden that is home'.

May is, however, under no illusions about the hardship and the cost of that journey:[271]

> At its mildest, the desert is a laboratory where one learns something about addiction and grace. In more fullness, it is a testing ground where faith and love are tried by fire. And with grace, the desert can become a furnace of real repentance and purification where pride, complacency, and even some of the power of attachment can be burned away, and where the rain of God's love can bring conversion: life to the seeds of freedom.

This sense of a hard journey, and a purging of desire through a furnace, is illustrated by reference to the lives of some well-known spiritual leaders, including 'Elijah and other great Hebrew prophets', and the saints of Hinduism, Buddhism, especially in the person of Gautama, John the Baptist, the Christian desert mothers and fathers, Mohammed, and of course, Jesus, particularly in his own Temptation story in a deserted, wilderness environment. Most if not all of these historic figures did not choose their 'desert' experiences. Conversely they were chosen, and then in positive response to their calling, were obliged to test their vocation in the desert, whether literal, metaphorical, or both.

In the case of Jesus, May suggests[272], we have a most important illustration of the relationship between attachment and the possibility of overcoming it, in the

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[270] ibid.
[271] *Addiction and Grace*, p.137.
[272] op. cit., p.138.

specific context of the 'Temptation'[273] accounts in the synoptic gospels[274]. Although each writer has his own particular 'take' on the meaning of the story he tells, and does so with some editorial freedom because of this, there is an underlying theme of testing of an individual in preparation for a task that lies in the future. Each episode in the account, May says, speaks of the problem of attachment[275]: in Satan's invitation to turn stone into bread there is a temptation to 'play god' – to misuse power for personal gain; in the temptation to jump off the Temple parapet the issue is one of manipulation; the invitation to become master of the world is the invitation to put personal power in the place of God, which is, in theological language, the ultimate act of idolatry.

The nature of that idolatry, as May points out, is that in the temptations, 'Satan was hoping Jesus would fall prey to attachment: attachment to meeting his own needs, attachment to his own power, or attachment to the material riches of the world'[276]. In line with our analysis of May's comments on attachment as part of a self-deception programme, this series of temptations is inviting Jesus to fall into the "I can handle it" trap. Rather than fall, he 'stood firm in his own freedom and in his faith and in grace'[277].

May argues that, in his full humanity, Jesus was undergoing a real, not an imaginary ordeal, and that all human beings who are tempted to fall into attachment behaviour patterns have to undergo that same ordeal, and meet it with the same resources available to Jesus, primarily those of humility and trusting faith. In that act of faith, as he shows in the next chapter[278], there comes the reality of underpowerment.

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[273] In fact, the word 'testing' is probably nearer in meaning than 'temptation' to the Greek verb *peirazo* which is used by all three evangelists in a variety of grammatical constructs.
[274] The precise references for these accounts are; Mark 1:12-13; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13.
[275] *Addiction and Grace*, p.138.
[276] ibid.
[277] ibid.
[278] *Addiction and Grace*, chapter 7, "Empowerment, Grace and Will in Overcoming Addiction".

<u>Some Conclusions</u>

Although May's book has many highly important things to say about addiction in general, there are some aspects of the book that can be criticised. In the first place, as James B. Nelson, observes[279], May is making a highly controversial statement at the beginning of his book when he claims that just as everyone is a sinner, so too everyone is addicted to something, whether it be alcohol, drugs, or some form of potentially harmful activity, something that falls short of concentration on God, thereby running the risk of being idolatrous. This is an important criticism, suggesting that May's definition of addiction is a highly personal one with which by no means all would agree. It seems to the writer of this thesis that in agreement with Nelson, it would be unwise to move more indiscriminately towards a definition of 'attachment' that makes it virtually synonymous with 'addiction'. To regard pathological attachments (such as to alcohol) as addiction seems to be valid, as such attachments so often cause suffering to the addict and his or her environment; it seems unnecessary however to see all such attachments as actually or potentially as harmful as that.

As discussed in the presentation of May's views, there is also an important question to be raised about how far May has dealt adequately with the theological concept of grace, even taking into account his own disclaimer in terms of his lack of professional knowledge of theology compared with his undoubted expertise as a doctor and psychiatrist.

It would also, from a religious perspective, be useful to pay more attention to the matter that May raises concerning the community, particularly the Church and its congregations, in providing help and support for the addicted individual

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[279] James B. Nelson, *Thirst: God and the Alcoholic Experience*, p.71

member, or the member of the congregation whose partner or children are at risk from, or already engaged in, addictive behaviour, particularly with regard to alcohol and/or drugs. It is important, in the view of the writer of this thesis that all pastors should be aware of the problems of addiction that may well affect members of their parishes, and that churches would be well advised to offer professionally accredited training courses in the pastoral care of people with drug and alcohol addiction problems in particular[280].

Also May does not take sufficient account of social pressures to misuse these potentially addictive substances. It is the contention of the present writer that the compound effects of availability, relative cheapness, and social approval, particularly towards the arguably excessive intake of alcoholic beverages, cannot be overestimated, and the cost of this behaviour to society in terms of medical care is an important factor, as was mentioned in the introductory section to this thesis[281]. This leads to the view that a holistic view of pastoral care should take account not only of the needs of the individual and his family, friends and colleagues at a personal level, but also engage with political leaders at both local and national levels to work towards public policies on addiction that have some chance of making a positive difference. This point of view will be developed later in this chapter, exploring the ethical approach to alcohol misuse and government responsibility in this context in Christopher Cook's book, *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics.*

It is a long time since May produced the first edition of this informative and helpful book, with its intelligent combination of ideas from both the medical sciences and the field of religious and spiritual investigation of human problems.

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[280] Training courses of this kind have recently been introduced in the Anglican Dioceses of Southwark, Guildford and London.
[281] It was observed there, for example, that specifically alcohol related death in the UK rose from just under 10 per 100,000 in 1991 to over 18 per 100,000 in 2006.

If he were writing today, he would almost certainly have wanted to include some insights from the world of genetics about the heritability of a vulnerability to some addictive lifestyles. Equally, that study, as we have mentioned, is still to a large extent on the threshold of discovery about how 'nature and nurture' interact in the formation of human personality, especially in some of its pathological manifestations.

2.2 Kenneth Leech, With Specific Reference To *Drugs And Pastoral Care*

Introduction

Kenneth Leech wrote about addiction in a number of books and articles[282], and provided guidance for the General Synod of the Church of England when it debated the problems of drug addiction in 1998[283]. His major book on the pastoral care of people who have drug problems, *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, was published in the same year[284].

Leech, who died in September 2015, was an Anglican priest, ordained in the Diocese of London in 1965, to work as a curate in the East London Parish of Hoxton with a long standing Anglo-Catholic tradition. He had a long history of working in London, including a substantial ministry at St Botolph's Church, Aldgate in the City of London and its programme of pastoral outreach to homeless people and those with drug and alcohol problems. He retired from this in 2003. Like Gerald May, Leech was thus actively involved in the care of people with addiction problems. Perhaps the best known example of this was his work

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[282] Examples include: *Pastoral Care and the Drug Scene* and *Youthquake: Spirituality and the Growth of a Counter-Culture.*
[283] Kenneth Leech, *Drugs and the Church – a background paper for the Board for Social Responsibility.*
[284] Kenneth Leech, *Drugs and Pastoral Care.*

at St. Anne's Church in Soho, where he was the assistant curate from 1967 to 1971, developing a programme of missionary outreach to that area with its complex and fast changing demographic profile, including the world of homelessness, alcohol misuse, drugs, and the sex trade, as well as the fast developing entertainment industry.

Kenneth Leech's Writings

The importance of Leech's work is not however confined to his active ministry: he has also written a number of books on spiritual and pastoral concerns, such as *Youthquake*[285], *Soul Friend*[286], *True Prayer*[287], *The Eye of the Storm*[288], and *Through our Long Exile*[289]. Among other clear statements about his beliefs he includes a personal political statement of affiliation, namely that, in his own words, 'I became a Christian and a socialist at the same time, and in my innocence, for a while as a teenager, assumed that all Christians were bound to be socialists!'[290]. His commitment to the Christian socialist cause is well illustrated by his personal involvement in the founding of the Jubilee Group in 1974, a group of (generally Anglo-Catholic[291]) Anglican clergy who were mostly though not all socialists[292] but all dedicated to exploring the social relevance of contemporary Christianity, particularly in urban areas of poverty and deprivation. Leech is a member of the movement known as 'contextual theology', an approach which regards local concerns and problems as the basic

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[285] *Youthquake, Spirituality and the Growth of a Counter-Culture.*

[286] *Soul Friend, Spiritual Direction in the Modern World.*

[287] *True Prayer: an Invitation to Christian Spirituality.*

[288] *The Eye of the Storm: Living Spiritually in the Real World.*

[289] *Through our Long Exile: Contextual Theology and the Urban Experience.*

[290] Quoted from his article "Why I became a Socialist: Socialism, Christianity and East London", published in *Workers' Liberty*, September 2000,cited in David Bunch and Angus Ritchie (eds.) *Prayer and Prophecy, The Essential Ken Leech*, p.306.

[291] The Jubilee Group has roots in both Christian Socialism and also the 'Catholic revival' in the Church of England which dates from the same period.

[292] Bunch and Ritchie, op. cit. p.314

material on to which theological ideas and concepts must be inscribed, rather than seeing theological statements as objective and universal in their application irrespective of the circumstances in which they are proclaimed, preached and taught[293]. The recent book which identifies some of the core elements in Leech's theology in an anthology[294] of his writings comes from the Contextual Theology Centre in East London.

Leech And Contextual Theology

Before looking at the content of Leech's writing on drugs and pastoral care in detail, however, it may be of importance to look critically at the claims of contextual theology. One criticism is that the contextual programme has strong epistemological links with 'liberation theology'. Angie Pears' book makes this link explicit in terms of gender theology and other topics. But is liberation theology a valid approach to Christian thought today? It is certainly not without its critics, especially in those areas where its instantiation is closely linked with revolutionary Marxist thought, such as in parts of Latin America. Concern about this has come from both within the Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church. In *Modern Theology* in 1986, for example, Stanley Hauerwas[295] questions the whole project of seeing the concept of liberation as identified by Gutierrez[296] as a theological concept on which to build a political theology[297].

There is here then recognition that to begin theological analysis from the local experience can carry with it the danger of distorting the picture.

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[293] This approach to theology has been described in detail recently by Angie Pears (who identifies Leech as a member of the movement) in her book *Doing Contextual Theology*.

[294] David Bunch and Angus Ritchie eds. *Prayer and Prophecy, The Essential Kenneth Leech*.

[295] Stanley Hauerwas, "Some Theological Reflections on Gutierrez's use of 'Liberation' as a Theological Concept".

[296] Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*.

[297] Hauerwas, op. cit, p.70.

From within Gutierrez's own Church, the Roman Catholic Church, there was also both positive and negative response to his liberation theology: the more negative kind came not least from Pope John Paul II, as Hans Küng observes in his book *Disputed Truth*[298]:

> Under the new Pope John Paul II and his German guardian of the faith, Joseph Ratzinger, who take a united front against liberation theology, they soon have to pay dearly for their attitude. On his first trip to Latin America in January 1979 the Polish Pope, stamped negatively by Soviet Marxism, vigorously criticizes the liberation theology and "disowns a whole group of theologians, pastors and bishops".

Küng's own view was not entirely supportive of a thoroughgoing Marxist analysis of the theological needs of Latin America[299] and he warns against an uncritical acceptance of Marxism as an adequate basis for Christian theology, while at the same time opposing the centralising tendency of the Vatican in terms of Church order and administration[300].

There are then many possible objections to the liberation theology that is connected with the contextual theology movement. If this were the only possible counter-argument to contextual theology however, it might not be seen as such a radical departure from orthodoxy. A much more radical critique can be offered in terms of its rejection of the concept of theological truth as absolute and unchanging, and unaffected in its essential content by issues of time and place. A Barthian critique, to be specific, while in no sense ruling out the need for a hermeneutics of biblical theology nevertheless argues for the objectivity of the biblical witness to God in Christ, and to dialectical confrontation between the Word and human philosophies. As he puts the matter in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans[301]:

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[298] Hans Küng, *Disputed Truth*. p.405f. The words in inverted commas were written, Küng acknowledges in the text, in letters to Gustavo Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff.
[299] This view was not just a theological critique, but also included the opinion that 'Marxist solutions don't convince economists' – Küng, *Disputed Truth*, p.405.
[300] This theme is central to the argument of Küng about Church authority in general.
[301] Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 6th edition, p.77.

The judgement of God is the end of history, not the beginning of a new, a second, epoch. By it history is not prolonged, but done away with. The difference between that which lies beyond the judgement and that which lies this side of it is not relative but absolute: the two are separated absolutely. God speaks: and He is recognised as the Judge. By His speech and by His judgements a transformation is effected so radical that time and eternity, here and there, the righteousness of men, and the righteousness of God, are indissolubly linked together.

In his exposition of Barth's theology, Hans Urs von Balthasar makes the point about the absolute distinction between God's righteousness and the temporal, relative world of human history well in relation to Barth's thought as the following quotation will make clear[302]:

The first thing is the pure actuality of God's Revelation. It cannot be compared with any actuality in the temporal world for, scholastically speaking, it is the presence of *actus purus* in the act of Revelation. For Barth, the actuality of Revelation means this: everything in it is pure act, pure decision, pure sovereignty and pure freedom; hence it is the Revelation of the divine in God.

It is not necessary to discard the whole enterprise of biblical criticism and hermeneutics in order to appreciate the force of this argument[303]. The Word contains a direct revelatory statement about God and particularly God-in- Christ in Barth's theological approach, and this statement is absolute, universal in its application, and unchanging. It is not dependent on any human instrumentality. It comes to all afresh and life-giving; what is needed is for the recipient to be open to receive it in faith. Above all, this process is not dependent on local or temporal happenstance, as the proponents of contextual theology would seek to suggest. On this basis, although it remains – in the view of the author of thesis – important to relate theology to the particular, we are right to be wary of the kind of theological praxis that seeks to make the interpretation of theological ideas solely or principally dependent on contingent reality, even when this may have at least a superficial attractiveness in terms of its important contributions

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[302] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, p.65.
[303] Barth himself firmly rejected the supposition that he was opposed to analytical biblical theology.

in attempting to give the poorest people on earth a voice, both in politics, economics, and in the developing life of the Churches. This problematic element in the approach of contextual theology will become more apparent when we consider Ken Leech's central chapter on "Pastoral Care and the Christian Community".

The Book *Drugs And Pastoral Care* Described And Assessed

We will now explore Leech's book, and provide some analysis and critique of his views, before relating it to the main argument of the thesis.

We begin with a quotation from the review article about this book written by James Woodward[304]. It is perhaps worth noting at this point that Woodward, like Leech, is a representative of the 'contextual theology' movement, because the contextual agenda influences what Woodward has to say about the book.

> Leech provides the carer with a tool for engagement with the realities of drug use in our modern society. Clearly written, theologically grounded and insightful, this book provides eight chapters which can enable any reader to become better informed and explore their own personal and professional responses to the use and abuse of drugs. As ever, Leech does not disappoint in the quality of his theological reflection. An essential addition to any library, but also a good example of how to do theology.

This appreciation of Leech's book has some merit: both writers recognise the need for any pastor to be well and accurately informed on addiction as on other aspects of her ministry. That aspect of Leech's book is highly important because it has so much detailed information about the UK drug scene as it had become by 1998 when he was writing. But is it, as Woodward also claims, 'a good example of how to do theology'? This confident assertion we may doubt. This is where the fundamental problem with contextual theology becomes problematic for this book because, beginning with the particular, Leech fails to

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[304] James Woodward, review of *Drugs and Pastoral Care*.

do justice to the complexity of the understanding of the nature of God that theology tries to explore. It seems to the writer of this thesis that it could well be argued that a far better place to begin looking at the theology of addiction, and the pastoral care of people with drug addiction problems in particular, might be to begin with the nature of God – exploring for example, the appropriate use of God given substances, including legal and illegal drugs, in relation to, for example, the theology of creation and the ordering of human desire. It is this question that the thesis will address in greater depth and detail in the chapter on theological understanding of addiction.

Drugs and Pastoral Care has a political agenda, perhaps not unrelated to the author's identification of himself with a socialist approach to politics. For Leech criticises the 1987-1997 Conservative British government's attempts to deal with the problems caused by drug addiction[305], and their failure, as he sees it. Some account of this agenda is necessary in order to evaluate the ideas contained in Leech's book. He does not take the view that the use of non-therapeutic drugs and alcohol should necessarily be regarded as a problem. Leech then is highly critical of the ways in which public policy makers, and in particular the Conservative Government of the United Kingdom between 1977 and 1997 saw drug use as a problem and tried to deal with it[306]. In making these criticisms he is not denying that many people who use drugs and alcohol become dependent on them and that this sometimes causes difficulty in their lives: he opens his chapter on "Politics, Policies and Pastoral Theology" by using the analogy of the ostrich that is said to bury its head in the sand in order to avoid looking at important but uncomfortable or frightening aspects of reality, in this case the

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[305] It is however doubtful whether the succeeding Labour administration was any more effective in addressing the problems of alcohol and drug misuse.

[306] Leech himself in *Drugs and Pastoral Care* recognises however that the Labour Administration which followed this one did nothing to reverse the mistakes previously made, and in some ways made matters worse: see in particular his chapter on "Policies, Politics and Pastoral Theology".

damage done by drug misuse. This is what happens both in official and unofficial responses to the drug issue, he says, and this policy of denial has been an important factor in the development of drug use patterns in our society, because it has been followed by an exaggerated reaction, which has done more harm than good. This argument is so central to his thesis in relation to pastoral care that a short quotation is needed to illustrate what he is saying on this point:[307] (italicisation added).

> It is necessary for pastors to understand the kinds of responses over the years which affect the pattern of drug use. *Often responses to drugs are more harmful than the drugs themselves.* Public responses and policies can hinder and impede as well as aid and strengthen pastoral work.

This is clearly a radical and provocative statement, so let us try to understand the nature of Leech's argument at this point. In order to begin this analysis, it is necessary to go back one step and look at Leech's understanding of the nature of drug use and how that use, once begun, can for some users of drug turn in to full blown addiction.

> Physical dependence can quickly follow heroin use, although it needs to be emphasised that both physical and psychological dependence are very variable, and many people do in fact give up the drug at some stage without serious ill-effects. There are many generalisations in this area which are based on individual experience without adequate comparative work. It is perfectly true that many people become dependent on heroin very quickly. But there is nothing automatic about it. [308]

He continues in the same passage by observing that the euphoric state that is achievable by the use of heroin has a short life span, and that it therefore has to be used in gradually larger amounts to obtain the same effect and to avoid the unpleasant side effects associated with withdrawal. Here we find the two classic elements in substance dependency – 'tolerance' and 'withdrawal' (with its unpleasant or even life threatening symptoms) – side by side.

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[307] Kenneth Leech, *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, p.118.
[308] op. cit., p.51.

What is already clear from Leech's account of addiction is that he draws a clear line between the use of drugs as such (and one perhaps could argue in a similar way in terms of alcohol) and the kind of use that results, for a significant number of people, in substance dependency. The move from <u>voluntary</u> to <u>substance dependent</u> use is not 'automatic': other factors are involved in setting up a substance dependent lifestyle. What then, in Leech's understanding, are these factors?

There are, he says many ways of looking at this question, and this assertion is to be welcomed, because it recognises that we are dealing with a complex subject which raises more questions than answers. It has been suggested, for example, that for some people the terror associated with abstinence is the most important factor – the fear of entering into a stage of what is termed the 'abstinence syndrome'[309] when the drug of choice is not available. But this explanation is not adequate, Leech argues. The truth involves 'a complex set of responses and conditioning to the drug'[310]. There are those, for example, he continues, who describe the experience of the heroin 'fix' in libidinal terms - 'coming from every pore'[311]. In line with this quasi sexual theme, in a quotation from M Hoffmann[312], he points to an analogy with masturbation, which has a certain significance here in the sense that masturbation, like the use of a drug, is generally thought of as being an individual form of sexual arousal and excitement rather than one that involves a relationship with another person[313]. The sexual referent was examined in detail by psychoanalytic writers such as Paul D'Orban, writing about female prisoners in London's Holloway Prison, who saw addiction as a symptom of

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[309] Leech, *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, p.52f.
[310] op. cit., p.53.
[311] ibid.
[312] M. Hoffmann, cited by Leech, *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, p.53.
[313] The relationship between the use of drugs and other activities in terms of the satisfying of an appetite will be explored in the following section which will analyse the concepts of appetite, longing, and pleasure in a more historical, theological manner.

psycho-sexual disturbance in which the injecting of heroin takes the place of intercourse for the addict[314].

What this connection with psychoanalytical concepts is suggesting, Leech continues, is that there is a danger of treating addiction, particularly drugs dependent addiction, as an isolated phenomenon, instead of aligning it to other aspects of personal development and its associated problems. Like Gerald May, he sees addiction as a syndrome which can appear in many forms, and like May he also argues against a facile attempt to link such behaviour too closely to supposed 'pre-addictive personality' factors[315]. 'The history of addiction shows an enormous variety of personalities, and their social contexts also vary'[316].

This caution about over simplifying the aetiology of addiction is therefore welcome. One such over simplification, Leech suggests[317], is the view that all heroin addicts are simply seeking a form of psychological escape. He points out that escape via emotional oblivion can be obtained more easily (and legally) by the use of other substances such as alcohol. It is therefore unlikely that 'escape' is <u>inevitably</u> a core determinant of substance dependency, particularly in the case of opioid drug misuse.

It is likely, Leech says, that relatively underdeveloped personality factors may play their part in the establishment of a dependence lifestyle, but he is wise to be cautious in looking for isolated determinants: the whole personal, social and economic environment of the person with the problem needs to be considered rather than individual psychological, or other factors. In the end, perhaps, 'those who cannot establish relationships with people may turn to the drug for security

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[314] Paul D'Orban, "Heroin Dependence and Delinquency in Women", cited by Leech, *Drugs and Pastoral Care,* p.53.
[315] ibid.
[316] Leech, op. cit., p.54.
[317] ibid.

and warmth, though eventually for deliverance from the pain of its absence'[318]. The drug thus becomes a way of coping with a degree of pain that seems unbearable without it. As he continues, 'Yet, whatever the aetiology, once addiction has developed there is a state of psychological imprisonment[319]. The world in which the addict operates is drastically reduced, the territory increasingly limited with predictable events and ritual repetitions'[320].

There is, it must be said, an unsatisfactory element to this account of the aetiology of addiction, a sense of confusion about what its cause really is. Leech himself is aware of this and does not try to minimise the problems. So although we may criticise Leech for the inadequacy of his account, it may be that he is in reality helpfully recognising the dangers of overgeneralization.

In Leech's work, the reasons for addiction are presented as complex and multi-faceted. Pastors and other professional carers therefore require a thorough knowledge of the individual, and his or her psychological, social, and economic circumstances and the interplay between all of these factors. This complexity leads Leech to be critical of political approaches to addiction, such as the so-called 'war on drugs', that have been tried by various governments in the United Kingdom and in the United States of America and elsewhere, which have either failed to improve the situation, or in some cases, as Leech argues, made matters worse[321]. What such legislative attempts fail to do, in his view, is to recognise the <u>mysterious element</u> in the world of addiction. 'Much ministry in the drug scene is marked by darkness, silence and uncertainty. It calls us to an apophatic style of pastoral care in which clarity and method give way to waiting and

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[318] ibid.
[319] The word 'imprisonment' is of great importance here as a powerful metaphor for addiction. It will be analysed in greater detail in the section of this thesis that explores theological concepts in relation to addictive behaviour in more depth and detail.
[320] ibid.
[321] See: Leech, *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, p.122.

"unknowing".… In a world where many die alone and abandoned, the central task of the Church is to share that darkness and be a powerful witness to life beyond the tombs'[322]. His willingness to acknowledge the mysterious nature of addiction is highly important here, as it can help to protect those who approach the subject from a religious or theological background from operating on the basis of a simplistic – or even judgemental – approach to the pastoral care of addicted people.

Perhaps Leech knew the views presented by J. B. Davies, whose book *The Myth of Addiction* we assessed earlier. The question might then be for Leech, as it was for Davies, not just whether addiction really exists or whether it is a myth, but more fundamentally, <u>why taking drugs matters</u>. Could it not be argued, in line with Leech's generally liberal approach to drug using lifestyles, that what is really needed for those who want to use drugs is an affordable supply, safe conditions for taking them, safe 'works', and a society which is far more tolerant of such behaviour rather than regarding it as essentially 'deviant' or 'sick'?[323]

This is the direction in which Leech's thought was moving at the time of writing *Drugs and Pastoral Care*. One highly controversial chapter – entitled "The Drug Culture and Spirituality" – addresses the issues raised by Aldous Huxley, Timothy Leary and Frank Lake, who proposed that the use of certain drugs can induce mystical experience in the user. Commenting on this possibility, Leech observes that[324]

> it would seem illogical, and incompatible with an incarnational and sacramental theology, to deny that, in principle, chemical agents could be used to enhance religious experience. However, as with fasting, breathing exercises, methods of meditation, and other ascetical disciplines, it is necessary to distinguish aids and methods from the goal of the spiritual

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[322] *Prayer and Prophecy, the Essential Kenneth Leech*, ed. David Bunch and Angus Ritchie, p.140.
[323] One very informative book called *The Road of Excess* by Marcus Boon details the use of a variety of drugs, including opium and cocaine on the basis of a historical survey of their use. There is little to suggest that in the case of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's creation the detective Sherlock Holmes, for example, his use of the substance had a malignant effect on his health, work or social relationships.
[324] Leech, *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, p.111f.

life. There is enough evidence that the use of drugs can awaken people to spiritual realities. There is not much evidence that, as a long-term component of religious discipline, drugs can be particularly useful.

It seems to the writer of this thesis that Leech's argument at this point is highly contestable and open to several objections. Perhaps the most telling phrase comes in the section beginning on page 107, in which Leech, discussing psychedelic drugs and mystical experience[325], quotes Timothy Leary[326] in whose view the use of certain mind altering drugs such as LSD can, allegedly, take the user to 'new realms of consciousness'. But does this expansion of the horizons have anything to do with genuine spirituality? To establish this, Leech would have to provide a definition of what a genuine spiritual experience is, and he surprisingly fails to do this.

It must also be set against any attempt to advance the use of drugs as a gateway to spiritual experience that there needs to be for the person who seeks such experience a discipline that has been tried and tested. Membership of a church group is important here both as a provider of such discipline through communal worship, and as a provider of spiritual direction or accompaniment.

We may also wonder whether the seeking of spiritual experiences for oneself really has any place in authentic spirituality. Such experiences belong to the realm of the given rather than that which can be in any sense engineered for oneself – which could be seen as an attempt to manipulate God. In her classic book on Christian spirituality *The Interior Castle*, St. Teresa of Avila reminds her readers that although a desire for spiritual union with God is a valid element in the spiritual quest, it must be remembered that such desire can be orchestrated by the devil rather than by God. Such desires must therefore be examined to make sure that they are authentic desires for God and not a subversion or perversion

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[325] op. cit., p.107
[326] Timothy Leary, et al. *The Psychedelic Experience*, p.11.

of human desire[327]. It is questionable whether and how the use of mind altering drugs and their allegedly spiritual benefits could be rigorously assessed on this basis.

Equally, the use of psychedelics as a spiritual aid must not be used, it seems to the writer of this thesis, to mask the realities both of the health risks of using non-therapeutic drugs, and the fact that by using them, people, perhaps young people in particular, are in fact breaking the law, and as a consequence could find themselves with a criminal record, which could have very serious consequences for their lives, partly in terms of employability. Although Leech is aware of much of this, his fairly liberal approach to the use of drugs, and even the possibility that they may have spiritual value, is one that needs careful scrutiny, and may prove to be unacceptable, in terms of the endeavour to establish a rigorous theoretical and pragmatic basis for pastoral care.

The Treatment Of Addicts – Setting A Context For Pastoral Ministry

We will now address Leech's approach to treatment for those who have addiction problems, and the ways in which pastoral care can play its part in providing help for them. The section following the one we have been reflecting on is entitled: Treatment for Addiction.

Building on his argument for the perception of addiction as a complex phenomenon with many interlocking causes, Leech says that in the light of this, patterns of treatment focus on different aspects of the problem. Those clinicians who favour an integrated approach will seek to offer treatment that has both psychological and psychopharmacological elements. In the case of heroin dependency, Leech mentions the use of methadone[328] as a way of helping heroin

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[327] *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, volume 2, p.393.
[328] Leech, *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, p.55.

dependent patients to decrease their dependency on opioid drugs without suffering unbearable withdrawal symptoms. The use of such drugs as methadone and buprenorphine are well established in the United Kingdom. Leech argues that treatment is only likely to be effective if the therapists involved attend to the social environment of the addicted person[329], and this important observation will be helpful as we look at the implications of this section for the care of addicted people in the community – particularly the opportunities they present for effective spiritual and pastoral care.

Leech also reflects on the use of the officially sanctioned prescribing of heroin as a way of containing the problem of opioid use when it seems unlikely that a policy of complete abstinence is going to be successful. Noting that there has been 'a revival of the practice in some places, and it may well be that this will spread'[330] he quotes research on this approach, which demonstrates a particular concern for the dangers of HIV/Aids infection through intravenous routes that is likely to be better controlled by an official policy of needle exchange for those who are, for the time being, unable or unwilling to stop using injectable drugs[331].

Heroin is not the only drug that is used for what are usually regarded as non-clinical or non-therapeutic drugs, and in the next chapter, Leech discusses issues relating to cannabis and psychedelic drugs. With reference to cannabis, Leech provides evidence of some confusion in thinking about its dangers: there are those for example who regard it as so dangerous that 'In time, marijuana leads to incurable insanity'[332]. Others whom he quotes express uncertainty about the effects of the drug. An obvious question relating to cannabis use is why it has been classified as a substance that it is illegal to possess, use, or trade.

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[329] ibid.
[330] ibid.
[331] ibid. He cites Richard Hartnoll, "Heroin Maintenance and AIDS Prevention: Going the Whole Way?".
[332] *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, p.56, citing Lord Sandford in the House of Lords, Hansard, 20 June 1967, column 1286.

Linked to all of these debates is the question as to whether cannabis is an addictive drug. Leech concludes that 'the pattern with cannabis seems to be that, while there are more regular users than occasional, there seems to be no general trend towards increasing the amount used. Most cannabis use is recreational and is not at all related to an addictive or destructive lifestyle'[333]. At the beginning of this chapter reference was made to the possibility that Leech's work needs to be approached with considerable caution in the belief that he is setting out a political agenda without necessarily acknowledging that he is doing so. It is noticeable that in his discussion of cannabis use, he makes a strong case for the absurdity of keeping cannabis on the list of prohibited substances. The fact that he bases this on the assumption that cannabis is relatively harmless, without actually supplying supportive quotations for this argument, may make us suspect that he was unaware at the time of writing of the new varieties of cannabis now being generally used in the UK, as described by Mary Brett[334].

It is worth noting from the point of view of this thesis, and the fact that Leech argues that Church work in the field of pastoral care has to involve itself not only with care of the damaged individuals who need help but also in the political structures which can work either to improve the situation or make it worse, that in his discussion of the arguments for and against the legalisation of cannabis possession and use, he points out that the Church keeps out of the debate. He does however refer to a lecture that he gave[335] arguing for the decriminalisation of the use of cannabis in 1966. Clearly for Leech there is a belief that the

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[333] Leech, *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, p.59. Mary Brett "Ten Key Facts that Teachers Need to Know about Cannabis", says that the physically addictive element in cannabis is caused by the mimicking of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) 'of one of the neurotransmitters, anandamide, replacing it in the brain. Production of anandamide decreases as it is being substituted'. The ceasing or reduction of use of cannabis thus leads subjectively to withdrawal symptoms, so that the user finds it harder to resist using the drug again.
[334] See: Mary Brett, "Ten Key Facts", p.47.
[335] Kenneth Leech, Lecture at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, March 7 1966, which was reported in the *Times* newspaper the following day, and attacked in *The Sun* newspaper on March 9 of the same year.

decriminalisation process should be promoted, and that the Church should be involved in the political debate on this subject. What is clear from this lecture and other passages in *Drugs and Pastoral Care* is that Leech is taking a liberal view of the use of cannabis, in the belief that it is a relatively harmless drug when used moderately, and that government interference in people's freedom to use it does no good – in fact it causes more problems than it solves.

What is less controversial is that in North America, the 'non therapeutic' use of drugs occurred at the same time as a sense of disenchantment of many people with the American way of life[336]. There was therefore a political process that accompanied the LSD experiment, for example, and it is possible that this revolutionary approach to the Establishment was guided to some degree by those who had, through the use of such perception altering substances, become aware of new visions of society as it was, and as it could become. It is difficult however to be sure that this suggestion has any verifiable evidence in its favour.

As Leech states, the dangers of LSD and other similar drugs must not be overlooked. Many have experienced 'great terror and disintegration, and some have never fully recovered'[337]. Because of these 'bad trips' occurring in significant numbers in San Francisco, for example, treatment centres began to appear, such as the Haight-Ashbury Free Medical Clinic. Leech does not endorse the use of LSD and similar drugs, but he does suggest that 'the incidence of serious casualties associated with this range of drugs is probably quite small'[338].

Leech's exploration of the world of cannabis and psychedelic drug use suggests that, on the whole, although he is concerned about the dangers of irresponsible or excessive use of them, he believes that a liberalising, decriminalising approach by governments would be a good thing. This leads us to consider what the

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[336] Leech, *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, p.75f.
[337] op. cit., p.68.
[338] op. cit., p.69.

response of the Church ought to be to the problems raised by drug taking, and what theological considerations should help church leaders to formulate a policy for the spiritual and pastoral care of people who are having problems because of their use of these substances. To that subject we will now turn out attention.

Theological And Pastoral Considerations

With all of these factors in mind, how does Leech describe the role of theological insight into the world of illicit drugs and drug addiction? His answer takes him into some key areas of importance for this thesis, as he recognises the salience of 'theological ideas about sin, grace, human will, the world and the Kingdom of God'[339]. In this section of his book he looks first at the relationship between addiction and sin. He argues that much writing about addiction has been too accepting of Gerald May's argument, namely that in line with undifferentiated thinking about original sin it is sometimes suggested that everyone is an addict, in the sense of being uncontrollably attached to some kind of behaviour. This, for Leech, attributes too much responsibility for the addict's behaviour to the individual, failing to recognise the complex interaction of social forces that imprison that individual who is in reality as much a victim as a perpetrator of sin. We are wise, he suggests, to avoid 'harmful generalities' in thinking about the causes of addiction and approaching those who are suffering from addictive behaviour.

There is also a question for Leech about the ways in which our image of God can distort our view of the addicted person. He suggests that some religious groups who try to work with addicted people do so with a view of God as 'dictator and controller', one who is in danger of becoming another object of

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[339]op. cit., p.99ff.

addiction, even if God might be thought of as representing a more wholesome addiction than drugs; he repeats the warning, originating in Karl Marx's critique of Hegel, that religion can have an opiate like effect on its adherents.

The next part of his theological comment denies that there is, or ought to be, a specific Christian ministry to drug users. The problem with this for Leech is that it falls into a dangerous pattern of thinking that tends to label people, seeing them as 'alcoholics' or 'drug addicts' and in so doing failing to see them as individual persons. The word 'client' is one that he prefers to avoid, as it over defines the relationship between helper and helped, in terms of an unequal distribution of power. He concludes this highly important but much abbreviated paragraph by suggesting that it would be better to see how 'the field of drugs can help to illuminate neglected areas of ministry, and help us towards a clearer understanding'[340]. There is much in this rather elliptical suggestion that needs more clarification.

A final element in Leech's theological commentary on addiction concerns his insistence on the mysterious and sacramental aspects of addiction. With regard to pastoral ministry, Leech stresses the need for pastors to work on the basis of a 'profound spiritual rootedness in God, and for those essentially priestly tasks of Eucharistic sacrifice and adoration, intercession and solidarity in Christ through the sharing of silence and darkness'[341]. This task is not for the ordained alone, but for the whole Church: it is vital to engage in this process of darkness, silence and unknowing, he suggests, because the care of people with addiction problems is not likely to be something that has a speedy positive outcome, but will require patience, and staying 'with the pain, the wounds, the brokenness, the repeated crises and the darkness, in faith and trust'[342]. This highly realistic view

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[340] *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, p.100.
[341] ibid.
[342] *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, p.101

of the care of addicted people is familiar to the author of this thesis in the context of dialogue with clinicians in the field of drug treatment[343]. Leech advocates a ministry involving the liberal use of prayer and anointing. But he also reiterates the need for tolerance of 'darkness, silence and uncertainty' in the face of the suffering that ministers will encounter in their involvement with addicted people.

What is perhaps surprising in the chapter on "Pastoral Care and the Christian Community" is the way in which Leech approaches the theological aspects of this subject.

Leech's approach to addiction is embedded in a 'contextual' approach to the subject. There is a problem with drugs: what is the theological answer to it? But it might be argued that this methodology is deeply flawed. On p. 100 he begins to take a more structured look at theology, asking questions about the kind of God we believe in as Christian pastors, and helpfully alerting the reader to the approach which sees drugs as an isolated phenomenon, unrelated to pastoral issues in general, and allowing positively for the darkness, uncertainty and unknowing that forms part of much spiritual guidance and accompaniment, on the part of both pastor and 'client'.

Some important criticisms might be offered here. The first is that he does not begin to look at the 'nature of God' question until well in to the chapter we are considering, and that having introduced the God question into the chapter at this point, he then tries to deal with the 'what kind of god do we believe in?' question in one brief paragraph, whereas it should have been given far more detailed and analytical attention, even allowing, correctly, for the claims he makes about the dark unknowability of God. For someone with such a concern for

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[343] Griffith Edwards tackles difficult issues around the decriminalisation of drugs and drug education, making the point that neither criminalisation nor education seem to have much impact on drug misuse. He therefore suggests that it is cycles of social deprivation that need to be addressed if change is to come about. See: *Matters of Substance*, p.268ff.

spiritual matters to be so elliptical at this point in the argument seems strange, and probably unhelpful.

Criticisms And Conclusions

The work of Kenneth Leech has important contributions to make to the understanding of addiction, and in particular drug addiction. He correctly asserts that the intervention of the Government via the criminalisation (and to some extent decriminalisation) of the possession, use and distribution of 'illicit' drugs have not solved the problems of drug misuse, and may even have inadvertently assisted in the creation of a criminal class in which the circulation of drugs in the United Kingdom plays a considerable part.

On the other hand, looking at the issues from a theological and pastoral point of view, much in his writing seems to the author of this thesis to be muddled and unhelpful. Whether or not, for example, it is helpful to a particular society to ban certain drugs, the fact remains that their use remains illegal in many countries. Leech seems largely to ignore this reality in dealing with pastoral issues, where he clearly advocates a more liberal and tolerant approach to their use. Could such an attitude really be recommended to people who are carefully considering their pastoral response to individuals and families with addiction issues?

At a deeper level, what is the spiritual and theological nature of drug use when its aim is not strictly 'therapeutic' but intended for the pursuit either of pleasure or even spiritual enhancement? There is a whole theology of desire, health, and the development of personality and relationships – a theology of the 'self' – that Leech does not engage with in a satisfactory manner, with regard to drugs (the same might be said about the use of alcohol and other addictive behaviours), and one of the principal aims of this thesis, which will be offered in a later

chapter, is to set the legitimate, and addictive, use of such substances in a proper theological context.

In his defence, it might however be suggested that Leech is expressing a great deal of the confusion that our contemporary society is experiencing about many different forms of intoxicants: a major supermarket in the area where this writer lives has filled its large display window with cheap bottles of wine, as a way of inviting customers into the store. This speaks eloquently of the availability, affordability and acceptability of drinking alcohol. There is no mention there of the negative personal and social consequences of the excessive consumption of alcohol.

Leech offers some important insights particularly concerning the complexity of the origins of addiction and the need for an accommodation of the difficult and demanding aspects of theological insight that often, especially in this context, have much more to do with silence, mystery and waiting than with any type of quick or obvious – or even lasting - success, however that success might be defined. He also makes a very important point (as noted in the text here) that the question of the legalisation of the use of at least some non therapeutic drugs needs careful thought: it is good to be reminded, as Leech stresses, that the criminalisation of drug use, far from helping to solve the problems associated with it has arguably contributed to the problem rather than to its solution by criminalising people who use drugs such as cannabis to a moderate degree in social contexts[344]. This point of view, while disputable, is one that in the opinion of the writer of this thesis needs to be taken very seriously.

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[344] There is however a body of evidence that suggests that cannabis may be responsible for some psychotic episodes in users. This evidence is as yet largely untested, but the suggestion lay behind the decision of the Labour Administration in the UK in 2009 to reclassify cannabis from class C to class B, with the concurrent change in penalties for its possession, use and trading.

We argue, however, that *Drugs and Pastoral Care* has serious problems: on the one hand it does not provide a robust enough engagement with the theological issues it raises in terms of the nature of God, and how this relates to issues of the self, desire (particularly the disordered desire that is embedded in substance misuse), and health and human flourishing, and on the other hand the more complex pastoral and ethical issues that are inescapably moved onto the centre of the epistemological stage when people like Leech appear to advocate a tolerant attitude to the use of potentially addictive substances in contemporary society. This thesis will attempt in the next chapter to provide a more securely based theological understanding of these issues. We will look at how the conceptual and phenomenological realities of addiction may be seen to relate to soundly based theological ideas concerning the human self, health and flourishing, and how addictive behaviour relates to these issues, not least because addiction can result, for the addict, in a state of being that has much in common with the language of imprisonment or enslavement. The theological – and pastoral - challenge then is to help the addict to find a way out of that imprisonment, and that process will be explored later in this thesis.

2.3   James B. Nelson, *Thirst: God and the Alcoholic Experience'*

Introduction To James B. Nelson's Work

James B. Nelson became well known in theological circles in the late 1970's when he began to write on the subject of Christianity and 'embodiment', particularly in terms of human sexuality. He was personally concerned to help the Church to look more sympathetically at homosexuality, and his first

contribution on this specific aspect of sexuality appeared in 1977, in the article he wrote for the magazine *Christianity and Crisis*, entitled "Homosexuality and the Church".

Nelson was born in 1930, in Windom, Minnesota[345]. He attended Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, which has a history of concern with social issues, internationalism and multiculturalism. At Yale University he received a PhD degree in 1962. He was ordained as a minister of the Congregational – United Church of Christ – tradition of the Christian Church. He served his ministerial 'apprenticeship' at West Haven, Connecticut, and then moved to the church at Vermilion, South Dakota, as senior minister.

