

ground to be near the man he had loved, the lantern, how hands clasped other hands in a hut, the clasp of strangers who did not have a common tongue and came from such different civilizations.”

Emerson goes beyond the political rhetoric that usually surrounds talk of the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation. The book is a judgment against all who refuse to look at the ugly reality of a people under occupation—people who are, in Emerson’s words, “penned in like barnyard animals.”

James M. Wall

Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Religion: Transference and Transcendence.

By James W. Jones. Yale University Press, 144 pp., \$16.95.

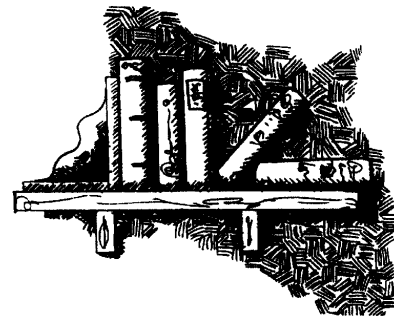
After a few decades of attempted (and at times aborted) conversations between psychoanalysis and religion, linking the two with the conjunction “and” has an all-too-familiar ring. But this attempt to “shuttle between two fields” is anything but old. Some psychologists are attuned to religious experience, some theologians dabble in psychological inquiry, but few have doctorates and strong commitments in both fields. As a clinical psychologist in private practice and a professor of reli-

gion at Rutgers University, James W. Jones occupies a unique vantage point. He has a vital stake in a positive answer to the question, Can a psychoanalysis of religion be conducted on a basis that leaves the intellectual and spiritual core of religion alive and intact?

The title and initial direction of the book are slightly misleading. The book could be called a “post-Freudian” or “relational” psychoanalysis of religion. The first two chapters lay the groundwork for a more exciting thrust that is not explicitly stated until midway. These chapters trace paradigmatic shifts in understandings of transference and review interpretations of religion in Freud, W. W. Meissner, Ana-Maria Rizzuto, Stanley Leavy and Hans Loewald. While appreciative of other efforts to move beyond Freud, Jones seeks an alternate route. Building on relational models of self in Ronald Fairbairn, Heinz Kohut, Morton Gill and Alan Roland, he argues that transference is not an inappropriate, regressive projection of infantile impulses. It is an interpersonal phenomenon, the re-creation of relational patterns central to the construction of a sense of self and the result of an ongoing, inherent propensity for empathic connection.

This cracks wide open Freud’s reductive interpretation of a powerful form of transference—religion. Religion is not a

one-way obsessive defense against primitive instincts; it is even more than the manifestation of the human need for transitional objects that Rizzuto explores. Religion is a necessary relationship. The psychoanalytic study of reli-



gion therefore has a new agenda; it should study resonances between a person’s God relationship and internalized relationships that shape one’s sense of self, the God relationship and transference patterns in one’s life, and finally the development of a more integrated sense of self and the development of a new image of God.

One of the real nuggets of the book is the all-too-brief clinical account tracing this theme in Jones’s treatment of four patients and the psychological and religious analysis of the transformations that occurred. As the patients’ transference engagements with Jones changed from anxiety, mistrust and anger to trust and openness, and as their sense of self evolved from a fragmented and diminished one to a more cohesive and autonomous one, their affective bonds with God underwent parallel transformations. God changed from a vengeful to a sustaining, empathic deity. This “affective bond with the sacred” grounds a person’s sense of self.

Clinicians who read these chapters will feel compelled to listen more closely to their patients’ bonds with the sacred, their inner relational world and the transference motifs that reflect both. The clinician and pastoral theologian may wonder: If the clinical moment is truly interactive and the clinician never neutral, what role does the religious and theological stance of the therapist play? Should we actively engage religious ideas and experience, as Jones does? Certainly he has a good ear for “inner relational melodies” and the symphony behind them. He listens carefully to his patients, to other scholars and ultimately to himself, enabling us all to appreciate religion in ways that Freud never could.

Bonnie Miller-McLemore

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