Professional Career and Publications

In 1963 Nelson was appointed as associate professor of Christian Ethics at the United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities[346], becoming full professor in 1968. There he began to explore issues of human sexuality, as a member of the University of Minnesota's Program on Human Sexuality and the UCC's Task Force on Human Sexuality. One of his most well-known books is *Embodiment: an Approach to Sexuality and Christian Theology*[347]. This spells out the inclusive approach to theology with regard to sexuality, and homosexuality in particular, that underlies his report to the Presbyterian General Assembly's Special Task Force on Human Sexuality, on which he represented the Center for Sexuality and Religion, of which he was a founding member, in 1989. (The report was rejected by the Church for being too 'liberal'). His concern for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender people continued into retirement from the United

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[345] The information from which these biographical notes are taken can largely be found in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Religious Archives Network, at www.lgbtran.org/Profile.aspx?ID=142 created in 2004: last consulted on 28.03.2011.

[346] Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota.

[347] James B. Nelson, *Embodiment: an Approach to Sexuality and Christian Theology*.

Theological Seminary in 1995, as is shown in his preface to *Crossing Over: liberating the Transgendered Christian*[348] and a prepublication review of *Transgender Good News*[349].

James B. Nelson[350], in addition to bringing his own individual interpretation to substance[351] misuse, and regarding addiction as a disease[352], looks critically at the work of those writers on addiction like J. B. Davies[353], whose work we discussed in the previous chapter, who deny the reality of addiction: as we noted earlier Davies regards the concept of addiction as a myth, invented for its usefulness in explaining away certain forms of anti-social behaviour. Nelson also refers in his book to the integrative survey of addiction issues provided by Gerald May, in his book *Addiction and Grace*[354]. He quotes approvingly the passage in May's book which argues[355] that all human beings have a fundamental desire for God as it were 'hard-wired' into the psyche, even though this desire may be repressed. This yearning for God can be distorted, Nelson suggests, re-emerging as a desire for a lesser god, to be found in such contingent realities as alcohol – 'trying to drink God out of a bottle', as Bill Wilson, founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, had written[356].

Nelson's Work On Alcohol Dependency

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[348] Vanessa Sheridan**,** *Crossing Over: liberating the Transgendered Christian.*
[349] Pat Conover, *Transgender Good News.*
[350] James B. Nelson, *Thirst – God and the Alcoholic Experience.*
[351] In his case, the topic under investigation is restricted to alcohol dependency: there are however many points of commonality as we have already seen between various forms of addiction.
[352] See for example Nelson, op. cit. p.10, where he states that 'since alcoholism is a disease marked by the proneness to relapse, we live one day at a time'.
[353] J. B. Davies, *The Myth of Addiction*
[354] May, *Addiction and Grace.*
[355] May, op. cit., p.1.
[356] This phrase is quoted by Nelson, *Thirst*, p.27. The theme of yearning for God, and its substitute in less satisfactory or edifying ways, will form an important part of our exploration of theological motifs with relation to addiction later in this thesis.

Thirst, his work on alcoholism, published in 2004, particularly concerns us in this thesis. Much in this book is well and clearly written: it also has the advantage of being written about alcoholic misuse by one whose own life was almost ruined by alcohol. It therefore has the passion and commitment of one who knows his subject not just from academic study but from self-observation and his way out of that particular form of slavery. At the outset of this assessment however, and in light of our focal concern with generating a <u>theological</u> template or paradigm for the study of addiction, it will be worth keeping two criticisms in mind.

Preliminary Criticisms Of The Book '*Thirst*'

1) In the first place, although his understanding of alcoholism has particular authority because of his own personal experience there is also here a danger of generalising from the particular. Would all agree that alcoholism is a disease or a form of addiction, to be <u>contained</u>, but never <u>cured</u>, by lifelong attendance at AA meetings? Would all agree that addiction is indeed an illness at all, rather than a lifestyle choice, however incomprehensible? There is, as we have observed in the psychological chapter of this exploration of drugs and alcohol, a wide range of views on all of these questions, and it is a disadvantage of Nelson's book that he does not seem to give sufficient weight to this disparity of views, even though by acknowledging the role of <u>choice</u> in the early stages of alcoholism, he tries to make room for the concept of sin, forgiveness and new life from a theological perspective. He begins his book by asserting his belief in the concept of addiction (particularly alcoholism) as disease, and does not in our opinion give a satisfactory explanation of why he takes this view.

It is the opinion of the present writer that in expressing his belief that addiction to alcohol is a form of disease, (in itself a reasonable although contentious supposition) Nelson does not provide a sufficiently robust definition of the word disease. He does address this in his chapter entitled "Disease and Sin"[357], but does not really deal adequately with the problem, seeming to be more concerned with the pragmatic advantages of looking at the problem in this way, as against more critical or condemnatory ways of viewing the alcohol misuser. That being so it is problematic, in terms of his argument, to decide whether the use of the word disease in this context is accurate or not.

2) Secondly, as a Christian theologian (albeit one who is in a sense perhaps trying to write for a wider public) his theology seems at certain points to exhibit a certain unevenness, particularly with regard to Trinitarian theology. A glance at the index of his book is instructive in this respect. There are many references to God in a largely undifferentiated sense, that is to say, regarding God in a 'global' generative, fatherly, creator role. There are many references to Jesus Christ, as son and saviour. There are however in the index no specific references to the Holy Spirit, and this is striking. In fact specific references to the Holy Spirit are limited to appearances only on pages 12, 28, and 34, and although the latter instance does provide a little more detailed information, it is still very limited in scope. In this sense then, one may argue that his fundamental theological programme is somewhat unbalanced.

The Book *Thirst* Examined In Greater Detail

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[357] See for example his comments about essentialist and social constructionist views of reality, Nelson, op. cit., p.51.

Nelson devotes two chapters to exploring the disease concept of addiction. The precise focus of these chapters, entitled sequentially 'Disease and Sin' and 'Sin and Disease'[358] is the recognition that if addiction (to alcohol for example) is a <u>disease</u>, then the person affected by it cannot be blamed for having it: equally, the form of treatment for it needs to take that reality into account. If, on the other hand, addiction is a <u>choice</u>, then it may be legitimately seen as, from a religious perspective at least, a sinful form of behaviour. One thing that makes Nelson's analysis particularly helpful as we have already observed is the fact that in *Thirst* he writes not as an outsider to the world of the alcoholic, that is to say in a 'spectator role', but as a 'recovering alcoholic' himself, with developing insight into his own condition. While there is a danger of putting too much reliance on this factual, autobiographical statement, his own frankness and self-disclosure puts his work into a very different category from that of the 'spectator', however sympathetic.

In the light of the foregoing paragraph, it will perhaps be helpful to quote Nelson's record of the process of his addiction, which he describes as follows[359]:

> [S]timulation and blessed calm came from the coffee cup and the pipe. But alcohol? I had not the slightest inkling that I would become addicted and certainly did not intend that. No one ever does. The cost of membership in that club is just too high. When I began to use alcohol moderately and regularly, I did so because (for a variety of reasons) it made me feel good. After some years, however, I depended on alcohol not just to feel good but to feel *normal*. Finally there came the "oops phenomenon" – the surprising, wrenching realization that I was hooked.

This quotation is of great significance in Nelson's presentation of the issues of addiction, because it brings into the openness of debate a number of highly important but contestable ideas. Perhaps the least contentious statement in this analysis of his own experience is the assertion that he 'certainly did not intend'

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[358] Nelson, *Thirst*, chapters 3 and 4.
[359] Nelson, *Thirst*, p. 37. The term "oops phenomenon" is attributed by Nelson (ad loc.) to Alan Leshner in "Addiction: a Brain Disease with Biological Underpinnings".

to become an alcoholic, because 'no one ever does'. Equally probable is the assertion that the process of becoming a dependent drinker rather than a controlled drinker is 'deceptively gradual'[360], so that 'even those close to us can seldom help us. The change becomes hurtful before they realize it, and they withdraw from us in confusion, pity, or disgust'[361].

<u>Nelson's Understanding Of The Causes Of Alcoholism</u>

Nelson takes very seriously the influence of hereditary factors as one of the causes of alcohol dependence. To put it in his own words[362]: (italicisation original)

> I find the cumulative evidence persuasive. Regarding alcoholism, while genes do not *predetermine* anything, it strongly appears that they do *predispose*. Though my own parents were abstinent, there was alcoholism elsewhere on both sides of the family.

It is clear that for Nelson, although he recognises the contribution that heritability makes to alcoholism, genetic influence alone will not be sufficient to initiate a process of alcohol dependency: there have to be other complementary factors. These he describes as 'psychological and emotional, sociological and cultural, the religious and the spiritual'[363].

Looking at the psychological dimension to this, Nelson speaks from his own experience of using alcohol in order to provide pain relief. He speaks of his own struggle with hyperactivity, excessive self- criticism and low self-esteem that underlay these attributes in the aetiology of his own pathological relationship with alcohol[364]. In his analysis of these feelings there was too a sense of being at

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[360] Nelson, *Thirst*, p.38.
[361] ibid.
[362] *Thirst*, p.39.
[363] ibid.
[364] Similar complementary elements can be found in Gerald May's identification of what he understands to be pathologically driven addictive behaviours in his own personal case history, particularly the temptation to become a 'workaholic' (See: *Addiction and Grace*, p.9f.)

risk of unmasking as a 'fraud', and yet being unable to speak of these fears with anyone else. Alcohol was one way of anaesthetising these painful emotions. He speaks of using psychotherapy to explore childhood issues that had helped to produce these conflicts, which seem to stem in general from what Howard Clinebell describes as 'heavy-handed authoritarianism, success-worship, moralism and overt rejection'[365]. This was helpful, but it did not prevent him from using alcohol to provide additional relief from tension. This use of alcohol for the avoidance of painful conflicts has been widely observed in the psychological literature, and examples of this have been given above in the psychological chapter of this thesis: it plays a significant role in the work of Cloninger, for example[366]. The problem with this kind of relief drinking is, as Nelson rightly observes, that in time the drinking sets up a 'vicious self-feeding cycle of increased drinking to overcome the painful effects of previous excessive drinking'[367].

There is however a welcome reluctance in Nelson's work to be too hasty in producing a comprehensive 'causatory' theory of addiction, and he persuasively argues that we will never get to the roots of the problem without allowing for the 'mysterious' and paradoxical element in addiction theory[368]. From personal encounters with recovering alcoholics the present writer is aware that this element has an important role to play in the work of organisations such as Alcoholics Anonymous[369], and it is perhaps no accident that such organisations have more investment than other helpers often do in the use of spiritual and

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[365] Howard Clinebell, *Understanding and Counseling*, p. 60, cited by Nelson, *Thirst*, p.40.
[366] See: C. R. Cloninger, 'tri-dimensional personality theory', in his article "A systematic method for clinical description and classification of personality variants".
[367] Nelson, *Thirst*, p. 40 citing Howard Clinebell, *Alcohol, Abuse, Addiction and Therapy* in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counselling*, p. 19.
[368] There are echoes of Kenneth Leech's interpretation of drug addiction here.
[369] 'Cunning, powerful and baffling' is an expression often heard in AA circles about the mysterious force that is addiction.

religious ideas in their understanding of the paradoxical problems of addiction and the route that needs to be taken towards recovery.

On sociological and cultural factors, Nelson points to one of the most neglected factors in the origins of alcohol dependence, that of social approval. Different societies (and religions) view alcohol use very differently. The United Kingdom or France view alcohol use with acceptance and tolerance, others, such as in the countries where Islam is the main or only religion (such as Saudi Arabia) with extreme official disapproval, applying penalties to those who disobey the local prohibition, including visitors from other, more alcohol tolerant societies. Among the risk factors discussed, Nelson attaches importance to the fact that he is 'male, of Scandinavian descent, and a city dweller – all risk factors'[370]. The availability, social approval and affordability of alcohol all play their part. On the other hand, many people who have been exposed in equal measure to these risk factors do not become alcoholic, so there must, Nelson argues, be other factors at work[371].

'Disease' And 'Sin' Explanations of Alcoholism and Their Relationship to One Another

It is precisely at this point[372] that Nelson begins his central task of looking at the evidence for the view that alcoholism (and one may of course extrapolate to some extent to other forms of addictive behaviour) is a disease rather than a chosen way of life, a choice which some writers with a religious background might refer to as 'sinful'.

He identifies five possible ways of looking at this question[373]:

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[370] Nelson, *Thirst*, p.41.
[371] ibid.
[372] ibid.
[373] *Thirst*, p.42.

1) *It's purely sin.*

   This is the most extreme position from a religious perspective. The behaviour is freely chosen, for reasons of human sinfulness.

2) *It begins as sin and becomes disease.*

   The second position is a modified form of the previous one. He mentions two radically different religious bodies, the Salvation Army (drinking is wrong) and the Roman Catholic Church (excessive drinking is wrong) and suggests that these two churches share the view that what begins as a <u>choice</u> can become a <u>compulsion</u>.

3) *Addiction is sin and disease all mixed together.*

   This is the Alcoholics Anonymous position. There is here a convergence between moral failure and chemical dependency.

4) *Addiction is disease resulting from sin, but that sin is outside a person's responsibility.*

   In this option, sin is seen not so much as a matter of personal choice as of the reality of living in sinful societies that are abusive and exploitative, whether in terms of family dysfunction, sexism, racism, poverty etc. In such societies, where alcoholism is prevalent, the ability of the disturbed individual to avoid addiction is eroded – he or she is to some extent a *victim*.

5) *Addiction is purely disease; sin is not a factor.*

   This is the opposite extreme to position 1). It takes the view that a percentage of those who drink are 'biologically programmed' to become addicted to alcohol, given a set of life experiences that also influence the process of becoming addicted. Where there is no real choice, to talk of sin is meaningless.

This collocation of possible positions sets the scene for what follows in Nelson's account. It is also of importance for the present thesis, which sets out among other concerns to look for components of a theological account of addiction on its own terms and in terms of the generation of a theory of pastoral care within a church community. Clearly the adoption of a religious point of view that regards alcoholic excess, and other addictive activities, as sinful, will approach the pastoral care of those who are affected by addiction, the sufferer and his or her family, from a very different set of assumptions from one which

regards addiction as being, in Nelson's words, 'a matter of disease pure and simple'[374].

Nelson's Own View

What then is Nelson's own view, and is he right? He begins by looking in detail at the disease concept of addiction, beginning with the work of E M Jellinek[375]. Nelson then identifies five criteria for viewing alcoholism as a disease[376]. We will state these as briefly as possible:

1) Alcoholism fits the criteria for a disease and has been defined as such by leading medical and health organizations.

2) Alcoholism as a disease is marked by brain changes that explain otherwise inexplicable behaviour.

3) The disease concept helps us to distinguish between cause and effect.

4) Understanding alcoholism as a disease markedly undercuts moralistic judgements and blaming, thus enhancing the chances for recovery.

5) The disease theory reduces our tendency to see evil as "out there" and external to ourselves.

It is necessary to evaluate these points because they are not all universally accepted. The first point, alcoholism viewed as a disease, is in one sense a matter of fact, as it has been classified by the World Health Organisation and the American Medical Association[377]. The second, relating to brain changes, depends on the notion of chemical change in the brain brought about by its exposure to alcohol in certain amounts. This constellation of chemical changes reduces the ability of the alcoholic to change that form of behaviour. Some psychological theorists such as J B Davies reject the evidence for this, however, and it would have been instructive to see how Nelson might have approached Davies'

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[374] Nelson, *Thirst*, p.42.
[375] See: E. M. Jellinek, *The Disease Concept of Alcoholism*.
[376] Nelson, *Thirst*, p.45 ff.
[377] ibid.

'addiction-as-myth' argument had he commented on this aspect of his work. He does however look at other objections to the disease theory, and we will touch on those presently.

On the third argument, from the standpoint of cause and effect, the argument is between those who say that people drink because they are alcoholics, and those who claim that people become alcoholics because they drink too much. This is a complicated argument, because there are people who exceed the recommended daily alcohol allowance for men and women respectively[378] without showing symptoms of <u>dependency</u> – this raises the question of how dependency can be defined in contrast to 'normal' use of alcohol[379]. An amount that would tip the scales for one person might fail to do so for another: as Nelson points out, '*any* alcohol was too much for me'[380].

The fourth point refers to the advantages that come, from a treatment perspective, when the alcoholic is not seen as someone who has behaved immorally, irresponsibly or sinfully. On a heuristic, clinically motivated basis, there might well seem to be indeed enhanced chances for recovery for someone who is treated as a patient rather than a sinner – although that might not necessarily be a universal truth: for someone who believes him or her self to be culpable, a healthy recognition of that could also be beneficial, as one treatment goal can often be to help the 'client', to use a neutral term, to be more truthful about him or her self and the relationships that have been adversely affected by substance or activity dependent behaviour. And we may wonder whether it is true, as Nelson suggests here, that the non-judgemental approach actually

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[378] Currently 14 units for women and 21 for men, per week, according to the current United Kingdom guidelines, based on the definition of one unit of alcohol as representing eight grams of alcohol. There are an estimated 20% of people who currently drink either hazardous or actually harmful amounts of alcohol in the UK. One person dies every twenty minutes because of alcohol overuse (compared with one every four minutes because of smoking tobacco products).

[379] The same criteria would have traction in relation to other forms of substance ingestion (including coffee, for example) and potentially addictive activities such as shopping or gambling.

[380] Nelson, *Thirst*, p.46.

enhances 'the chances for recovery'[381]. There seems to be little hard evidence for this, and recovery is a complex and often iterative process with many beginnings and endings; on the other hand it may be true that a non-judgemental approach helps some people to take the first step of seeking treatment, whether or not that treatment is ultimately successful or not. We may find ourselves wondering here to what extent Nelson's argument may be skewed because of his own experience.

The fifth point is perhaps less contentious in religious terms at least – the temptation to see only good within oneself and evil as somehow external to the self is clearly a fallacy in religious discourse, going back in the Hebrew literature, as Nelson rightly observes, to the theology of the scapegoat[382]. This finds a modern echo, as Nelson observes[383] in racist and sexist behaviour. In the case of alcoholic behaviour, it may sometimes be that churches which have a high moral outlook scapegoat people in their congregations who have this problem rather than approaching them with empathy and understanding[384].

Nelson has been looking in this chapter at the arguments in favour of seeing alcoholism as a disease. He now turns to criticisms of that point of view, beginning with the robust contentions on this subject of the philosopher Herbert Fingarette[385], who, like J. B. Davies[386] regards the disease model of substance dependency as scientifically flawed and unhelpful. The argument here hinges on essentialist and socially constructed models of disease: Fingarette claims that from an essentialist perspective, there is insufficient scientific evidence to claim that alcohol addiction can be defined as a disease compared

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[381] *Thirst*, p.48.
[382] Nelson for this purpose cites the text of Leviticus 16:21.
[383] Nelson, *Thirst*, p.50.
[384] ibid.
[385] Herbert Fingarette, "Rejecting the Disease Concept", in Ruth C. Engs (ed.) *Controversies in the Addictions Field*, volume 1, pp48-54.
[386] J. B. Davies, *The Myth of Addiction*

with other conditions that can be so defined. To this argument Nelson presents the counter claim that 'Even though the scientific evidence for alcoholism as disease is still less complete than it currently is for some other illnesses, something significant has been happening: the disease concept itself has stimulated scientific research, which in turn has established the concept even more securely among medical professionals and the public'[387]. Despite the awkwardness of this sentence, it is pointing out that, as with many other illnesses, the reality of the illness is there long before it can be named – giving it a name helps those who are investigating it to be clear about their task of trying to understand it and providing a cure where possible.

There are other objections that Nelson considers in this chapter to regarding alcoholism as a disease, such as the objection that the disease concept can have the negative effect of taking away the responsibility of the person with the problem for trying to overcome it. In the face of this objection, Nelson introduces the important matter of <u>denial</u>. Far from attributing their situation to genetic or circumstantial determinants, at least in the relatively early stages of dependency, those with the problem invest heavily in denying to themselves and to others that they have a problem. Nelson's reflections on his own alcoholism led him to say, 'I staunchly denied my alcoholism to the end. My increasingly heavy drinking was due to the dynamics of the disease itself, including organic brain changes. It was not due to a feeling of genetic fatalism'[388].

At this point, via a short paragraph comparing the views of St. Augustine and Pelagius, Nelson moves into an area of addiction theory that brings together, in his chapter entitled 'Sin and Disease' the medical and theological aspects of his subject, and to these we will now turn.

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[387] Nelson, *Thirst*, p.52.
[388] *Thirst*, p.56.

Taking a 'Platonic' line on the nature of sin, Nelson argues that there is 'Sin', as an idea, and individual 'sins' as instances of that reality. Beneath the things that alcoholics do which are sinful in nature, then, there is an underlying reality, which Nelson tries to identify. That reality, for him, is to be found in four things, perfectionism, control, selfishness, and attachment. Perhaps, ultimately, selfishness links all of these things, as it is such a pervasive and complex aspect of human attitudes. He recalls that 'AA's founders recognized that selfishness is more complicated and many-sided than even this. They saw it as a given of the human condition, something that people in all great religions attempted to transcend but never would completely. Hence its destructiveness should be minimized, but its continuing reality should be honestly acknowledged rather than dangerously denied'[389]. It is then from this selfish basis that artificial attachments spring, whether to people, objects or behaviours.

Going deeper into the nature of this selfish basis of sin, Nelson, with echoes of the thought world of Paul Tillich,[390] whom he quotes at several points, describes sin as ultimately a form of estrangement: 'It is relational brokenness, separation from everything meaningful. It is alienation from ourselves, from those around us, and from our environment. Fundamentally it is estrangement from God, the source and ground of all that exists'[391]. Furthermore, although he rejects some of the more moralistic views of Augustine (on sexual matters for example), and the idea of sin as biologically transmitted, he suggests that sin is transmitted from one person to another in societies through attitudes to the material world that encourage the wrong kind of dependence on created things. On this Nelson comments perceptively[392]:

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[389] Nelson, *Thirst*, p.65.
[390] This can be seen in Tillich's use of the language of 'estrangement' as for example in *Systematic Theology*. See, Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, volume 2, passim.
[391] Nelson, *Thirst*, p.67.
[392] op. cit, p.69.

> Perceiving original sin as estrangement that is conveyed by social means was an important new perspective in the early twentieth century. It is no less relevant to a twenty-first-century culture where instant gratification is taken almost as a right and where one corporate slogan, "Better living through chemistry" has become emblematic for society as a whole.

The problem then can be seen as having to do with distortion, what Tillich describes as 'heteronomy', which denotes any idolatrous world view that places anything other than God at the centre of its concerns.

If this distorted view of truth is at the root of the problem of alcoholism, from a religious perspective, what is the answer to it? Here, in the last chapter of his book, Nelson draws extensively on the work of the Fourth Evangelist. In this gospel there is much emphasis on truth as a liberating, life giving, life restoring force: it is more than something that 'is', it is something dynamic that we 'do'[393]. That 'doing' process must then include the reversal of the dynamic of denial that we observed earlier. To recognise this truth is the beginning of a realisation that drinking to excess is a form of slavery – and the capacity for awareness of this generates a 'thirst for the truth that would make me free'. Every pastor who has worked with alcoholics and their families will know the reality of this and the painful process by which the alcoholic reaches the moment of decision – often forced on him by circumstances of health or social disintegration – that leads to the acknowledgement of a need for help. Tragically, not every addict makes this acknowledgement, but when they do, grace is available, for as Nelson recognises, the centrality of the cross in Christian theology is the point at which despite the horrors of many forms of abuse and misuse of God's gifts, there is 'a compelling revelation of the gracious Heart of the Universe'[394].

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[393] op. cit., p.175.
[394] Nelson, *Thirst*, p.165.

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<u>Critical Reflections On Nelson's Work On Alcoholism</u>

Taking a critical look at Nelson's book, it is evident from what has been presented so far that he has provided a full and wide ranging study of the problems of alcoholism as one example of addictive behaviour. He takes into account genetic aspects of the problem, as well as elements of the individual's social relationships from childhood onwards, and brings in a religious viewpoint that argues for the reality of sin as an explanation. Sin is reinterpreted by Nelson in non-judgemental language however, adopting the vocabulary of 'estrangement' familiar to those who know something of the theology of Paul Tillich in particular. He also helpfully takes the imaginative step of looking at the way in which some males, in order to bolster a failed or inadequate sense of their own maleness, in traditional or conventional terms at least, use alcohol to boost their confidence or disguise (from themselves and others) their feelings of vulnerability.

<u>Specific Critical Comments</u>

Inevitably, this book, with the word 'God' in its title is much more likely to appeal to people who have a religious belief than to those who do not, and the way he deals with the sin factor is problematic in the sense that it derives its understanding of the phenomenon of sin from one, fairly specific Protestant tradition, one that would not necessarily be acceptable to Christians of all denominations. It also raises perhaps unanswered questions about the excessive use of ingestible materials such as alcohol, in terms of human desire and longing. There is little here that helps us to be clear about the distinction between normal and abnormal use of such substances. It is on surest ground when the locus of addiction is seen not just, or principally, as a matter of the individual, but as a sign of a society in which instant gratification is taken as a 'human right', and the

damage that this philosophy can do when that supposed right involves the use of potentially toxic or addictive commodities such as alcohol.

One positive comment from Richard Osmer[395] is that although not everyone would accept the 'disease model' of addiction (with specific reference to the misuse of alcohol) the identification of the complexity of understandings, genetic, psychological and sociological that Nelson presents to the reader is to be welcomed. So we may perhaps conclude that there is no simple answer to why people become addicted. There may turn out to be as many reasons as there are addicted people, which if it is true, makes the task of providing helpful treatment, of whatever kind, in itself a complex undertaking, one that reveals itself in a tortuous and often baffling and paradoxical manner.

On a more technical note, it seems strange that a book which expressly uses the terminology of Christian theology takes little account of the workings of the Holy Spirit. This concern has already been raised. His approach to the theology of the Spirit seems rather 'thin'. He does not develop a systematic theological approach to this part of Trinitarian theology, and this is regrettable because with his emphasis on recovery from addiction (not least his own) as Resurrection life or new life, emphasis on the Spirit infused quality of such life seems to be a natural linkage. He provides some attempts to relate his work to 'Spirit' theology, by pointing out for example that[396]

> The Spirit can teach us an immense amount in every thirst we experience every desire in our lives…. The Spirit may some day prompt me to ask "What is the desire behind that desire?" If I discover that I desire approval and esteem through being seen as conscientious, considerate and capable, what is the desire lying deeper than that desire?

Again, on the same page, Nelson suggests that 'It is through pressing questions that the Spirit takes us deeply into our own woundedness out of which our

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[395] Richard Osmer, *Practical Theology*, p.121.
[396] Nelson, op. cit., p.34.

drivenness and addictions arise' and that it is in this 'wilderness' experience, which may continue for years, that 'the basic healing of our souls can occur'. This is a promising line of theological and spiritual understanding in relation to the doctrine of God and the Holy Spirit. It seems regrettable that Nelson does not develop this line of argument in greater depth and detail.

Situating This Work Among Others On The Subject Of Theology And Addiction

Two further observations need to be made at this point, on the one hand about the relationship of this book to the other writers whose work on addiction also forms a substantial element in this chapter of the thesis, and on the other, the relationship of Nelson's work to the project with which the thesis is concerned.

1)   Nelson owes much to Gerald May to whom he refers on pages 27-28, 66, 71, and 87. He quotes from *Addiction and Grace* on p.27f, 71 and 87. He does not however agree with all that May writes: on p. 71 he takes issue with him for example over the question of <u>universal</u> addiction, namely the suggestion that we are <u>all</u> addicted to something and that this addiction can be equated with the religious concept of sin. Wisely, in the view of the author of this thesis, Nelson says that the term should strictly only apply in the more specific sense – 'It is one thing to say that everyone is involved in sin. It is another, however, to say that everyone is addicted. This stretches the addiction net too far'[397]. Even this might be a fairly generous view of what is probably the most contentious element in May's work, as we observed in the chapter on his writing. It both reduces the concept of addiction to another epistemological framework where it hardly belongs,

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[397] Nelson, *Thirst*, p.71.

and also perhaps underplays - or even trivialises - the misery that addiction can bring to individuals and families.

2) The relationship of Nelson's work to this thesis.

There are questions to be asked about how Nelson's work as described in this chapter relates to the purpose of this thesis both in its psychological and theological modes. Although we are committed to looking for the possibility of constructing a theological paradigm, it would be unhelpful to overlook the contributions of people who are writing from a different perspective. Tony Adams, the former captain of the England Association Football team is particularly relevant to our consideration of Nelson's book because like Nelson, he is someone who describes himself as an alcoholic. Like Nelson, Adams regards this description rather in the way that another person might describe him as 'a diabetic'. In other words, even allowing for factors such as poor life choices or sinful, disordered behaviour, both writers believe that the alcohol dependent drinker is 'an alcoholic for life' and will need to exercise perpetual vigilance lest this disease, 'cunning, powerful and baffling' recur and cause further problems even many years after the individual has come to believe herself to be abstinent. This awareness will entail for example, continuing self-help treatment via AA and Adams writes of looking for AA meetings to attend wherever he travelled to play football for his club or country[398]. And yet we may perhaps be left wondering whether this approach is necessarily one that is needed by all who have an episode of alcoholic dependency. There are other treatment modalities that do not make assumptions about the 'alcoholic' or 'drug addict' for life diagnosis, regarding this process as

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[398] Tony Adams, with Ian Ridley, *Addicted*, p.366.

labelling which may be countervailing in helping the individual towards personal empowerment and positive self-evaluation. This can be true even when people with dependency problems are referred to detoxification or rehabilitation units many times, and may never completely break the cycle of dependency. There is a debate then about this 'for life' element, and that is perhaps related to the disadvantage to an individual of regarding her as having a disease that is lifelong, like diabetes.

Of great importance here is the problematic nature of 'choice' as a way in to understanding a wide range of behaviours that can for some develop into addiction, one that they seem unable to defeat without some form of outside intervention, through AA and similar organisations, or psychotherapeutic and/or psychopharmacological assistance. Nelson, with his AA background, and Adams, speak of alcoholism as a lifetime pathological condition which, whatever causes its onset, cannot be cured, although vigilance and attendance at AA meetings can control it.

Although this is one interpretation of substance dependency, it is open to challenge by those who do regard it as disease rather than choice (with its possible overtones of 'sinfulness') - but one that can be overcome. This is mentioned because there is an ongoing debate about these issues which has not so far been resolved.

This thesis is intended as a contribution to this debate, providing some light on the subject from both theological and psychological perspectives, and Nelson's book, despite its problems, offers the reader some helpful pathways into a greater understanding of the complexities of the subject.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Nelson offers the reader a fascinating, informative and often challenging route into the better understanding of addiction, one that does not avoid the complexities or difficulties of the subject matter. Inevitably, his understanding is influenced by his own personal experience, about which he is very honest, and this is to be welcomed, although it may be questioned whether his own experientially founded epistemology of addiction is in danger of generalising from the particular. Different people have different experiences and different hermeneutical methodologies for explaining the causes of addiction and its treatment.

2.4   Christopher Cook: *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics*

Introduction.

Christopher Cook is professorial research fellow in the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Durham and based at St. Chad's College, which has a long history of offering training for the Anglican priesthood. He is a consultant psychiatrist who worked for at the Institute of Psychiatry in South East London, specialising in addiction. He was ordained as an Anglican priest in 2001 in the Diocese of Canterbury. He therefore has understanding and experience on the subject of addiction from the perspective of the health care sciences, and combines that with his understanding of Christian theology and spirituality, which is particularly evident in his recent work on the *Philokalia*[399]. Let us look in more detail at his life and work to date[400].

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[399] The *Philokalia* is an extensive collection of texts on the spiritual life emanating from the Orthodox Churches from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries C.E. Cook's particular contribution to the study of these writings is concerned with the relationship between the *Philokalia* and mental health. C.C.H. Cook, *The Philokalia and the Inner Life: On Passions and Prayer.*
[400] The information recorded here is based on information to be found on the website www.dur.ac.uk/theology.religion/staff last consulted on 24.02.2011.

Cook trained in Medicine at St. George's Hospital Medical School in London, qualifying in psychiatric practice at Guy's and St. Thomas's where he specialized in the study of addiction. This led to a lectureship at University College London, and from there to the Institute of Psychiatry, and to a professorship at the University of Kent – as Professor of the Psychiatry of Alcohol Misuse, a post which he held from 1997 to 2003, before moving to Durham. One of his most important publications during this period was his co-authorship of a book entitled *The Treatment of Drinking Problems*[401]. His doctoral thesis was concerned with the likelihood of a genetic predisposition to addiction, which while in no way determinative, nevertheless points to the likelihood of a heritable component in the predisposition of an individual to acquire a substance dependency. He points out however that his interest in addiction is far wider than the biological elements. He has developed an interest in a variety of 'treatments[402]' for alcoholism, such as through Alcoholics Anonymous and both religious and secular therapeutic and pastoral counselling interventions.

His present title is Director of the 'Project for Spirituality, Theology and Health', a collaborative enterprise between the University's Theology and Medical departments. He has also written, in addition to his books on addiction, a chapter on spirituality and addiction in a book entitled *Spirituality and Psychiatry*[403]. He also chairs the Executive Committee of the Special Interest Group in Spirituality at the Royal College of Psychiatrists. He acts for various charities that work with addicted people in a consultative capacity.

We will now focus specifically on his writing on addiction, especially in *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics.*

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[401] Edwards, G, Marshall E. J., Cook C.C.H., *The Treatment of Drinking Problems, a Guide for the helping Professions*, 4th edition.

[402] The word treatment is put in quotation marks here because AA groups are self-help groups rather than regarded by members as treatment.

[403] Cook, C.C.H., Powell, Andrew, and Sims, Andrew, eds.: *Spirituality and Psychiatry*.

As we have already observed, Christopher Cook writes from the dual perspective of a medical practitioner working in addiction care and that of an ordained Anglican priest. His major writings are mainly contributions to the understanding of alcohol misuse – first from the perspective of a psychiatrist, and then increasingly from a theological and ethical point of view – without neglecting the more 'scientific' understanding of the subject, including genetic factors.

His ethical outlook comes into the foreground in *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics*. Of great importance here for Cook is not just the question of individual responsibility for the use and misuse of alcohol, but also questions of public policy, a matter also raised by Kenneth Leech as we have seen earlier in this chapter.

In *Alcohol Addiction and Christian Ethics* Cook wishes to change the language of addiction. He prefers the words 'dependence syndrome' to 'addiction'. This is important in relation to the questions of personal responsibility that are reflected in his ethical approach, because it offers a more comprehensive theory of substance misuse, relying on both biological and psycho-social evidence, and proposing that at the heart of this syndrome lies an 'altered relationship' between the user of the substance and the substance itself[404]. In respect of the public aspects of addiction, he concerns himself, as we shall see later, with the ambiguous relationship between the alcohol production and sales industry and the need for the government to derive sizeable revenue from taxation of the sales of alcohol, which arguably creates a conflict of interests.

The book's chapters illustrate the various aspects of the subject that he wishes to consider. These chapters are headed in such a way as to provide a historical

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[404] See Cook, *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics*, p.24. He continues this train of thought by arguing that 'Whatever the initial reasons for drinking, dependence provides a reason for continued drinking' (ibid).

survey of the uses and abuses of alcohol – as seen in the evidence provided by the Bible[405], the phenomenon of 'intemperance' instantiated in the writings of Saint Augustine of Hippo in the *Confessions*, especially chapter 6, St. Thomas Aquinas in the first part of the second part of his *Summa Theologica*, where he explores the concept of the 'mean of virtues' as a guide to human activity based on the proper engagement of reason and will, Martin Luther in *Table Talk: of God's Works* (paragraph 699) and George Whitefield's Sermon 52. He explores the nineteenth century temperance movement[406]. He then examines the concept of addiction in terms of human sinfulness and in its appearance as a syndrome, that is to say, its understanding within the body of scientific, medical literature. Regarding 'sin', he draws on the work of Alistair McFadyen[407], who relates the concept of addiction to the Augustinian doctrine of original sin: human beings find themselves, to use Cook's terminology, 'embedded' in sin in ways that cannot be explained simplistically in terms of wilfulness or the exercise of free will[408].

One factor that needs to be acknowledged here is his conviction that whether one accepts the Pauline notion of the divided self or the Augustinian notion of the divided will, it is vital to see addiction, from a theological perspective, as embodied in inner conflict that is part of the human condition. Of great importance here is the contribution to our understanding of this phenomenon provided in the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 7, although there are many possible interpretations of this chapter, some of which are discussed by Cook in

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[405] Especially in terms of its appearance in the New Testament as a vice when it is associated with drunkenness. The household codes in the epistles, such as at I Timothy 3:1-2 and 8 also give instructions about avoiding alcohol excess.

[406] Of particular interest here is the work of writers such as Whitefield as shown in his sermon on "the heinous sin of drunkenness", 1771, cited by Cook, Op. cit., p.70.

[407] See in particular, Alistair McFadyen, *Bound to Sin: Abuse, Holocaust and the Christian Doctrine of Sin*.

[408] Cook, *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics*, p.128.

the chapter on "Addiction as sin and syndrome" and we will return to this chapter.

Ethical Dimension

Cook faces the difficult issue of the legitimate use of religious terms and categories in ethical, and particularly in secular ethical, discourse. He cites[409] the former Bishop of Edinburgh, Richard Holloway, who believes that while Christians have a right to engage in secular ethical discourse, the use of specifically religious ideas in that context is questionable. This is obvious in the case of fundamentalist approaches of the 'God says, therefore…' type; in a more nuanced way it raises questions about what type of intervention from a specifically theological point of view can legitimately be introduced into such dialogues, which can involve people of many faiths and none. Cook makes a strong case for bringing such ideas in to the dialogue, though without attempting to use them, as some temperance movements have done, to suggest, for example, that the use of alcohol is in some way to be seen as evil in itself. Cook's approach attempts to formulate a moral view of when and in what circumstances drinking is acceptable behaviour for a Christian, and in what circumstances the drinking of alcohol should be avoided[410].

One problem with this approach as identified by Ryan Topping in his detailed review of this book[411] is the charge of rhetorical circularity, as it seeks to present a theological argument that is worth considering by people who are not Christians. The argument might be expressed in terms of inviting the reader to look at the results that his theologically motivated methodology achieves and

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[409] op. cit., p.7.
[410] In one interestingly argued section, Cook makes a good case for abstinence as a model of behaviour for others to follow – in the sense that setting an example is often more effective than preaching, however persuasive. See: *Cook, Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics*, pp. 174-176.
[411] Ryan Topping reviewing *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics* in *Studies in Christian Ethics*.

decide on the basis of those whether or not the arguments are valid. But the problem is that he is starting from the assumption that what is being argued is valid. Topping says:

> The weakness of [Cook's] method, however is that it opens the theologian to the charge of circularity. At some point, the sceptic must simply adopt principles that the theologian has assumed – unless, of course, the theologian can show reasons why those disputed principles can be argued for on other grounds (traditionally the work of natural theology, sometimes called 'fundamental theology').

The fact remains that many people, of a variety of faith backgrounds, and many with no overt religious belief, drink far more alcohol than is consistent with personal health and social wellbeing, including that of their families[412]. This also correlates to an awareness of excessive drinking as a problem on the one hand, but an inability to be more moderate on the other. Cook provides a detailed analysis of this paradox, and sees it in terms of Pauline and Augustinian theologies of the <u>self</u>, which is so often divided between a wish to do what is in the best interests of the individual and society as a whole on the one hand, and a desire to drink excessively on the other. Here again, Topping[413] has some criticism of Cook, because he states that Cook 'should have included a discussion that would make explicit the philosophical presuppositions dividing contemporary theological and psychological views of the human person'. To this highly important philosophical and theological issue we will return in the next chapter of this thesis, which will look at theological models of the self and human desire in terms of a fundamental desire for God that can become distorted and express itself in ways that are to a greater or lesser extent destructive.

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[412] A detailed breakdown of figures comparing sensible and risk taking consumption of alcohol per head of the UK population is included as an appendix to this thesis.
[413] Review article, *Studies in Christian Ethics* 21.1, p.132

Four main theological writers whose work Cook employs in order to generate

for the purpose of his book a theological understanding of addiction are:

1)   Saint Paul
2)   Saint Augustine of Hippo
3)   Saint Thomas Aquinas
4)   Martin Luther.

1)   Saint Paul.

In his letter to the Christian Church in Rome, dated approximately 50

CE, Paul directs his attention to the phenomenon of what Cook refers to

as the 'divided self'[414], although he is careful to point out that 'The divided

self of Romans 7:14-15 is … not a description of addiction; it is a

description of another kind of experience' [415]. The verses under discussion

are stated here[416]:

> We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. I
> do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want,
> but I do the very thing that I hate.

This cautious statement about these verses by Cook in relation to his

topic of addiction is welcome as it alerts us not only to the allusive manner

in which he himself uses the verses, but also to the complexity of trying to

make sense of the passage of Romans under consideration on its own

terms. For a full discussion of this, and in particular the suggestion that

modern interpretations have been excessively influenced or even distorted

through the prism of Augustine's heavily psychological interpretation, the

reader is directed for example to the work of Krister Stendahl[417]. Stendahl

sees Paul's polemic not as some kind of inner wrestling, but as a way of

accommodating a variety of points of view, faced as he was in a political

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[414] Cook, *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics*, p.143.
[415] ibid.
[416] Epistle to the Romans, 7:14-15, Revised Standard Version.
[417] Krister Stendahl, "Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West" in *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*.

as much as a theological sense, in the light of God's apparent abandonment of Israel, with the task of uniting Christians in Rome from Jewish and pagan religious backgrounds[418]. Whether or not we accept Stendahl's view, he is alerting us to the danger of forcing a modern interpretation of the text in a too artificial manner[419]. We should therefore be wise to treat with a certain amount of caution the idea that Paul in this passage is in any sense wrestling with his own conscience or expressing a personal sense of failure.

So how are these verses to be understood and how does Cook use them to help us to understand the plight of the person who is addicted to alcohol? His procedure involves the introduction of a number of twentieth century conversation partners. These are C. E. B. Cranfield[420], J.D.G. Dunn[421], J. Ziesler[422] and G. Theissen[423]. This selection of commentaries however immediately poses a problem. There are after all many commentaries on Romans, so on what basis has Cook chosen these and excluded others? Cook readily admits that he is being selective, and that his chosen conversation partners are representative of certain positions[424]. It would however have been better if Cook had given reasons for his selection – it is noteworthy that there are no references to some of the

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[418] Stendahl, op. cit.
[419] For a critique of Stendahl's position, see for example Patrick Henry, *New Directions in New Testament Interpretation*, p.175ff., which is positive about Stendahl's interpretation, and on the other hand the more reserved position of J.G.D. Dunn, in *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, p.7.
[420] C.E.B. Cranfield, *Romans: a Shorter Commentary*.
[421] J.G.D. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, eds. D.A. Hubbard et al.
[422] J. Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*.
[423] Gerd Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology*.
[424] In particular, for example, they take opposite sides on the question of whether this inner debate is the concern of the Christian or the non-Christian, with both Cranfield and Dunn arguing for the former interpretation, and Ziesler and Theissen taking the opposing view. See Cook, p.138.

classical modern commentaries such as those of Karl Barth, Rudolph Bultmann, C.H. Dodd, or C. K. Barrett[425].

What are the focal points that he is seeking to clarify in terms of Paul's argument, and how does this relate to Cook's exploration of addiction?

On the former question, there is a clear issue about human desire and moral choice, and the ways in which choice is directed by inner forces, those that motivate free choice on the one hand, and those that inhibit that freedom on the other. What then are we to make of the context in which Paul sets up his polemic, and how does he explain the fundamental problem?

Romans is a large and in some ways comprehensive document, whether we see it as a letter, a thesis, or a 'Greek letter-essay'[426]. It deals with many interconnecting themes, all related to Paul's perception of the person and salvific role of Jesus Christ. The section of the letter that contains chapter 7 is one that builds up to a climactic expression of faith, to be revealed in the following chapters. At this point, however, Paul is setting the scene for what he intends ultimately to say. Paul is addressing an audience that has come to faith in Christ from a variety of faith communities, to use a somewhat anachronistic expression. Some Church members are of Jewish origin; others are not. Paul respects the traditions that all have brought with them, to avoid suggesting that one group has any ultimate advantage over another – and to this extent he is on a theological knife edge. He refutes the suggestion that the Jews are deficient in their understanding of the range of God's promises by asserting the benefits that the Jews have because of their foundation on the Law and the Prophets, as we see, for

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[425] Barrett's book *Paul: An Introduction to his Thought* is however mentioned in the bibliography, together with his commentary on the Gospel according to Saint John.
[426] For this latter helpful suggestion see ed. Karl P. Donfried, *The Romans Debate*.

example, in 3:1-4. This assertion is immediately balanced however in 3:9 and 3:21ff., in which it is made clear that just as all have in some sense failed in God's eyes, so his offer of forgiveness and grace through Jesus Christ as gift available through faith is available to all – on equal terms.

Paul is therefore arguing with a view to inclusiveness: his polemic has the object of making it possible for the Roman Church to include people of Jewish and non-Jewish religious traditions on an equal basis. This context is vital to a proper understanding of what the apostle is trying to achieve. He is, to this extent, a politician as well as a theological writer. But in terms of content, we are faced in Romans 7 with writing that talks of some kind of inner debate that faces the individual believer. It is a debate that addresses <u>desire</u> and how desire may be consonant with the will of God as understood by the believer, or contrary to that will. This idea is addressed by Cook using the commentators mentioned earlier:

Cranfield

Cranfield[427] claims that the kind of inner conflict to which Paul refers is experienced by the Christian <u>after</u> her conversion and sanctification by the Holy Spirit. What is imparted by this process is twofold, that is to say, knowledge of God's will on the one hand, and the will to live accordingly on the other. With this however comes awareness of the power of sin to frustrate good intentions. This interpretation is founded on an essentially Calvinistic understanding of Paul, in the sense that because of the literal reality of the Fall, even good human actions are tainted by the fact of

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[427] Cook's major exposition of Cranfield's view of Paul's theology of inner conflict can be found in *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics*, p.136 and 142-143.

egotism. Ultimately only God can resolve this conflict: thus Calvin (and Cranfield) has a thoroughly eschatological approach.

Dunn

James Dunn agrees with Cranfield that the locus of the conflicted will is to be seen in humanity <u>after</u> conversion to Christianity. For Dunn, the essential feature of the problem lies in the contrast between the individual's willingness to follow God's wishes on the one hand, and another 'I' who, as a 'man of the flesh', is worked on by sin to bring death rather than life, in the sense that living according to God's will is life, whereas living under sin is death, from a theological point of view. This is a 'two epoch' theory. In the first epoch, before conversion, the individual is under the power of sin alone: in the second epoch he lives under the power of Christ, but this still has an eschatological dimension, because for the individual Christian the process of salvation has begun but is not yet complete[428]. It is this tension in the believer that, in Dunn's view, leads to Paul's agonised cry in Romans 7:24-25 – 'Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death? But thanks be to God through Jesus Christ Our Lord!'

Ziesler

In Ziesler's view, however, something different is happening here. For him the divided self that Paul is describing is not about the situation of the Christian person <u>after</u> conversion. For Ziesler it is a state that exists <u>prior to that conversion</u>. There are two epochs here as well, but they are not

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[428] Cook's exposition of Dunn's theory can be found on pp. 139, and 142-144., op. cit.

related to pre and post conversion temporality. They are rather two aspects of the narrative of conversion itself, on the one hand recognising the competing desire that is part of all human experience[429], and on the other an engagement in inner debate about which law to follow – the law of God as made available through the Gospel in competition for the person's commitment with other laws, whether based on religious (such as Jewish, for example) or philosophical (such as Hellenistic) theories[430]. Into this turmoil comes God's word, in Christ, which alone can bring resolution.

Theissen

Gerd Theissen's book[431] is unique among those with whom Cook engages in his account of Romans 7 because he incorporates into his exegetical enterprise a psychological dimension. There is here a danger of interpreting an ancient text through the intellectual prism of modern thinking (We have already mentioned Stendahl's' warning about this). The question remains as to how Theissen uses psychological insights and whether he has done so successfully.

Unlike Ziesler, and the other writers we have been considering through the eyes of Chris Cook, Theissen argues that the conflict which Paul is describing has its locus neither in the pre-conversion potential Christian believer, nor in the Christian as such, but in something that we might perhaps call 'the human condition'. Theissen bases his theory here, Cook argues, on a Greek model of the human personality, one that is associated

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[429] This is instantiated in the verses leading up to Romans 7:20
[430] This is instantiated in the verses following 7:20.
[431] Gerd Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology*

with the Stoic philosophy of Seneca, as seen, for example, in the latter's analysis of the killing of her children by Medea[432].

Although Cook does not come down in favour of one of these writers in any overall or absolute sense, he does conclude this section helpfully by suggesting ways in which an exploration of the relationship between sin and addiction to alcohol in the light of Romans 7 might be profitable: he suggests that it would be more helpful to focus on the power of sin rather than individual sins, a conflict between 'openness to the grace and power of God and openness to the power of sin'[433], and the need for the grace of God as a means of deliverance from 'enslavement or captivity'[434] to addiction, with or without the assistance of psychotherapy.

2) The second writer that Cook chooses as a voice on the issue of self and conflicting desires is Augustine of Hippo, and he gives a great deal of attention to his interpretation of Paul on this point. The main features of his presentation of Augustine fall into two main sections. First there is the use Augustine makes, in Book VIII of the *Confessions* for example, of the idea of the divided will, in contrast perhaps to Paul's preference for the concept of the divided self. This is how Cook describes Augustine's analysis of this idea:[435]

> It becomes clear here that Augustine understood himself as possessing two wills in opposition to each other. The one will commanded that his mind should will that he follow the example of Victorinus[436]. This was evident in his consciousness of 'commanding' himself to do the same. The other will was his unwillingness to follow Victorinus. This was evident in the fact

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[432] This debate can be followed through Helen Foley's journal article "Medea's Divided Self", which explores the masculine/feminine internal debate in which Medea addresses the murder of her children. As Foley explains in her article (p.63), Medea's 'internal dialogue is held between a part of herself called *thumos* … or sometimes *kardia…* and another part that is *mētēr*'. She is in fact quoting from Burnett at this point – see: Anne Burnett, "Medea and the Tragedy of Revenge".

[433] Cook, op. cit., p.146

[434] ibid.

[435] Cook, op. cit., p 153.

[436] Victorinus is the philosopher whose conversion to Christianity Augustine took as the model for conversion, and whose path to Christianity he wished to follow himself.

that the 'command' was not actually obeyed. He understands this state of affairs as reflecting an 'infirmity of mind' in which there are two partial wills neither of which is 'entire' or 'whole'.

At first glance this interpretation seems to describe adequately a state of subjective internal conflict, the kind of experience that Paul presumably had in mind when praying to be delivered 'from the body of this death'[437]. Further examination however reveals that such a simple argument fails to describe the situation adequately. What seems to be happening, in the process of Augustine's thought, has, Cook suggests, the character of dual volition, a phrase that he takes from Harry Frankfurt's contribution to *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*[438]. On this understanding of the problem of the divided will, there are first order volitional drives, which would mean for Augustine the wish to remain in his pagan way of life, and the second order drive which wants him to turn away from his old ways and embrace Christianity. This is a highly important contribution to the theological background to Cook's theology in relation to addiction, because as he observes, Frankfurt himself uses the example of the addict as an instantiation of the problem he is addressing. As Cook[439] observes:

> For Frankfurt, the narcotic addict may have first-order desires both to take the drug and not to take it. The former is in both cases, more or less, generated by physiological dependency upon the drug. The 'unwilling addict', however, also has a second order volition to stop taking the drug, and therefore identifies self with this first-order desire, while withdrawing from the first order desire to stop using the drug

Cook then develops this idea in relation to 'salience' – the technical term for the way in which the use of a substance, or engagement in an activity such as gambling, can assume increasing importance in the life of the

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[437] Romans 7:24.

[438] Ed. Stump and Kretzmann, The *Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, p.126-127.

[439] Cook, op. cit. p.156.

individual, and this salience conflicts with the volitional drive to abstain because of perceived 'psychological, social and biological harm associated with the dependent pattern of drug use'[440]. Putting this back into the language of Augustine, Cook quotes his view that[441]

> the law of sin is the tyranny of habit, by which the mind is drawn and held even against its will. Yet it deserves to be so held because it so willingly falls into the habit.

Cook concludes his remarks on Augustine by observing that although he did not go into detail about the problems of alcohol excess, he did 'make it clear that drunkenness is a disorder of the will, consequent upon the sin of Adam', suggesting that the 'modern concepts of subjective compulsion, craving and addiction might be greatly illuminated by an application of this aspect of Augustine's thought'[442]. It would be difficult to dissent from this point of view.

3) Moving on to the writing of St. Thomas Aquinas, the key to understanding his writing in relation to addiction is to be found, Cook suggests, in his use of the 'mean of virtues' approach to Christian ethics. This presupposes an epistemological spectrum of views of the created order, at one end of which there is contempt for created things, which in its own way 'insults' the One who created everything, and at the other is excessive indulgence in the use of nature's goods. Between these two extremes there is 'mean', by which is meant an attitude to created things that neither denies their goodness nor capitulates to excess. Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica*[443] uses the word 'temperance' to denote the right use of reason in making decisions about how to avoid the extremes. With regard to the application

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[440] Cook, op. cit, p.157.
[441] Augustine, *Confessions VIII*, v, 12, cited by Cook, op. cit., p.157.
[442] Cook, op. cit., p.59.
[443] See in particular *Summa Theologica* Second Part of the Second Part, Question 47:7.

of this theory to the consumption of alcohol by an individual, Cook makes the following statement[444]:

> Notwithstanding the commendability of complete abstinence for those who choose it, the application of Aquinas' mean of virtues as an ethical framework to govern moderate drinking behaviour also has much to commend it. As a general rule, it would certainly seem that it is 'excessive' or heavy consumption that is associated with the greatest risk of harm, although there is a need to remember that the prevention paradox suggests that a moderate level of consumption alone will not solve all alcohol-related problems at the population level.

It does seem that Aquinas, as Cook suggests, has a valid contribution to make to the study of addiction by his assertion that the appropriate use of God's creation, including alcohol, entails a positive valuation of things created and given to us, balanced by a rational decision to use such things in moderation – although as we have just observed, that degree of moderation is not necessarily attainable by all.

4) The last person we shall be discussing in relation to Cook's ideas is Martin Luther, who, he claims, like Aquinas concerns himself with reason as a guide to right thinking and right behaviour, whereas states of drunkenness should rightly be regarded as 'a work of the flesh' that is to say, something that is in contra-distinction to the Christian virtuous life. He does not see Christian commitment as a guarantee of sinlessness, but attributes to the Holy Spirit a means of overcoming temptation[445]. Drunkenness is a phenomenon which Luther sees as a sin of excess, a 'work of the flesh'[446]. In some ways he, like Aquinas, tends towards a consequentialist view of drunkenness. This means that being drunk when committing an evil act in no way excuses the individual from responsibility for what he has done

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[444] Cook, *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics*, p.176
[445] Cook, op.cit. p.68.
[446] ibid.

while in this state of temporary 'diminished responsibility'. In fact, quite the opposite conclusion may be drawn. To quote Luther himself on this:[447]

> It has been asked: Is an offence, committed in a moment of intoxication, therefore excusable? Most assuredly not; on the contrary, drunkenness aggravates the fault. Hidden sins unveil themselves when a man's self-possession goes from him; that which the sober man keeps in his breast, the drunken man lets out at the lips. Astute people, when they want to ascertain a man's true character, make him drunk. This same drunkenness is a grievous vice among us Germans, and should be heavily chastised by the temporal magistrate, since the fear of God will not suffice to keep the brawling guzzlers in check.

This is a highly important quotation by Cook as it illustrates not only Luther's awareness of excess as sinful in terms of behaviour, but also establishes a link between God's rule and secular authority. The fear of God's wrath or punishment may not be enough to deter this kind of excess and its consequences, but fear of secular punishment may encourage moderation! Society, in his view, needed legislative protection from the dangers of alcohol misuse, and the punishment of those who while under inebriation commit further crimes or offences against the law.

Cook ends his discussion of Luther's views on alcohol excess with a helpful summary of his argument. Cook suggests[448] that Luther:

> saw drunkenness as sinful on the basis that it is expressly forbidden in scripture. It is thus analogous with the sin of Adam and Eve. Insofar as it was a problem in the 'created realm', it was matter for the attention of the courts, and one which he believed should be treated severely in order to keep the problem in check. Insofar as it was a problem in the 'realm of redemption', it was a sign of the resistance of 'the flesh' to the work of the Spirit of Christ. The Christian is enjoined to eschew drunkenness, and other works of the flesh, out of gratitude to Christ. And yet, Luther still recognised that Christians may sin 'unwittingly' and that the reign of the Spirit of Christ in the believer's heart may not make him or her greatly different from 'any honest man'.

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[447] Cook, op. cit. p.69, citing Martin Luther, *Table Talk: Of Offences*, paragraph 695.
[448] op. cit., p.69.

Cook's discussion of Luther's approach notes his hostility to 'sins of the flesh' and this viewpoint has strong backing in scripture at many points, particularly in terms of Paul's wrestling with the concept of flesh in terms of his theology. As James Dunn has helpfully pointed out[449], however, it can be argued that Paul's use of '*sarx*' in his writings carries a certain ambiguity of meaning, and care needs to be taken to avoid an unnecessary suggestion that in his view there is a close relationship at all points between words like 'flesh' and 'evil'.

Luther was thus aware not only of the tendency of human beings to drink too much alcohol but also of the social consequences of such excess which cannot be excused by a plea of 'drunkenness' as if it were perhaps the fault of the alcohol that someone behaved wickedly. He therefore recommends rational moderation, and is sufficiently concerned about the extent of the problem to recommend that it should be a matter for legislation and punishment for those who cannot control their consumption of alcohol without external constraint. He clearly does not advocate a policy of total abstention as a requisite for the Christian man or woman.

Ethical Considerations

Given the acceptability of a religious dimension to the ethical discourse, and taking into account the forgoing historical survey, what specifically ethical criteria does Cook advocate in relation to the use and misuse of alcohol? From a theoretical point of view, although he does not explicitly identify with any particular philosophical ethical position such as the

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[449] J. G. D. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. See p.64-66 about Paul's 'spectrum' of usage of the word *sarx*

deontological, utilitarian, situationist or 'virtue' ethics template, there is a fundamental concern with what Cook describes as 'an interplay of agent and environment in such a way that subjects experience themselves as "drawn into" an addictive pattern of behaviour for which they are neither entirely responsible nor entirely without responsibility'[450]. This approach is not easy to work with. It is easier to adopt a 'take it or leave it' approach to ethics for religious thinkers, and it is greatly to his credit that Cook attempts to work in this more nuanced way, so that he cannot be accused of attempting to use religious language to close down the arguments, as is sometimes the case with more fundamentalist approaches. He also recognises that although much of the ethical discourse that has been directed towards excess of alcohol consumption, such as that of Aquinas, has been essentially consequentialist in its concern with the negative effect of drunkenness on society, there needs to be a counterbalancing emphasis on the pursuit of the good as a positive goal, and that for Christians that goal has to be located in the being and nature of God[451]. This leads to a discussion of the Augustinian idea of the *summum bonum*, which will concern us in more detail in the following chapter of this thesis that is concerned with theological aspects of human desire. In essence, this teaching suggests that all forms of human sinfulness are ultimately characterised not so much by the positive evil that they entail as by the departure from what is the highest good that humanity, under God's grace, can attain.

On the specifics of individual responsibility for sensible consumption of alcohol there are many biblical texts that could be brought into the debate.

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[450] Cook, op. cit., p.146, cited by Ryan Topping on page 129 of his review of the book, pp. 129-165.
[451] op. cit., p. 184f.

One particularly helpful quotation[452] comes from the apocryphal book of Sirach[453], which counsels the use of alcohol, but in moderation:

> Wine is very life to human beings if taken in moderation. What is life to one who is without wine? It has been created to make people happy. Wine drunk at the proper time and in moderation is rejoicing of heart and gladness of soul.

There is however a section following this which balances this liberal admonition by asserting that the excessive use of wine leads not to 'rejoicing' but to its opposite – "bitterness of spirit", quarrels, anger, and loss of strength'[454]. This text, in combination with many others in both Jewish and New Testament scriptures, notably in lists of vices and virtues such as can be found at Romans 13:13, Colossians 3:18-4:1, I Peter 4:3, and I Timothy 3:3[455] warns of the danger of excess. Although all of these counsel sensible restraint in the use of alcohol, the practical wisdom of Sirach is of great importance as it presents the kind of balanced picture that occurs in later Christian theology – the middle way of Thomas Aquinas, for example, who, as we have observed earlier, rejects the need for total abstinence because God's gifts are essentially good, but also opposes over indulgence as it offends against the deadly sin of gluttony[456].

Many people, from a variety of faith backgrounds, and many with no overt religious belief, drink far more alcohol than is consistent with personal health and social wellbeing, including that of their families[457]. Why is that? Cook provides a detailed analysis of this, and sees it in terms of Pauline and Augustinian theologies of the self, which is often divided

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[452] op. cit., p.39
[453] Sirach, 31:25-31.
[454] Cook, op. cit., p.39.
[455] For a comprehensive list of these occurrences, see Cook, op. cit., p.46.
[456] For further commentary on Aquinas, see Cook, op. cit., p.61f.
[457] A detailed breakdown of figures comparing sensible and risk taking consumption of alcohol per head of the UK population is included as an appendix to this thesis.

between a wish to do what is in the best interests of the individual and society as a whole on the one hand, and a desire to drink excessively on the other. We observed earlier Ryan Topping's[458] criticism of Cook, asserting that Cook 'should have included a discussion that would make explicit the philosophical presuppositions dividing contemporary theological and psychological views of the human person'. To this highly important philosophical and theological issue we will return in detail in the next chapter of this thesis. To this criticism we may also add that it is surprising that Cook does not draw any explicit parallels with the various ethical approaches to health care that have been provided in the last twenty years or so by significant ethical figures as Alastair Campbell[459], or Raanan Gillon's philosophical approach[460]. Robin Gill's survey of medical ethics in the same series as his own book may well have been published too late for Cook to have referred to it; it does however analyse many different religious and secular approaches to medical ethics, and a subsequent edition of *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics* would benefit from some attention to Gill's work. This is not to suggest that these books provide a comprehensive answer to the ethical questions Cook is asking, but referencing them would situate his own work within a wider contemporary context. From a specifically Christian perspective, he might also have helpfully used the ethical views of Stanley Hauerwas, particularly in his book *Naming the Silences*[461].

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[458] Review article, *Studies in Christian Ethics* 21.1, p.132

[459] Alastair Campbell, Grant Gillett and Gareth Jones, *Medical Ethics* 3rd edition. It may well be that Cook's book was published before the appearance of both this and the useful article by Sidney Bloch and Stephen A Green, entitled "An Ethical Framework for Psychiatry".

[460] Raanan Gillon*, Philosophical Medical Ethics*. Gillon debates the concept of duty of care to patients from both religious and secular philosophical positions.

[461] Stanley Hauerwas, *Naming the Silences*. He favours the view, following MacIntyre, in an article entitled "Patients as agents" in eds. Spicker and Englehardt, *Philosophical Medical Ethics,* p.210, that trying to sort out the 'quandary' of what is best for an individual can only proceed from an understanding of that person's story

With regard to alcohol and public policy, Cook points out that corporate attempts to control both alcohol and drug misuse by the 'body politic' have a chequered history. On March 2nd 2009 the devolved Scottish Parliament, in the face of alarming statistics[462], decided to introduce, via taxation, a minimum price per unit of alcohol. It is debatable what this will achieve, except to penalise those who drink alcohol responsibly. History seems to suggest that people who wish to drink excessively will find the means of doing so no matter what this costs, including the cost incurred by society as a whole through petty (and not so petty) crime. At the same time, is important to recognise that the number of alcohol related deaths per year in the United Kingdom has been rising steadily in recent years[463], so the makers of public policy are undoubtedly right to be concerned, and maybe doing nothing is no longer an option.

Cook looks at these public responses to the problems of alcohol related violence, disease and trauma in his chapter entitled '*Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics*'. Like Kenneth Leech, who as we saw earlier argued that pastoral care has as much to do with the formulation of public policy and law making, in terms of society's response to the problems associated with the misuse of drugs, Cook regards this aspect of ethical concern as of great importance, although, as we have suggested, both authors at times seem, justifiably perhaps, somewhat pessimistic about how far such policies and their implementation can go towards finding a solution to these problems. In the case of alcohol misuse Cook addresses collusion between governments and alcohol producing companies which engender a form of

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as a human being, and that it is unrealistic to suppose that clinicians will in general have access to such detailed information.

[462] It was announced in the Press that the number of alcohol related admissions to hospital in Scotland in the previous year had risen to an all-time high of 1,500.

[463] See: News Release from the Department of National Statistics, 25 January 2008.

hubris in the response to the problems from official bodies including the Government:[464]

> Examples of the conflicts of interest that arise in practice have already been described in Chapter 2, as for example in the form of allegations involving the influence of the alcohol industry on debate and policy. There is reason to believe that governments also are not unconflicted on such matters, when revenue from taxation and popularity with drinking voters conflict with particular public goods such as that of health.

This is one of the most important insights of the book because of its engagement not only with aspects of personal morality in relation to alcohol consumption but with the perceived duty of national governments to find ways of tackling the medical, social and criminal problems associated with excess. As Cook correctly points out, however[465],

> the balancing of health concerns against the benefits of alcohol in society will never be an easy matter while health is merely set against the pleasures which some associate with alcohol. A point of reference is required which lies beyond profit, and even beyond health and pleasure.

In conclusion, Christopher Cook has identified a number of highly significant elements in the story of alcohol and its misuse, and attempts by both church and state to deal with some of the problems that this has caused over the last hundred years, beginning with temperance movements, and now attracting a considerable amount of attention from governments in the belief that changing the law can be an effective instrument of harm reduction. Both Leech and Cook are sceptical about how far this will work, not least because both the alcohol industry and the government are concerned not only with public health and social harmony but also with maximising revenue.

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[464] Cook, *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics,* p. 191.
[465] ibid.

On the explicit ethical element in Cook's book, however, although his emphasis on both personal and corporate ethical standards is extremely timely and welcome, it is hard to resist the impression that he has only begun to touch the periphery of the ethical material, and a far deeper and more philosophically grounded foundation needs to be given to the task of making valid ethical judgements about these matters.

2.5 <u>Conclusion to the chapter.</u>

Although both psychological and theological approaches to the understanding of addiction presented here have provided many important insights into the subject, there remains a sense of dissatisfaction with what they demonstrate: there does not seem to be a unified argument on either side about the aetiology of addiction or the best way to treat addicted people, assuming addiction to be in some sense a 'disease'.

Looking at the theological writing, we find some major areas of debate that are as yet unresolved. For May, we are all attached to something, so by extension we are all addicts: this seems to reduce the concept of addiction to meaninglessness. For Nelson, with his 'AA' approach, those who are alcoholics will always be so, a view which is contestable. For Leech, generalisation is problematic: we cannot understand an addict's situation without attending to his personal circumstances: equally we must allow for the mysterious and unknowable element in addiction in offering a worthwhile pastoral ministry.

What emerges from this is the need for a new way of understanding the causes of addiction, a <u>new model</u> that promises a better way of offering pastoral help to those who are substance dependent.

The following chapter will address this in detail.

3.   CHAPTER 3   TOWARDS A NEW MODEL OF ADDICTION STUDY

Introduction

If we consider the amount of money that is spent on the medical treatment of people with addiction problems, we should, as tax payers contributing to the NHS budget, ask questions about whether, for example, the current expenditure of £3bn per annum on drug problems is having a positive impact. The concern that this raises can also be put into proportion by the recognition that, as Sir Richard Branson has observed[466], the worldwide illicit drugs trade currently generates £200bn of profit annually for those who supply them. As long as this profitability remains, the so called 'war on drugs' has no hope of success, however that success might be measured.

Whether we recommend the decriminalisation of the use of cannabis, for example, as Branson has argued, or go further and legalise (and presumably tax) the use of this and other such substances, the apparent failure of the UK and other countries to stop the potentially dangerous use of non-prescription drugs and alcohol raises very profound questions about the right way to proceed.

What is the essence of that debate?

It is the contention of this thesis that there are fundamentally three ways of approaching the problem – three possible roadmaps for addressing the issues of drug misuse. They are:

1)   The clinical approach
2)   The forensic approach
3)   The spiritual approach.

In this thesis it is our wish to argue as the major original contribution of the work that approaches 1) and 2) have failed consistently, and that approach 3) which starts from a quite different place is the only one that will have a lasting beneficial effect on

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[466] See http://metro.co.uk/2013/09/25.

the wellbeing of those who are already, or might become, addicted to ingestible substances.

In other words, the clinical approach fails because it medicalises and thus, as we have argued earlier, disempowers, addicted people, instead of giving them responsibility for their problems and the means to overcome them by a positive approach: the forensic approach is useless because as long as there are people who can make money by distributing illegal substances or colluding with governments of all political parties in profiting from the taxation of alcohol, the supply of such substances will never be reduced or eliminated.

Taking the clinical approach argument one step further, the problem is that all medical intervention is based on three factors, diagnosis (including the history of the problem), treatment, and prognosis. Diagnosis means, according to the medical literature[467], the determination of the nature of a particular disease, by the use of signs and symptoms. But if this is applied to addiction, then we need to be certain that addiction is in fact a disease, which we have argued in this thesis is by no means univocally accepted by the health care psychologists whose work has been addressed here. If we cannot be certain that addiction is a disease, then it makes little sense to continue to factor 2 – i.e. the provision of some form of treatment. And if there is a question mark about the nature of what if any treatment will succeed, it is hardly surprising that so many so-called treatments do in fact fail.

Similarly, the forensic approach fails because it works on the basis that the best way to treat addicts, including those who commit crimes in order to buy illicit substances, is to put them in prison. But with increasing staff reductions in education and rehabilitation little is being done to address their drug habit effectively in prison, and access to illicit substances seems relatively easy there. So little is achieved by the

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[467] See, for example, Baillière's *Nurses' Dictionary*, p.113.

forensic approach, other than keeping the price of the drugs on the street artificially high - which provides additional incentive for dealers to make them available.

If, then, approaches 1) and 2) are of little value, what is left?

The answer, it seems to the author of this thesis, is to be found in a radically new model, which looks at drug use and misuse (and similar things could be said, it is argued, about 'process' addictions) on the basis of a spiritually informed model, that incorporates both the life view of the addict herself and ideas from quite traditional theological discourses, such as those of St. Augustine. We will now explore this approach in more detail.

A conversation between this writer and a man with a history of substance misuse suggested a new hermeneutical approach to addiction. Its emphasis was not a negative one – "What has made you substance dependent?" – but a positive one, that could be expressed as "What do you want out of life?". Some years later, the man commented that it was this question, rather than attempts to discover why he had become unable to control his substance misuse, that established the beginning of recovery. Although it would be inadvisable to generalise from this instance, that encounter suggested that both psychological and Christian theological theories, and their apparent failure to provide a clear understanding of the subject and a universally valid treatment path, might result from a false start, a fundamental concern with the problem of addiction rather than a new model based on investigation of positive appetite, longing, desire and aspiration.

This new model also reflects Saint Augustine's view of God, as expressed at the beginning of his *Confessions*, as the ultimate source and destiny of authentic desire – 'our hearts are restless until they rest in you'[468]. Are we then justified in seeing all desiring as ultimately, if subliminally, desire for God, however distorted or occluded

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[468] Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, 1.1.

by external, materialistic desires? This new model presents a positive answer to this question.

We will also address Saint Paul's statement in Romans 7:19 'For the good I would I do not: the evil I would not, that I do.' Similarly, Griffith Edwards[469] includes 'the subjective awareness of a changed relationship with a drug' as one of seven symptoms of addiction.[470]

Human beings can both desire to drink alcohol to excess or use illicit drugs and wish to give up doing so while, at the same time, recognising the many ways in which it could be harmful to continue. How can we understand this? Consideration of the 'self' is needed here.

Attempts to understand the self in the twentieth and twenty first centuries have been pursued by theologians, sociologists and psychologists. Julian Jaynes[471] makes the point that concepts such as self, person and consciousness are recent arrivals in human history. Consciousness is a subject that is being investigated at many levels today, and, as Fraser Watts points out in relation to the relationship between "Consciousness, Brain and God", 'Consciousness is a topic whose time has come. It is one of the most distinctive things about human beings, and is currently the focus of an extraordinary amount of multi-disciplinary interest. The human sciences currently see it as one of their greatest challenges'[472].

One challenge to traditional ways of thinking about personality is the problematic of whether human beings have a core self or a range of sub-personalities which operate according to the circumstances in which we find ourselves and have a fluidity of expression that is both diachronically and synchronically multiple. As this question

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[469] Griffith Edwards, *Matters of Substance*, p.xxiv.
[470] ibid. In Edwards' words, 'The AA member's admission that alcohol had become the controller' had become the first step towards recovery. Similar reflections on internal conflict can be found in the World Health Organisation definition of addiction and a similar one produced by the American Psychiatric Association. See: Robert West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.15.
[471] Julian Jaynes, *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*.
[472] Fraser Watts, *Theology and Psychology*, p.33.

seems to lie at the heart of human conflicts about desiring certain things such as alcohol and drugs on the one hand, and recognising their danger on the other, we will now explore this concept of unity and plurality.

We will look at three books on this topic, those of Léon Turner, Raymond Martin and John Barresi, and Charles Taylor.

3.1   As Turner gives an extended analysis of the thinking of both theologians and psychologists on this subject we will begin with an exploration of his thesis, later published in book form.[473] .

For Turner, theologians seem to be less hospitable than psychologists to the suggestion that the human self is most accurately regarded as multiple rather than unified. There is a problem here, Turner argues in the main body of his work, because theologians have a tendency to ignore accounts of the self that do not agree with their hypothesis[474]. We will now look at the psychological and theological aspects of the self in relation to plurality as discussed by Turner.

The Psychological And Sociological Perspective

Twenty and twenty first century psychological models of the self tend to argue that there is no unified core self that exists both diachronically and synchronically, that is to say over the course of an individual's life, or in terms of a 'snapshot' of the person at any given moment in time.

On diachronic multiplicity, Turner says[475] that 'the idea that the self is not a single static essence or underlying substrate of being but rather changes over time, is not novel'. He emphasises this by saying[476] that 'one of psychology's

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[473] Léon Turner, *Theology, Psychology and the Plural Self.*
[474] op.cit. p.158.
[475] op. cit. p.77f.
[476] op. cit., p.78.

primary goals over the last century has been to clarify the nature of this development', i.e. the developing view of personal change over time.

On the synchronic element he uses the concept of the *schema* which refers to a 'network of modular units' which function 'within hierarchical systems'[477]. He also cites in this context the work of Markus, Nurius and Oyserman who believe that 'the self is more accurately described as a collection of interrelated self-schemata, each of which organises and encodes particular pieces of information about perceived personal knowledge or interpersonal relationships'.

The most influential proposal about the plural self, as Turner sees it, comes from this concept of the *schema*. How can this be best understood? As Turner comments on this central characteristic of the theory[478]:

> Collectively, schemata are presumed to be plastic (that is to say flexible and easily adaptable), multi-layered cognitive entities that serve both to represent relationships between specific concepts and govern and predict behaviour on the basis of previously organised knowledge and experience.

There is a predictive element to this concept of multiple schemata co-existing within each individual. But we are still far from understanding in great detail how the 'specific concepts of each schema relate to one another' as this 'depends on the nature of the context in which they were experienced and how they are subsequently deployed in its understanding'[479].

Turner continues by examining how this theory may inform our understanding not only of the atomic self, or the self in isolation, but also the social self. In this context he observes that[480]:

> Relationships, particularly close relationships, have a peculiarly strong influence upon representations of self. It has even been suggested that particularly close relationships determine self-representations to the extent that the partners of these relationships are partially assimilated into one's representation of oneself.

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[477] ibid.
[478] ibid.
[479] op. cit., p.79f.
[480] op. cit., p.83.

Here then we can see in principle how the way in which an individual perceives himself depends not only on internal schemata - perceptions of how the world functions in terms of the experiencing of the world from within - but also in terms of mutual responsiveness between the self and others, and images formed within the mind as a result of these encounters and relationships.

The reception of these representational images is not merely a passive occurrence, however. There is, alongside this process of reception 'the active manipulation and interpretation of this experience as the basis of understanding or re-evaluating past, present and future concepts of self and the extrapersonal world'[481].

Theological Consideration

Turner's survey of a number of theological writers reveals hostility to the multiple personality theory. We will therefore present a brief survey of the main points made by some leading theologians, Colin Gunton, Vernon White, Wolfhart Pannenberg and Alistair McFadyen.

On Gunton's anthropology, Turner recognises a mode of thinking theologically that 'exemplifies theological anthropology's recent embrace of the philosophical turn to relationality' on the basis of which he undertakes his 'social analysis'[482]. Gunton regards much previous anthropology as having missed the importance of relationality in the understanding of how humanity actually functions, or functions best, a failure which, as he sees it, leads to 'instrumental objectification'. There is, in other words, much more to relationship than individual self-fulfilment. To understand this is to set oneself against current experiences of alienation and fragmentation within society. The antidote to this

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[481] op. cit., p.84.
[482] op. cit., p.22.

fragmentation is to be found, Gunton argues, in the discovery of 'an enriched understanding of our place in the world based upon a revised theoretical doctrine of relationality that is grounded firmly in Christian Trinitarian theology'[483]. The problem for Turner is that this relatedness is hard to reconcile with the concept of plurality that we have been addressing in the psychological section of the book.

These considerations, Turner suggests, take us to 'the question at the very heart of [his] book'[484]. He says at this point:

> Given the apparent conflict that theories of the discontinuous fragmented self pose to a core element of Christian anthropology, are not theologians justified in clinging to concepts of self-unity, and expressing their antipathy towards the undercurrents of secular philosophy that threaten them?

Turner addresses this problem by reviewing *Paying Attention to People*, by Vernon White. White bases his theology of the self on an 'inviolable ontological unity of each individual person' which does not 'preclude the possibility that people can experience themselves as disunified'[485]. He situates this ontologically in theological concepts, particularly in the Christian theology of creation and (following Gunton) relatedness. This relatedness, he says, 'grounded in theology, provides support not just for the unity of personhood, but also, derivatively, for the value and meaning for life that so many observe, but which few attempt to defend'[486]. It is the 'grounded in theology' motif here that Turner finds troubling, because it is White's concern with an evangelistic approach to Christianity that makes him undertake this methodology instead of engaging with the psychological narrative on its own terms. He is guilty, Turner says, of using 'slippery' language about the concept of self-fragmentation and 'a certain

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[483] op. cit., p.23.
[484] op. cit., p.27.
[485] op. cit., p.29.
[486] ibid.

ambiguity about how, precisely, such fragmentation manifests itself in the individual'[487]. He also seems to confuse the terms self-fragmentation and pathological self-alienation. But this view of what he sees as the problem, and the introduction of a programme of evangelization to restore a kind of pre-modern understanding of the person in a non-fragmented, and therefore socially cohesive form, falls down because it refuses to engage significantly with the current consensus of psychological discourse about the self. This is not to propose in relation to the current thesis an uncritical acceptance of such discourse, but to underscore the need for theologians to take account of it rather than attempt to work on the self in isolation from it, as Turner makes clear in the final chapter of his book[488].

Much of the theological writing in Turner's book engages critically with two significant twentieth century theologians, 1) Wolfhart Pannenberg and 2) Alistair McFadyen.

1)   Pannenberg.

Turner looks in detail at *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*[489]. He identifies 'three closely related central themes'[490], i.e. 'the origins of both the ego and the self in the social world, the momentary unity of ego and self in self-consciousness, and, most importantly, the relationship between ego and self in the formation of continuous individual identity'[491]. An ontological distinction is thus made between the concepts of 'ego' and 'self'. The ego, that is to say, has only a fleeting, momentary existence, whereas the self is, in Pannenberg's argument, the place where a sense of historical cohesion is located. For Pannenberg, 'If both the ego and the

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[487] Turner, op. cit., p.30.
[488] op. cit., pp.192ff.
[489] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective.*
[490] Turner, op. cit., p.148.
[491] ibid.

self are subject to change over time, then the self, he repeatedly asserts throughout his various anthropological writings, must develop independently of the ego'[492].

But Turner argues[493] that what Pannenberg says about the self depends on his varied ways of understanding the concept of <u>identity</u>. It can be used to describe the idea of 'sameness over time', or the momentary relationship between ego and the self in terms of self-consciousness, or even the eschatological aspect of self in terms of 'the final communion of the individual with God at the eschaton'[494]. This, together with issues about the way in which Pannenberg uses the language of psychology to talk about the unity of the self, make his argument complex and inadequate for Turner, as we will now describe.

From the beginning of a human life, Pannenberg claims, ego and self are identical. But the ego becomes an object that can be observed by the self over a period of time, and thus envisaged as in some sense 'other'. It is this capacity that distinguishes humanity from other animal life. It implies a 'conscious sense of self'. It is what is involved in the process by which identity is formed over a considerable period of time. It leads to the point in life at which an individual can refer to him or her self as 'I'.

Pannenberg bases his theory of self-unity not on this ego-self dyad, but on something more like continuity of <u>experience</u>. He draws on William James's theory of 'continuity of consciousness'. In this process, Turner suggests, following James, 'continuity is a function of the connection

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[492] ibid.
[493] ibid.
[494] ibid. Turner here is basing his ideas on the critique of Pannenberg provided by the bioethicist Robert Potter in his article "Self-transcendence: the human spirit and the Holy Spirit" in C. R. Allbright and J. Haugen (eds.) *Beginning with the End: God, Science and Wolfhart Pannenberg*, pp.116-146.

between individual moments of unified consciousness, whereby each successive moment appropriates the contents of the former'[495].

This consciousness is now, for Pannenberg, closely connected to particular societies and their norms and values. The unified self is then best seen as 'that totality of states, qualities, and actions that in the eyes of a "generalized other" are to be ascribed to the individual which I am'[496] .

These ways of looking at the problem of identity and the unity of the self are highly complex and, Turner argues, criticising Pannenberg, that he has fused together 'at least three concepts that I have argued ought to remain qualitatively distinct'[497]. These relate in particular to the idea that 'the successful formation of identity requires the continuous unification of the ego with the self' to such an extent that 'in any given moment of self-consciousness the ego knows itself to be identical with the self'[498]. But this argument, Turner suggests, cannot be 'squared' with contemporary psychological insights into identity formation based on the plurality of the self, which Pannenberg ignores.

For Turner, the fundamental problem with Pannenberg's presentation of the unitary theory of identity is that he is so concerned to argue his theological case persuasively that he fails to engage with those psychological theories that contradict his view. 'Pannenberg, though he critiques a vast and diverse corpus of self-theories, picks and chooses the concepts that appeal to him and incorporates them into his own theory'[499].

Turner recognises in Pannenberg's *Anthropology* a welcome recognition of the idea that human personality is to a large extent socially constructed

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[495] Turner, op. cit. p.151.
[496] op. cit. p.152.
[497] op. cit. p.153.
[498] ibid
[499] Turner, op. cit., p.155.

and develops over time[500]. And he might have found an ally in some of his more positive comments on the self and its developmental aspects in the work of <u>narrative</u> psychologists such as D.P. McAdams. But the fact that he tends to see the idea of a non-pathological plural self as meaningless gives his work the appearance of being based on outdated psychology. At the same time, Turner wishes to make the point that had Pannenberg been able to recognise it, he might conceivably have come to the conclusion that there is in fact a 'compatibility of the notion of the plural self with his own theories about the singularity and continuity of identity, and to suggest that narrative psychology is well placed to address some of the fundamental problems I have raised with his inflexible account of identity formation'[501].

2) <u>McFadyen.</u>

Alistair McFadyen's contribution to this conversation is to be found in his book *The Call to Personhood* [502]. But his views are to some extent based on Rom Harré's *Personal Being* - 'it is clear', Turner tells us[503], 'that the bulk of [McFadyen's] psychological theorising is appropriated from the work of Rom Harré…whose own reasons for finding narrative psychology attractive should make McFadyen's work amenable to such an interpretation'.

Although McFadyen's take on this brings him closer to accepting a contemporary psychological account of the problems of the unitary self than most other theologians, Turner argues, he still finds it impossible to break away from 'an abiding concern with self-unity'[504]. To this extent, he

[500] op. cit. p.158.
[501] op. cit. p.160.
[502] Alastair McFadyen, *The Call to Personhood.*
[503] Turner, op. cit., p.163
[504] ibid.

continues, although in many ways McFadyen and Pannenberg are far apart in many respects of their thought, they share a reluctance to look directly at the psychological evidence and deal with it systematically.

'For McFadyen,' Turner says, 'persons are "individuals whose consciousness, experience of and interaction with the world are internally centred"[505]. This is not, he emphasizes, the same as arguing for an 'inner core' of personality structure, but is rather 'the result of holding a belief (or theory) about oneself, the origin of which lies in the social world'[506]. The acquisition of this belief is then not innate but learned. This process is described as 'sedimentation', as layers of experience become organised 'into a unified and continuous structure, which transcends every particular situation'[507].

At first glance this seems like a plausible, even elegant methodology for overcoming the problem of regarding the self as unitary. But does it work at a theoretical level?

In Turner's opinion, this is far from being the case. He makes the positive observation that 'more than any contemporary theologian, McFadyen seems prepared to tackle the differences between the appearances of the self in different social settings. At any given time, McFadyen argues, identity depends upon precisely how the 'I' is 'indexed' in relation to others ('you', 'him', 'her') in the context of a particular communicative situation'[508]. But this apparent welcoming of some form of plurality theory is illusory, because in his proposal of the idea of a 'deep self' at the root of the person 'he actually takes the observation that people

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[505] op. cit, p.164, citing McFadyen, op. cit., p.69.
[506] op. cit. p.165.
[507] ibid.
[508] Turner, op. cit., p.166f.

do experience themselves differently in different contexts as evidence of a further, more fundamental structure of selfhood'[509], which seems to be counterintuitive.

As Turner later argues[510], this idea of a deep self is central to what McFadyen is proposing. But he questions how 'a single "grand theory" of self might lead to the construction of a deep self structure *and* several local self models'[511]. Thus McFadyen, in his 'deep self theology', has failed to avoid the problem of using the same concept to argue two completely opposite points of view. McFadyen is struggling to 'accommodate or explain radical changes in the sense of self from one moment to the next, whether these changes ought to be considered pathological or not'[512]. What this suggests is that the defence of a theological concept is at the heart of this problem, and what is being defended, Turner suggests, is a theology of the *imago Dei*. Both Pannenberg and McFadyen speak of this. Writing on McFadyen's understanding of this concept, Turner says:

> McFadyen's interpretation of the *imago Dei* offers the most plausible reason for his rugged defence of personal unity. This, as I showed in the previous chapter, is the source of his belief that the individual person, as an enduring particularity, has a continuous identity. A clearer picture of his understanding of self-unity emerges in his descriptions both of the distorted relationships that characterise humanity's fallen state, and of the implications that redemption has for the reorientation of human relations.

The problem for Turner is that although it may well be possible to argue the case for personal unity along these lines from a purely theological point of view, McFadyen's views are compromised by his failure to identify any significant arguments that contradict the psychological theories that clearly argue in favour of the multi-personality theory.

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509 Turner, p.167.
510 Turner, p.168
511 ibid.
512 Turner, op. cit., p.169.

We will conclude this brief investigation of Pannenberg and McFadyen in relation to the plural self in Turner's book by noting his summary to this section[513]. In terms of their concern with the idea of self unity as a feature of 'personal wholeness', Turner says that[514]:

> This idea is important for two primary and essentially theological reasons. First, the absence of personal wholeness is taken to correspond to the corruption, or denial, of the image of God. Secondly, the concept of personal wholeness in any given moment and over time is deemed essential to the concept of the individual as a unique and continuous entity that exists over and above its social constitution.

Like White's view, which we considered earlier, there is a sense that the theological concept of fallenness entails a sense of fracturing not only of the divine-human interface but also of the relationship between members of the human race in terms of specifically human relationships and also between humanity and the environment. What is not clear is how that hypothesis can be supported in psychological terms without resort to theological language to establish its validity, even when appeals are made, somewhat superficially, Turner suggests, to the world of narrative psychology because it is in danger of failing to maintain its own 'distinctive identity'[515].

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[513] Turner, op. cit., p.176.
[514] ibid.
[515] op. cit., p.177.

<u>Turner's Own View Of The Plural Self</u>

Turner's own reconfiguring of theology's dialogue with psychology draws significant contrasts between Pannenberg and McFadyen, but although he sees some movement towards a potential accommodation with some contemporary models of personal psychology, especially narrative psychology, he argues that, from a theological perspective, the idea of an enduring self 'acquires an objectivity that grates against the ontological scepticism of some narrative psychologists'[516]. And this, he suggests, comes from a paradigm error in their methodology: in attempting to provide a critique of these psychological theories of the self, they use not so much the language of psychology itself, as of metaphysics. And he maintains that although many contemporary theologians and philosophers – such as Arthur Danto, Robin G. Collingwood in the philosophical camp, and White, Hauerwas, and others in the theological camp, work hard to illustrate the importance of narrative understandings of humanity and then those who are arguing from a theological perspective make that their basis of an appeal to Christian values and the place of positive evangelism, such endeavours cannot ultimately 'exorcise the spectre of self-fragmentation'[517].

In the face of this, Turner offers a prescription for overcoming the ontological differences between psychology and theology with regard to the plural self. [518]:

> It is clear that many modern theologians assume that a sense of existential angst accompanies the sense of self-fragmentation as a result of the conflict it inspires with prior beliefs in the enduring unity of personhood. The typical theological solution has been to redouble the search for a secure foundation for personal continuity, and the seemingly obvious alternative, that we embrace our self-multiplicity, has been largely ignored. However, if self-multiplicity can co-exist in harmony with personal continuity, then multiplicity itself no longer carries such an existential threat.

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[516] op. cit., p.184.
[517] Turner, op. cit., p.186.
[518] ibid.

If this approach could be adopted, he continues, then resolution might be achieved 'not by seeking to reaffirm a strong sense of self-unity, but by surrendering it and accepting that the continuity of personhood is not coterminous with the singularity of the self'[519]. This would, he suggests, have both theoretical and practical advantages, and avoid the danger of relegating theological anthropology to the same place of isolation that might be associated with a theologically based refusal to embrace other scientific theories such as evolution.

Critical View Of Léon Turner

Is the human 'self' a unified entity, or is there a sense in which we are both diachronically and synchronically multiple, with no 'core self' which identifies us as unique and permanent individuals? Turner's answer to this question is that psychologists are far more positive than theologians about the existence of multiple personalities existing within each individual, even when these personalities have no obvious pathological elements such as in conditions like DID[520].

Turner is right to have drawn our attention to the contrast between these two disciplinary approaches, and to have criticised theologians for not taking the psychological evidence seriously enough: but he does leave us with awkward questions from a theological perspective. If there is no core self, rather many sub-personalities within each individual, and if these are also evolving over time, to which self does God relate? And which element of a person's being may be said to survive death and relate to God in the eschatological dimension of being?

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[519] ibid
[520] Dissociative Identity Disorder.

Although Turner does not elaborate these issues, they are questions that theology should not ignore.

The discussion of Turner's book presented here attempts in this part of the thesis to look at what the study of personality may tell us about the nature of human addictions. Whereas Craig Nakken[521] argues for the reality of an addictive personality, we might follow Turner who suggests that a tendency towards competing lifestyles may reflect one sub-personality co-existing with others, such as a desire for drugs competing with the wish to avoid addictive behaviour for health or other reasons.

We have looked at a number of important contributors to the understanding of human personality and the possible origin of conflict within the human psyche. One factor that has perhaps stood out in this context is that of the divided or multiple personality, without making any hasty diagnosis of what might be called 'split' or dissociative personality in quasi clinical terms. With regard to addiction, it seems to us that the contribution of Léon Turner has something of particular importance to contribute, in terms of our attempt to link addiction with inner conflict between the wish to quit a particular activity and the difficulty encountered in doing so.

The reason for this assertion is that Turner has found a language in which he can express the nature of this phenomenon that resonates with both theological and psychological analyses of the multiple personality syndrome. In essence, this is because he argues, as we have seen above, that 'if self-multiplicity can co-exist in harmony with personal continuity, then multiplicity itself no longer carries such an existential threat'. For the pastoral counsellor, and for the psychological therapist alike, in this view of things, and specifically related to our 'new model',

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[521] Craig Nakken, *The Addictive Personality*.

the methodology in relation to addiction might then be to look for ways of encouraging those parts of the person's psyche that seek new and healthy goals and objectives, while allowing the more destructive parts to wither away.

3.2 Martin and Barresi

The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self by Raymond Martin and John Barresi, who are researchers in the history of the philosophical concept of the human self, has a historical section and a more evaluative section later on.

They map the historical development of the understanding of the self, taking account of Plato, Augustine, Descartes and the ideas generated by the Enlightenment. Their hypothesis is that both soul and self are concepts that have become progressively limited in meaning – 'soul' because its relevance seems to lie now only in specifically religious discourse, and 'self' because modern psychology has proposed the demise of a sense of personal unity in the light of the more generally accepted notion of multiple personality. They also discuss more recent works, including such thinkers as Jacques Derrida and Daniel Dennett, who argues that 'consciousness should be understood as consisting of narrations, produced by the brain, the point of which is to interpret objects and events in some coherent way'[522]. They also look at some principal figures in psychological thinking in the twentieth century, including Erikson and Jung.

The Structure Of The Book

The methodology is clear and well structured. They are not looking at any specific critiques of the history of the idea of the soul and the self, although they

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[522] See Daniel Dennett, "The Origin of Selves", cited by Martin and Barresi, op. cit., p.279. The force of this argument for Dennett is that the concept of self is best understood as a fictional construct by means of which an individual attempts to resolve the problem of internal competing narratives for the explanation of events. Its aim, that is to say, is coherence.

do refer to such writings on the subject, and provide a wide ranging and lengthy bibliography for those who wish to pursue primary and secondary aspects of the relevant literature. In their final chapter they offer some suggestions about how the quest for the understanding of self might be undertaken in the twenty first century, although they are not sanguine about the prospects of achieving this in the near future. For the moment, it seems to them, we may have to be satisfied with the suggestion that the concept of self (unlike that of soul) has a useful place in the way we understand the human being but that to try to give a more theoretical structure to the concept of self may be still far off and may in fact never be possible.

The Foundation Of Their Argument

What is presented to the reader is a progression from religious forms of understanding of the self which make use of the word 'soul', and define the soul as something that survives the reality of death, to a more secular interpretation of self which then also falls apart because, particularly since the work of psychologists such as William James, it has become increasingly impossible to view the human self as a unified object. Thus both soul and self are words which, it could be argued, have no concrete meaning, the former because the idea of the soul has been relegated to purely religious thought, and that of the self has collapsed under the weight of the suggestion, common to most scientific schools of psychological theory from James onwards, that individuals are constructed of a number of sub-personalities which co-exist both developmentally and in terms of current social interaction.

In the light of this we can draw a distinction between two things: on the one hand the self as a 'scientifically useful notion' and on the other as a 'practically useful notion'[523].

This is their understanding of James' contribution[524]:

> In James' account, after elevating the "personal self" to a very high status, even claiming that no psychology that hopes to stand can question its existence, he immediately conceded that in cases of dissociation an individual can have more than one personal self. Moreover, he continued, each personal self may be regarded both as an object and as a subject (a *me* and an *I*). The self as object may be further divided into the material self, the social self, and the spiritual self, each of which may be further divided. He said, for instance, that "*a man has as many social selves*" as there are individuals and groups "*who recognise him*" and carry an image of him in their mind.

This is an important contribution to the modern understanding of the self as fragmented rather than unified. It was carried over into the twentieth century and the word self now tends to become hyphenated rather than to have any identifiable meaning when standing alone, so that we get constructs such as self-image, self-esteem, self-discovery etc.[525].

There is also a sense, they suggest, that from this time onwards self tended to be interpreted not so much in terms of individual personality as in terms of other definable characteristics, such as those of race, gender and political affiliations. A person is what she is seen as by others and sees for her self. This understanding does not however produce a sense of personal coherence, and it is this trend, they argue, that underlies the demise of the concept of a unified, individual self, to be replaced by an understanding that sees only fragmentary elements of personality.

But – is fragmentation to be regarded as the end of the story of self? Martin and Barresi draw their survey about the self and its alleged demise to an end with

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[523] See: Martin and Barresi, op. cit. p.294.
[524] Martin and Barresi, p.296, emphasis original. They are quoting here from William James, *Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1, p.294-401.
[525] Martin and Barresi, op. cit. p.297.

speculation about what the next step might be. They identify two possible steps that we might take in the future and they are[526]:

I.   The suggestion that we are better off without a theory of the self as a unified concept. A healthy pluralism might be a better route towards understanding the self than an artificial theory of unity.

II.   The suggestion that we are in fact mistaken if we think of the idea of a person as a unified self as being something which we once had but have somehow lost. This idea, however attractive, is in fact an illusion. To shed the illusion is to make progress in our thinking about the nature of persons.

Critique Of Martin And Barresi

The interpretative element of this book concerns the hypothesis that just as the 'soul' concept has effectively lost its explanatory force in the understanding of what it means to be a person, so the concept of 'self' has declined, in terms of our ability to give a formal, conceptual structure to the ontology of the self. The word self is, they argue, a useful hypothesis, but when we seek to define it, it becomes too problematic, because human beings are not unified selves but are composed of many sub-selves, which cannot be defined without resort either to composite expressions such as self-conception, self-discovery, self-esteem etc., or in social terms related to gender, ethnicity, religious or political affiliation etc. Embedded in this suggestion is a diagnosis of fragmentation, with regard to the self, which may mean that some sense of personal unity which we once had has been lost, or that the idea of such unity is illusory – we have not lost it because it was never a reality in the first place. To shed such an illusion might then be seen a form of human progress[527].

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[526] op. cit., p.301.
[527] See: Martin and Barresi, op. cit. p.301.

This is an interesting and well written book. But there are some problems with it, which we will now address.

In the first place, it may seem to some readers that the material presented in the historical overview offered here is not so much inaccurate as unnecessary because the information it presents is easily available already in other forms.

Secondly, they argue that the idea of the soul is obsolete because religious ideas and beliefs – which incorporate the notion of an immaterial, immortal soul – have become a sideline, and in some ways a toxic sideline[528], in the history of human thought. There is a post Enlightenment, materialistic humanism underlying the writing, but one wonders whether in reality the world religions are in decline as these authors think, and whether in consequence the idea of soul is really redundant.

Finally, but in some ways most importantly, does their vision of the concept of the self as having declined while remaining a useful pragmatic concept have any real value, or is it just speculation? As Mark Freeman comments[529]:

> With all due respect to Martin and Barresi, it is truly remarkable that they can speak in this context with such confidence. *Their* convictions, it would appear, are not a matter of faith at all: they are speaking the unvarnished truth, with materialistic science providing the needed, and largely unquestioned foundation. But in speaking in this way, they are failing to see just how faith-ful their own proclamations are. What's more, they are failing to see just how thoroughly the theoretical *status quo* has permeated their own conclusions. Their conclusions are themselves a sign of the times, and it is not at all clear that they know it.

Perhaps what we have here then, in this book's interpretative aspects at least, is the presentation of a theory which is regarded by its authors as scientifically self-evident, but without taking the trouble to find enough supportive evidence to make their case in a way that has empirical validation in its favour. It is

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[528] op. cit., p.303, where Platonic forms of Christian thought in particular are alleged to be a force for holding back progress in materialistic modes of thought by insisting of the primary importance of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.
[529] Mark Freeman, "A Case of Theory: Abby, Brittany and Us".

ultimately, and perversely (in Freeman's view), built on faith rather than hard scientific evidence.

Conclusion

We have looked at the book *The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self*, which, like Turner's *Theology, Psychology and the Plural Self* suggests that we have to be very careful not to make assumptions about the unitary self, because when examined more closely, the idea of the self as unified diachronically and synchronically appears more arbitrary than was once thought to be the case. This in turn may help us to see, in our quest for understanding of addiction, how it comes about that human beings can both desire the use of substance such as alcohol to excess and at the same time wish for abstinence.

3.3   Charles Taylor: *Sources of the Self*

Introduction

Charles Taylor presents an account of how western thinkers from classical times onwards have understood human personality and the ways in which they prepared the way for the 'modern identity'. His thematic survey includes many giants of Western thought who have addressed the 'self', from Plato, via Aristotle and the Stoics, by way of Augustine, Descartes and Enlightenment figures such as Immanuel Kant, up to present day interpreters such as Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, Alasdair MacIntyre, Iris Murdoch, and writers from the world of modern fiction such as Marcel Proust.

Taylor is particularly concerned with the <u>ethical</u> implications of what he is addressing in terms of the search for the meaning of 'self': as he says in his preface[530] (emphasis added):

> I focus on three major facets of [modern] identity: first, modern inwardness, the sense of ourselves as beings with inner depths, and the connected notion that we are 'selves'; second, the affirmation of ordinary life which develops from the early modern period; third, *the expressivist notion of nature as an inner moral source.*

He chronicles a moral dimension to the <u>modern</u> understanding of the self, 'from its origin in the late eighteenth century through the transformations of the nineteenth century, and on to its manifestations in twentieth-century literature'[531]. For him some modern concepts of liberal ethical thinking, such as that enshrined in utilitarian ideas[532], are problematic for Taylor as they seem to him to rest on an inadequate philosophical infrastructure.

On human personality, which he speaks of as 'identity', Taylor addresses the important question "Who am I?" Speaking from a communitarian viewpoint on morality, he says that:

> 'My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose[533]'.

When such identity is lost, he continues, the individual is unable to make an assessment of the 'significance of things'[534]. This significance is not to be found in what he calls the exercise of 'disengaged reason', a theme that Taylor addresses in this book, and has commented further on recently[535]. It is an important concept in terms of this thesis and its connection between human desires and

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[530] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. x.
[531] ibid.
[532] He comments for example that what made many people dissatisfied with the utilitarian principles of morality was the difficulty in regarding without incredulity 'the picture of a world in which virtue and self-interest came so neatly together' – Taylor, op. cit., p.322.
[533] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p.27.
[534] ibid.
[535] See: *Faith Rationality and the Passions*, ed. Sarah Coakley, pp.18ff.

addiction, with emphasis on the inner quest for an experience of God. Taylor opposes the view that reason, free of passion, is the only true gauge of the good life, or ethical decision making, because in his view the way we interpret our lives and their meaning is made up of both reason and emotion, and that they are inseparable[536]. And from the point of view of this thesis, we are here entering again the field of ideas in which human desire, and the education or re-education of desire, is an important motivator. Reason unaided will not help people to conquer addictions; a reordering of priorities on the basis of a deeper longing might potentially be more effective.

A hermeneutical key for understanding the book in its breadth and complexity of argument can be found in Taylor's assertion that the moral or spiritual order of things must come to us <u>indexed to a personal vision</u> [537].

Against the ideas of naturalism, and in contrast to approaches drawing from Enlightenment thinking about the relationship between ethics and selfhood, Taylor refuses to see modern fragmentation of religious ideas about ethics as a reason for rejecting subjective viewpoints about the nature of the good: instead he introduces a new concept into the debate about ethics, namely 'identity'.

It is in the quest for identity that Taylor invokes one of his most powerful themes, that of the 'affirmation of ordinary life', which he regards as a highly significant aspect of the creation of 'modern identity'.

On this basis, questions about what constitutes the 'good' have a context within the person and her place within a social, professional, national environment, and within the experience of belonging to a particular family with its own norms and practices. This environmental experience is irreducible: it

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[536] op. cit., p.21.
[537] Taylor, *Sources of the Self,* p.428.

cannot simply be set aside as an irrelevance in discussing how people come to make distinctions between what is good and what is not.

Is there then to be found an objective good which, in his words constitutes something 'the love of which empowers us to do and be good'[538]?

For Taylor Immanuel Kant is perhaps the name most associated with the intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment, which emphasized in a radically new way 'its emphasis on the ability of human reason to penetrate the mysteries of the world. Humanity is able to think for itself, without the need for any assistance from God. Unaided reason is able to make sense of the world – including those aspects of that world traditionally reserved for theologians'[539]. Kant, like Rousseau, rebelled, Taylor notes, 'against standard Deism along the lines of the anti-levelling objection. Enlightenment naturalism and utilitarianism make things worse, in his view[540]'. Kant claims that they effectively rule out any kind of intelligible ethical discourse, and thus they are ranged against human freedom, as freedom requires a moral framework 'dictated by the very nature of reason itself'[541]. And this moral framework is not teleological or consequentialist in essence. Its true motivation has to do only with the driving force behind moral actions, independently of their actual outcome[542].

This Enlightenment movement, Taylor argues, has done much to create the modern identity: although it has some good contributions to make, Taylor argues that Kant's moral edifice is weakened by its rejection of naturalistic or revelatory aspects in favour of human dignity as a function of rationality alone.

In this context the concept of the <u>ordinary life</u> has force for Taylor, and he draws the attention of the reader to thinkers like Hutcheson who have

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[538] Taylor, op. cit., p.93.
[539] Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology: an Introduction*, 5th edition, p.67.
[540] Taylor, op. cit., p. 363.
[541] ibid.
[542] ibid.

emphasized the importance of the experience of people in living their lives as the true means of expressing identity against those (going back to Descartes) who suggest that reason, quite distinct from the natural world, can give us the meaning of what human nature is really about[543]. And for Hutcheson, as earlier for Locke, the clue to this ethical model was a sense of the world as an interlocking system, designed by God, in which benevolence is a God given instinct which in itself produces, through engagement with it, the greatest happiness – a theme which would be taken on, but in a less theologically founded manner, by the Utilitarians.

This book is a rich source of information about, and critical commentary on, the process by which humanity over many centuries learned what it means to be a person and how persons ought to behave. He is highly critical of post Enlightenment views of these things: such a view leads, he suggests, to two particular unfortunate trends, that towards <u>instrumentalist</u> ideas about attitudes to the world on the one hand, and liberal <u>individualistic</u> interpretations on the other, neither of which, he suggests, claim to refer to deeper, more universal human 'goods'.

In place of such developments, he would argue in favour of an inward, reflexive turn, in relation to which humans approach moral issues by what he calls indexing to a personal vision[544]:

> But something has undoubtedly changed since the era of the great chain of being and the publicly established order of references. I have tried to express this by saying that the metaphysics or theology comes indexed to a personal vision, or refracted through a particular sensibility.

This vision he finds articulated in many ways in contemporary society but especially in the world of poetry, particularly that of outstanding contributors to that art form in the twentieth century such as T.S Eliot and Ezra Pound. It also

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[543] On Hutcheson, see pp. 248-285.
[544] Taylor, op. cit., p.491.

occurs in other modern literary endeavours, as in the series of novels by Marcel Proust, *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*. The enduring value of such great authors is that they provide us, in a public sense rather than a merely subjective one, with 'an articulation of personal vision'[545].

In his final chapter, Taylor suggests a new model that will overcome the instrumentalism and consequent fragmentation of modern liberal Western society. What is needed, he suggests, is a return to the pattern of living that is embedded in the Judeo Christian theological and ethical formulations that were rejected by the great thinkers of the Enlightenment period. He argues that the Judeo Christian tradition, with its emphasis on divine *agapē* and the instantiation of this quality in human life, far from having been disproved or proved obsolete, is one of the principal ways in which the post Enlightenment relativization of human values could be overturned and replaced by something of greater depth and potentially universal application. Taylor concludes his work by rejecting purely subjective, rational, instrumentalist views of the good life and arguing that there is hope for the future of humanity. 'It is a hope that I see implicit in Judeo-Christian theism (however terrible the record of its adherents in history), and in its central promise of a divine affirmation of the human, more total than humans can ever attain'[546].

Critical Reflection On Charles Taylor, Sources Of The Self

Having looked at some section headings in Taylor's book it is time to make some critical comments about the work and how it might connect with the overall purpose of this thesis, namely to derive from this and other books that have been consulted a better understanding of the origins of addiction.

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[545] op. cit. p.492.
[546] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p.521.

The first, and in some ways most significant criticism to be offered here, relates more substantially to what has just been mentioned about Taylor's introduction of religious ideas, particularly those related to the ethics of the Judeo Christian tradition, into his prescriptive vision for modern society. The intention here is not to deny this possibility or criticise Taylor for introducing it; in fact the intention is exactly the opposite.

What is being suggested here is that from an 'architectural' point of view, the section on possible remedies for the regrettable situation we seem to be in with our contemporary understanding of morality, is far too elliptical, and needs more emphasis. An analogy might be that it is as if he has written a very long overture to a rather short opera.

Secondly, what does Taylor actually means by 'self'? We may question whether, when for example he uses the language of 'indexation' of ethical views in terms of the inward turn to the person, he is being too neglectful of arguments against the unity of the person. Whereas this approach might be attractive to theologians, for example, it has largely passed out of use in the psychological literature about personhood[547]. Which of these personalities then is the one that is at the heart of this reflection about values and morals? Taylor tends to neglect problems about the concept of the unitary self[548]. In our search for meaning in terms of addictive behaviours, this question of the unitary self is highly important, because often addicted people have competing personality components: some aspects of their being want to be free of substance or behaviours that can enslave the individual, while other parts of the self seem to be at times utterly dependent on them. We are reminded of Paul's anguished cry in Romans 7, and his longing to be freed of the conflict of will that it entails.

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[547] This argument was advanced in our discussion of Turner's book *Theology, Psychology and the Plural Self*.
[548] See Taylor, op. cit. p. 463, 480.

What is of interest here is the ways in which these conflicting elements of the self operate, and how the disconnect between the two can be resolved. Taylor does not deal adequately with this problem.

'New model' thinking acknowledges the idea of conflict within each person, and offers, as we shall observe, a way out of the problem in relation to addiction by focussing on positive desires.

3.4   The Nature Of Human Desire

Introduction

Having looked at the self, we now turn to desire as an aspect of selfhood. How is desire best understood both psychologically and theologically?

The Appetites Of Animals

It is probably true to say that desire is 'hard wired' into animal nature. Animals know the instinctive force of desire, for food, drink, reproduction or the company of other living beings, principally though not necessarily exclusively of their own species. Desire for nourishment or reproduction is embedded in the need to survive, either as an individual or as a species.

Human desire or appetite goes back a long way in the history of thought, finding expression, for example in the work Heraclitus and Plato. In the *Symposium* Plato argues, via a conversation between Diotima and Socrates, that in line with Heraclitus' philosophy of 'flux', all things, including 'traits, habits,

opinions, desires, pleasures, pains fears – none of these things is ever the same in any individual, but some are coming into existence, others passing away'[549].

There is probably only one species that also experiences a desire for spiritual experiences: that is the human species. That is not to restrict the understanding or terminology within which such spiritual desire could be housed to a particular religious affiliation, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, or any other: it does not require that the spiritually aware person professes belief in a creator-God, as we know from the doctrines of Buddhism. Together with physical appetites, spiritual desire and longing also demonstrably exists - and only human beings are undeniably in touch with this dimension of living. How can we explain human desires, physiological, social and spiritual, and how can such understanding help us to find a more satisfactory theory of addiction than those critiqued previously in this thesis? We will now explore the nature of addiction with the ideas we have been looking at about human desire as the focal background to this task.

One way into this might begin by suggesting that addiction is a 'problem'[550], whether we interpret this problem as that of the individual or society as a whole, or whether we look at it from a physical, psychological, sociological, economic or even spiritual point of view in the first instance.

There is however an alternative and potentially more helpful way into the study of addiction as we have been suggesting. This is the new model proposed in this thesis. This new 'road map' for the study of addiction starts not with addiction as a problem, but by looking at the whole concept of human desire, appetite and aspirations, and discovering thereby much that is at least neutral in its effect and can often be creative. Alcohol – to give one particularly relevant example – can be enjoyed as an accompaniment to a meal, taken either alone or with others;

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[549] Plato, *Symposium*, quoted in Martin and Barresi, *The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self*, p.12.
[550] The surveys of psychological analysis of addiction and religious writing as discussed in the earlier party of this thesis all proceed in this manner.

but it can also be enjoyed as a way of increasing the pleasure of socialisation, as is evidenced in the works of some great writers of the past, such as Plato[551] and Eubalus[552]. The description of the enjoyment of feasting with good food and wine and intellectually stimulating conversation perhaps reached its highest literary expression in Plato's *Symposium*. That is not to ignore the often catastrophic effects when alcohol is taken in excess. But it re-orients the discussion of desire by beginning with the positive – 'God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good'[553].

It seems to the author of this thesis that this positive understanding of desire and the ways in which human beings seek to satisfy their desire is a vital component in the task of making sense of addiction to ingestible substances or processes. It will therefore be argued that the inadequacies of the addiction theories – both psychological and theological – that we recognised earlier can be overcome by restructuring the conversation, beginning not with <u>pathology</u> but with <u>the positive desires, appetites and aspirations which actually motivate human beings</u>. We can then move beyond that to see what distorts or exaggerates this longing so that it often becomes a problem for individuals and societies.

We have looked at the various aspects of addiction from two disciplinary points of view, the psychological and the theological, consecutively. We will continue by investigating the concept of human desire from the same two perspectives.

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[551] The practice of coming together in groups for banqueting and conversation in classical Greece is well known (see, for example, *The Symposium*, mentioned earlier). In this work, as R.H.S Crossman observes, we find that 'Plato was convinced that love is the basis of true philosophy'. See: R.H.S Crossman, *Plato Today*, p.121.

[552] See Eubalus, who recommends a maximum of four cups of wine at each meeting, lest the consumption of greater quantities may lead to 'hubris, uproar, prancing about, black eyes, the arrival of the police, vomiting, insanity, and finally the hurling of furniture', (fourth century BCE, cited in N Roberts, *Working with Addiction Sufferers, a Handbook for Southwark Clergy*, 2008, not in general circulation).

[553] Genesis 1:31.

3.5   Understanding of desire: psychological viewpoint.

Modern psychology[554] began with the revolution in thinking that occurred in 1900 following the publication of Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*[555]. That is not to suggest that there was no psychology before Freud's time, but that his writing about the role of the unconscious, whether or not we accept his ideas today as he expressed them, constituted a revolution in how psychology would be understood from then onwards. At the heart of this revolution was the concept of motivation initiated by forces of which the individual is not consciously aware.

3.5.1 Freudian approach

How does Freud understand human desire, longing, appetite? Freud uses a 'conflict' model of personality: intrapsychic conflicts between different parts of the mind, (super-ego, ego, and id) compete so that natural desires such as the sex drive are countered by the individual's introjected attitudes based on prohibitions and taboos imposed by society[556]. Freud says that the prohibitions that society erects set limits to the ways in which human beings can actively express their appetites. There is nothing wrong with such desires in themselves; but society places a limit on how, for example, sexual desire and hostility to enemies or rivals may be expressed, otherwise 'civilised' (to use Freud's own term[557]) society would not be possible. The unconscious repression of these desires

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[554] That is to say, the psychological understanding of the twentieth and twenty first centuries.
[555] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Standard Edition, volumes 4 and 5.
[556] On this process see: Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Standard Edition, volume 2, p.144. Freud here deals with the ways in which civilised society has to place a check on the expression of human desire in terms of the libidinal and aggressive appetites.
[557] One of his most important books was entitled *Civilization and its Discontents*, Standard Edition, volume 21.

generates neuroses, according to this view, and it is these repressed desires and the ways in which they can be brought to the attention of the client that are the subject of classical psychoanalytic theory and psychotherapy.

Sigmund Freud thus originated the <u>psychoanalytic</u> understanding of human psychology, and his proposition of the sexual nature of the origins of human desire (the libido) is the key to this in Freud's thought, in which appetite, particularly sexual appetite, is seen as a biologically driven function within the psyche. Desire, located in the 'id'[558] is fundamentally diffuse and uncontrolled until societies need regulation (of sexual activity/incest etc.). This is the origin of civilisation and the beginning of repression. Repression is the price we pay for living in a civilised society in which incest and murder are kept at bay through legal restraints and, where necessary, punishments. These arguments can be followed in detail in his writings, in *Civilization and its Discontents*, for example[559]. Psychoanalysis constitutes a form of 'talking treatment' which aims at the resolution of inner conflict by helping the client to rediscover the instinctive desires that have been driven in to the unconscious by societal restrictions, and to help him to redirect these energies into more socially acceptable patterns of behaviour in a process known as 'sublimation'.

The post-Freudian psychoanalytic movement, and in particular the contribution of the Object Relations school of psychoanalytical theory represented by such writers as Melanie Klein, Ronald Fairbairn and Donald Winnicott has moved away from a biological, libido driven view

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[558] That is to say, the part of the psyche that according to strict Freudian theory only responds to the 'pleasure-principle' rather than acknowledging other principles such as the 'reality-principle': see Charles Rycroft, *A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*, p.66. There is thus, for example, no sense of moral obligation within the 'id'.

[559] The discussion on pages 61 f. is particularly relevant here as Freud tries to make sense of the human experience of guilt, something that is not shared by other animals. One element of this, in Freud's estimation, is that humans fear loss of love by people who are significant in their lives, and the guilt instinct helps to protect us against behaving in ways that would endanger this experience of being loved.

of human desire towards one that is more focussed on the need for intimacy and emotional fulfilment[560]. It is noteworthy in this context that in his book *The Fix*, Damian Thompson suggests that in substance dependent patterns of addictive behaviour the desire for such intimacy can become replaced by a 'relationship' with the substance in question.

3.5.2 <u>Carl Jung</u>

How does Jung interpret desire? He emphasizes the spiritual content of desire in reaction against Freud's 'materialistic' biological approach to it. Jung emphasizes different kinds of desire[561] which can be 'instinctual, compulsive, uninhibited, uncontrolled, greedy, irrational, sensual etc., or desire may be rational, considered, controlled, co-ordinated, adapted, ethical, reflective and so on'. He rejects the central governing hypothesis of Freudian psychology that all behaviour is driven by the libido. What then, essentially, is desire in Jungian thought? Having rejected the Freudian view that the libido, the expressly sexual element of appetite, is the powerful motivating force behind all human desire and behaviour, on a more positive note he cites the work of Cicero[562] who proposes that 'all men naturally pursue those things that seem good and shun their opposites. Wherefore, as soon as anything presents itself that seems good, nature herself impels them to obtain it'. This process can be limited, as in the case of Stoic philosophy by the influence of 'moderation and prudence', he continues, and this limitation is the definition of the what it means to be, in Stoic thought, a truly wise man.

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[560] See Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, *Theology and Pastoral Counseling*, pp.45-58.
[561] See Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, p.84f.
[562] See Jung, op. cit., p.129f, quoting from Sallust, *The War with Catiline*, VII, pp.14-15.

We can see therefore that for Jung, desire and appetite are natural instincts, but they are far wider in scope than Freud had thought in promoting the notion that the libido alone is the motivator of action. He also links these ideas about the human tempestuous appetites such as lust for revenge with the work of St. Augustine[563], whose spiritual understanding of desire we shall address later.

3.5.3 Behaviourist models of desire

Behaviourism, an approach to psychology and psychotherapy associated with names like B.F. Skinner and H.J. Eysenck, challenges psychoanalytic concepts of desire and motivation based on the notion of the 'unconscious'. The form of therapy known today as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy developed from this approach to psychology – emphasising 'unlearning' and 'relearning' at a cognitive, 'educational' level[564].

It is within this body of behaviourist literature that the work of the Positive Psychology Movement belongs[565]. Its importance for the study of addiction is that unlike other forms of psychological interpretation of human distress and its treatment, positive psychology begins not by focussing on distress (questions of the 'what went wrong?' variety) but on questions of positive motivation. At its best, this positive psychology movement, with its origins in behavioural psychology, and working closely with such pioneering psychologists as A.T. Beck[566], takes the view that

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[563] Jung, op. cit., p.130f.

[564] See, for example Stephen Briers' book *Brilliant Cognitive Therapy*. This book explains his reasons for rejecting more psychoanalytic theories of the self, and treatments based on this model, in favour of a learning based model.

[565] There is a difference between positive <u>thinking</u> as instantiated by Norman Vincent Peale and positive <u>psychology</u>. Seligman observes that positive psychology depends on 'a balance sheet, and in spite of the many advantages of positive thinking, there are times when negative thinking is to be preferred…Positive psychology aims for the optimal balance between positive and negative thinking': See Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p.288, note 96.

[566] See, for example, A.T. Beck, A.J. Rush et al., *Cognitive Therapy of Depression*.

psychological intervention can fail when it emphasizes the uncovering of the past with its traumas and miseries, rather than emphasizing the opportunities that the client may currently have, maybe in a form that he or she does not yet recognise, to enhance ability and performance in many areas of life[567].

How might this positive approach to human psychology relate to our quest for a better understanding of addiction?

Martin Seligman[568] explains his understanding of addiction by referring to experiments on rats, which were induced by electrical stimulation to prefer this stimulation to 'food, sex, and even to life itself'[569] – they became addicted to the sensation.

Seligman addresses the difference between addictive pleasure in its most simple, physiological form, which can, in his terms, be a matter of 'habituation', as in the case of his non-human subjects on the one hand, and on the other, the genuine and persistent experience of 'savoring' experiences in a way that is consciously present to the individual as a willed and genuinely enjoyed experience that does not depend for its potency on craving. Thus there is a vast difference between the experience of drinking wine in order to enjoy the wine itself or as a positive aid to socialisation, and its use to self-medicate or to become deliberately intoxicated.

Having raised the topic of addictive behaviour Seligman continues by proposing a way of viewing experiences that have the potential to cause harm in a more positive light when they are seen as part of a programme of what – in Buddhist thought for example – would be named

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[567] In fact Seligman goes so far as to suggest that in some cases psychodynamic intervention may be detrimental to the individual who is suffering from depression, resulting in extreme cases in attempted or actual suicide. See: Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p.69.
[568] op. cit., p.105f.
[569] ibid.

'mindfulness'. He cites Bryant and Veroff[570] in this context as pioneers of this way of perceiving what he calls 'the awareness of pleasure and of the deliberate conscious attention to the experience of pleasure'[571].

It is this deconstruction of the concept of pleasure, and the establishment of a positive psychology of pleasure that concerns Seligman in this chapter of his book, in terms of his investigation of what brings happiness. The categories that have most traction for him are those of 'savoring' experiences, such as mountain climbing or reading letters from one's children, mindfulness, (contrasted with mindlessness, which he believes pervades much human activity), and gratifications which go beyond the mere experience of fleeting pleasures.

Since Seligman wrote his guide to authentic happiness, many other books mention and build on his ideas, notably the excellent overview of positive psychology by Alan Carr[572]. In terms of our pursuit of analogies between secular (psychological) and theological frames of reference within which addiction may be understood most comprehensively, it is noteworthy that Carr includes in his major work several references to religious and spiritual elements in humanity's search for happiness.

Current treatment forms for psychological disorders (such as alcoholism) are often of the type known as <u>Cognitive Behavioural Therapy</u> which is a derivative of behaviourism[573]. As a move away from psychoanalysis, towards an educational model, Aaron T Beck established this form of treatment of depression from the time of his book *Cognitive*

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[570] Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p.107. Fred B. Bryant and Joseph Veroff's book (at the time unpublished: it was in fact published in 2006) entitled *Savoring: A process model for positive psychology* stands in Seligman's view alongside Bryant's article "A four factor model of perceived control".
[571] Seligman, op. cit., p.107.
[572] Alan Carr, *Positive Psychology: the Science of Happiness and Human Strengths*, 2nd edition.
[573] See, for example, Stephen Briers, *Brilliant Cognitive Behavioural Therapy*.

Therapy of Depression in 1979[574]. And CBT is used now particularly in alcohol treatment centres. Its focus is on positive ideas about the self, which we welcome because it seeks to uncover people's positive desires and motivations by helping them to make different and arguably more realistic sense of the meaning of their life and relationships.

It may however be argued against this form of treatment that although it offers some success in terms of short term relief, it may be inadequate in the sense that it concentrates on relatively superficial symptom relief rather than looking for deeper psychological meanings in the addictive behaviour. That criticism is supported by the author of this thesis both at a theoretical level and in relation to his experience as a working therapist.

3.6   Theological theories of desire

Introduction

We have used at various points in this thesis the assertion of Augustine that we are made for God, and that are hearts are restless until we find God.

Is there a universal awareness of or desire for God? Léon Turner explores in his article "Psychological Innateness & Representations of God[575]" the contention that all human beings have an awareness of God 'built in'. Turner is reluctant to claim too much for the assertion that religiosity is innate, but he suggests that 'the formation of God-concepts may be an inevitable feature of human cognitive development'[576]. This would link neatly with Augustine's claim

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[574] A. T. Beck, A.J. Rush, B.F. Shaw, and G. Emery, *Cognitive Therapy of Depression.*
[575] Léon Turner, "Psychological Innateness & Representations of God". These ideas are also explored by Fraser Watts: see, F. Watts, *Theology and Psychology*, p.90, where he explores the question of universality of religious experience, and concludes that there are important 'common elements' and 'diversities' in religious experience between different religious traditions worldwide.
[576] Turner, op. cit., p.98

that we are ultimately 'made' for God, i.e. to have a relationship with God. And earlier writers than Turner, such as 'God's Biologist', Sir Alister Hardy, began working on this theory in the 1940's[577]. In 1979 Hardy produced what is perhaps his most comprehensive survey of the spiritual aspects of human living in his book *The Spiritual Nature of Man*[578].

Christian theology investigates the concept of human desire for God, but warns of a certain moral ambiguity and thus need for circumspection in its use in theological discourse. As Nicholas Lash observes, 'Desire is just as dangerous and, often, as destructive as are the surrogates of sight in glibness and illusion. Hence, once again, the need for pedagogies of discrimination, cultures of *ascesis*'[579]. But in order to begin our approach to the positive elements of desire in human living, and relate it to the question of addictive behaviours, we need to set the scene in more detail by relating it to two of the theological giants of the New Testament and Patristic eras, Saint Paul and Saint Augustine of Hippo.

3.6.1 The Theology of Paul the Apostle in relation to Human Desire

In order to ground the theological concept of desire, and consider the part it has to play in our understanding of addiction, we will go to Saint Paul, who has much to say about human desire, and how desire can be properly housed within the life of the Christian Churches. At the heart of the Gospel he presents there is a strong emphasis on the freedom of the human being to choose her actions: Paul is concerned however that freedom must not be mistaken for what might be termed 'licence' – freedom to do exactly as we please. Much of his epistolary effort has the aim of promoting unity in the Church, and, as his hymn to 'charity' in I

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[577] This refers to the recent biography of Hardy: David Hay, *God's Biologist*.
[578] Alister Hardy, *The Spiritual Nature of Man*.
[579] Nicholas Lash, *The Beginning and End of Religion*, p.211.

Corinthians 13 makes clear, mutual concern among the Christian congregation is highly important, and takes precedence over individual judgement as in the requirement not to behave in ways that cause stumbling blocks to what he described as the more vulnerable members[580].

The words 'desire', 'freedom' and 'grace' are important in this context, and we shall now explore them in relation to the argument being presented in this part of the thesis. These words lie at the heart of Paul's theology of desire and its ambiguities on the one hand, and the divine intervention - God's grace - which alone can 'order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men' on the other, because human effort unaided is powerless to achieve the life that is line with God's will.

Paul acknowledges the power of human desire for food, wine, and intimacy. He sees these as good but needing to be ordered according to Christian principles, especially in areas of sexual morality. He also acknowledges the existence of conflict here in that 'the good I would I do not; the evil I would not, that I do…[581]'. Appetite can be divided between different and competing wishes or desires. There are issues of biblical theological interpretation here[582] but this epistolary writing suggests a problem which all have to address in terms of, for example, protection of 'weaker brethren' as a counterbalance to the gospel of freedom in the Spirit (food offered to idols etc.). We will now look in greater detail at Paul's theology in relation to human desire.

The Meanings Of The Words To Be Considered

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[580] See, for example, his concern that the freedom to eat meat formerly offered to idols might cause offence or a stumbling block to some. Paul pursues this argument in I Corinthians 8:1-13.
[581] See Romans 7:15-25.
[582] see C. C. H. Cook in his book *Alcohol , Addiction and Christian Ethics* on this, as discussed in detail earlier in relation to alcohol dependency.

We will now examine the meaning of some key words in Pauline theology that are related to our concern with 1) desire and 2) freedom.

1) <u>Desire</u>

The word group to be investigated here is based on the Greek noun *epithumia* which may be translated as 'desire', a word that is in itself essentially neutral, in a moral sense, although it acquires a certain pejorative connotation in both Hellenistic (especially Stoic) thought and (generally speaking) in the New Testament, though not normally in the Hebrew scriptures as represented by the Septuagint.

Perhaps the most important exception to this generally negative sense of the word desire as found in the New Testament is the saying of Jesus at the Last Supper (see Luke 22:15) in which he declares that it is with desire (Greek: *epithumiā* with 'iota subscript' indicating the dative case, used instrumentally) that he has desired to eat this Passover with the disciples before his time of suffering.

<u>The Background To *Epithumia* In NT</u>

In its verbal form, this concept of desire is found seven times in the synoptic gospels (especially Luke) and Acts. It occurs also in Paul's letters (four times) and once each in I Timothy, Hebrews, James, I Peter and Revelation. As a noun, its thirty four appearances are mainly to be found in the letters, plus one example of each in Mark, Luke, John and Acts. There are ten examples of the use of the word in Paul's seven authentic letters (five of them in Romans) and nine in the secondary Pauline literature.

<u>Derivation Of The Word *Epithumia*</u>

The Greek noun *thumos* underlies *epithumia*. Its meaning is given by the lexicons as 'spirit', 'courage', or 'wrath'. It therefore suggests passionate desire (this would certainly fit its use by Jesus in Luke 22, noted earlier).

Its use in the scriptures can be morally neutral, as in Genesis 31:30, positive (Luke 22:15) or in connection with evil intentions (Romans 7:7 etc.). Desire is thus a highly ambiguous concept in biblical theology.

Taking a positive view of the word, the Septuagint provides a number of occurrences in connection with human need. Genesis 30:31 talks about Jacob's longing for his father's house; Deuteronomy 14:26 of the provision for whatever kind of food and drink (including wine and 'strong drink') the people need in their new life of freedom after their time of slavery in Egypt.

Paul however mostly uses *epithumia* in its negative sense to express the immoral aspects of desire (though not in Philippians 1:23 and I Thessalonians 2:17[583]). It is noteworthy despite this generally negative tone that when he wishes to speak of desire in a positive sense, he normally uses a different word, based on the verb *epipotheo*, to distinguish evil desires from good ones. The use of *epipotheo* occurs at Romans 1:11, II Corinthians 9:14; Philippians 1:8, 2:26 etc., expressing 'longing' in an entirely favourable way.

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[583] Philippians 1:23 is the place where Paul contrasts his longing to die and be with Christ on the one hand and his recognition on the other hand that it is beneficial for him to remain alive in order to be of service to the Church. In this context Paul chooses the word *epithumian* to designate his desire to be with Christ. In I Thessalonians 2:17 he also uses the word *epithumia* to speak of his desire to visit the brethren at Thessalonica.

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2) <u>Freedom</u>

When Paul addresses human freedom he has to consider the danger that those who believe themselves to be liberated from following the Torah, basing their faith and lifestyle instead on the promptings of the Holy Spirit, may fall into the opposite trap of becoming 'antinomians', people who regard any kind of desire or behaviour as acceptable for the Christian man or woman once 'Law'[584], both ritual and moral, has been shown to be ineffective in leading, of itself, to salvation.

Law also has for Paul a negative contribution to make in terms of the central feature of this study, i.e. human appetites. For as Paul observes more than once, it is Law that paradoxically encourages human sinfulness, by creating as it were a catalogue of requirements against which it is natural for human beings to rebel. This is brought into focus powerfully in passages such as Romans 5:20 and 7:7-9. It is therefore our contention that Paul's critique of the Law is based not only on its failure to achieve salvation through human effort at keeping it, but also on his awareness that Law in itself generates human disobedience to God by creating a series of commandments that human beings tend to rebel against: remove those commandments, or reduce them to a minimal place of importance, and that temptation is diminished or removed. This is an extremely realistic and compassionate view of what human beings are like,

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[584] The Hebrew word '*Torah*', which is often translated as 'Law' is best understood as both 'defining sin', as catalysing faith, and its social function in terms of community discipline, alongside its ambiguous role of 'bringing sin in to consciousness'. See J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, pp.719ff.

although it would perhaps be more within the expertise of a psychologist than a theologian to explain the human tendency towards the desire that is embedded in ethical rebelliousness. E. Erikson[585] is perhaps helpful in this context when writing on stage based conflicts, especially in relation to adolescence. At all events, this interpretation of Paul's negative view of the Law will be of great importance in our attempt to assess desire, motivation and choice from a theological perspective.

We now focus on interpretation of Paul's views on the concept of freedom as expressed in his '*Hauptbriefe*' letters, i.e. Romans, Galatians, and I and II Corinthians.

The Background To Paul's Theology Of Freedom

What does Paul mean us to understand when he speaks of the Christian's freedom of action? And - perhaps even more pertinently in relation to our overall topic - what does he not mean? The Greek word for freedom as a concept in the New Testament is *eleutheria*. The verb *eleutheroo* in its verbal form is found seven times in the New Testament. Five of those occurrences are in Paul, and two in the Gospel of John. In its substantive form, *eleutheria*, it occurs eleven times, with seven appearances in Paul: other instances are in James (twice) and once each in I and II Peter. The verbal adjective *eleutheros* occurs twenty three times, and of these, fourteen examples come in Paul's undisputed letters: two further instances appear in Ephesians and Colossians.

There is one example (albeit highly significant) of the word *apeleutheros* denoting someone having been set free: this is in I Corinthians 7:22.

From the preceding survey, which has as yet offered no interpretation of the passages where these words occur, the most striking fact is that in all cases, verbal, nominal and adjectival, the most numerous examples of the word *eleutheria* and its cognates are found in the letters of Paul: in other New Testament writings they are comparatively rare. We therefore seem to be dealing with a range of expressions that are peculiarly Pauline in their subject matter.

The Background In The Septuagint

In the Hebrew Scriptures as represented by the Septuagint the word *eleutheria* is used in a number of senses, such as:

> In the context of slavery (e.g. Exodus 21:2, 5:27; Leviticus 19:20; Deuteronomy 15:12)

> Referring to prisoners of war (Deuteronomy 21:14) In relation to exemption from obligations (I Samuel 17:25).

This last example is of particular interest because, as the NIDNT observes[586], the people were in general terms not freemen but essentially slaves of the king. I Kings 21:8,11 and I Samuel 8:10-18 suggest this. In this constitutional setting, 'only a few privileged men stood out as free'[587].

Nevertheless, in a more ultimate sense, people do have a freedom, not through their birthright but as a gift of God, which can however be taken away because of their rebellion, as in the examples of II

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[586] *New International Dictionary of the New Testament*, p. 718
[587] ibid.

Kings 17:7-23 and the Babylonian captivity (see II Kings 21:10-15, 22:19f, 23:25ff.).

What then is the meaning of 'freedom' for Paul?

One important factor in determining this meaning must, as the lexicons consulted emphasize, be the overarching conceptual focus provided by the eschatological factor in the New Testament in general, and in particular in the thought of Paul, because of the centrality of the 'Christ event'. Because of this eschatological factor, the churches for which he had responsibility had a sense of living in an interim period, a time characterised by awaiting an event that was yet to take place. They were to be awake and alert in their expectation of this event (Romans 13:11ff). The event in question was the *Parousia*, the return of the exalted Christ as Lord in the fullest cosmic sense. Their worship was therefore characterised by expectancy, which remained a factor throughout the New Testament period, despite the change of horizon implied in the later writings which, unlike those of Paul, set out terms and conditions of church management alongside ethical and liturgical considerations for an indeterminate future: the work of W.G. Kümmel[588] on the contrast between Paul and John is relevant in this respect.

The freedom that Paul writes about can only be understood in terms of that expectation, even though it is unlikely that Paul himself had any clear view as to when the *Parousia* was likely to take place. Freedom is limited by that expectation – that is why he concerns

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[588] W.G. Kümmel, *Theology of the New Testament*, p.329

himself (especially in I Corinthians) with the recognition that although it is perfectly acceptable, for example, for slaves to seek their liberty, (see I Cor. 7, especially verses 21-22, 26, 29) there is no need to demand this 'freedom' because the end of historical time is approaching, and then everything will change. It is important to keep this example in mind because, as will be demonstrated later, the idea of the release – the freeing – of slaves has an important role to play in the interpretation of the biblical concept of freedom.

In origin, the word *eleutheros* denotes one who belongs to a particular group or nation with the full rights of citizenship of that group. This condition of belonging is to be seen in contrast with others in that group who do not share those rights, that is to say, aliens, non-citizens, members of conquered populations and slaves. In its Greek form, the word later acquires more philosophical overtones, in relation to human freedom. Stoic philosophy, and the possibility of some cross-fertilisation between this and the theology of Paul, may perhaps be relevant in this context[589].

In Paul's writing, there is a recurrent contrast between freedom and its opposite in terms of the polarity between the freeman and the slave (see: I Corinthians 7:21, 12:13; Galatians 3:28, 4:22; Ephesians 6:8; Colossians 3:11; and cf. also Revelation 6:15, 13:16 and 19:18 for non-Pauline examples).

There is in this context a paradoxical reversal made explicit in Paul's thought: one who has been 'set free' by Christ becomes his slave – the *apeleutheros Kyriou* becomes the *Doulos Christou* (see

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[589] See: J.N. Sevenster: *Paul and Seneca.*

especially I Cor 7:22 as an example of this play on words). This is part of what was alluded to earlier in terms of the eschatological character of the nature of freedom as understood by Paul: it is a calling into a new relationship with God through Christ, which will, as we shall see, have implications, among other things, for the ethical behaviour of the baptised Christian.

The Love Command

As noted above, the new style of living that is consistent with the eschatological calling to new life as a member of the Church has ethical implications[590]. Those who are liberated through faith in Christ are not thereby set free to live according to the promptings of desire without qualification; on the contrary, they are expected to balance this freedom by a willing fulfilment of the ethical demands of the Law, without falling back into a reliance on this obedience itself as a means to salvation – it might be better seen as a way of maintaining the wellbeing of the individual within his or her life as a member of the Church, a new form of 'covenantal nomism' with the aim of maintaining the community. To uphold the Law in this particularly ethical sense therefore does not mean subservience to legalism (see Galatians 6:2; I Corinthians 9:21).

It is however an important element in Paul's thought that human effort alone cannot achieve the kind of life that the Love Command enjoins on the Church members. Had such effort been adequate and achievable through observance of the Law alone, then the Christ event and all that it implies would be unnecessary. A new Church might have been formed, in

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[590] See: V.P. Furnish, *The Love Command in the New Testament*, pp.96-98 & 111-113.

which, as some still thought necessary, Gentiles would simply embrace the Jewish law in its ritual and ethical dimensions, and this would be enough. What Paul proposes is radically different from this: he treats the old Law as helpless in terms of achieving salvation. The key to this difference lies in <u>grace</u>, made available not through any human striving but simply through faith in the effectiveness of the work of Christ as the bringer of salvation to Jew and Gentile alike without any need for observance of the Law.

The study of Paul's theology of grace is thus of high importance in establishing the driving force behind Paul's thought on human nature, the choices people make – their desires, both noble and sinful, their freedom to behave as they choose, limited as we have seen[591] by the 'love command', and the ways in which God provides a remedy when things go wrong in human dealings with one another and God. This point is made forcefully by Dunn[592] who asserts that 'No other word expresses his theology so clearly on this point[593] as "grace" (*charis*)'.

From the point of view of linguistic analysis, this word has a wide and rich variety of uses in the Greek literature of the period. Arndt and Gingrich[594] suggest three principal meanings of the verb *charizomai*, based on its appearance in a number of biblical and other contemporary religious writings[595].

The first meaning (for example in Romans 8:32 and Philippians 2:9) refers to the act of giving freely, as a favour, gracious giving. It can be used

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[591] Furnish in particular engages with the aspects of freedom that relate to mutual responsibility
[592] *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, p.319 f.
[593] That is to say, on the New Testament idea of salvation as interpreted by Paul
[594] Arndt and Gingrich. Greek English *Lexicon* p.1078ff.
[595] see, for example 3 Maccabees 5:11, Josephus (*Antiquities*) 3,87; 4,317; Romans 8:32; Philippians
Luke 7:42; 2:9; 2 Clement 1:4; Didache 10:3 etc.

in 'civil' speeches in praise of a generous benefactor who gives freely of his or her wealth or influence for the common good. In its Pauline, 'religious', context it speaks of the God who can be relied on to provide all that is necessary to the Christian believer, because he has even given up his own Son on their behalf[596], and the act of bestowing on Christ the 'name above all names' [597] because he submitted himself in total obedience to God – even to the shedding of his own blood.

The second meaning given by Arndt and Gingrich[598] is that of the cancellation of the debt of a sum of money that is agreed by the creditor. An example of this can be found in Luke 7:42 ff in the parable of the two debtors – perhaps better referred to as the parable of the forgiving creditor.

The third meaning given in the same place involves the act of pardoning a wrongdoer and thereby showing oneself to be behaving in a gracious manner. This meaning occurs both in Jewish literature of the intertestamental period[599], and the New Testament itself[600].

There is a close relationship between grace and righteousness in Paul's thought: grace, made available as a gift through the redeeming work of Christ, re-establishes the proper relationship, based on right or righteous behaviour, between God and humanity, which human beings are unable to achieve by their own efforts. This question of human effort introduces a vast subject in terms of the way in which Paul (who it will be remembered regarded himself as 'impeccable' in terms of his own personal keeping of Torah) approached the question before and after his

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[596] Romans 8:32
[597] Philippians 2:9
[598] Arndt & Gingrich op. cit.
[599] see, for example Josephus, *Antiquities* 6,144
[600] see, for example Colossians 2:13; II Corinthians 2:10, 12:13; Ephesians 4:32

conversion to Christianity. As Stephen Westerholm has pointed out with many illustrations,[601] there is no reason to suppose that the 'Jewish' Paul had a negative or pessimistic view of human ability to keep the commandments – despite lapses into sinfulness – on the basis of his knowledge of the rabbinic writings, the views of biblical writers such as Tobit or Sirach, and the Maccabean Literature, and the evidence from the Qumran texts[602]. In other words, the decision whether or not to 'hearken' (with its suggestion of obedient listening[603]) is one that human beings are free to make, according to the mainstream Jewish theology with which Paul would have been intimately familiar. There are of course problems of dating with some of this writing, and yet it is hard to find texts of the relevant period that diminish this sense of human beings' freedom and responsibility for their actions, rather than supposing them to be, so to speak, controlled by external, demonic forces, the forces often hypostasized by Paul under the name of sin. Human beings are able to keep the Law if they so choose, and this, says Westerholm, is the understanding that Paul had before his Damascus Road encounter with the risen Christ[604]. It was only after this momentous event that he changed his mind about human ability to live righteously by their own efforts, with a consequent need for an act of God to put things right.

There is then a sense, as more than one commentator has pointed out, that the step taken by God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the key to understanding the plight in which humanity stood before the 'Christ

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[601] Westerholm's chapter "Paul's Anthropological 'Pessimism' in its Jewish Context", in Barclay and Gathercole, *Divine and Human Agency*.

[602] extensive examples of each category are given by Westerholm, e.g. the *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*; *4 Maccabees* (1:1,3,5 etc.*); 1QS II,11-17, V 10-13* etc.

[603] See *Rabbi Vayassa I* in the second volume of Lauterbach's three volume work on rabbinical writings, quoted by Westerholm ad. loc.

[604] Westerholm, op.cit. p.80.

event'. This plight, in Paul's post-conversion phase, is linked to a new understanding of what Louis Martyn[605] refers to as the third actor in the cosmic drama as seen by the Christian Paul – the quasi hypostasized character of Sin which inhibits human beings from making right decisions.

From a linguistic point of view, James Dunn links the word *charis* and its use in Paul's writing not so much to the Hellenistic usages of *charizomai* and its cognate forms, as to the context of the word grace in the Jewish Scriptures. The key words here, as Dunn observes[606], are the Hebrew terms *chen,* and *chesed.* Both words are used to indicate acts of gracious favour or kindness performed by one person to another. Both words suggest favour shown by someone in a superior position to someone of lower rank or importance: there is a difference of nuance however, in the sense that whereas *chen* has a more specific connotation – in the sense of being observed in relation to a clearly defined situation, and being in a sense conditional, *chesed* conveys more of a sense of equality in the relationship between the two parties. Dunn, quoting the *Theological Dictionary Of The Old Testament* (5.62-63) refers his readers to a number of passages which illustrate this argument particularly well – Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalms 86:15 and 103:8. In each of these examples it is *chesed* that is used by the author.

What is of great significance in this respect is that the initiative lies at all times with God, not with human beings, and there is a recognition that there is nothing human beings can do in response to what God is freely offering that is any quantifiable way equal in value to what is being offered.

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[605] See Martyn in Barclay and Gathercole, *Divine and Human Agency…* chapter 10, p.175f.
[606] Dunn, p.320

Biblical Contexts For Desire, Freedom And Grace In Paul's Writings

The next part of this chapter looks at the passages in which these three key words appear in Paul's writing and pays particular attention to the context in which they are to be found, both in the overall purpose of Paul's theology, and in relation to his own theological and cultural environment[607]. Here again we will be looking for recurring and central themes in Paul's thought.

We begin with some reflections on his use of the word group associated with freedom – *eleutheria* and its cognates.

A particularly good example of the nominal and verbal forms occurring in the same sentence is found in Galatians 1:5, in which Paul exhorts the congregation to 'stand fast in the liberty (*eleutheria* in dative form with iota subscript) wherewith Christ has made us free, (*eleutherose*) and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage' (King James translation). This is a sentence that could be taken as a summary of the argument of Galatians as a whole, with its highly significant combination of an imperative based on an indicative – this is what Christ has done for us; therefore this is how we should conduct ourselves[608]. Of central importance for Paul in his polemical interface with the rebellious elements in the Galatian church is his insistence that the condition of being a Jew does not of itself promise or provide any route to salvation; anyone who submits to circumcision is required to observe the whole of the Law. What matters most to Paul here is his insistence that only a total re-orientation of a person's spiritual allegiance to Christ as the bringer of salvation is valid, and the acceptance of this is equally necessary for Jew and Gentile

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[607] See: Barclay & Gathercole, *Divine and Human Agency*.
[608] this is mentioned, for example, in Barclay's introduction to *Divine and Human Agency*

alike. It is this radical re-alignment, rather than any previously held beliefs or practices, that is the sign and the significance of what freedom as a Christian man or woman really means, and as in Romans, this proposition is fundamental to Paul's theology.

This line of thought is further worked through in Galatians in 5:13, where Paul engages with the possibility that his exhortation to live according to freedom might be misunderstood – seen, that is, as a radically libertarian principle. Paul refutes any such interpretation of his ideas, insisting that true liberty brings with it not a free-for-all ethical system, but, on the contrary, an entirely new ethic based not on the slavish fulfilment of rules or conventions but on the mutual responsibility that is at the heart of what is meant by love in its Christian sense. The free man or woman has exchanged slavery to the Law for slavery to Christ, which paradoxically makes people free so that they become, in effect, slaves of one another[609].

One of Paul's emphases when thinking of the Christian in relation to God through participation in Christ is his use of the words *technon* (child) and *huios* (son). These words are to be found for example in I Corinthians 10:29; Galatians 2:4 and I Corinthians 9:1. Participation in the Spirit confers these eschatological gifts of 'son- and daughter-ship' in the present to the believer, who is now the inheritor of God's promises. Freedom is true citizenship of God's Kingdom with its promise of an eternal destiny begun in this life and to be harvested in its fullest sense at the end of time. These realities and promises are not in any way dependent on, or achievable by, any works of the believer, whether Jew or Gentile, but

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[609] see on this V. P. Furnish, *Love Command in the New Testament* which gives a detailed analysis of texts in which the love command is to be found in the New Testament in a variety of forms – not only where the word *agape* or its cognates appear as such. Chapter 3 of his book focuses on Paul's ideas on this.

through the freedom won by Christ through the Cross, and transferable to the individual Christian by faith alone

<u>Use Of Words Explored In Their Context In Greater Detail</u>

Eleutheria. Chapter 6 of Romans uses this idea frequently. Paul, with a rhetorical flourish – *'mē genoito'*, meaning something like 'not on your life!' - sweeps aside the possible interpretation of his vision of grace abounding as God's response to human wickedness that sees sin as somehow a good thing because it leads to grace[610]. His way out of this dilemma involves the application of the 'imperative based on an indicative' argument – "How can we who have died to sin still live in it?" The Christian who has been brought into a special relationship with Christ through Baptism will naturally live according to the principles of Christ.

The person who has 'died', he reminds his readers, is free (*eleutheros*) from sin, that is to say, the power that a personalised conception of sin formerly had. Through incorporation into Christ that power has been destroyed on our behalf by Christ's death. From now on, in the paradoxical sense that Paul often employs, we are slaves still, but now we are slaves of righteousness. In a rhetorical sense, then, Christians are free from the power of sin. But men and women do not live in a way that is fully determined by the fact of their participation in Christ. There is abundant evidence in many of Paul's letters, notably I Corinthians, that the actual behaviour of the members of the churches falls short of the ideal in many respects. As we have seen, Paul laments the fact that he cannot always

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[610] though see aspects of rabbinical literature of Paul's time that could indeed be seen in this light: attention is drawn to these passages by Phillip Alexander in his account of the 'two wills' i.e. good and bad inclinations which are both implanted by God in the human soul, in Barclay and Gathercole, *Divine and Human Agency*, p.36.

(ever?) behave in a way that is aligned to the freedom that has been gained in Christ; there is therefore a constant need for repentance and forgiveness and the possibility of a new start[611].

As we have already observed, the idea of *eleutheria*, wrongly interpreted, can seem like an excuse for any kind of behaviour that people may wish to indulge in, and this is not just an ethical matter in a narrow sense, it also has implications for the ways in which Christians behave in relation to non-Jewish cultic activity. As we know from Luke's account of the Council in Jerusalem described in detail in Acts 15 there was a tendency for Christians to assert that the eating of meat bought from markets that were sourced from pagan temples was to be regarded as acceptable behaviour for a Christian who has been set free from any narrow set of regulations. While concurring with the idea of freedom in principle, Paul stresses that these people must recognise that in doing so they may set a stumbling block before other (Jewish?) Christians, who find such behaviour unacceptable. Acts 15 concludes with a rather weak compromise, whereas Paul is adamant in I Corinthians 10 that individual freedom must be subject to, and qualified by, the good of the worshipping community as a whole.

We now look in detail at Romans 7, where Paul works out his theology of freedom in terms of the tension between the wish to do what is good, as a sign of freedom in Christ, and the frequent experience of making choices that militate against the will of God as revealed in the life of Jesus Christ and his commandments.

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[611] It is striking however, as Dunn points out (*The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, p.327) how little time Paul devotes to the idea of forgiveness and repentance; there are only two occurrences of these words – one in Romans 4:7, and one in Colossians 1:14. It is interesting to note (as Dunn does) that this 'reticence' on his part in the letters is in sharp contrast to its frequent occurrences on his lips in Acts (13:38, 17:30, 20:21, 26:18 & 20).

Our principal guide for this task will be a recent author who comes from the twin perspective of theological and psychological disciplines, Christopher Cook[612]. In this way we will begin to be able to see how the two disciplines shine individual but related lights on the questions Paul is raising in his letters.

On the section we have referred to in Romans 7, Cook refers to the commentaries and to the work of writers such as Gerd Theissen, who approaches theology with a complementary attention to psychological insights. The problem that Cook is addressing is the Pauline idea of the 'divided self'[613]. As we have seen earlier, the key text here is Romans 7:15-25, which addresses the difficulty that human beings have, not in ascertaining what the right course of action is in a given situation, but in doing what they perceive to be right. The exponents of Paul whom he uses as the 'key' commentators on this passage differ about whether this sense of inner conflict in Paul's thought refers to people in their pre-Christian state or subsequent to their conversion to Christianity.

In this context he quotes Cranfield[614] and Dunn[615] among those who take the view that Paul is referring to the Christian with her inner struggle to conform to God's will on the one hand, and Ziesler[616] on the other as an example of those who identify the 'strugglers' as those who are in this divided state but outside the Christian Church, because he cannot accept the idea that Paul would have such a negative view of the Christian life.[617] Theissen[618] concurs with Ziesler's view, suggesting a 'three tribunal' view

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[612] Christopher C. H. Cook, *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics*

[613] Cook, op.cit. p.136-147

[614] C. E. B Cranfield, *Romans, a Shorter Commentary*.

[615] J. G. Dunn *Romans 1-8*.

[616] J. Ziesler*, Paul's Letter to the Romans*. See also Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity*.

[617] See Cook, op.cit. p. 140

[618] G. Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology*, p.244.

of the dilemma in which the individual self stands at the mid-point between two urges, the urge to follow God's commandments on the one hand, and the urge to follow the law of sin on the other.

This last view is highly significant for our study in terms of the way in which Paul appears to give a quasi-personal significance to the concept of sin. Sin, for Paul, can be the subject of an action performed on human beings, diverting them from what they know to be right and good towards actions that are against God's will. This idea is discussed in detail by Simon Gathercole in his chapter on "Sin in God's Economy" in Barclay and Gathercole (eds.) *Divine and Human Agency*[619]- 'The agent who dominates most of chapter 7 is clearly the mysterious figure "Sin"'[620]. This comment is highly significant: it both personifies the concept of sin by the use of the word 'who' and then renders the concept – or person – of sin as in some sense incomprehensible and unknowable. And in this unknowability we are, as Gathercole reminds his readers, reminded of Romans 1, where the presence of sin is responsible for a 'darkening of the mind' and 'inability to discern' which is caused by a failure to glorify God. Sin also has the effect, he continues, of deceptively presenting 'a picture to "me" that sin's own work is in fact entirely consonant with the Law. In other words, sin is at this stage not recognised as sin at all' - by the pre-conversion person[621]. And the hypostatised sin 'character' thirdly has the force, as we have seen earlier, of actively provoking prohibited desires. We have here then a sustained working out of the idea of sin as an actor in the drama of the relationship between God and humanity.

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[619] see pages 167-172
[620] Barclay and Gathercole, op. cit. p.168.
[621] op cit., p168f.

This leads to a number of questions, such as from where Paul derived this idea of a personalised concept of sin, on the one hand, and on the other, questions about how far human beings can be held responsible for their actions, especially those that are against God's will, when they are to a greater or lesser extent under the power of sin even, if we follow Cranfield and Dunn's argument, after their conversion to Christianity. Turning to the question of where Paul derived his theology of a personalised concept of sin from, the commentators suggest a number of possible answers to this question.

Fitzmeyer[622] points out that 'Paul often personifies both Death and Sin, depicting them as actors on the stage of human history. *Hamartia* is thus an active evil force that pervades human existence. It "dwells" in humanity (Rom. 7:17,23) deceives it, and kills it (Rom.7:11).' What this neat exposition leads on to is the question of what Paul meant when he spoke of a personal 'being' named Sin. Was he accepting an Old Testament view based on Genesis in which the Devil is seen as literally walking in the Garden of Eden, or is his thought more sophisticated, more metaphorical?

Looking at the passage under discussion, that is to say Romans 7 (passim), the commentaries provide us with some clues about how Paul understands this personified figure called Sin. Karl Barth[623] and C. Kingsley Barrett[624] make much of the idea of rebellion as the key to understanding what sin does, and the ways in which it is instanced in human history, and they rightly link this rebellion with the act of defiance of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. For Barrett, this act comes from the seed of doubt placed in Adam's mind by the serpent. In consequence,

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[622] *New Jerome Bible Commentary*, p.1403
[623] *The Epistle to the Romans*, see p.167ff.
[624] *The Epistle to the Romans*, p.111.

Adam tried to 'set himself in the place of God'[625] and sin was born in that moment, causing the entry of death into the cosmos as a direct result of his action. Barrett's use of the word 'born' is particularly significant here, suggesting the arrival of a new being with quasi personal status. It is however interesting to note, with Barrett, that Paul does not suggest that universal sinfulness is somehow acquired by literal inheritance, despite the evidence from 4 Ezra that this idea was known within the contemporary Jewish theological understanding of the Fall.

One suggestion that helps us to understand the idea of sin from a more psychological perspective was suggested, before the recent work of Theissen, and this is to be found in the commentary of C H Dodd on Romans[626] chapter 7. Dodd is here particularly interested in the impact of law on human response to God, suggesting that at a deep (i.e. unconscious) level, the injunctions against certain forms of activity (he quotes Rabbi Eleazer ben Azariah on this point) such as the use of clothing with mixed textiles, the eating of pig's flesh and the desire for illicit sexual activity creates a climate in which such wishes are repressed and therefore 'form a "complex" below the threshold of consciousness, and can at a later time break into the conscious life in fresh and perhaps even more deleterious forms'[627]. Repression is itself an activity which takes place, as Dodd recognises, at an unconscious level and this point is of great significance in terms of human choice. It raises, for example, a question about the extent to which human beings are, from a psychological point of view, responsible for the content of what is contained in the

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[625] ibid.
[626] *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, C. H. Dodd, commenting on Romans 7, in particular verses 8ff. (see page 128 of the Fontana Edition, 1968).
[627] ibid.

unconscious part of their psyche, and the destructive choices they make as a result.

At a more theological level, Dodd suggests that the personified characterisation of sin that we find in Paul relates to the potential the Law has to cause a rift between humans and God by setting up an opposition to God within the individual because God's commandments are in conflict with human desire: the desires then become problematic, and instead of enabling humans to engage with the problem at a conscious level, the desires are driven down into the unconscious where we can deceive ourselves into believing that they no longer have any power. It is this process of deception that reveals the existence of sin as a personalised concept.

Paul would not have expressed these ideas in the language of modern Freudian psychology. It is nevertheless true that in his view the divinely given Law has the ambiguous role of both revealing God's commandments and at the same time demonstrating human fallibility in observing them, a situation which requires the operation of grace to resolve it. This, for Paul, is where Christ achieves what the Law is powerless to do.

Bultmann[628] draws an important distinction between the reality of human sin, for which people are individually responsible and of which they can be personally guilty, and Original Sin, for which people of their own generation cannot be personally responsible in the general, retrospective sense of being responsible for Adam's apostasy. Bultmann finds the idea of this Original Sin theology of Paul coming at least partly

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[628] Rudolph Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* volume 1, sections 15:4b and 25:2.

from a Gnostic background: as Bultmann puts it,[629] 'Gnostic mythology serves to characterise man's situation in the world, as a life which by its origin is destined for destruction, a life that is prone to be ruled by demonic powers' and the descending and ascending Redeemer has the task of liberating humanity from those powers. It is however questionable how far we should agree with Bultmann in detecting hints of Gnostic thought behind Paul's own views, not least because of the difficulty of dating the Gnostic writings with sufficient certainty.

Commenting further on the personal nature of sin itself, rather than individual experiences of it, W. G. Kümmel[630] identifies the ways in which Paul in Romans regards sin as the subject whose impact on humanity as object can be seen at work: these actions include ruling (5:12, 21; 6:12), making people slaves (6:6,17,20), paying wages that are death (6:23) and misuse of the Law to deceive and slay (7:9,11). Kümmel does not however comment on where Paul derived this personalisation of sin, he simply presents it as a key element in Paul's presentation of man's plight before God – the sinful attitude and behaviours that lead to death for us as it did for Adam, and the remedy for this in the life restoring, once for all work of Christ.

Perhaps it needs to be emphasized that Paul, in presenting the force of sin as a real determinant of human action does not analyse the nature of this concept in any detail. He prefers to take for granted that his readers, whether Jewish or Gentile, will understand what he means without the need for detailed explication. It may be that in our own times, by contrast, when the word sin is less used in ordinary human discourse in secular

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[629] op.cit. p.174f. (italics original)
[630] W. G. Kümmel, *Theology of the New Testament,* p.180.

society, the ideas that underlie this theology of a personalised 'sin' character in the human drama need more clarification.

Mention was made earlier of the possible influence on Paul of writings from a Hellenistic, Stoic background that may illuminate the idea of choice and freedom, and one influential book on this topic was *Paul and Seneca*[631], which explored this relationship in detail, as have other more recent writers on Paul, such as Troels Engberg-Pedersen in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and his Cultural Environment*[632]. He examines the writings of Epictetus looking for a resonance between Paul and Epictetus as a significant representative of Stoic thought in relation to the relative part played by freedom and determinism in the choices that people make. He concludes that there are both similarities and differences in the ways in which they address these issues. Ultimately, we have to beware – as we have seen before in this chapter – of the danger of attempting to understand ancient texts from the standpoint of modern interpreters. Having said that however, the conclusion is reached in Engberg-Pedersen's article[633] that in both Pauline and Stoic (as evidenced in Epictetus) writing that 'there is an idea of a self which is able to reject the world because in being directed towards and aligning itself with God it has the self-sufficiency – and indeed, power – of God'.

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[631] *Paul and Seneca*, (1961),pages 180-183, quoted by V. P. Furnish, *The Love Command in the New Testament*, p.69. Furnish also quotes the idea of 'surrendering one's freedom to God' as one aspect of finding 'freedom from the burdens of finite existence'. However, for Epictetus, this freedom involves, according to Furnish, a freedom from involvement with other people – a concept which would have presumably been alien to Paul's thought.

[632] Chapter 7, pages .133 ff.

[633] op.cit. p.139.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Paul firmly believed that leading an immoral life could not be an option for the Christian man or woman. What is more questionable is the idea that only by divine inspiration could such a moral life be possible. Equally, however, a balancing factor must be kept in mind which regards human activity, however noble, and whether or not in some sense autonomous, as powerless to procure salvation for any individual. Only a faithful response to what God has done for humanity in the person of Jesus Christ can achieve that purpose. When we come to consider the choices we make in relation to addictive substances and behaviours this line of enquiry will help us to detect what goes wrong when the fulfilment of human desire leads to slavery to addictive patterns of living.

3.6.2 <u>The Theology of Saint Augustine with respect to desire:</u> introductory section.

This section of the thesis, which investigates Augustine's theology of desire with particular reference to his books The *Confessions* and *De Doctrina Christiana* (henceforward referred to as DDC), aims to provide a theological reconstruction of his views on the nature of human desire, based on the premise that although desire for material objects such as food and drink and sexual relationships are in some sense good, they cannot bring human beings the ultimate blessings of a relationship with God. The *Confessions* express this in terms of Augustine's own developing self-understanding, and DDC deals with the subject of desire in terms of the

language, and in particular what would nowadays be called the 'semiotics'[634] of human discourse[635].

There are four parts to this section, and they are as follows:

1. <u>Genre</u>. It is tempting to assume that The *Confessions* is essentially an introspective, autobiographical literary work. Most translations and commentators take this view: Henry Chadwick speaks of the work as autobiographical, but recognises that it 'carries harmonics of deeper meaning'[636]. The assumption that the book is characteristically autobiographical is not however without challenge, as for example in the chapter written by Brian Horne in the book *Persons Divine and Human*[637]. Following some thoughts of Rebecca West on Augustine[638], Horne makes an interesting link with the work of Marcel Proust, who also presents an extended meditation on life with autobiographical details put in so that what might otherwise have been a purely theological treatise (in Augustine's case) becomes a narrative based on autobiographical details, without being an autobiography as such. This is perhaps easier to recognise in Proust's case, because he is writing a work of fiction that contains indirect reference (and in some ways perhaps misleading, with regard to sexual orientation) to his own personal history: on the other hand, Augustine is, presumably, being as true to his own personal memory as it is possible to be. But he is not writing autobiography as such; he is rather, as Horne expresses it, 'discovering meaning in a life and imposing order on chaos by means of relating and forming into a narrative… selected pieces of previous experience', rather than recounting his personal history for its own sake. The difference in genre suggested by Horne is

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[634] See: Alexander L. Zachary, "Interpretative Desire: Augustine's Semiotics and the Transcendental Signified". *Columbia Journal of Literary Criticism* 2 (2004): 25-34, and R. A. Markus (ed.) *Augustine.*
[635] One recent translation of the DDC is entitled *Teaching Christianity*, and is part of a series entitled *The Works of Saint Augustine, a Translation for the 21st century*' – translated by Edmund Hill OP and published in 1996.
[636] H. Chadwick, *Confessions*, a New Translation.
[637] Christoph Schwöbel and C. Gunton. *Persons Human and Divine*
[638] Rebecca West. A Celebration, pp.165-166.

subtle and nuanced, but it is important, as it helps us to understand better Augustine's

true theological purpose in writing his *Confessions*.

2. <u>The language of Augustine as related to desire</u> – how do we set about understanding

   the language of a book written long ago and in a very different culture from our own?

   It would be a mistake to ignore this question, just as it would in attempting to

   understand the books of the New Testament or other ancient texts. Our discussion

   of this relies considerably on the work of Robert Ayers[639] and Rowan Williams[640] on

   Augustine's use of language.

   Ayers focuses on Augustine as a thinker and rhetorician. And in doing so he makes

   the important point that the background to Augustine's thought as demonstrated,

   for example, in the DDC in his explanation of the nature of 'signs', depends to a

   large extent on Stoic thought[641]. So, for example, 'natural signs are those which, apart

   from any intention or desire of using them as signs, do yet lead to the knowledge of

   something else, as for example smoke, when it indicates fire'[642]. On the other hand,

   conventional signs have been made to stand for other things by people 'for the

   purpose of showing … the feelings of their minds, or their perceptions, or their

   thoughts'[643]. Ayers comments on the triadic nature of signs in Augustine, as he adds

   to the concepts of the thing itself, and what is signified, a third, which is the meaning

   attributed to the sign by its <u>interpreter</u>. In this way, Augustine the theologian typically

   imports an essentially Trinitarian element into his discussion of signs.

   Williams devotes an article to the language of the DDC[644], exploring the nature of

   Augustine's thought in this work in relation to desire, which is the main interest of

   this section of the chapter. We will therefore look at what he says in more detail.

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[639] Robert Ayers. *Language, Logic and Reason in the Church Fathers.*
[640] Rowan Williams. *Language, Reality and Desire in Augustine's De Doctrina.*
[641] Ayers, p.69, citing DDC, 2.1.2. See also John Rist, *Augustine*, p.168f.
[642] Ayers, op. cit., p.69.
[643] Ayers, p.69, citing DDC, 2.2.3.
[644] Rowan Williams, op. cit.

At the heart of Williams' discussion is the distinction between *res* and *signum*. The essential point for Augustine, as Williams observes, is that God can only ever be *res*, never *signum*. All else but God is *signum*, because it has the capacity to reveal something of God's being and nature. The only exception to this is the Incarnation of the Word, where at a particular point in history – 'The incarnation manifests the essential quality of the world itself as a "sign" or trace of its maker'[645].

What leads on from this is Augustine's teaching on the precise nature of how we may rightly engage with the created order. This has two components, which he characterises by using two Latin verbs *uti* and *frui*, referring to our capacity for making use of the created order and desiring and enjoying what it has to offer. Williams observes that the relationship between these two pairs of words – res/*signum: uti/frui* in fact becomes an element which 'pervades the whole of DDC'[646].

What does he mean by this suggestion?

To investigate this we begin by referring directly to the DDC. In 1.3.3, Augustine explains what he means when he draws a major distinction between the use of things and their enjoyment. 'Things that are enjoyed make us happy, things which are to be used help us on our way to happiness'. Merely using things as needed creates no problems, in terms of the happiness they afford, in so far as they point beyond themselves to their creator, God. So for Augustine, happiness is in itself a legitimate experience for the Christian man or woman. The problem is that our <u>deliberate enjoyment</u> of created things, our instrumentalisation of them to provide true happiness, as Augustine sees it, blocks our way to ultimate happiness: 'we are impeding our progress, and sometimes are also deflected from our course, because we are thereby delayed in obtaining what we should be enjoying, or turned back from it altogether, blocked by our love for inferior things'[647]. So for Augustine, there is a

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[645] op. cit., p.141.
[646] op. cit., p.139
[647] DDC 1.3.3.

clear dividing line between experiencing pleasure from making use of the created order, and actively seeking that pleasure in a way that distracts us from what is of the greatest value – the *summum bonum* – the God, who in distinction from the created order is both eternal and unchanging[648]. We may perhaps put this in terms of a more recent commentator on the world from the perspective of poetry – it is not enough to enjoy the good things of the world in and for themselves as such: what is needed, in Joseph Addison's words, is the capacity to recognise that 'the hand that made us is divine'.

Because of this danger of distraction, what is needed, he continues[649], is a process of purification of the mind in order to perceive the light which is provided by the Trinitarian God, by which we see the truth 'which is unchangeably alive', by means of a journey towards our home country, involving 'honest commitment and good behaviour'[650].

3. <u>Conflict in relation to desire.</u> Historians of Christian thought have observed that although Augustine moved away <u>from</u> a Manichean, dualistic and essentially negative view of the creation of the universe, he nevertheless remained concerned about the appropriateness of fleshly desire for the Christian man or woman, particularly with regard to sexual acts[651]. It is questionable whether he ever resolved this tension either theologically, or in his own spiritual life, as Margaret R Miles has speculated in her book on Augustine's view of human desire and pleasure, *Desire and Delight*, suggesting that Augustine deliberately leaves the question of how we should regard the created

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[648] DDC 1.22.20
[649] DDC 1.10.10
[650] ibid.
[651] See, for example, Paul Tillich's *A History of Christian thought*, especially p.109f. Desire and pleasure are discussed at greater length later in the thesis, using Meilaender's article "Sweet Necessities" as a guide to Augustine's thought on this subject.

order – its enjoyment and its dangers – unanswered, in order to be provocative[652]. This view is however contestable.

Of considerable importance here also is the complex subject of the will in Augustine's thought, particularly in the sense that in his work, and especially in the *Confessions*, book 8, the human will is regarded as divided between a desire to follow God's requirements, and a competing desire to follow one's own wishes, which may, as they did for Augustine, lead in a completely opposite direction, not least in terms of his desire for sexual intimacy which he came to see as ultimately incompatible with the vocation he had personally been given as a Christian. The divided will features prominently in *Confessions*, book 8. Augustine looks back at his conversion experience, and particularly the role that lust, and habituation to lustful behaviour, held him back from embracing the Christian faith:[653]

> For this was what I was longing to do; but as yet I was bound
> by the iron chain of my own will. The enemy held fast my will,
> and had made of it a chain, and had bound me tight with it. For
> out of the perverse will came lust, and the service of lust ended
> in habit, and habit, not resisted, became necessity. By these links,
> as it were, forged together… a hard bondage held me in slavery.
> But that new will which had begun to spring up in me freely to
> worship thee and enjoy thee, on my God, the only certain Joy, was
> not able as yet to overcome my former wilfulness, made strong
> by long indulgence. Thus my two wills – the old and the new,
> the carnal and the spiritual – were in conflict within me; and by
> their discord they tore my soul apart.

Christopher Cook points out[654] that 'it is the "service of lust" which leads to habit, and the failure to resist habit that leads to necessity. The sequence seems to be: will – desire - behaviour. Where actions are repeated they lead to habit and a sense of compulsion'. And of course the opposite is equally true, because, to continue his line of thought at this point, 'Where habit is resisted (implicitly by the will) that sense of compulsion may be broken'. What this implies for Augustine in his process of

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[652] Margaret Miles, *Desire and Delight*: a New Reading of Augustine's Confessions, p.52f.
[653] *Confessions*, Book 8, cited by C.C.H. Cook, *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics*, p.151.
[654] Cook, op. cit., p151.

conversion is a conflict of the will between his desire to follow the example of Victorinus, who had become a Christian, and his competing will to follow his old, lustful way of life.

We will therefore briefly pay attention to this notion of the divided will, looking in particular at Harry Frankfurt's exposition of the notions of primary and secondary volition[655]. His use of the idea of first order volition (or desire) refers to the way in which the human will directs action, in one way or another: on the other hand, second order volition refers not to what a person might will to <u>do</u>, but what she might will to <u>will</u>. An example of this is given by Eleonore Stump, namely the desire of a would-be vegetarian to form a volition to will not to eat meat[656]. Such direction given by the will to itself, so to speak, is the essential meaning of second order volition. So how does this way of thinking influence Augustine? The key concept here, Stump asserts[657], is the idea of <u>free will</u>, which humans have, even in their 'fallen' state. But this raises problems about the relationship between human effort to overcome evil and the divine grace which, Augustine recognises, is the only thing that can achieve this conversion of the will.

The problem here is, as Stump points out, that if God can act directly on our second order volitions, so that we decide to follow the 'good' path – she cites the example of ceasing smoking – then it seems that our free will is thus eroded. Stump suggests a way out of this problem by arguing[658] that although 'Augustine grapples with the problem of making God the sole source of goodness in the post-Fall human will without taking away from human beings control over their wills', which might suggest that God is then responsible for evil, this conclusion might be avoided if it

[655] See: H. Frankfurt, *Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person*, and commentary on this by Eleonore Stump, in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, chapter 10.
[656] *Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, p.126.
[657] op. cit., p.130.
[658] op cit., p.139.

is also claimed that God 'offers to every person the grace that produces the will of faith, but it is open to a person to refuse that grace', so that 'Since a human willer can refuse grace or fail to refuse grace, a human willer has alternative possibilities available to her, even if God alone produces any good in her will'[659].

4. <u>Relevance to thesis</u>. The thesis presents a view of the best way to help people who are addicted to drugs or alcohol, or both, and it could be argued, by extension, that the same ideas might have traction in relation to a much wider variety of compulsive behaviours, not just those that involve dependency on substances. The fundamentally new contribution takes as its starting point the idea that if we begin our work with such people by looking at positive goals, desires, and aspirations, that may be a better place to start our therapeutic intervention than by focussing initially on the pathological, aetiological elements of investigation of the problem implicit in the notion of a divided will to use, or not to use, drugs. In a word – we aim to focus on the <u>person</u>, rather than the <u>problem</u>.

But that does not go far enough. If we are to look at human desire, then we need to understand which desires can realistically be expected to provide for people a genuine, lasting and satisfying experience of living, and that is where, we are arguing, the writings of Augustine – especially in DDC and the *Confessions* - have a suggestion that has transformative potential. It begins with his famous assertion that God has made us for himself, and that only by relating to God can we find the fulfilment that we desire: all other objects of desire only provide temporary and fleeting occasions of delight. One way of putting this is to argue that there are ultimate and penultimate desires – and only desire for the one eternal and unchanging God is the ultimate, and therefore most satisfying pursuit in which human beings can engage; this is the message of Augustine, and if it can find a home in the heart of the addicted person,

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[659] *Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, p.142.

viewed from pastoral and spiritual perspectives, we suggest, that may be a highly valuable aspect of holistic treatment.

3.6.3 Augustine on Desire – main section.

Saint Augustine, in the *Confessions*, looks at his journey from desire experienced in physical and sensual terms as in his relationship with a woman (outer reality) to concern with spiritual longing for God (inner reality). Also in Augustine the concept of the divided will appears, with primary and secondary desires or motivations and conflict between them, as in Augustine's own battle for chastity, leading to his <u>belief in resolution of conflict as only possible when we come to 'rest' in God.</u>

With regard to our quest for the theological understanding of desire, Andres Niňo[660] sees a link in this context between Augustine's understanding of desire and the work of the twentieth century psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut who 'focussed on the self, the significance of the search for the realization of values and ideals…'[661] This resonates well with Augustine's understanding of the search which, sees God as the real goal towards which all human striving is ultimately oriented. Augustine also suggests that our God-desire is partly to be understood as 'memory', although he distances himself from an over Platonised view of memory in this context[662].

We are looking at the phenomenon of addiction from a new angle – namely seeing addiction as having its roots, paradoxically perhaps, in something which is potentially good, or at least neutral, in itself – and that is human desire, longing, appetite. Without a deeper understanding of human desiring, we may misunderstand its distortions, from either a

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[660] Andres G. Niňo, "Restoration of the self: a therapeutic paradigm from Augustine's *Confessions*".
[661] Niňo, op. cit., p.10
[662] See: Louis L. Martz, *The Paradise Within*, p.xvi.

psychological or theological point of view. As Augustine wrote in a number of places about human desire, we therefore now turn our attention to the place of human desire in Augustine's thought. For Augustine the idea of human desire as good or neutral must be balanced by his belief that such intentionality has been damaged by the 'Fall' which to a greater or lesser extent compromises human desire and the will.

How Does God Implant Desire Into The Human Psyche?

It is important to recognise at the outset the complex and nuanced view that Augustine takes of bodily desires and needs of human beings and how he relates these to spiritual desires: in his letters, for example, he describes the relationship between the physical and the spiritual in positive and symbiotic language[663] (emphasis original).

> So great a power does the sweet companionship of the flesh and soul have! *For no one ever hates his own flesh* (Eph.5:29), and for this reason the soul also does not want to leave its weakness even for a time, though it trusts that it will receive its flesh for eternity without weakness'.

There is then a kind of temporal indissolubility of the close relationship between body and soul, a 'sweet companionship' which nevertheless must be regulated by the avoidance of sin.

The starting point for Augustine is the creation of humanity which he interprets theologically as God's will to create humanity 'for himself' not from a selfish or power loving motive, but because the human heart will be restless until it finds a resting point 'within' God. Thus the true life of human beings consists in hearing the divine call and responding positively to it. 'You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made

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[663] Augustine, *The Works of Saint Augustine, Letters 100-155*. See Letter 140, p.252.

us for yourself and our heart is restless until it rests in you'[664]. Henry Chadwick's footnote at this point in his translation of the *Confessions* links this idea to Plotinus, who speaks of the soul finding rest 'only in the One'[665]. This sentence of Augustine's, Chadwick emphasizes, 'announces a major theme of his work'[666]. It recurs frequently, such as when Augustine speaks of his desire for God in terms of 'the satiety of your love [being] insatiable', a recognition that with God alone is 'utter peace and a life immune from disturbance'. By entering into God, then, we 'enter into the joy of the Lord'[667]. Then the human being does not have fear but is 'in' the supreme Good 'where it is supremely good to be'[668]. This rather compressed language make us wonder what precisely it means to be 'in' God and how to achieve it: this theme is perhaps the supreme essence of the autobiographical narrative of the *Confessions*. One hint lies in his theme of wandering away from God, suggesting perhaps that being 'in God' is our natural state, but that we can abandon that state, for one reason or another, but in particular by our desire for lesser 'goods' than the *summum bonum*.

For Augustine it seems therefore that longing is a basic function of the human personality. But what is meant by this is not simply longing or desire in the natural sense of longing to be fed, clothed and generally cared for in a physical, materialistic sense but in terms of a 'holy longing'[669]. Longing, he explains[670], is characterised by a sense of delay, longing for something not yet available in its entirety, but which is known about and

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[664] Augustine, *Confessions*, translated by Henry Chadwick, p.3.
[665] Plotinus 6.7.23.4
[666] *Confessions*, p.3.
[667] *Confessions*, p.34
[668] ibid.
[669] See: Augustine, *Tractates on St. John's Gospel and Epistles*, Tractate 4, p.179
[670] ibid.

richly desirable. In this state of longing for something yet to come, he argues, 'you are made capacious so that when what you are to see has come, you may be filled'[671]. In this state, he continues, God performs a stretching exercise, just as one might stretch a pocket in a piece of clothing to make it able to contain more things. The postponement of spiritual delight is, he says, God's 'postponing' activity in the soul, which in a spiritual sense, by analogy with the pocket imagery, makes the soul more capacious. He models this theological idea on the words of Saint Paul[672], 'Not that I have already attained or were already perfect; brothers I do not think I have already apprehended'. The stretching that accompanies this insight is described by Paul as a process of 'following on to the prize of the high calling'[673]. What is implied here is a calling by God to humanity to have less regard for the pleasures of the flesh and more concern with spiritual or heavenly delights. God, so to speak, desires to fill us with honey, but the vessel that will contain the honey 'must be cleansed; it must be cleansed even though with toil, with rubbing, in order that it may become fit for a particular thing'[674]. Augustine proposes that God implants in us a particular kind of longing that exists alongside the natural desires of the human heart, and is destined in time to become far more significant by a process by which 'we have pruned our longings away from the love of this world'[675].

In *Confessions* book IX we follow this process in the mind of Augustine as in response to Christ's piercing of his heart with love, he moves further away from the Manichean teachings towards the full embrace of what he

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[671] ibid.
[672] Philippians 3:12-13.
[673] Philippians 3:13-14.
[674] Augustine**,** *Tractates***,** p.180.
[675] ibid.

came to regard as true Christian Catholic teaching. Embedded in this experience for him was a recalibration of the notion of desire, and the sense of inwardness replacing desire for external realities:

> But now the goods I sought were no longer in the external realm, nor did I seek for them with bodily eyes in the light of this sun." (*Confessions*, p.161)

Augustine is beginning here to recognise that true pleasure, the satisfying of human longing, is not to be found in anything in our external environment. He sees that the eternal is inward[676], if only people could see this inward reality. He records of himself at this point:

> I had tasted this, but was enraged that I was unable to show it to them[677] even if they were to bring their heart to me, though their eyes are turned away from you towards external things, and if they were to say 'Who will show us good?' In the place where I had been angry with myself, within my chamber where I felt the pang of penitence, where I had made a sacrifice offering up my old life and placing my hope in you as I first began to meditate on my renewal: there you began to be my delight, and you gave me 'gladness in my heart'.

How have later commentators viewed Augustine's understanding of desire and pleasure in terms of the contrast between the temporal and the eternal? We will now look briefly at three contemporary writers on this topic – 1) Charles Taylor[678], 2) Ian McFarland[679] and 3) Bonnie Kent[680].

1)   Charles Taylor

For Taylor, Augustine embodies a crucial turning point in the history of the understanding of the 'self', the theme of his extended study *Sources of the Self*[681]. Augustine is the pivotal point between

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[676] Augustine, *Confessions*, p.162.

[677] that is, others who have not yet experienced Christian conversion, such as the Manicheans

[678] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, chapter 7 – "In Interiore Homine", pp.127-142.

[679] Ian McFarland, *In Adam's Fall*, chapter 3, pp.61-87.

[680] Bonnie Kent, in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, eds. Chapter 15, pp. 205-233, "Augustine's Ethics").

[681] The overarching theme of Taylor's book is the important change in direction that occurred at the time of the Enlightenment, particularly in terms of humanity in its

Plato, as we look backwards to classical antiquity, and forward to Descartes, whose radical dualism stands at the threshold of modernity. The focal point of that unique position held by Augustine is what Taylor refers to as a 'turn', that is to say an <u>inward turn</u> towards the self as the place where truth is to be encountered in a 'first person standpoint' or perspective rather than by an examination of external objects or realities. In this inward turn, characterised by his invitation '*Noli foras ire: in teipsum redi; in interiore homine habitat veritas*'[682], Augustine builds on his understanding of Plato, filtered through the writings of Plotinus, so that where for Plato the pursuit of the Highest Good is the greatest human endeavour, for Augustine it is necessary to go to an even higher source than the Good, namely God himself. The Good has meaning, but it has, to use the language of Paul Janz that we will mention later, penultimate, not ultimate truth as its goal.

In this context what is established in terms of human perception is thus the 'first person standpoint' or 'radical reflexivity'[683]. Whereas Plato sees the outer world as pointing towards ultimate reality, 'Augustine is always calling us within'[684].

To continue this line of thought, following Taylor's analysis[685],

> our principal route to God is not through the object domain but 'in' ourselves. This is because God is not just the transcendent object or just the principle of order of the nearer objects, which we strain to see. God is also and for us primarily the basic support and underlying principle of our knowing activity. God is not just what we long to see, but what powers the eye which sees. So the light of God is not

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embracing of the concept of an anthropocentric autonomy with regard to behaviour.

[682] From Augustine's *De Vera Religione* xxxix.72, translated by Taylor (op. cit., p.129) as "Do not go outward; return within yourself. In the inward man dwells truth".

[683] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p.130.

[684] op. cit., p.129.

[685] ibid.

just 'out there', illuminating the order of being, as it is for Plato; it is also an 'inner' light. It is the light "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world"[686].

This vivid contrast between Platonic and Christian philosophical thought avoids on the one hand the Manichean trap of devaluing the world and setting up an eternal conflict between good and evil, light and dark, matter and the domain of the spiritual, and on the other any kind of theological reductionism that over emphasises the capacity of the material order to say all that can or needs to be said about God at the cost of the vision of divine truth that belongs in the inner man. What is suggested here also is that there is a divinely implanted longing for a vision of God, which in turn can be experienced by the God given "light that lighteth all". The longing – the appetite for God - of which Taylor speaks in relation to Augustine is important to our thesis: it suggests here that there is a universal longing which is implanted by God, and made available to all in terms of a vision of the truth to be experienced because it is God-given. To continue Taylor's reflection on this, and by way of summary[687]:

> Augustine's turn to the self was a turn to radical reflexivity, and that is what made the language of inwardness irresistible. The inner light is the one which shines in our presence to ourselves; it is the one inseparable from our being creatures with a first person standpoint. What differentiates it from the outer light is just what makes the image of inwardness so compelling, that it illuminates that space where I am present to myself.

The importance of this suggestion is hard to overestimate. It is a moment which could be seen as the beginning of modern thought,

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[686] The scholarly consensus, however, seems to favour a version which says that "the light which lighteth every man was coming into the world", rather than the version presented by Taylor. See, for example, Raymond Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, volume 1, p.9.

[687] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p.131.

with its emphasis on the individual as distinct from the more collective understanding of what it means to be human that held sway from the beginning of human experience of selfhood to the individualism which has come to be the mark of modern sophisticated – though arguably fragmented – societies. It was a landmark on the path to Descartes, as Taylor suggests, and beyond him looking towards the highly ambiguous intellectual upheaval associated with Kant and the Enlightenment, leading, at least in one way of interpreting it, to the excessive individualism (the enthronement of the 'I think' as having ultimate significance), nihilism and despair of Nietzsche. That, perhaps, is why Taylor ruefully comments on the link between Augustine, Descartes, 'and all that has flowed from it in modern culture… *to the point of aberration, one might think*'[688] (emphasis added).

Augustine, despite his absolute refusal to dethrone or demystify God, is not unproblematic concerning the source and content of human desire and longing, even though he sees these as God inspired. For it is in some ways an individualistic rather than an ecclesiastical picture of the search for truth that Augustine presents to the reader at many points, and it also conveys a kind of elitist spirituality, which may be fine for a medieval celibate scholar-bishop, but would be hard for an ordinary layperson to achieve with all the demands of family, professional and social commitments. It also marks a watershed in the understanding of the writings of Saint Paul, (one followed some centuries later by Martin Luther) who is

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[688] ibid.

perhaps regarded by Augustine as engaging in deep psychological reflection on his religious persona in a way that may say more about Augustine's perception of Paul than about the apostle himself[689].

2) Ian McFarland.

Ian McFarland's book *In Adam's Fall* [690] is a study of the concept of original sin including a chapter on the Augustinian view in a chapter entitled "Augustine of Hippo: Willing and the Ambiguity of Desire". He locates the Augustinian material on desire and sin in the context of Augustine's debate with the Pelagians. As Maurice Wiles correctly observed[691]:

> The prayer of Augustine from the *Confessions*, "Give what thou commandest and command what thou wilt", shocked Pelagius. It seemed to him to undermine the foundation of that moral effort which was the primary need of the times. For Pelagius the essence of the moral life was the determined exercise of the human will.

For McFarland this is the essential conflict between Augustine and Pelagius. The problem concerns the nature of human will, and McFarland treats this complex subject with clarity of insight, suggesting a bipartite view of the will, in which 'desire' and 'will' have a close relationship but are not coterminous or functionally co-existent in time, because desire precedes the operation of the conscious will, whether or not the individual acts on the basis of what her desire suggests.

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[689] This is the essence of the critique of 'psychological' exegesis of Romans 7 found in the commentary of Augustine and Martin Luther, provided by Krister Stendahl in his essay "Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West" reprinted in his book *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*, pp.78-96.
[690] Ian McFarland, *In Adam's Fall: A Meditation on the Christian Doctrine of Original Sin*.
[691] Maurice Wiles, *The Christian Fathers*, p.176.

In relation to Augustine's anti Pelagian polemic, he points out[692] that 'Augustine suggests that the will is intimately connected to [both human nature and God]. Because for Augustine will is shaped by desire, it is an integral part of human nature, which is the seat of those desires (e.g. for health and happiness). But insofar as those desires are also shaped by grace… the will is also subject to God'. In the light of this duality, it can be claimed that the will does not lead us in any direction but actually follows (in logical sequence) our desires – 'we will what we are inclined to will, whether by nature or grace; and in so willing, we both experience and acknowledge our lives in all their many dimensions of action and passion as our own'[693].

For McFarland desire in Augustine's thought is rooted in the God given creation, and is not somehow separate from God or an alternative mode of experiencing the self. It could therefore be said to be a divinely given gift or implantation. Equally it leads to a situation in which choices can be made, so it is possible to choose the path of action which is believed to accord with the divine will, and to follow that path, although such choice and action are not the result of human willing unaided, but the result of divine grace at work in the soul.

Secondly, wrong choices can be made when the experience of will, secondary to desire, is activated in a way that is known to be contrary to the will of God: it is then distorted desire.

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[692] McFarland, *In Adam's Fall*, p.76.
[693] ibid. McFarland refers at this point to the scepticism with which Augustine responded to the suggestion of Julian of Eclanum that 'willing arises in human nature but not from it' (as found in Augustine, *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian* 5.56).

And thirdly, when this wrong turning has been taken, it is only the call to the soul from God that can restore the person to the right path: this cannot be initiated by human beings, it can only occur by way of response. Desire then can be both oriented towards good and bad actions. Response to God's call can redirect the individual to God, just as God redirected Augustine after his time of wandering away into Manichaean religion and concurrent sinful lifestyle.

3) Bonnie Kent

Kent analyses the concept of will in her chapter entitled "Augustine's Ethics" in the *Cambridge Companion to Augustine* [694]. At the heart of her discussion of will in Augustine's writing is the concept of the divided will, and this approach was, as we saw in the discussion of Christopher Cook's book *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics*, predicated on the epistemological understanding of will as having primary and secondary functions which can come into conflict when two forms of motivation are opposed. Augustine's approach was a radical one, she argues[695], in comparison with the view of will generally held in antiquity in terms of morality in relation to human psychology. By this she means that for Aristotle, and others with a similar understanding of morality, the main focus of their discourse tends not to be issues around appetite and decision making themselves, but the issues of rationality and irrationality in relation to choice[696].

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[694] Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (eds.)
[695] Kent, op.cit. p. 221.
[696] ibid.

On this basis 'different emotions might even be understood as different kinds of volition', a suggestion found in *De Civitate* 14.6, where Augustine addresses the question of 'the quality of a person's will' which may be rightly ordered or perverse. The rightly ordered love that is entailed by this bifurcation is at the root of human virtue, and is itself a divine gift[697].

But this raises a question for the reader about what exactly Augustine means by the word 'will'. Bonnie Kent discusses the meaning of this word for Augustine in her chapter on "Augustine's Ethics". Her view of his understanding of the word is clearly articulated[698]. Although she is sceptical about the possibility of finding a formal definition of the will (in relation to Augustine), she is more optimistic about viewing it pragmatically, in terms of what 'the concept of the will is needed to do'[699]:

> If human beings sin, and God justly punishes us for it – two assumptions Augustine considers indisputable – then we ourselves must be morally responsible for sinning. It is precisely to explain moral responsibility that we must posit the will. Pause to reflect upon Adam and Eve, the premier example of human sin. They had no unsatisfied needs; they suffered no agitations of mind or body; and God gave them only a single command, supremely easy to obey. How can we explain why they nonetheless disobeyed?.... The only explanation Augustine can conceive is that their sin arose from an evil will which itself had no prior or external cause.

This explanation has a certain internal logic, but it raises questions about the <u>origin</u> of this fallible will, for which, in Augustine's view, human beings (typified by Adam and Eve), are personally responsible. On the basis of the Eden story as told in Genesis 3, the

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[697] On this aspect of the will in relation to virtue in Augustine see: Cook, *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics*, p.53.
[698] Kent, op. cit., p221f.
[699] op. cit., p.222.

question would have to be where did that part of the human psyche that could be manipulated by the Serpent come from? Obviously not from the Creator who is totally good. So we have here another problem to solve. How does Augustine deal with this?

It would have been helpful if Kent had tackled this subject directly at this point: what follows however is a consideration of the will in terms of the human capacity for following one of two paths, either that of 'love', to use an Augustinian, theologically embedded concept, or 'duty' for those who follow a Kantian line, with their consequential attributes of reward and punishment for courses of action that are deliberately chosen. This approach does not adequately deal with the problem of where wrong choices originate; the possibility of making such wrong choices seems to have become a foundational concept which either cannot or need not be explained, and this is regrettable. It leaves the reader on something of a 'cliff edge'. So can we go further at this point?

Why Then Does The Human Will Become Distorted?

There is a problem here then that Augustine has to solve. If God offers us only good, why do we, and why did he too, at first, reject what was being offered in favour of external modes of satisfying desire?

This rejection is something he describes in the *Confessions* as a journeying, a wandering away from God, just as the Prodigal Son in the parable of Jesus wandered away from his earthly father. On this, Augustine comments[700]

> The younger son in your gospel did not look for horses or
> carriages or ships: He did not fly on any invisible wing, nor did he

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[700] *Confessions*, p.20.

travel along the way by moving his legs when he went to live in a far country and prodigally dissipated what you, his gentle father, had given him on setting out (Luke 15:11-32), showing yourself even gentler on his return as a bankrupt. To live there in lustful passion is to live in darkness and to be far from your face.

It is of great importance here to recognise that as Augustine reflects on his own journey away from God he comments that this departure was caused by a <u>mimetic element</u> – 'When one considers the men proposed to me as models for my initiation, it is no wonder that in this way I was swept along by vanities and travelled right away from you, my God'[701]. This mimetic element in the rejection of the supreme Good is highly significant. In his book *Discovering Girard*, Michael Kirwan examines this construct of mimesis in relation to Augustine and his haunting claim that 'Our hearts are restless till they rest in thee'[702]:

> The fact is, people do not know what they want – therefore they imitate the desires of others. We need only reflect upon the vast expenditure and creativity which goes into advertising - a medium, incidentally, which is becoming ever more forthright about its own mimetic strategies… In fact, any kind of market is nothing other than a mechanism for the harmonious mediation of desire… A number of economic theorists have in fact attempted to utilise mimetic theory in their analyses of market behaviour.

We thus fit our desires (from childhood onwards) to what others think is in our best interests rather than a truly independent assessment of what really motivates us, and this is at the heart of what Augustine means by proposing that his journey away from God was dependent on a wish to conform to the ideas of other people around him rather than on the promptings of his own personal, individual spiritual awareness.

Augustine comments for example that he can dare to complain that God was 'silent' during this wandering away[703]. There were warnings, not

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[701] ibid.
[702] Michael Kirwan, *Discovering Girard*, p.19.
[703] See: *Confessions,* p.27.

least from his mother, about evil behaviour (such as adultery), but he continues[704]: '[I] went on my way headlong with such blindness that among my peer group I was ashamed not to be equally guilty of their sexual exploits'. Those who behaved in this depraved way were often admired by others, and so Augustine 'went deeper into vice to avoid being despised, and when there was no act by admitting to which I could rival my depraved companions, I used to pretend I had done things I had not done at all, so that my innocence should not lead my companions to scorn my lack of courage, and lest my chastity be taken as a mark of inferiority'[705].

As the topic of this thesis is addiction, we might recognise a possible analogical link here with what has just been advanced as Augustine's own understanding of his youthful excesses. Why do people today drink excessively or misuse certain pharmacological substances so that they become their 'slaves'? This question is central to the thesis as a whole. But perhaps Augustine is here giving us a clue from the fourth century as to why things happen in the twenty first century. It has been proposed by some psychologists[706] that there are a number of psychological types of personality that make people particularly vulnerable to substance dependency, particularly in the adolescent phase of development, such as group pressure. For some people, according to this theory, there is a need to be admired as an outstanding performer of whatever the group regards as its characteristic activity, and when that activity is, for example, drinking alcoholic beverages, the person who can drink most heavily may well be regarded as having some kind of exalted status. The writer of this thesis

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[704] ibid
[705] ibid.
[706] See for example the article by Castellanos, N., P. J. Conrod and Clare Mackie, "Personality-targeted interventions delay the growth of adolescent drinking and binge drinking".

has heard a man in his sixties, for example, boasting of being able to drink a bottle of whisky every day, and the implication seems clearly to be that doing this gave him a particular status among a group of hard drinking companions. The man concerned destroyed his liver and died within a few years of retirement, which may well reinforce our sense of the tragic element in addiction. But the mimetic, even competitive element at work here can perhaps help us to explain (in a way that Augustine would surely recognise looking at his own life) the extent to which peer group pressure can influence people in their behaviour, not least when this is self-destructive.

And in raising the relevance of Augustine with specific reference to addictive phenomena, it should perhaps also be recorded that his mother, Monica, as a young woman had her own personal struggle against the use of alcohol as is recorded in the *Confessions*,[707] where he describes her as being at one stage in the grip of a 'foul addiction' from which she was rescued by the intervention of a family servant who denounced her in front of her parents for her drinking habit. This fact may well have influenced Augustine, at least in the sense that as we shall see, he was opposed to the idea of taking nourishment for its 'pleasure' value rather than its use in a quasi-medicinal sense.

Having raised the issue of sensual enjoyment, and how this can be a perversion, at least in Augustine's thoughts, of what bodily enjoyment is meant by God to be, it may be helpful to look at the article "Sweet Necessities" by Gilbert Meilaender[708].

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[707] *Confessions*, p.168. It is her struggle in this respect which has led to her being recognised as a patron saint of alcoholics, although her brief encounter with alcohol as described by Augustine may not have been as serious as that perhaps suggests.

[708] Gilbert Meilaender, "Sweet Necessities: Food, Sex and Saint Augustine".

It may seem to us strange that Augustine, as represented by Meilaender's article, takes such a negative or admonitory view of the delight humanity can take in food and sexual activity. With regard to the former, he must have been aware of the charge brought against Jesus Christ that he was, to use the language of the King James Version of the English Bible 'a glutton and a winebibber', and that he was challenged on this aspect of his lifestyle, answering by reference to the apparently 'demonic' asceticism of John the Baptist contrasted with his own relaxed attitude to eating and drinking and the company of tax collectors and sinners[709]. What is significant in relation to this thesis is that Meilaender takes eating as an analogy for sexual relations. Both are natural human activities, and both have, in different ways, an element of <u>necessity</u> to them, as well as pleasure and desire, hence his title. We need to eat in order to survive as individuals; we need to reproduce in order to survive as humanity. This is true, even though some are called to a life of celibacy, as Augustine clearly believed himself to be. So what is the problem that Augustine is addressing when he considers human pleasure in eating and sexual intercourse?   Although Augustine does not in any quasi Manichean sense regard them as essentially morally suspect in themselves, he nevertheless concerns himself with questions about the legitimacy, in theological terms, of experiencing pleasure from these activities. Meilaender cites two particular loci for this concern, namely *City of God*, Book 14, and *Confessions*, Book 10. In the former, he describes human sinfulness, the sinfulness that goes with any kind of over-indulgence, as having both physical and spiritual dimensions. There can

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[709] Matthew 11:19//Luke 7:31-35.In this article, Meilaender's objective is to demonstrate that Augustine is wrong in his assertion that sexual activity must at all times be linked to the wish to reproduce. He also suggests that the Roman Catholic Church has always been in error in using Augustine's (as he thinks flawed) argument as a basis for rejecting the practice of contraception within marriage.

be overindulgence in the engagement in sexual activity or the taking of wine, but also in the kind of sinfulness towards others that is entailed in such attitudes as quarrelsomeness and jealousy. Augustine is right, Meilaender argues, to reject 'the Stoic ideal of *apatheia*' on the grounds that it is not necessary 'for us to try to live without experiencing the passions of bodily life' even though some of the more unpleasant ones (such as fear) will be absent in Heaven. What Augustine is asserting, in his analysis of pleasure in connection with the 'sweet necessities of life' is to be seen as the separation of pleasure from the true purpose of the act being considered. In the case of food, he argues, food is a necessity rather like forms of medication. Sex is necessary because it reproduces the human species. But to take food just for the pleasure of eating, or to engage in sexual intercourse just for the pleasure it provides while deliberately separating it from the will or means of reproduction, puts these activities into an area which is capable of being regarded as sinful.

The other main example of his thought on pleasure reported by Meilaender is the section in the *Confessions*, Book 10, 30-41, where, in a section described by Robert O'Connell as 'some of the most depressing reading in all of Christian literature'[710], Augustine reviews, in an essentially negative way, his personal record of behaviour since his conversion. His guidelines for doing so come from the First Epistle of St. John, in relation to fleshly lust, the 'lust of the eyes', and pride[711]. This self-analysis, O'Connell says, has to do with Augustine's worries about the pleasure he takes in sensual experiences. Why then is he so troubled? This is at the heart of the article by Meilaender who then proposes a solution to the

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[710] Robert O'Connell, *St. Augustine's Confessions, The Odyssey of Soul*, p.133, cited by Meilaender, op. cit., p.5.
[711] Meilaender, "Sweet Necessities", p.5.

problem, which contains similarities in his discussion of pleasure in relation to both food and sex. There is then in Augustine's thought, and notwithstanding his refusal to adopt the solution that rejects fleshly pleasures on principle, a belief that the pursuit of pleasure is in some sense to be regarded as morally or spiritually suspect. Why did Augustine believe this? The answer lies for Augustine in the relationship between the external material world and the interior spiritual world in which human beings relate to and enjoy God. It is when the individual indulges in the outward pleasures to excess that the true pleasure which is internal and spiritual is put into the background, and it may perhaps be that Augustine, the trained rhetorician, is deliberately exaggerating his case to emphasize what for him - and as he hopes it will become for his readers - is the delight of the soul in heavenly rewards. To desire God is the greatest good; anything other or less than this is in a sense a false good, a distorted desire.

What Then Can Be Done To Remedy The Situation When Desire Has Been Distorted?

It is perhaps in his debate with the Pelagians that Augustine's answer to this question comes clearest. As Chadwick points out[712], 'The two men were agreed on far more than that on which they disagreed', but Pelagius significantly denied that original sin was literally inherited from one's parents, a view with which Augustine could not agree partly because of his 'belief that no pain or loss is undeserved'[713]. Neither could he concur with Pelagius' view of the possibility of escaping sinful behaviour by free choice. Human beings can 'only be grateful for grace they had done

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[712] Henry Chadwick, *Augustine*, p.109.
[713] ibid.

nothing to deserve'[714].The concept of will is clearly embedded in this process, and Christopher Cook draws attention to this in his book *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics* in the chapter where he gives extended attention to Augustine's ideas about the divided will[715]. The problem is also, as Cook observes, discussed in detail by Eleonore Stump[716] in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*. What is addressed here is the concept of first and second order volition. What is meant by this is that, to use the example she gives, a person may have a desire to smoke cigarettes (first order volition) and a desire to quit smoking (second order volition). What is entailed in this is a conflict between the two elements of the will, and the question then becomes what can be done to resolve it in a way that is acceptable to the person with the conflict. This has implications for the phenomenon of addiction, if we accept the premise that at some stage, before becoming psychologically or physiologically addicted (to alcohol for example), the individual has choice about whether to indulge in the activity or not.

What we are dealing with here may well be the kind of thing that is meant by the concept of 'ultimate and penultimate reality'[717]. Paul Janz and David Ford describe these two realities in detail, basing their views on the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, suggesting that the true goal of pursuit for the Christian will be the ultimate reality which is the enjoyment of

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[714] ibid.

[715] See Christopher Cook, *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics*, pp.53ff.

[716] Eleonore Stump in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, chapter 10, pp. 124-127. She is commenting on and extending the argument of H. Frankfurt in his article "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibilities", originally published in the *Journal of Philosophy*, 1969, volume 66, pp. 829-839.

[717] See: Paul Janz, *God, The Mind's Desire: Reference, Reason and Christian Thinking.*

God, in contrast to the enjoyment of lesser, contingent realities such as can be provided by the external world[718].

When the individual has been 'seduced' into desires that are penultimate, therefore, and have journeyed away from God, to use Augustine's language, what can be done to deal with the problem? This was not simply a theoretical concern for Augustine. Much of his own journey, his struggle towards the life of a faithful Catholic Christian, was embedded in his conflicting desires with regard to the desires of the flesh, and sexual desire in particular. This journey is detailed for us supremely in the *Confessions*, which Brian Horne regards as epoch making in its significance as a work of literature because of its extraordinary and original capacity for self-reflexivity[719].

It was therefore essential for Augustine in terms of his spiritual development to initiate a return journey from where his outward journey had led him, namely into the Manichean world in religious and philosophical terms, and the world of sexual experience and commitment, to the point of forming a long term relationship with an unnamed woman and fathering a child, Adeodatus.

The key elements of this return journey were not for him just a matter of intellectual speculation, although, as he tells us in the *Confessions*, he did find the teaching of a leading Manichean remarkably unsatisfactory[720]. In fact this Faustus's ignorance on many subjects on which Augustine

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[718] See David Ford, *The Future of Christian Theology*, p.113ff. on this as well: Ford and Janz base their approach on Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* in relation to penultimate desires.

[719] Brian Horne, "Person as Confession: Augustine of Hippo", in Christoph Schwöbel and Colin Gunton, eds., *Persons Divine and Human,* pp. 65ff. Horne is however cautious about the extent to which we should assume that the book is 'altogether faithful to reality'.

[720] Augustine, *Confessions*, p. 77f, where he describes the arrival of the teacher Faustus, whom he found 'gracious and pleasant with words' but concluded that they 'who had promised that he would be so good were not good judges. He seemed to them prudent and wise because he charmed them by the way he talked.'

consulted him alerted him to the Manichean's lack of genuine knowledge and understanding that were to some extent (though not to the sharp witted Augustine) disguised by his eloquence and agreeable nature[721].

Certain significant people however helped Augustine to make what he himself describes as the return journey of the Prodigal Son in relation to his own spiritual enlightenment. Chief among these were his mother Monica, the great Bishop of Milan Ambrose, and Augustine's friend Victorinus.

We have been addressing these issues of example in terms of Augustine's return journey, and this idea of a return journey has considerable importance in our attempt to make sense of human addictions – distorted or excessive desires, or desire for things of lesser, penultimate importance than the ultimate goods we can enjoy – because it points out that the return journey may be connected with exemplary or mimetic factors. One obvious parallel to that lies in the observation that most drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation programmes are led by people who have had similar problems in the past but have found ways of escaping from the problems associated with substance and process addictions, drugs, alcohol, gambling, and many others. We learn best, it seems, not just by word but by example.

3.7   Contemporary Writers

Introduction

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[721] *Confessions*, p.79.

We have explored the writings of Saint Paul and Saint Augustine on the question of desire, and their ambivalent view of how expressions of desire might be accommodated within the Church. Furthermore, there is a sense, particularly in Augustine's writing, that the ordinary human desires that motivate behaviour may perhaps best be seen, to use a Platonic style of vocabulary, as at best shadows of a greater reality, which is a fundamental human desire for God, because 'Our hearts are restless until they rest in you'.

We will now look to the early years of the twenty first century to see how some contemporary theological writers have looked at the issue of desire and its place within Christian life. The writers to be considered in this context, chosen because it is believed that each has a distinct and valuable contribution to make to the quest for understanding desire, are David Ford, Timothy Gorringe and Christopher Cook.

3.7.1 David Ford.

David Ford is currently Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He was born in Dublin, and studied theology in Dublin, Cambridge, Yale and Tübingen. He was for some years a lecturer in theology at the University of Birmingham before moving to Cambridge. His many publications include *Jubilate: Theology in Praise* (with Daniel W Hardy) *Self and Salvation: Being Transformed*. He is particularly interested in transformation theology in relation to human desire – for example he uses the expression the 're-education of desire' in his recent books. In order to understand his theological background here we will briefly, in relation to our pursuit of the concept of desire, consider *Christian Wisdom*[722] and the

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[722] David Ford, *Christian Wisdom.*

Future of Theology[723]. In *Christian Wisdom* he articulates a contemporary Christian wisdom theology that builds on and complements what is to be found in the Tanach, particularly in the book of Job, where we find a detailed 'theodicy' unlike anything else in the Jewish scriptures, as it sets out a quasi-philosophical dialogue between one human being and God, as a result of Job's intolerable suffering. In this situation, and despite the inadequacy of the contribution of his so-called 'comforters', Job wrestles with his desire for God set against the temptation to believe that God has abandoned him.

Ford shows how just as the heart of Jewish wisdom can be found in the cries of Job in the midst of his spiritual testing, so in the New Testament we may look to the work of Saint Luke to find a wisdom literature that has traction for today's Christian. What is meant by this, to use Ford's own vocabulary, is 'the embracing optative mood of Christian wisdom'[724]. In the account of the birth of John the Baptist Zechariah and Elizabeth have longed for a child, and made this the subject of their prayer. Their prayer has been heard, and the covenantal relationship between God and his longing people is confirmed both in their parenthood of John and in the calling of Mary to be the mother of the saviour Jesus, so that the two birth narratives are interwoven. What is at stake here is a creative mingling of human desire and longing and the will of God: '[Mary's] optative response became for much subsequent Christian theology and spirituality the core model of human desire attuned to divine desire[725]'. And this collocation of human and divine desire found, Ford continues, a further and even more profound expression the ministry of Jesus, so that we find, for example,

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[723] David Ford, *The Future of Christian Theology*.
[724] Ford, *Christian Wisdom*, p.153.
[725] op. cit., p.156.

that the coming to him of the Holy Spirit at his baptism occurred –
specifically – when he was praying.

In *The Future of Theology* Ford develops this line of argument in terms of
the contrasting moods of experience identified as the 'indicative', which is
essentially narrative in content, and the 'imperative', which focuses on
theologically centred ethical demands. For Ford, this double dynamic
avoids two pitfalls in theological discourse: on the one hand it steers clear
of a rigid dogmatism of a kind that has a 'heavy investment in telling
members exactly what to believe and what to do, and in limiting any scope
for questioning and exploring'[726]; on the other it refuses types of liberalism
that have no fixed point and are therefore so 'fragmented that they seem
to lack the capacity to make definite affirmations or give any clear guidance
for living'[727].

Ford describes *The Future of Christian Theology*, as a 'manifesto'[728] for the
task of theology for the next generation. In chapter 4 he explores the
concept of desire in greatest detail. As a way into this line of thought Ford
brings to the attention of the reader the ideas contained in the longest of
the psalms, Psalm 119. This psalm is about the passionate desire of
humanity for God[729]. He gives many examples of this[730]: they are all
concerned with the deepest desires of humankind, in terms of 'mercy, fear,
faithfulness, steadfast love, wisdom, sweetness, light, praise, joy, salvation,
justice, cries, promises, truth and memory'[731]. In other words, this psalm,

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[726] Ford, op. cit., p.70.
[727] ibid.
[728] This word can be found for example in David Kelsey's comments inside the front cover of the book,
under the heading 'Praise for *The Future of Christian Theology*' and in the introduction to the book by Ford
himself (p.xi).
[729] Ford, *The Future of Christian Theology*, p.73.
[730] ibid. Verses 14, 15, 32, 47, 49 and 66, have this theme, for example, but he makes the point that the
language of the whole psalm is full of images of longing for and delighting in the will of God.
[731] ibid.

perhaps more than any other, encapsulates the whole range of human desiring and emotional response to life and to God. And at the heart of this is what Ford calls the 'leading mood', the 'optative of passionate desire'[732].

There is no obvious sense here of passionate desire as being evil or even suspect; on the contrary, it is a vital element in the spiritual life of the worshipper whether Jewish (as in the case of those who wrote and sang the original Hebrew version of Psalm 119) or Christian (those who have adopted the Jewish scriptures as part of their own pattern of worship). Does Ford therefore mean to imply that there is no problem with human desire? That is clearly not the case because as we shall see, Ford speaks later not just of desire in a generic sense, but as something which needs to stand under the judgement of God: desire, in some way needs to be transformed, and that idea is what we will now investigate.

Ford expresses the problem in these terms:[733]

> The problem – which is more good news than a problem – is God and God's initiative. Theologically, our affirming depends on the divine voice – us being affirmed by God; our commanding and obeying depend on us being commanded by God; our questioning is premised on us being searched and questioned by God; our exploring springs from confidence in the abundance and endless surprises of God; and our desiring is a response to being attracted, desired, and loved by God.

This divine initiative has two particular formats: in addition to the initiative-taking, active, commanding God, there is also, Ford acknowledges, a side of God that is characterised by silence, because it is within the space created by God's silence that God, 'without compromising the priority and freedom of God' becomes also a listener, and this capacity of God as a listener is what 'draws us into our own ever

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[732] Ford, op. cit., p.73.
[733] op. cit., p.82.

more attentive listening to the affirmations, commands, questions, possibilities and desires'[734].

How might this theological approach help us with our overall concern with addiction as an example of disordered or excessive desire? What Ford is suggesting is that desire, far from being in some way at war with appropriate ways of engaging with God, is actually at the centre of the picture for the Christian man and woman. In fact there is a need for intensification of God centred desire, fuelled by praise, that expresses – and even expands – our capacity for relating to God[735]. What is entailed in this, on a positive note, is the possibility of the spiritual enhancement of life by turning from an earthbound set of desires (food, drink, clothing etc.) towards a way of thinking that is formed by an encounter with the kingdom values of the Gospel, attitudes focused by divine love and justice towards the world, and challenges the believer to follow that path.

There is perhaps room for some dissatisfaction with what Ford has offered in the current book. It is a positive, affirmative and optimistic type of theology. There seems to be an underlying assumption that human beings are in principle reasonable, good, honest, creative and responsible and can freely choose which path to take, not least in matters of ethical concern. But is that really a tenable argument? There is in Ford's writing much engagement with the theology of Bonhoeffer, particularly in terms of the Cross as a sign of redemption, not least when we consider the evil embedded in the Nazi régime that Bonhoeffer opposed. And yet there seems here be some disconnection from the reality of such evil and the flawed, ambiguous moral nature of humanity as whole. We need perhaps

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[734] op. cit., p.83.
[735] He links this for example with St. Augustine's idea of the soul being stretched in its capacity for engaging with God. See Ford, op. cit. p.82.

to return at this point to the earlier work, *Christian Wisdom*, where Ford has more to say about the need for desire to be transformed. In this context, what is being proposed is that desire alone is not enough. Ordinary human desire is categorised in St. Luke's Gospel for example in terms of striving to obtain earthly rewards and blessings, food, drink, clothing, and the worry that can so often accompany the pursuit of these objectives[736]. Transformed desire entails striving not for these things but for the values that can be associated most readily with the pursuit of God's kingdom, and can be characterised in terms of love and generosity rooted in the compassion of God, and hospitality given to those who need it, not to those who will repay it'[737]. This re-education of desire has an uncompromising element to it, Ford argues at this point, because ultimately, as in the case of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, it may call for the ultimate personal sacrifice, the laying down of one's own life rather than compromise with the kingdom values of the Gospel. In Lukan terms this is clearly expressed by the words 'What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?'[738]. This ethic of the absolute demand is extreme, and yet there is a logical progression at work: to embrace the kingdom values of the Gospel is to be utterly open to the transformation of desire from a concern with worldly things to a life of complete trust in God that even embraces death when necessary rather than compromise what one has committed oneself to.

The person who has been caught up in a pattern of life characterised by addiction is perhaps at that stage of his or her life a long way from the state in which such positive commitment can be made, at least in terms of

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[736] See Ford, *Christian Wisdom*, p.159, citing, for example, Luke 12:29-34.
[737] Ford, *Christian Wisdom*, p.159.
[738] ibid, citing Luke 9:25.

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religious commitment. And yet the testimony of many addicts bears witness to the possibility of addiction being overcome and life being transformed in a variety of ways. Kelly Smith, the England women's Football player, expresses it in her autobiography, writing of her own personal battle against alcohol dependency[739]:

> When my drinking was spiralling out of control, my life was spiralling out of control. I was lucky. I got the help and the support to get through it. I had to learn and grow before I could move forward. I had to become stronger in myself so I did not have to rely on drink for my happiness.

Many people who have experienced the hard journey from substance dependency to freedom and a new beginning would recognise their own journey here. From a theological point of view, what is perhaps most significant is the suggestion made here that addiction, to use Kelly Smith's expression, has an element of reliance in it, reliance on something that is harmful, whereas desire for, and dependence on worthwhile objects, human and divine, may well prove to be an effective means of escaping from the prison of addiction into freedom and creativity.

It remains open to speculation, however, whether Ford really deals fully in either book with the concept of human choice when that appears to be seriously flawed, and whether he overestimates human capacity for returning to a more constructive manner of living through one's own efforts. For the orthodox Christian it might well be objected here that only divine grace, freely given and humbly accepted can rescue an individual from destructive lifestyles such as addiction to alcohol or the kind of non-therapeutic drugs we have been considering. There is then much that we can take from Ford's positive, wisdom based approach to human theology

[739] Kelly Smith, *Footballer: My Story*, p.150.

and ethics and his future oriented manifesto in *The Future of Christian Theology*. But his books raises some unanswered problems about the nature of the human rebellion against that kind of co-operative interaction with God which is called sin, and the capacity of human beings to deal with that negative element themselves. It is perhaps true to suggest that despite his profound humanity and engaging theological insight, Ford's work is ultimately to be seen as rather too optimistic about the human condition.

3.7.2 T.F. Gorringe

Timothy Gorringe is the St. Luke's Professor of Theological Studies at the University of Exeter. His book *The Education of Desire* [740] sees concern for expression of human life through senses - hearing, sight, touch, taste etc. - as consistent with Christian spiritual experience, but recognises need for 'education of the senses' as well as valuing what is purely instinctive. He attempts to place a positive interpretation of human desire within the framework of Christian theology, as opposed to a view of sensual experience which is either neutral or negative in tone. It therefore sits well within the approach that is taken in this thesis, namely that we will fail to understand the pathologically disordered use of certain substances or activities unless we begin by recognising their positive value in human life from a theological perspective.

Gorringe looks at human desire as a 'given' in terms of human experience and regards the expression of desire through physical enacting

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[740] T.F. Gorringe, *The Education of Desire: towards a Theology of the Senses*.

of desire as belonging to a range or stratification of evaluation from the most basic to the most spiritually enlightened[741]. This gives us a platform from which to view human desire as a good and necessary thing, before asking what has gone wrong when desire becomes addictive – as in the case of a person becoming a slave to alcohol or drugs for example.

So what does Gorringe have to offer by way of interpreting the expression of human desire in this positive light, and what does he mean by his suggestion that desire may be in need of 'education'? He links desire with the physical senses:

1) Hearing. The concept of hearing is fundamental to the Christian proclamation, as instantiated in the opening line of St. John's Gospel, itself providing an echo of earlier scriptural examples of God 'speaking' in a way that can be heard and interpreted, principally through the prophets[742]. And although Plato, Gorringe says, prioritised sight over hearing, Gorringe starts with hearing because he is speaking 'within the Judaeo-Christian tradition'[743]. It is through hearing that we can have some conception of 'the graciousness of God's presence'[744]. That presence is frequently heard as a 'still small voice' rather than something more 'stentorian' in volume. Thus the voice of God 'has usually been taken to be the voice of conscience or of reason'[745]. But there is a sense in which language ultimately fails to convey the nature of God with

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[741] One might think here perhaps in a secular model of the 'hierarchy of needs' psychology of Abraham Maslow, such as he describes in his book *Towards a Psychology of Being*.

[742] Gorringe, op. cit., p.13.

[743] ibid.

[744] Gorringe, op. cit., p.15.

[745] ibid.

recognition here of the defeat of mere language which lies, for example, at the heart of the poems of St. John of the Cross[746]. And despite Plato's strictures on music[747], Aristotle sees it as a way of expressing human emotions, and also as contributing to 'the cultivation of our minds and the growth of moral wisdom[748]. Looking at music from a theological viewpoint, Gorringe[749] makes a case for God as:

> the origin of music's power to express emotion, to lead us to dance, to reduce us to tears. All this has its origin in God, and we explore the depths of God's world and of it imaginative possibilities in making music. Barth famously said that the music of Mozart caused us to hear the peace past understanding in creation, but there is joy and tragedy to hear as well, stemming from the depths of God's imagination.

In light of this, we are seeing an argument that will apply equally to the other four senses, concerning the physical attributes as having the capacity to be disclosers of the person and nature of God, whether in a literal verbal sense, or through the medium of art or music. Desire for these experiences is then linked to a desire for God.

2) Sight. Gorringe points out that 'more than any of the other senses, [sight] is responsible for giving us our world'[750]. He speaks of the many well used phrases, and figures of speech, that refer to sight, such as 'seeing is believing' and 'I couldn't believe my eyes'. This is

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[746] The reference given here by Gorringe is to the writings of George Steiner. He is here quoting from G. Steiner, "Silence and the Poet" in *Language and Silence*, p.58.

[747] He was of the opinion, Gorringe says, that music casts a spell and this is something that is clearly opposed to the exercise of pure reason.

[748] op. cit., p.16, citing Aristotle, *Politics*, 1337a.

[749] ibid.

[750] Gorringe, op. cit., p.18.

linked in his view with a medieval understanding of the significance of light as 'the most direct manifestation of God'[751]. And in a Platonic sense, as Otto von Simson is recorded as saying, 'light is the most noble of natural phenomena, the least material, the closest approximation to pure form'[752]. What is at stake here is an awareness of the ability of light and vision to provide human beings with a reflection of the very beauty of God in God's most fundamental and gracious being. This of course in no way is meant to suggest that people who do not have physical sight cannot experience these aspects of God, and Gorringe later explores the senses in relation to those who are partly or wholly deprived of one or more of them. But it does suggest that the enjoyment of sight is an experience that takes us very close to the experience of God, an experience described very vividly in Ezekiel in terms of fire and brightness[753].

3)   Touch. Gorringe points out that, surprisingly perhaps, Aristotle held touch in very high regard, because in touch we are able to reach 'exactness of discrimination'[754]. It is in fact because of this sense above all, Aristotle believed, that humanity can be seen as 'the most intelligent of animals'[755]: the idea of touch as a revealer of truth on the same level at least as sight and hearing is important in this context.

In theological terms, Gorringe continues, it is Emmanuel Levinas who recognises, followed by Enrique Dussel, the importance of

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[751] ibid.

[752] ibid, quoting from O von Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral*, p.49-55.

[753] Gorringe, op. cit., p. 19, quoting from Ezekiel 1:4.

[754] Gorringe, op. cit., p.20, quoting Aristotle, *On the Soul*, II, 9, 421a21.

[755] ibid.

physical intimacy in relation to touch. Thus the idea of the 'caress' is brought into sharp focus, not least in the recognition of the important part played by affection appropriately provided for a child by her parents in our sense of 'security and self-worth'. This can be recapitulated in adult life in the touch of a lover, and Gorringe quotes Dussel on this point, who observes that there is a gradation of touch from the cautious exploration of the early part of the relationship that is part of a journey towards full sexual intimacy[756].

Furthermore, touch is the medium through which healing can be effected, not least in the Gospel stories of healing on the part of Jesus Christ. Such healing overruled - in a way that many found shocking - the rules of the society of his day about touch, particularly in the touching of a leper[757]. This perhaps has a modern counterpart in the difficulties that some people have felt over touching a person with Aids. And he records the alienation felt by a European woman who when living in India was very aware of the physical deprivation she felt because touch, particularly, one assumes, between people of the opposite sexes, was not permitted in most social situations.

Gorringe quotes at length a passage from a book by Ann Briggs[758] that brings the theological importance of the desire for and experience of touch into the foreground because she is clear that although religious experiences of the kind that come from time to time in worship and elsewhere are of great importance, it is in the

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[756] op. cit., p.21, quoting E. Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, p.81.
[757] The story of the healing of a leper as recorded in Mark 1:41-42 is given as an example of this by Gorringe.
[758] See: A. Briggs in K. Galloway (ed.) *Dreaming of Eden*, p.42-43, cited by Gorringe, *The Education of Desire*, p.22.

physical embrace of a lover that she knows herself 'loved and accepted for what I am, not what I pretend to be, that I know there is a God who *enjoys* life!'. She thus accepts vulnerability in such situations only because there is an underpinning sense of being held at such times and therefore willingness to take the risk of openness to another being, even though such openness can be – and often is – abused. Touch is therefore at the heart of the experience of intimacy. And in such intimacy the joy of God is found for many as well as human joy.

4) Taste. Unlike the other senses taste is much more susceptible to change because the taste buds are, he informs us, renewed on a regular basis, about every ten days. But taste has its importance, not least when, as in the case of Dominique Bauby, the editor of *Elle* magazine who suffered from locked-in syndrome following a stroke, taste acquires the character of memory because normal feeding methods are no longer possible[759].

Taste has in Gorringe's understanding an important discriminatory role. We talk about people who have good taste or do not: in a theological sense it can be used in terms of our relationship with God as is instanced in the language of the Psalms, and other books of the Bible where we are bidden as in Psalm 34:8 (and in Job 20:18) to 'taste and see that the Lord is good'.

Although Gorringe does not devote a large section of this chapter to taste, he does make the important point[760] that:

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[759] Gorringe, *The Education of Desire*, p.23.
[760] op. cit., p.24.

Taste, in its infinite richness, is a sign of grace, the overwhelming abundance and goodness and beauty of what God has given us, which is why it is so beautiful and proper to 'say grace' before meals.

This is a highly important point with respect to the subject of addiction. Damian Thompson, in *The Fix*, regards taste as a collateral casualty of addiction when the enjoyment of such things as good wine because of their flavour collapses into a need for continual replacement of the effects of alcohol: so taste becomes a subsidiary or ultimately redundant part of the experience of consuming the drink.

5) Smell. The sense of smell is the final category in this chapter of Gorringe's book. Here too, there are both literal and metaphorical aspects, as when we speak of perverse human acts that 'stink to high heaven'[761]. Smell is a much more ambiguous factor in the range of the senses; although there can be this negative side there is much about smell that has positive connotations, not least in terms of religious experience, as Gorringe reminds us[762]:

> With his profound classical education I am surprised that Freud did not know the elder Pliny's remark that 'the pleasure of perfume is among the most elegant and also the most honourable enjoyments in life'. Paul seems to have shared the same view because he describes the Church as 'the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved (2 Corinthians 2:15)'.

He continues by noting the varying assessments of people as disparate as St. Francis of Assisi and Aldous Huxley, both of whom seem to have discovered more reality in dirt and 'foulness' than in the fragrance of artificial perfumes.

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[761] op. cit., p.25.
[762] ibid.

Gorringe concludes his discussion of the theological significance of smell by relating it to what he terms 'the economy of grace'[763]. What he means by this is that in many ways smell is irrelevant, in evolutionary terms, to human beings, but it is gifted to us by God without a discernible need for its existence in our human environment.

We have been reviewing in this section of the discussion of human desire the ways in which the physical senses play their part in desiring and appreciating the natural world, in terms of hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell. What conclusions does Gorringe himself draw from his own discussion, and what does he then mean by emphasizing the need for what he terms the education of the senses? In a lengthy quotation from Bishop Jeremy Taylor, Gorringe observes that in contrast to a more puritanical assessment of the role of the senses in theology, Taylor was positive about enjoyment of sensual experiences, and stated that 'God has given us leave to be delighted in those things, which he has made to that purpose, that we may also be delighted in him that gives them'[764]. The senses are then (as Barth observed), he continues, the means by which human beings may be regarded as co-creators with God, and therefore constitute 'God's way of exploring the possibilities and reaches of God's creation, precisely in and through the senses'[765]. Furthermore, he says[766]:

> The kingdom is God's project, and in that project all the senses are passionately, and sometimes wildly, affirmed. In and through bodies, and through the exercise of our senses, God moves towards the creation of a new world, a world of the celebration and affirmation of bodies, and therefore of the creator who

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[763] Gorringe, op. cit., p.26.
[764] from Jeremy Taylor, *Sermons*, "The House of Feasting', cited in S. Schimmel, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, p.122, quoted by Gorringe, op. cit., p.26.
[765] Gorringe, op. cit., p.27.
[766] ibid.

imagined them and gave us them materially, as the consummate sign of the grace of God's essential nature.

All of this is of course very positive in its theological interpretation of the role of the senses in relation to creation and God's future kingdom. But that is not the whole picture for Gorringe. Our engagement with the senses can become distorted in a number of ways. It is when this occurs that we need what he defines as the 'education' of desire, a concept which he explores in detail in chapter 4 of the book. So how can the use of the senses go astray, and how can our engagement with the physical world of the senses be educated, or perhaps re-educated?

The problem, Gorringe argues, is that in our contemporary society the human senses provide pleasure and enjoyment of life but are also the means by which we can become enslaved by hedonism and consumerism, which are the negative poles of sensuality. As we walk in our cities and towns, 'From every window larger than life-size pictures of children, young women and young men, but especially young women, urge you not only to buy clothes, soaps, perfumes, sportswear- items naturally associated with the body, but cars, houses, beer, wine, holidays, garden equipment, insurance – you name it'[767]. The problem with this, he continues, is that 'Consumer capitalism exploits the body, as John O'Neill argues, by teaching us "to disvalue it in its natural state and to revalue it only once it has been sold grace, spontaneity, vivaciousness, bounce, confidence, smoothness and freshness"'[768]. What is being presented here is an implicit narcissism in which the ways in which our imperfect bodies can be enhanced to fit some notional template of excellence or even

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[767] op. cit., p.84.
[768] ibid, citing Jon O'Neill, *Five Bodies*, p.101.

perfection solely for the purpose of maximising the profits of the companies that supply these goods.

It might seem that this rejection of the consumerist driven encouragement to buy to enhance our bodies is a kind of neo-Puritanism. But to refute this claim, Gorringe explores the concept of basic human desire in theological terms, not rejecting such concepts as desire and pleasure in themselves, but recognising that they can lead away from enjoyment of what is most important in life. He argues this case with reference for example to Paul's concern, expressed in Romans 1:24, that the pursuit of pleasures (a pursuit paradoxically seemingly implanted by God) locates such pursuits at the place in our lives which actually belongs to God: to worship a lesser God is to become enslaved to things that can bring no ultimate satisfaction.

This perhaps gives a rather negative view of desire and pleasure, and this negative view was pursued by some early Christian writers such as Augustine of Hippo, as we observed in his theology earlier. Gorringe however turns at this point to the secular writings on desire to be found in Plato and Aristotle, where the subject is analysed in detail. For Plato, he says, desire is principally to be seen as indicating a lack of something, as would be the case with the experience of hunger or thirst, for example. On the other hand, Plato is sceptical about the value of pleasure; it has at most a tertiary role to play in relation to the first order reality of what is measured and appropriate and the second order which refers to what is 'proportioned and beautiful, and what is perfect and satisfying'[769]. This, says Gorringe, echoes the New Testament 'suspicion of pleasure'

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[769] Gorringe, *The Education of the Senses*, p.87.

suggested by the fact that the word for pleasure, rarely used in the New Testament, always has a negative spin. Again, for Plato, there is the danger that excessive concern with pleasure may lead human beings into a form of slavery, as he comments in *The Republic*[770]. There is also a lowly place assigned to erotic love, which is compared unfavourably with the attainment of 'the very soul of beauty'[771].

Aristotle also concerned himself with desire, and uses the word 'appetite' to define it, Gorringe continues. He seems to have placed a higher value on pleasure than Plato did, but he too expressed concern about excessive appetite. This, Gorringe comments, he regards as 'self-indulgence and a form of childishness'[772]. There are however authentic pleasures, which have their proper place within the totality of what it means to be human.

The Christian literature that followed from Plato and his contemporaries is discussed next by Gorringe, and in particular the writings of St. Augustine. As Gorringe observes, Augustine concerns himself with the problem of 'concupiscence'. At the heart of what Augustine proposes, however, is the argument that is being put forward in this thesis in regard to addiction, namely that whatever we may see as the object of our desires as human beings, the fact is that underlying all desire, and not always recognised, there is in all human beings a deep desire for God. Gorringe cites Augustine himself in the opening lines of the *Confessions*: 'To praise you is the desire of man… You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, and our heart is restless until it rests in you'[773]. Gorringe shows how within

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[770] Plato, *The Republic* IV, 442a, cited by Gorringe, op. cit., p.87.
[771] Plato, *The Symposium*, 211d. Gorringe refers to the work of Catherine Pickstock at this point, who argues that in The Phaedrus Plato gives a more positive value to physical experience and enjoyment, so there is some ambiguity in Plato's thought, which fed, via Plotinus, into Christian thought. See: C. Pickstock, *After Writing*, p. 14.
[772] Gorringe, op. cit., p.88., citing Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, 3.11.
[773] Augustine, *Confessions*, p.1, quoted by Gorringe, *The Education of Desire*, p.88.

the canon of Christian literature, from Augustine through Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas Aquinas, there is this sense of the human heart and its desires being directed towards the loved object, and this object, in its highest form, is about union, about a relationship not with inanimate objects but with another living being, and ultimately God – 'the true object of our desire'[774]. And this train of thought continues in more recent studies, Gorringe continues, such as in the work of the Benedictine Dom Sebastian Moore, who argues, like Augustine, that 'Real desire is what the cross empowers, bringing us to the death that its liberation entails. The death is the death of our present ego, whose perpetuation is the work of egoism posing as desire'[775]. Could addiction, then, be one form that this self-perpetuating egoism takes? What is being argued in this thesis is that addiction comes about when the ultimate desire is replaced, for some reason, with what is penultimate and - ultimately - unable to deliver the rewards that it promises, hence the need to engage in the activity more and more to find a satisfaction that it can never bring.

Gorringe recognises the important nature of desire in human activity as a motivating force, and it is something which can be both humanly and spiritually creative. But that is not, he argues, the whole picture. From page 91 of his book, and for the rest of that chapter, he interprets desire in terms of the way in which many societies deliberately set about the task of educating desire to make sure that the activating of desire does not work against the 'goods' that that society believes to be worthwhile – 'All high societies recognize that the non-divine imagination needs training and exercise. This work is called education, and this introduces the *normative*

[774] Gorringe, op. cit., p.89.
[775] ibid, citing S. Moore, *Jesus the Liberator of Desire*, p.93.

dimension of desire which Plato sets out in the *Symposium*, and Augustine in the *Confessions*'[776]. This is very important in terms of our study of addiction. It recognises and supports the good elements in desire; on the other hand it argues that in both Greek and Christian philosophy of the 'good', desire can be chaotic and destructive of societies without an educating system that helps their members to live in accordance with principles that are vital to the proper ordering of those societies, whether fundamentally secular or religious. Addiction represents a situation in which the expression of desire works against the moral grain of that society. In Christian terms, Gorringe suggests, it is that process of education that Jesus is concerned with when he calls his followers to be 'disciples', which literally implies a calling to be 'students'.

There is much here that makes an important contribution to the understanding of desire which we are examining in this thesis from both psychological and theological perspectives.

3.7.3 Christopher Cook

We have encountered the writings of Chris Cook in the chapter of this thesis that was concerned with providing a theological insight into addiction. *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics* was one of the principal books in that part of the current work, included in part because, as we noted earlier, he looks at the ethical implications of alcohol misuse in British society in the twenty first century, and his reflections on what may well be seen to be a collusive approach to the problems on the part of governments and the beverage alcohol industry.

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[776] Gorringe, *The Education of Desire*, p. 91 (italicisation original).

The book to be briefly considered now is a new development of Cook's work, a study of the *Philokalia*[777]. Within this newer work he refers to a number of contemporary writers who look at addiction from within the Christian Orthodox tradition, such as Victor Mihailoff[778], who combines the Twelve Step programme with spiritual practices such as confession, holy communion and prayer, Meletios Webber[779], who sets out to enable people with a spiritual understanding to incorporate the Twelve Steps into his vision, and a chapter in the *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Religious Diversity*[780] which has a chapter on Orthodox traditions of spirituality which is more general in scope but sets out to 'support better awareness of religious and spiritual traditions and to enable more effective working with clients/patients from particular faith traditions'[781].

The reason for including this book in this survey of theological ideas about human desiring is that Cook is also particularly concerned to investigate the topic of the human passions in a positive sense, using the writings of the *Philokalia* as a guide to the Orthodox Christian understanding of the role of the passions in spiritual discourse. He explores this in his chapter on 'Mental Well-Being'[782]. One instance of the relationship between the passions and mental health, seen from a spiritual point of view, is the writing of Saint Maximos, for whom, Cook says, 'the source of all well-being is found in God, but human creatures are free to

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[777] Christopher Cook, *The Philokalia and the Inner Life: on Passions and Prayer*. The literal meaning of the word *Philokalia* is 'love of the beautiful'. The writings described by Cook represent, in his words, 'a particular anthology assembled by two Greek monks in the eighteenth century', collating 'spiritual writings from the Eastern Christian tradition, spanning the fourth to the fifteenth centuries CE' – see Cook, op. cit., p.xv.
[778] V. Mailhoff, *Breaking the Chains of Addiction*.
[779] M. Webber, *Steps of Transformation: an Orthodox Priest Explores the Twelve Steps*.
[780] P.S. Richards and A.E. Bergin *The Handbook of Psychotherapy and Religious Diversity*.
[781] Cook, *The Philokalia*, p.255.
[782] op. cit., chapter 4.

accept or reject the gracious gift of well-being'[783]. Maximos identifies a process that occurs in the spiritual life, which leads from temporal well-being, via a sense of eternal well-being, to its ultimate goal which is deification. As this concept is so closely linked to our idea of the explicit and implicit longing of the soul for God as expressed by Augustine, it is perhaps worth exploring this concept of deification in a little more detail. Cook explains the process in these terms[784]:

> At this point we might conclude that both health and well-being in the *Philokalia* are concerned with achieving a life of dispassion and virtue. Well-being, however, appears to be the broader concept of the two, and it connects in turn with the doctrine of deification. Deification is a state of well-being, but it is much more than just this. It is an eternal, largely eschatological, but also very present and real, participation in God through Jesus Christ.

This is clearly a radical statement about the deification process, one in which our eternal destiny is known in an embryonic state in the here and now, and, as Cook comments, it recalls the language of Saint Athanasius, who dared to suggest that 'as God in Christ became human, so by grace, human beings are called to participate in Christ's divinity'[785]. If we are to take that claim seriously, then it seems to further underpin the statement that is central to this thesis that human desiring is not just a longing for the 'goods' of this secular world, or even for a pre-death glimpse of eternal truths, but a desire for, and to a limited degree actualisation of, real participation in the life of God, both in this world and for eternity.

There is however a darker side to desire, as the *Philokalia* asserts, drawing for example stark contrasts between what may be regarded as 'virtues' and

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[783] op. cit., p.165. This reflection is based on Maximos's work in the *Philokalia*, although as Cook comments on p. 163, the text in question is thought by some to be by an unknown author rather than Maximos himself.
[784] Cook, op. cit., p.166.
[785] op. cit., p.160.

what may be seen as 'vices' in the spiritual quest[786]. These negative passions, as Evagrios regards them, can be remedied to some extent by superimposing the opposite, positive attitude. Other remedies, Cook says, include 'tears for sins, meditation on death, "the commandment of love", patient endurance, trials and sufferings, and obedience'[787] with appropriate spiritual discipline in terms of the practice of askesis, virtue and prayer. What matters from the point of view of this thesis and its proposals about desire for God and even oneness with God – deification – is that not all desire is holy, and when there is destructive desire (such as gluttony, a vice sometimes associated with addiction) there is the need to find a remedy, whether through spiritual direction or secular forms of psychotherapy[788]. There is thus here a welcome attempt by Cook, himself an expert on addiction, to delve into the ambiguity of desire and passion, exploring them, and the possible remedies, spiritual and psychological, when the passions lead in negative and destructive rather than constructive directions.

Cook thus makes a link between the work of spiritual guidance based on the *Philokalia* on the one hand and modern psychotherapeutic practice on the other. He specifically mentions addictions in this context, drawing a parallel between the spiritual approach of *The Way of The Pilgrim*, for example, which is 'given to the pilgrim in response to his expressed desire to achieve unceasing prayer' and forms of psychotherapy which have a different but perhaps complementary aim, that of bringing relief to 'those

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[786] On this contrast see Evagrios of Pontus, *On the Vices Opposed to the Virtues* in which he lists nine categories: for example, gluttony is opposed to abstinence, avarice to freedom from possessions, anger to patience etc. This list is given in full in Cook, op. cit., p.110.

[787] Cook, op. cit. p.114.

[788] Cook devotes a chapter of his book to the study of the relationship between spiritual guidance and psychotherapy.

who are psychologically overwhelmed by life stresses, and those whose behaviour is disturbed (e.g. due to family stress in childhood, or due to addiction)'[789]. While it is important to maintain professional boundaries between clinical and spiritual forms of 'therapy', might we not be justified however in looking for opportunities for providing, in appropriate ways, elements of both in our treatment of people with a variety of problems, including addiction?

3.7.4 Conclusion to the chapter

The hypothesis that underlies this chapter of the thesis is based on the view that we will not be able to find a satisfactory methodology for understanding the aetiology of addiction, whether from a psychological or a theological point of view, without paying attention in the first place to the nature of human desiring as a <u>positive experience</u>, and this hypothesis is the essence of what we are putting forward as a New Model for understanding the nature of addiction, and the best way to help people who are suffering from enslavement to drugs or alcohol in particular. This positive approach remains true, we are suggesting, even when in some cases human appetites, natural and good in themselves, become distorted either by attachment to unsatisfactory and even dangerous and illegal objects such as heroin, or by the excessive use of legal substances such as alcohol. And at a deeper level, working with the ideas of St. Augustine in mind, we are suggesting that human desiring is ultimately founded on a desire for God, even though the true nature of that desiring may be hidden from us or channelled into less satisfactory pursuits: ultimately, on this

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[789] See Cook, op. cit. p.226.

view, we assert that Augustine was justified in his declaration that 'our hearts are restless until they rest in you'.

But how is desire to be understood better? How can the world of psychological theory and theological interpretation of human nature help us to understand desire and how it may be expressed in ways that are creative and life enhancing rather than destructive of individuals and societies? In our survey of psychological theories of desire, particularly in relation to the positive psychology school, instantiated for example by the writings of Seligman and Carr, and of theological explorations of desire in the writings of Saint Paul and Saint Augustine, and in contemporary writers such as David Ford, Timothy Gorringe and Christopher Cook, we have tried to establish a view of desire and its fulfilment that is positive and holistically health friendly, including elements of 'spiritual' health and wellbeing. At the heart of that quest is the question posed to a person who was at the time 'in recovery' regarding his view not so much about what had gone wrong in his life that made him an addict, but about his deepest wishes for personal fulfilment – that is to say, he was being encouraged to think not about what he was recovering <u>from</u> but what he was recovering <u>for</u>.

When a programme such as this is put into place, we are suggesting, then we have an alternative treatment route that might offer a better and more hopeful approach than is often the case in psychological treatments where highly effective treatments based on psychological and psychopharmacological treatment cannot prevent the high rate of relapse that follows successful treatment – often within the first year of recovery.

It is not only in the clinical environment however that these modest proposals might be employed. Looking at the situation from a theological

point of view, in relation to Church praxis, it might be that the positive approach could form part of a holistic attempt to provide good spiritual and pastoral care for those who suffer from addiction problems. We shall return to this suggestion in the next chapter of this work.

CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS ON WHAT HAS BEEN PRESENTED, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING 'NEW MODEL' THINKING.

Introduction.

   This chapter does two principal things: in the first place it looks back at what has been presented so far, and secondly it begins, via engagement with existing models of pastoral care, to see how the 'new model' thinking that has been presented can be implemented in relation to these models.

   Outlining the chapter.

   The thesis set out, in the introductory chapter, five research questions with the aim of providing a guideline for what has been discussed. We will begin the current chapter by reviewing those questions, showing how they have been answered in the thesis up to this point. We will then identify three particularly helpful examples of theoretical and practical books on pastoral ministry in order to set up a framework for discussing the new model of understanding addiction in the context of current pastoral practice. Having set up this framework, we will return to the three books and make more specific suggestions about how the new model can be incorporated with them in order to provide effective pastoral care for people who have substance dependency problems. We will then make some suggestions about how this study might be taken forward in practical terms, both in ministerial training settings such a provided by the Anglican dioceses in particular, and in other institutions such as hospital chaplaincy. And we will make some suggestions of a more theoretical kind about the possibilities for further study and reflection of these matters from both psychological (particularly feminist) and theological (using for example Cook's work on the *Philokalia*) perspectives.

At the beginning of this thesis five research questions were identified. How have they been addressed subsequently?

Question 1) addresses the debate as to whether addiction exists. We observed that some writers in the psychological literature, such as Jim Orford, have argued that addiction is real and should be regarded as a disease; writers such as J B Davies and Herbert Fingarette argue that addiction does not exist - the concept is to be regarded as a 'myth' in the colloquial sense. A useful contribution to this debate was made by Orford, as the discussion of his book *Excessive Appetites* illustrated, suggesting that the word disease may be more generally acceptable in relation to substance (and process) dependency if it is interpreted in a more metaphorical sense, thereby freeing it from the limitations imposed by the narrower interpretation of the word that may be implied by specifically clinical models.

What is undoubtedly true, however, we argue, is that many people who misuse alcohol and illicit drugs damage their health in many ways, cause harm to their families, and in some cases bring about their own death through overdose. This is no 'myth': it is true of a large, and perhaps increasing, number of people. There is however an ongoing debate about concepts of addiction that would undoubtedly benefit from further scrutiny.

Question 2) asked about the understanding of the origins of addiction that can be found in books and articles that investigate the psychology of addiction. Again we found a wide variety of interpretations: some emphasise the 'disease' model of addiction, others highlight personal choice in relation to life experience, while others believe that both disease and choice models together play their respective parts, while allowing also for the likely influence of genetic

factors, which will continue to be assessed beyond the limited scope of this present work.

It is our contention that the most significant factor is the <u>context</u> in which a person becomes unable to control his or her use of these substances, some of which, such as alcohol, are harmless and possibly beneficial, when taken in moderation. Circumstances in life experience such as the loss of a job, a partner, or a dwelling – and *a fortiori* a combination of such events – may be sufficient to propel an individual into the misuse of ingestible substances. Equally, a change in such circumstances for the better may free an individual from slavery to them.

<u>Question 3)</u> looked at the same issues from the perspective of <u>theological</u> discourse, and here too there was a variety of viewpoints. James B Nelson, with his personal history of alcohol dependence, adopts the Alcoholics Anonymous 'alcoholic for life' approach, while others such as Gerald May believed that through divine forgiveness and grace the addict can end his harmful indulgence in alcohol or drugs. A helpful insight was provided by Kenneth Leech, who sees, in the world of drug addiction in particular, much that speaks of mystery, darkness and unknowing, and makes valuable links between this and the spiritual world of Christianity which can tolerate experiences of despair and death because with good spiritual guidance they in turn – and over time – can lead to hope, deliverance and resurrection. Leech's contribution will be explored in more detail later in this chapter.

We noted conflict that exists when on the one hand a person wishes to use potentially addictive substances such as heroin, and on the other, and frequently at the same time, experiences a wish to abstain. We have explored this conflict in terms of the unity of personality, as analysed by Léon Turner: this subject would benefit greatly from further study, beyond the scope of this thesis,

particularly in terms of the complex issues raised by the concept of consciousness.

Question 4) addressed the confusion and at times open conflicts identified in questions 2) and 3). In order to avoid over-generalisation we began to search for a new model that might help us to understand both the route that people take into addiction and also how they might be helped to recover. A conversation with an addict led us to propose a model that starts in a completely new place, concentrating in the first instance on the individual's desires and longings and aspirations, and then trying to determine the place of addiction with respect to those goals. On the basis of this positive insight, it seemed that the natural place to look for further illumination was the claim that all human life, rightly understood, has at its heart a search for, a longing for, God, whether this is recognised or not: and we therefore explored ways in which Augustine's claim that 'our hearts are restless until they rest in you' might be the best basis for spiritual engagement with an addiction sufferer.

Question 5) looked at how the theoretical, client centred, approach suggested by the new model might be relevant to the treatment of addiction sufferers both in relation to pastoral care offered by clergy and other pastoral ministers in the community via churches and other social institutions such as prisons and in the clinical interface as provided by health care professionals. It would be good to follow up this research beyond the confines of this thesis by facilitating a forum including representatives of both pastoral and clinical care of addiction sufferers and their families who would approach the subject on the basis of the new model proposed here.

This thesis has suggested that a new pastoral approach to addiction needs be found because of the conflicted opinions we have observed in both psychological and theological literature. What new model for doing so has emerged from our survey?

We reported a conversation that suggested a new model through asking an addicted person one relatively straightforward question: 'What do you want out of life?' Although he did not give a clear answer to this question at the time, he later commented spontaneously that for him the process of recovery from addiction had begun to a significant extent in response to that question. We will now provide a provisional framework for making these findings the basis of a new pastoral strategy for helping addicted people.

The thesis has focussed on two particular aspects of addiction, namely the ingestion of alcohol and illicit drugs. The psychological writing that has been reviewed looks at the aetiology of addiction: the theological section explored pastoral and spiritual aspects of the phenomenon of addiction. In both cases we found important and helpful information and theories about addiction; we concluded however that in both disciplines there remains much that is unclear and truly contradictory about the nature of addiction and its treatment, even about whether addiction really exists at all, or is in fact a reflection of human beings' tendency to <u>attribute</u> indulgence in particular activities (such as drug misuse) to uncontrollable forces[790].

Because of this unsatisfactory state of affairs, we suggested that we may be in need of a new methodology for understanding addiction and treating those who seem unable to control their use of alcohol and drugs. As we have seen, a conversation with a drug user led to consideration of the subject from a different starting point, that is to say investigation of that individual's own desires and aspirations.

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[790] The argument proposed, as we have seen earlier in the thesis, by J. B. Davies: *The Myth of addiction*.

On this basis we now feel able to provide three things in this concluding section, namely looking at the phenomenon of addiction and its treatment from ontological, epistemological and pragmatic perspectives.

1. <u>Ontological considerations</u> – some definitions. It is our contention, in line with the views of many commentators such as Robert West, Griffith Edwards and Christopher Cook, all of whose contributions have been noted in the psychological theories chapter (chapter 1), that contrary to the views of J. B. Davies (and others), addiction does in fact exist, and may in principle be defined as a reward seeking activity which has, as Robert West puts it, become 'out of control'.

   <u>The New Model</u>. According to this model, we can <u>define addiction</u> as a type of compulsive behaviour which involves acquired dependency on certain substances, and significantly does not accord with the addicted person's stated goals and aspirations for his or her life, even when that person may need help in discovering, or rediscovering, those personal goals.

   On this basis we can thus go a step further and <u>define treatment of addicts</u> as a process of discovery about what these goals and aspirations are in order to help the addicted person to recognise these goals for himself, and then put in place a structure for achieving them, while assessing the role of drug misuse (or other addicted behaviours) in relation to those stated goals and purposes. Thus the radically new starting point for treatment is the desires, longings and aspirations of the 'client' rather than debate about the aetiology of addictive behaviour, though that may concern us at a later stage. This process is closely linked with the movement known as Positive Psychology, as discussed in the thesis, in relation to the work of Martin Seligman and others.

   From a theological perspective we can also define this new model in spiritual terms, taking as its starting point the assertion of Saint Augustine of Hippo that God has made us for himself, and that our hearts are restless until they rest in him – so a life

that is 'good', on these terms, is, and only ultimately can ever be, one that is oriented towards God as the ultimate good.

2. <u>Epistemological considerations of the new model</u>. Having given a view of how the new model may be defined, in terms of the nature of addiction, and a definition of the nature of treatment as we perceive it, we can now look briefly at some of the implications of the model and it employment.

In the 'psychological theories of addiction' chapter[791], we explored the writings of many psychologists, indicating how they interpret the phenomenon of addiction and their consequent strategies for treating people with addiction problems. We suggested in that chapter that one of the most impressive contributions was made by Jim Orford, particularly in his major work entitled *Excessive Appetites*. This book, we suggest, has in particular three important things to say:

   i.   It recognises that people move from normal to compulsive use of substances, many of which, such as alcohol, are arguably harmless when used in moderation. The new model thinking which we are recommending here picks up this idea of a progressive movement towards full addiction, and recognises that when people present themselves for treatment, the stage of their journey that they have reached into the darkness of dependency – which we have referred to as 'enslavement' - must be taken into account on an individual basis. This approach would be equally true, we would suggest, for both psychological and spiritual and pastoral interventions.

   ii. Orford also asserts that addiction, when it occurs, is a form of illness, which, when sufficiently damaging to health, may well require some form

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[791] Chapter 1.

of treatment, including the use of psychological medicine such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy techniques. The new model is open to all such techniques. It is our contention however, that there has often been a very disappointing outcome, with high degrees of relapse during the first year of treatment. The new model is therefore presented as a way of overcoming this difficulty, by starting in a new place, i.e. the aspirations of the client, although it is recognised that this approach may not be suitable for everyone who needs treatment. It is however, as we suggested above, a format that could be used in principle in both psychological and pastoral settings

iii.   Orford further claims that successful treatment of addicted people may for many include both moral and spiritual elements, and among the writers discussed, he was undoubtedly the most positive about this spiritual element, although he is not over prescriptive about how such spiritual intervention should be offered. This is clearly very important in terms of one of the stated aims of this thesis, as it sets out to provide insights in to how scientific (psychological) and theological (pastoral/spiritual) modes of thought and therapeutic intervention might be brought into closer alignment.

3. <u>Pragmatic Considerations</u>: method of working with the new model, its aims and limitations. One obvious approach to the pragmatic element here, which seeks to look at co-operation between disciplines, is to make in the first instance links within the medical establishment between clinicians and pastors, and thanks to the wisdom of the founding fathers and mothers of the NHS who argued vigorously for the establishment of chaplaincy in all NHS hospitals, the tools needed for this are to some extent already in place. The writer of this thesis has himself been involved in

training hospital chaplains (of many faiths and denominations) in caring for people with substance dependency problems. But there remains the task of finding a forum in which <u>pastors and clinicians</u> can be encouraged towards a mutually respectful and open dialogue to discover modalities of treatment which can – in line with Orford's comments about spiritual and moral aspects of addiction – bring effective and lasting help to those who are substance dependent. It would also be good to find ways in which this proposed programme of shared insight could be extended out of the hospital environment and replicated in local communities, possibly via the Community Drug and Alcohol Action Teams: here again, we can observe that to some extent the tools needed for achieving this are already available.

One of the implications of this programme, we have already noted, is the need to assess the possibility of working in this way with clients: this depends on a number of factors, such as the degree of addiction that a particular person has, their willingness to work in this way with psychological therapists and/or pastoral workers (chaplains and others) and the possibility of co-morbidity[792].

Following on from this, it is in our estimation vital that pastors who engage with people on the basis of new model thinking should have proper training in the field, and a group working at Church House in London is currently looking at the right way for this training to be delivered – whether, for example, it would be best to introduce the subject at theological college level, or in post ordination (or post qualification) courses as provided by The Church of England and other Christian denominations.

It seems to the author of this thesis that the new model has much to offer addicted people, and that it is an area of clinical and pastoral practice where a considerable amount of co-operative work could be done between the scientific community, as

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[792] Co-morbidity in this context is the existence of severe psychological or psychiatric conditions alongside, but not necessarily connected with, addiction.

represented by the psychiatric and psychological professions, and pastoral care deliverers, provided that boundaries are respected, and adequate training is made available.

4.3. What is now offered is a way of linking these theoretical insights to current pastoral models.

Models Of Pastoral Counselling

We are proposing that current society suffers greatly from addiction to substances (e.g. alcohol, prescription and non-prescription drugs) or to processes (e.g. gambling or internet pornography), partly because of the availability, affordability and social acceptance of such things, particularly the use of alcohol. Alongside clinical or even forensic approaches to the social problems caused by addiction, we argue that pastoral care endeavours should look at the deepest desires and longings of human beings, to enable people with addiction problems to find new meaning and purpose in their lives. We would tentatively go further, suggesting that this approach, embedded in what the thesis calls the 'new model', may have more to offer than those which emphasize seeking the causes of addiction. We will now review three approaches which have been found helpful in training for pastoral ministry, including further reflections on Leech's contribution, and relate them to the care of addicted people.

Richard Osmer's book *Practical Theology* provides a comprehensive and well researched overview of pastoral care as one aspect of 'practical theology': Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger's book *Theology and Pastoral Counseling* has more specific intentions, linking pastoral theology viewed from a psychoanalytic perspective with the theology of Karl Barth. We have already discussed Leech in detail, and we will return to his ideas in this chapter after looking at Osmer and Hunsinger.

We will now look at these writers in detail, and with appropriate critical commentary. We will then show how each of these three models might be linked with the new model of care of people with addiction problems that forms the focal content of this part of the present work.

4.3.1 Richard Osmer' book *Practical Theology*[793].

This book has been chosen because Osmer has analysed the concept of pastoral counselling in a number of ways, in its essence, interpretation and practical application. It therefore has a comprehensive scope, drawing on the ideas of others in the field, and adding his own suggestions as appropriate. He proposes four key questions that can be used to address the pastoral care of an individual, focusing on what is happening, why it is happening, what ought to be happening, and issues about Church leadership in response to these situations.

It also happens that he gives as his principal case study an account of work with a church member whose problems included the excessive use of alcohol, so that in addition to the general analysis of the concept of pastoralia, there is also the specific instantiation of how his approach to pastoral care might be used to help someone who was indulging in substance misuse.

Osmer's model of pastoral care has a number of stages. These are:

1) <u>The descriptive empirical task</u>, which involves a particular kind of attentive listening
2) <u>The interpretive task</u>, which requires 'sagely wisdom'.
3) <u>The normative task</u>, which can be expressed as 'prophetic discernment'.
4) <u>The pragmatic task</u> – this related to providing leadership of a kind which is founded on the theology of service.

1) On the question of <u>listening</u> (what Osmer calls 'priestly' listening[794]) the theme is essentially <u>narrative</u>, as the person being listened to is encouraged to tell her life story in a safe and accepting environment.

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[793] Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: an Introduction.*
[794] This can be misleading: what is intended is to speak of priesthood that is not restricted to ordained persons, but in terms of the priestly role of the congregation as depicted in I Peter 25:9 and Revelation 1:6 and 5:10. See Osmer, op. cit., p.35.

In his case study relating to a woman called 'Olivia', an alcoholic coming from a family of alcoholic parents, the focal problem is one of belonging – at seminary for example, where she goes to explore her sense of a personal vocation, she is described as being <u>at</u> the seminary but not <u>of</u> it. Just as she had lived in a biological family without a sense of belonging or being valued, so at seminary she remained something of an outsider, and would often, she suggests, find more of what she regarded as a truly Christian reception from AA members rather than the seminary community who seemed to avoid her. The descriptive empirical task here was to observe and interpret her feelings of isolation and rejection, and to be aware of her deep desire for acceptance in this new 'family'. Olivia was also discovering that the kind of things that ultimately make us happy are not externals, even a good relationship with another human being, but the spiritual process of finding God, in which our human relationships can be helpful[795]. In relation to the first task there is an echo here of the Augustinian theology of desire, and the restlessness of the human heart, to which he draws attention at the beginning of the *Confessions*, until a home is found in God.

There is however a weakness in this chapter. It gives much information of a technical kind on the aetiology of alcoholism, but in spite of having identified the Wisdom concept of the outsider as having a special place in God's kingdom, there is no direct epistemological link made at this point with the experience of the alcoholic who often feels like an outsider, not least, as Olivia found,

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[795] op. cit. p.73.

because committed Christian church people can sometimes marginalise the alcoholic, and this is very much part of the systemic view of alcoholism and its proper treatment.

2) The second, interpretive, task, involving 'sagely wisdom', follows on from the listening stage. For Olivia, as described in this book, the 'wise judgement' implied by this was founded on reflections on much Biblical exposition of the Wisdom theology of the Jewish people as described in books such as Ecclesiastes and Job. Wisdom is also seen as a characteristic of Jesus, in terms of his eschatological reordering of priorities, particularly in terms of wealth[796]. In this context it can be shown that for Jesus there is a new interpretation of the situation of the 'poor, outcast and oppressed' telling them that they are in fact 'the special beneficiaries of God's loving care and that their plight will be rectified in God's kingdom' (as predicted for example in Luke 6:17-26.)[797].

3) The third, normative, part of the process entails 'prophetic discernment'. Can this be used in the pastoral care of addicted people such as 'Olivia'? Prophetic ministry, in its classic location in the books of the Tanach, is often, Osmer suggest, at odds with the prevailing ecclesiastical assumptions[798]. Thus Isaiah 'counter[s] the royal ideology of the temple and the court, as well as the popular belief that God's promise to David meant that Israel would always

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[796] Osmer, p.97.
[797] ibid.
[798] Osmer, op. cit. p. 133 f.

be safe from other nations'[799]. Jesus follows on from this: he not only proclaims God's word in a way that challenges the ecclesiastical *status quo* – he personally embodies the proclamation. In the light of this, the work of the prophetically minded pastor today entails 'the task of listening to this Word, and interpreting it in ways that address particular social conditions, events, and decisions before congregations today'[800]. One such social condition might well then be the engagement of the congregation with the social reality of addiction which affects approximately 6-8% of a given population[801].

Osmer provides us with a number of models of prophetic discernment in relation to pastoral care. A particularly notable one is what Don Browning calls the *ethic of equal regard*[802]. This ethic, as the words imply, avoids any sense of superiority or paternalism in the care of others, including what he sees as the harmful effects of a pattern of care based on 'self-sacrifice' or 'self-denial'[803]. For Browning the pattern of equal regard is founded on the commandment to love others as one loves oneself. It seems to the writer of this thesis that the pastoral (or indeed clinical) care of people with addiction problems might well benefit from this type of prophetic ministry, as it avoids any suggestion of superiority on the part of the care giver, seeking rather to establish the dignity of the sufferer, which can be eroded by the use of words like 'patient' or

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[799] op. cit., p.134.

[800] op. cit., p.135.

[801] This figure is taken from UK government figures published in 2005 that suggest that more than 4% of the population can be defined as 'harmful' drinkers. See Appendix 2.

[802] Osmer, op. cit., p.151. Osmer is basing his understanding of Browning's position on his article "Domestic Violence and the Ethic of Equal Regard" in *Equality and the Family, a Fundamental Practical Theology of Children, Mothers and Fathers in Modern Societies*, p.378.

[803] Osmer, op. cit., p.151.

even 'client', which as Kenneth Leech argues[804] can be a form of disempowerment. Thus often the best person to help an addicted person is someone who has had an addiction problem herself, which helps to avoid any suggestion of superiority.

It also helps to make deeper sense of the question that seemed in one case to catalyse change for the addicted person, by asking about what he wants, rather than expecting him to conform to the wishes of the carer or society in general. There is, in prophetic terms, an issue of justice here which demands a proper recognition and evaluation of the dignity of the addicted person. Even allowing for the technical theological problems associated with the idea of prophecy in terms of its origin in divine initiation rather than human choice[805], there is a prophetic element here in relation to the pastoral care of addicted people in terms of equality that may well prove to be a better route than one which is founded on the idea of the clinician or pastor as having superior knowledge or skill to the 'client'.

4) Osmer's fourth task is that of pragmatic leadership as expressed conceptually as embodying the role of the servant. He identifies three models of leadership – task competence, transactional, and transforming. All are needed within the life of a congregation, Osmer suggests[806], but he argues that in the light of what he regards

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[804] Comment on this view of Leech's theology was made in the chapter discussing his work.
[805] On the proper theological assessment of criteria for prophetic ministry, see R.W.L. Moberly, *Prophecy and Discernment*, p.225, cited and briefly discussed by David Bunch in his D Min. thesis "Social Trinitarianism and Contextual Theology", p.68
[806] Osmer, op. cit., p.178.

as a need for 'deep change'[807] it is transformative leadership that is most important. This is based, for Osmer, on a rejection of the approach which sets the professional priest or pastor at the centre of everything so that all activity radiates out from him or her. The servant model challenges and replaces this methodology.

The key to this understanding, for Osmer, lies in Gospel *pericopes* in which Jesus radically reinterprets the <u>Messianic</u> role in terms of the Suffering Servant, and he locates this theological motif particularly in the Gospel of Mark and the letters of Paul. In Mark (following Richard Hays' exegesis of Mark 10:45[808]) the cross becomes the centre of the role of discipleship, interpreting the faithfulness required as servanthood as radical obedience to God's will. In Paul's theology, he identifies an ethic of 'mutual care and service' that rejects 'hierarchies of power and social status' in favour of unity and co-operation, and refuses to accept any kind of violence within the Church community. In this way, Osmer states[809], 'the Christian community gives visible expression to the self-giving love of Christ, who exercised God's royal rule in the form of a servant'.

The Christological title 'Servant' as found in the gospels is not without its own theological problems, however, in terms of Jesus' own self-understanding and his own questionable use of titles such as Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man[810] etc. Many excellent books explore these questions about Christological origins[811]: but it

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[807] ibid.
[808] Richard Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics*, pp.84, and 197, and c.p. Oscar Cullmann, *Christology of the New Testament*.
[809] Osmer, op. cit., p.191.
[810] Assuming that Son of Man is a title rather than an instance of circumlocutional self reference as Geza Vermez argues, contra others such as Morna Hooker.
[811] The reader's attention is drawn, for example, to James P. Mackey, *Jesus the Man and the Myth*, and C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology*.

remains open to speculation whether in Osmer's appropriation of Hays' exegesis of the Suffering Servant title for Jesus, one which is not made explicit in the Gospels, too much is being built on a slender foundation.

Osmer has provided a detailed and helpful approach to pastoral care, proceeding in logical steps from the listening, via the interpretative and prophetic stages, to a pragmatic engagement with the issues facing those who have requested pastoral care. It is a symmetrical approach, particularly with respect to addiction, in that it offers both clinical (psychological and sociological) interpretations of the aetiology of addiction and theological views, in terms of how to give appropriate pastoral care to the person who has a problem with alcohol or other substances. But it has a revolutionary agenda in two senses: firstly it looks at the relationship between the clerical, professional pastoral officers of the Church and the congregation on an egalitarian, non-hierarchical basis, and secondly, it places the person who is being offered help at the centre of the picture rather than the helper. Thus the pastor as has the role of servant rather than the person with the knowledge and authority to 'fix' the problem. This willingness on the part of the pastor to divest herself of power may contrast with the way in which secular hierarchical models of clinical intervention normally work. For the pastor, founding his or her work on Osmer's model, there is ample scope for the question that puts the client in the 'driving seat' framed in questions such as 'What is it that you want?', and as we shall observe later, this has direct relevance to work with addiction sufferers such as alcoholics.

4.3.2 Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger's *Theology and Pastoral Counseling.*

This book has been chosen as a contrast to Osmer's work, partly because it begins in a different place. Rather than starting with the pastoral issues themselves, Hunsinger expounds a theology of care that is based on what she describes as a 'Chalcedonian' pattern of dialectic, with much detailed reference to the work of Karl Barth. It is also of relevance to the thesis in terms of the pastoral response to addicted people that she provides a detailed case study of a pastoral intervention between a Christian pastor and a woman who has misused alcohol. What is particularly significant in this book is her use of the Chalcedonian pattern to establish the possibility of combining psychoanalytical insights from the Object Relations branch of psychotherapy with spiritual elements of care.

We have observed that Hunsinger's model of pastoral counselling is based on a Chalcedonian view, similar to the Christological debate of that period, because it concerns 'two natures'. Contrary to Osmer's approach, this is an asymmetrical programme, because Hunsinger argues that although the psychological insights of psychoanalysis can be encompassed within theological discourse, the same cannot be said of the relationship in reverse – psychology cannot 'contain' theology[812]. In her understanding of the counselling process, what is entailed is a programme of counselling that unites the secular (Object Relations[813]) and sacred (Barthian) visions of human salvation while allowing (in line with the Chalcedonian pattern) for their distinctiveness – a <u>bilingual</u> approach. What emerges is a fascinating account of a therapeutic alliance between a therapist and her

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[812] Hunsinger, op. cit., p.62ff.
[813] She does not however justify her adoption of this form of psychoanalytic therapy rather than, for example, that of Jung.

client which looks at the latter's problems from both psychological and theological points of view. For the former, Hunsinger made considerable use of Kaufman's programme of intervention[814] in the case of a client traumatised by guilt and shame. For the theological work, she bases much of what she says about the interaction on the work of Barth, seeing for example, the idea of God as aligned with the suffering, sick and sinful aspects of human experience rather than sitting as an absolute judge concerned only with the niceties of accurate and perhaps punitive justice.

Two important points must be made here: one is that this approach to counselling is explicitly Christian in its conceptual framework, and presumably could only be attempted within a Christian context. Secondly, this therapeutic process depends on making clear moves from the psychological to the theological modes, and moving in the opposite direction as well, and one wonders in practice how easy it is to do so without some sense of disjunction. It is also clearly a 'Reformation' church approach: it seems unfortunate that no attention is given by Hunsinger to the sacramental methods of dealing with guilt that are available more readily perhaps in more 'Catholic' minded church environments. These sacramental approaches have considerable traction in dealing with guilt issues: if they did not it is unlikely that people would make use of them.

Some criticisms of Hunsinger's important and groundbreaking work are inevitable. It is clear from her work that she regards the relationship between the psychological and theological aspects of counselling as asymmetrical. But it is open to question how far this asymmetrical pattern

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[814] Hunsinger, op. cit., p.181ff.

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has really been established beyond question in her book, and whether it is really as important as she claims.

And on a practical note, although there is much in her carefully balanced approach between the two disciplines that is both original and significant, it does seem to the present author important to consider how a pastoral counsellor could be trained to use the 'bilingual' approach that she advocates with safety and confidence. It would be helpful to take her work forward and explore issues of training and ongoing support of such counsellors in ways that she has understandably not been able to address in detail in this introductory book – but these things are of great importance when counsellors are dealing with vulnerable clients.

But the biggest problem here is that although reference is made to the long-time drinking problems of the client, Eva, and those of her mother also, Hunsinger does not engage with the issue of alcohol at all in terms of its relationship to Eva's problems. She does mention on several occasions the fact that Eva believed herself to have been rescued by God from addiction to alcohol, but we are not told how this happened. Equally we are not given any information about how either therapist or client made any connections between the client's emotional problems and her drinking history. This is a pity, as it seems that such a close connection is likely to exist. People do not drink excessively without a reason.

4.3.3 Kenneth Leech – *Drugs and Pastoral Care*

We have also mentioned the work of Ken Leech and given an extended critique of his contribution to the care of addicts in the chapter on the theological understanding of addiction. Why has he been chosen here?

Although some criticisms of his work have been set out in the thesis, he does, in our estimation, make some important points about pastoral care in general terms, and the relating of this pattern of care to addicted people in a more specific sense. An important component of this judgement relates to the fact that he alone, of the three writers whose work on pastoral care are mentioned in this chapter, had an extensive ministry to people with addiction problems over a number of years. There is however another aspect of his book *Drugs and Pastoral Care* that is relevant to this part of the thesis in which we are looking at some models of pastoral care in itself, and relating them to the care of addicted people and the connections that can be made with the new model.

In his chapter entitled "Pastoral care and the role of the Christian community"[815] Leech sets out a four point analysis of pastoral care, which as he comments[816], has direct relevance to work undertaken with addicted people but also has a much wider relevance to 'practical theology'[817]. The four points are as follows:

1) The view can be encountered that addiction is in some sense to be regarded as sinful behaviour or as 'a manifestation of original sin'. But as Leech rightly points out[818], 'the context in which addiction arises is often ignored' whereas in fact context is a highly important factor in addictive behaviour. That reflection might be true of much sinful or immoral behaviour. The key word here for Leech is

[815] Ken Leech, *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, pp.86ff.
[816] op. cit., p.99.
[817] Leech uses this term coined originally by Don Browning in his article "Practical theology and political theology": as we have seen, Richard Osmer, who frequently cites Browning, makes "Practical Theology" the title of his own major work on pastoralia.
[818] op. cit., p.100

'victim'. He advocates a distinction between the idea of sin as willed behaviour on the part of the sinner, and behaviour which is engaged because he is the victim of systems that enslave, such as the drug trade. Pastoral care will then require a profound engagement with that context rather than operating on the basis of generality or any superficial judgment of the addicted individual. And this is a point that Leech would bring to our attention not just in terms of drug use or misuse, but in a more generalised way, in terms of the pressures that society places upon individuals, with regard to such phenomena as prostitution and homelessness.

His use of the word victim finds an echo in the work of Mercadante in her book *Victims and Sinners*, and it raises important issues. But it raises semantic problems for the reader: Leech stresses the need to avoid the stigmatisation or disempowerment of the addict, and yet the very word victim can seem to convey a sense of powerlessness, and for this reason it seems to the writer of this thesis that the word needs to be used with great care in order to avoid the regrettable effects that could be entailed by this paradox.

2) Leech also raises here a question about the nature of God as perceived by those who offer pastoral help. God is presented by some church folk as a 'dictator and controller' rather than a God who leaves people free. In other words, Leech argues here, God can become for some people an addiction that simply replaces addiction to drugs. He reminds us of Marx's warning about religion as an opiate that induces a false sense of reality. Pastoral care in general

needs to avoid colluding with this idea of a dictatorial or controlling God.

3)   One of the most important points that Leech makes is the clear injunction not to stigmatise or marginalise the addicted individual by assuming that there can be a 'specific ministry to drug users'[819]. This is very important, because it regards ministry to people with drug problems as one aspect of a wider pastoral concern of which drug misuse is one facet rather than the whole picture. At a theological level, he speaks in this context of the need to engage more profoundly with issues of what being human means, in theological terms, and how that reality is embedded in the 'doctrine of the Body of Christ in which all are equal'[820]. This is perhaps a way of stating that each person encountered in a pastoral context is to be regarded as a unique individual and not labelled 'addict', 'alcoholic' or by any other such term, even, he suggests, by using the word 'client'. This will be referred to again when we consider how Leech's pastoral theology can be related to the new model proposed in this thesis.

4)   Further to this, and perhaps in a way deriving from it, Leech stresses that in the pastoral encounter with people with substance misuse problems there must be space for 'silence, darkness and the way of "unknowing"'.

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[819] ibid.
[820] ibid.

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This last point is both controversial and of great theological significance. We will therefore pay more detailed attention to this crucial aspect of Leech's contribution at this point in his book *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, although the book as a whole has been reviewed in a preceding chapter of the thesis.

As we have seen in Leech's approach:

1) As with all pastoral intervention, so with addiction, Leech insists on the importance of discerning the context in which problems arise for the individual, especially in situations where a person may become the victim of circumstance – such as social or economic deprivation.

2) As we have already noticed, the pastor is required in Leech's view to avoid behaving with a client in a way that is over directional or controlling. Replacing one form of addiction to a drug by another – even to God - may in fact be counterproductive in the long term.

3) Leech insists throughout this chapter that there is no such thing as a specific ministry to addicted people: this work must be seen as one aspect of a ministry to the whole person. To label someone 'addict' is in itself to deny something of that person's humanity.

4) Allowing a place of darkness and mystery in this ministry, as in all ministries. This awareness leads for Leech into the use of appropriate forms of Christian healing ministry, with particular

emphasis, as one would expect from an 'Anglo-Catholic' priest, on the use of the sacraments, particularly 'anointing and deliverance'[821].

This approach challenges the kind of clinical or pastoral intervention that comes with all the answers pre-packaged, without listening to the people with the problems and taking each individual person seriously. What is therefore required, Leech suggests, is not a formula of caring that is expressed with certainty or clarity or with the hope of 'immediate change', but a pastoral approach based on willingness on the part of the pastor to 'stay with the pain, the wounds, the brokenness, the repeated crises and the darkness in faith and trust'[822]. Theologically viewed, this represents to this author a clear statement of a 'kenotic', self-emptying approach in which the pastor divests herself of power in order to be spiritually available to the person receiving her care. This will also be discussed further in relation to the new model later in the thesis.

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[821] See: Bunch, *Prayer and Prophecy*, p.140.
[822] Leech, op. cit., p.100f.

4.4   <u>The three models of pastoral care linked to the New Model for understanding</u>

      <u>addiction</u>

      We are now in a position to relate the 'new model' proposed in this thesis to

      these two approaches to pastoral counselling.

      4.4.1 Osmer

          As we have seen, Richard Osmer presents in his book a detailed analysis

      of the way in which pastoral care can best be provided. It is an impressive

      system, although like many similar systems, it is perhaps somewhat

      idealistic. The process of delivering pastoral care is not always as seamless

      as his fourfold schema might lead us to suppose, and probably does not

      generally move in an orderly way from task one to task four: in fact these

      episodes are more likely to be iterative and retrospective as well as at times

      following a clearly perceptible forward trajectory. An analogy to this might

      well be bereavement counselling, in which although there are relatively

      definable stages on the path to recovery from bereavement, they rarely

      happen in quite the order or with the clarity and efficiency that some text

      book approaches seem to imply[823].

          Despite this criticism of Osmer, one that he is aware of and takes into

      account himself[824], there is much useful guidance to be found in his work

      for the training of pastors both before and after authorisation or

      ordination.

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[823] The Cruse Counsellors Training programme, for example, identifies four tasks of mourning: experiencing the reality of the death, feeling the pain, adjusting to life without the deceased, and saying goodbye and building a new life. See Mary Jones, *Secret Flowers*, introductory quotation.
[824] See Osmer, *Practical Theology*, p.11. Osmer views the tasks of theological interpretation with regard to pastoral work as a spiral in which previous tasks may need revisiting, rather than as a linear or circular process.

On this basis, how might Osmer's system of pastoral care be inscribed onto the new model thinking that we have put forward in this thesis with regard to addiction?

Two aspects of the model that are relevant are:

1) Emphasis on the client as the centre of the story, not just in terms of trying to identify problems in the past that may have impelled the person who is addicted into a substance dependent lifestyle, but in terms of setting a new agenda for the future. That is not to deny the importance of the aetiology of the problem: it is however a way of approaching the issues that takes as its starting point the assumption that most people have appetites and desires that are in themselves good, and if they can be given sufficient prominence from the beginning of treatment (whether pastoral or 'clinical') then a better outcome may be achieved in the long term.

2) The suggestion that, viewed from a theological perspective, and in line with much traditional writing (notably that of St. Augustine, as we have seen earlier) all human beings are created with a fundamental desire for communion with God, and that it is ultimately only in the experience of that communion that they achieve the genuine fulfilment of desire, in comparison with which, other forms of longing can only be secondary, and may in fact be a distraction, as in the case of serious or chronic substance dependency.

In this context two aspects of Osmer's system of pastoral care resonate well with these two elements of the new model.

In the first place, Osmer emphasises the importance of listening. This is particularly apparent in his first 'task', in which he describes a form of listening that is defined as 'priestly', not in the narrow sense of what an ordained priest alone has the authority to do, but in the broader sense of what I Peter 2:5-9 implies by speaking of the whole congregation as a holy priesthood, 'a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people'[825]. The task of this priesthood, for Osmer, is to observe and interpret the feelings of a woman who, because of her personal history, which includes alcohol misuse, is at the time in question, characterised by experiences of isolation and rejection in relation to church membership. At the heart of this is the awareness of the pastor that she is seeking inclusion in the full life of the Church, as a deep desire and longing, and the hope that the pastor will help her towards achieving that goal. This process of listening to the client without imposing any predetermined agenda is an essential first step in the new model thinking being proposed here.

A second element, which can be linked to the 'desire' motif, lies in Osmer's use of the theology of the Suffering Servant, as one of the most important aspects of Christology[826]. This relates in principle to the fourth stage of pastoral care identified by Osmer – that of identifying the pragmatic task for the pastor. In offering pastoral ministry as a servant, there must be room for engaging with the client at every level of her being including her spiritual quest, but without imposing too objectively a model

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[825] See Osmer, op. cit., p.35, already referred to in this chapter.
[826] This has been discussed in detail in the previous section on Osmer's pastoral strategy.

of one's own without taking into account the specific needs of the individual.

4.4.2 Hunsinger

Hunsinger's book on pastoral counselling makes a strong and explicit link between pastoral counselling as a religious enterprise with its roots, as she understands it, in Barthian theology on the one hand, and secular models on the other – particularly the Object Relations School of psychoanalytic psychotherapy[827]. It is significant that the use of the word 'object' which has a special significance for both psychoanalysis generally and Object Relations psychology in particular has a resonance with our exploration of the nature and origins of addictions in one specific way.

By way of explanation of this assertion we note the possible epistemological linkage between psychotherapy and addiction and the work of Damian Thompson, whose book *The Fix* has been mentioned earlier. Thompson uses the word 'object' in a less specific sense than that which is given in psychoanalytical discourse; nevertheless, there is a highly significant feature here: he sees addiction as drawing particularly on two pathogenic factors in contemporary living, i.e. the pathological movement from relating to <u>people</u> to relating to <u>things</u>[828], and the ever increasing availability of intoxicants, both alcohol and other drugs.

The gradual replacement of people by things such as alcohol or drugs in the hierarchy of desires is being highlighted here. The key factor for Thompson in this context is that, unlike people, drugs make no demands

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[827] See Charles Rycroft, *A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*, pp.100ff for a full exploration of these ideas, with particular reference to the unconscious formation of internal representations of objects.
[828] Thompson comments that 'Perhaps the crucial feature of addiction is the progressive replacement of people by things', (op. cit., p.6), a view that he attributes to the work of Craig Nakken in his book *The Addictive Personality*.

on us. They do not have needs that we are obliged to meet. We can therefore conclude that we are in control of them. This supposed control continues until addiction erodes or destroys it, a process which he argues is deliberately engineered by those who stand to make a profit from our increasing addictions, such as the companies who market alcoholic beverages.

The argument being presented in this thesis is therefore that individuals can form within their minds, at a deeply unconscious level, an object representation based on alcohol, drugs, or process addictions such as gambling which provide a pleasant and (supposedly) controllable sensation in the psyche. Hunsinger is concerned in her Object Relations approach to pastoral counselling with the ways in which human beings, from an early age, form internal representations of what is most meaningful to them. There is a clear hierarchy here involving God, other people, and things, such as alcohol. Her client 'Eva' might then be seen as someone who, as a result of traumatic experiences with her parents, has elevated what are perceived initially as controllable objects such as alcohol to the place where relationships with people and God would be expected to have more significance.

When this process has reached the point of addiction or substance dependence, the therapeutic endeavour, which could be undertaken at a clinical level through psychotherapy, or at a pastoral level (using Hunsinger's approach for example) entails a reversal of that process, so that the client is enabled to re-engage with people instead of the drug of choice.

From a more specifically religious perspective, the Barthian aspects of Hunsinger's model of pastoral care then plays its part alongside more

psychological elements: she observes the way in which Barth argues that 'our very being derives from our relationship with God. Our need of God will also be reflected in the creaturely sphere in our relationships with one another'[829]. And following from this she links it with Fairbairn's claim that in contrast to the Freudian picture, 'for Fairbairn human beings are fundamentally and irreducibly object seeking'[830], rather than focussed primarily on the need for the relief of intrapsychic tension at a more individualistic, biological level. Thus longing for, hunger for, God and human relationships (and in terms of recognising the distortions when addiction to 'things' takes their place) are fundamental rather than secondary aspects of human desiring, and pastoral counselling will work towards enabling these relationships to be formed and to flourish.

But – and this is where we would argue that the new model enters the picture – such a programme of intervention would only be possible when the client is able to identify for himself the usefulness of this interpretation and decide for himself to work with that image in mind. The new model, asking questions of a positive kind, would help to focus the client's thinking on the way in which for him things have taken the place of people, and also to suggest, in the case of the religious element housed within pastoral counselling, that one of the casualties of this process might be God and an engagement with spiritual issues.

4.4.3 Kenneth Leech

The first point of contact between Leech's pastoral approach and the new model, it is argued here, is that as with the other writers mentioned

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[829] Hunsinger, op. cit., p.55.
[830] ibid.

in this chapter, it is important, as Leech understands it, to see the pastoral minister not as a superior being, one who holds the answers to the situation, but as one who enters into the encounter with a humble, and above all egalitarian, attitude. This is to make the question that is proposed in 'new model' thinking 'What do <u>you</u> want from life?' central to the process of pastoral counselling, even though it may be some time before the client (a term which, as we have seen, Leech resists) has access to a coherent way of answering the question. What matters is that the endeavour does not focus primarily on ideas about the aetiology of addiction, which may only reflect the ideas of the counsellor, but letting the person receiving the counselling approach the subject in his own unique way.

There is perhaps here an echo of one of the psychological models for understanding addiction that we mentioned in a much earlier part of the thesis, that of Prochaska and Di Clemente, in their 'transtheoretical' or 'stages of change'[831] approach to working with addicts. As we saw there, the first stage on this journey, according to their model, is that of 'pre-contemplation' a stage in which no decision to change one's behaviour has yet been reached, but there is a sense of beginning to move in that direction.

A second significant aspect of Leech's position on addiction in his book *Drugs and Pastoral Care* is his willingness to engage with the highly mysterious element in the experience of people who are misusing drugs in terms of their attempts to journey out of the slavery to such substances. The damage may be physical or psychological: often it is both. It also often

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[831] See J. O. Prochaska and W. F. Velicer, "The Transtheoretical Model of Health Behavior Change". Their approach was noted in the earlier chapter of this thesis on psychological understanding of addiction in connection with J. B. Davies who, like them, rejects the concept of addiction at an ontological level.

has social and economic aspects. For Leech there is also a highly significant spiritual dimension involved in this process. But for the pastor to engage with this aspect of the journey is to encounter much darkness, mystery and uncertainty. It is a journey that is often characterised by waiting rather than by rushing into any form of active ministry at an early stage in the pastoral encounter.

But the use of the phrase 'journey out of slavery' might also alert us to an epistemological link with the Augustinian approach we have been suggesting alongside the 'client centred' approach being advocated in terms of the new model, which, as we have seen, focuses on desire for God. There was for Augustine a long period of darkness and uncertainty before he was able to recognise the superior claim of Christian spirituality and praxis to all the other religions and philosophies he had encountered such as that of the Manicheans[832] – and this is helpful because it reminds the pastor that in terms of the new model, there may well be, for the addicted person, a lengthy time of darkness and uncertainty similar to that which Augustine himself experienced before embracing Christianity.

The chapter in which Leech looks at this dark, mysterious element of addiction is entitled "Pastoral Care and the Christian Community". He emphasizes that 'there is a central place for silence, darkness and the way of "unknowing"'[833]. He observes that in the care of the addict, which he regards as being the concern of the whole Church rather than of a priestly *élite*, 'it is not possible, much of the time, to see the prospect of immediate change, and it is important to stay with the pain, the wounds, the brokenness, the repeated crises, and the darkness, in faith and trust'[834].

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[832] This journey is chronicled for us in the *Confessions*.
[833] Leech, *Drugs and Pastoral Care*, p.100.
[834] op. cit., p.100f.

Human happiness and the fulfilment of desire is thus, in line with Augustinian theology, to be found ultimately in the internal process of the development of a spiritual relationship, a relationship with God as understood by Christianity, rather than by pursuing outward, more materialistic goals. Leech, who emphasizes the truth of this proposition in his own work, in his book on spiritual direction, for example[835], is concerned also in *Drugs and Pastoral Care* to help those who have been enslaved by addiction to drugs to discover, or rediscover, a spiritual basis to their lives, not as an addition or supplement to their clinical or pastoral care but as a vital ingredient of this healing process.

It is then this willingness to engage with the darkness without trying to avoid it or look for a quick result that is arguably Leech's most important contribution to the world of caring for addicted people, and it fits well with the new model, it is argued here, because it allows the persons receiving care to be in control, to move at their own pace, and to set their own agenda for change when this becomes a possibility. Change, for the individual, and with the help of the pastoral counsellor, may then lead to recognition of the longing for God which is there, although it may not be immediately apparent to the client. This 'apophatic' approach to pastoral care is also counter-cultural in a society where pressure on health care resources of all kinds is increasing, and there is a consequent temptation to look for the kind of quick results which so often fails the addicted population who often cannot make this kind of immediate lifestyle change.

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[835] Kenneth Leech, *Soul Friend.*

4.5   Conclusion to this chapter

Richard Osmer, Deborah Hunsinger and Kenneth Leech all have important insights into pastoral care, and also ideas that resonate well with the New Model being proposed in this thesis. So which of them has the best claim to help us to understand the pastoral ministry to people with addiction problems?

Of the three, it seems to the present author that Kenneth Leech does that best, not just because he writes convincingly at a theoretical level, but because although all three give some account of pastoral interaction with people who have addiction problems, Leech worked for many years with addicted people in central London who were at such a vulnerable stage of their lives, in Soho, and later at St. Botolph's Church, Aldgate. It is his active involvement with this work in practice, and his reflections on it in his books that, we argue, gives them a special place of importance. This is not least because he is able to offer an approach in which darkness and uncertainty are tolerated rather than addressed in too much of a problem solving approach that looks for quick results.

It is perhaps also worth noting that although both Osmer and Hunsinger speak about an addicted person with whom they have been involved, and Osmer gives a lengthy section on the nature of addiction and its treatment, neither of them makes a sufficiently clear statement about the ways in which the alcohol dependent person herself has been affected by her substance dependency in terms of her emotional and spiritual trauma and the process of healing.

And in terms of the new model, Leech's approach fits particularly well, because it allows the client to be regarded in an egalitarian fashion and to be, as far as possible, in control of the pastoral interchange, while allowing

for the centrality of spiritual awakening as part of the process of movement from the enslavement of addiction to freedom in Christ through the ministry of prayer and sacrament.

4.6 <u>A summary of what has been presented</u>.

This thesis has addressed the subject of human addiction by focussing on three fundamental concerns, which are:

1) How do the available books and articles on addiction from psychological and theological perspectives approach the task of understanding what addiction is? Some important insights were derived from this part of the study, but there was also dissatisfaction with what has been discovered in the process because of the wide and at times contradictory range of views that can be found in the literature: there are sometimes irreconcilable attitudes observed towards whether:

   1. Addiction is a form of disease, and
   2. Whether a person with an addictive lifestyle such as alcoholism should necessarily be regarded as an 'alcoholic for life' or
   3. Whether the condition can be successfully dealt with by the appropriate treatment

2) The quest for an alternative theory. Given the disparities in the approaches mentioned, and a sense of dissatisfaction with what has been written in some respects, the quest then became a search for an innovative theory that might avoid some of the problems associated with what has been written before. In the light of this a New Model was proposed which starts in a different place from earlier ones in that it focuses primarily on the appetites and desires of the person with the problem in a positive and individualistic way, rather than beginning with an attempt to discover what has caused the addiction. This also led to a theological aspect of the issue, arguing that in line with the theology of

St. Augustine of Hippo, all human longing has its ultimate destination in a wish for a spiritual experience rather than being limited to the secular and materialistic aims of humanity, even when this spiritual longing is not recognised.

3)   Following on from the provision of this new model for understanding addiction, our quest has moved into a more pragmatic area of discourse, as we began to look at ways in which these insights might be incorporated into a number of templates for pastoral care. Three were identified: as the new model was related to each in turn, Leech's work was given special commendation.

Having identified these aspects of the exploration of addiction, therefore, and looked at how they might best be addressed, we are now in a position to show how this approach is already being introduced into some training programmes for Christian ministers, and how that initiative might be implemented further at an institutional level by co-operation with one of the central governing bodies of the Anglican Church in the United Kingdom.

Firstly, as was mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, a number of Church of England Dioceses, Southwark, Guildford, and London, have already received a training session from the writer of the thesis (and colleagues from the relevant secular bodies) as part of their continuing ministerial education programmes that incorporate the ideas that are embodied in the thesis. It is hoped that input from us into these courses will be continued in the future. And some work has been done in this context in a number of parishes in west London. A request to the Diocese of Southwark for financial backing for a similar project in a Richmond parish is being considered at the time of writing.

Secondly, at the request of the lead chaplain of two NHS Trust hospitals, in Croydon and Kingston, a course has been delivered along similar lines. One advantage of this is

that although in the Anglican diocesan programmes the participants were all Christian ministers, in the hospital environment there has been an opportunity to widen the scope of the training by the participation of people of other Christian denominations, and other faiths, thereby broadening the ecumenical aspects of delivery of the subject matter which affects people of all types of religious persuasion (and none).

Thirdly, by arranging meetings at Church House in Westminster, convened by the Policy Advisor of the Mission and Public Affairs Division of the Archbishops' Council, and involving two other medically qualified and also ordained participants[836], it has been possible to begin to investigate ways in which the need for well-informed pastoral intervention on behalf of addicted people and their families can be addressed not just in terms of local initiatives but in terms of the generation of a response from the Church of England at an institutional level to a problem which is widespread in our country and should be addressed as a major social concern. It is our belief that the New Model proposed in this thesis would fit in well with such a programme.

To conclude – what is being proposed in this thesis is a methodology for treating addicted people in pastoral situations (and in particular those with alcohol and drug dependency problems) which concentrates less on questions of what causes addiction and focuses on a more positive engagement with the wishes, longings and aspirations of the sufferer, linking this with the theology of St. Augustine in particular. This is a cognitive, person centred approach, which builds critically on much of available literature about the aetiology of addiction, but avoids the kind of excessive generalisation that too often can be found in this primary material. Questions about such a person's deepest wishes become the foundation of such treatment, and in the light of this, he or she may be encouraged to think less about what they are recovering <u>from</u>, and more about what they are recovering <u>for</u>.

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[836] One of whom is the Reverend Professor Christopher Cook of Durham University, whose writings have been discussed at various points in the thesis.

This thesis is thus being presented as the beginning of a way of understanding addiction and how people whose lives have been adversely affected by the misuse of alcohol and illicit drugs may best be helped, in both clinical and pastoral settings. The idea of it as a beginning implies that much more needs to be done. What forms might this further investigation take?

The research presented here has taken two directions: it has been informed by the available writings on the psychological understanding of addiction and by an attempt to show how theological ideas, particularly those of Augustine, might be used, both separately and also in collaboration.

On the psychological side of the equation, it is unsurprisingly the case that books and articles on addiction appear with some regularity: only those that were available at the time of writing this thesis, and only a representative proportion of these have been discussed here. It would be helpful to continue to read and assess such books as they appear, looking in particular for those that share the current author's idea of beginning with the aspirations of the client, as an arguably better starting point than retrospective attempts to understand the pathways by which individuals become addicted. One such recent book is Bepko, *Feminism and Addiction*, and others such as Kubička and Csémy have looked at female role perception in relation to alcohol misuse[837].

Similarly, on the theological approach, there are new books on particular aspects of human desire that contribute to our understanding of this aspect of the subject. The volume entitled *Faith, Rationality and the Passions*, edited by Sarah Coakley, is one example of a recent book that tries to find satisfactory theological answers to questions about how reason and emotion can be related within Christian discourse. A book already mentioned in this thesis would also be worth further study – Christopher Cook's review of the *Philokalia* looks at the relationship between Christian pastoral

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[837] Kubička and Csémy, "Women's gender role orientation predicts their drinking patterns".

counselling and secular psychotherapies, and it may be that insights from this book, written by someone with a wide experience of working with addicted people, would provide more routes into the kind of thinking suggested by our research. There are also issues about training, and ways in which this approach, particularly in relation to Hunsinger's bilingual model, might be addressed in the preparation of Christian pastoral ministers at all levels.

With further time this approach could be developed in greater detail, and it may be that, in some form, it might be adapted for use not only in a pastoral setting within the life of Christian and other worshipping communities, but also in the holistic clinical care offered by General Practitioners, and hospitals and clinics specialising in the care of addicted people. What has been identified here is therefore seen by the researcher as a way into understanding addiction from a new perspective, with suggestions about how the ideas presented might be studied more widely and in more detail, and then applied to a number of treatment modalities, both in church based pastoral care plans, and potentially in the wider context of secular treatment agencies for people with addiction problems.

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Diagnostic Guides for Determining Addiction:

See: Robert West, *Theory of Addiction*, p.15

1. **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual –IV** (American Psychiatric Association, 1995.) 3 or more occurring in same year suggest addiction:

   (1) Substance is often taken in larger amounts or over longer period than intended

   (2) Persistent desire or unsuccessful attempts to cut down or control substance use

   (3) A great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain the substance or recover from its effects

   (4) Important social, occupational or recreational activities given up or reduced because of substance abuse

   (5) Continued use despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent psychological, or physical problem that is caused or exacerbated by use of the substance.

   (6) Tolerance, as defined by either: need for greater amounts of the substance in order to achieve intoxication or desired effect; or markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount

   (7) Withdrawal, as manifested by either: characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the substance; or the same (or closely related) substance is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms.

2. **International Classification of Disease-10** (WHO 1992)

   (1) Difficulties in controlling substance taking behaviour in terms of its onset, termination, or levels of use

   (2) A strong desire or sense of compulsion to take the substance.

   (3) Progressive neglect of alternative pleasures

   (4) Persisting with substance use despite clear evidence of overtly harmful consequences

   (5) Evidence of tolerance, such that increased does of the psychoactive substance are required in order to achieve the effects originally produce by lower doses.

   (6) A physiological withdrawal state when substance use has ceased or been reduced, as evidenced by: the characteristic withdrawal symptom for the substance; or use of the same (or closely related) substance with the intention of relieving or avoiding withdrawal symptoms.

How many people in this country have a significant problem in relation to alcohol at the moment? The diagram shown here gives a helpful breakdown of the statistics.
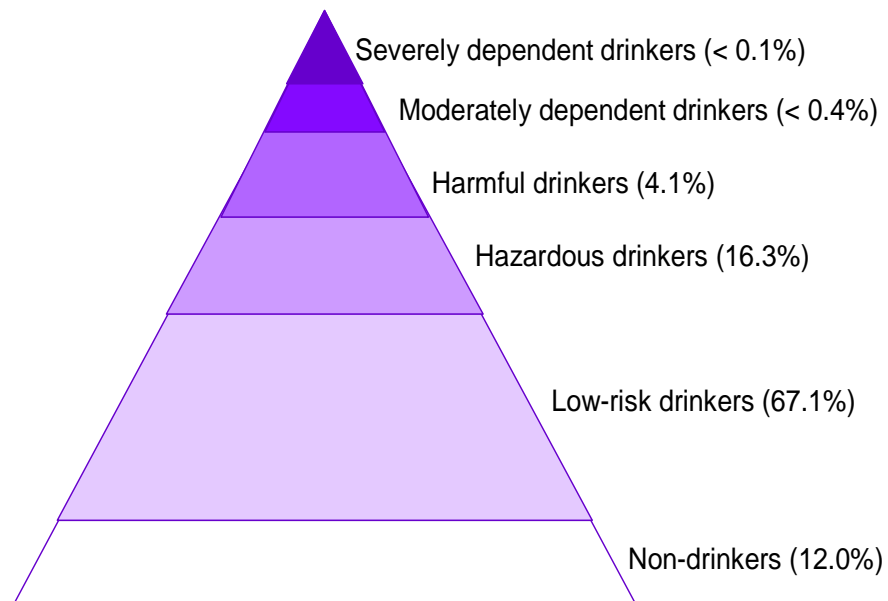
(Department of Health estimates, 2005)

Most of the adult population of England are either non-drinkers (12%) or low-risk drinkers (67.1%), who drink within the Department of Health's guidelines and suffer no harmful effects. (These people are not considered *alcohol misusers*.)