

Introduction

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For anyone interested in hearing the dialogue between psychoanalysis and religion in a new key, the present text will be deeply rewarding. There are many bridges being built today between these two formerly antagonistic disciplines, an antagonism that was much to each other's loss. Psychoanalysis hovers near a functionalistic, mechanistic approach to human experience, while religion frequently fosters a denial of human ambiguity and conflict. Dr. Keith Haartman's bridge, so to speak, is solidly built and brings the reader to an informed appreciation not only of John Wesley's Methodism but also of the essential role psychoanalysis plays in understanding the intrapsychic issues at stake in his religious method. Using Maslow's concepts of self-actualization, Haartman studies the vicissitudes of superego/ego-ideal and ego reaction to understand Wesley's contributions to his religious followers. Haartman details the effect not only of the expectable life issues that Wesley's followers experienced, but particularly the pervasive childhood bereavement traumas they were subject to in eighteenth century England and its effect as evidenced in their religious experiences.

Wesley taught that God's grace and kingdom were to be experienced in the here and now rather than exclusively in the hereafter, that "salvation" was a graduated process with many turns in the road and that continued self-awareness were to be its constant companion. Psychoanalysis, for its part, teaches that the fruits of one's labors for insight have to eventuate in an integrated life in the here and now, marked by an experience of personal meaning and creative interaction with one's world. And, of course, that the formal ending of any personal analysis is only the beginning of a life long task. Without compromising the fact that Christian religious beliefs and psychoanalysis are radically different in content, Haartman shows, with remarkable clarity, how psychoanalysis supplies the tools for understanding the *process* of such religious beliefs. Along the way the author's mastery of psychoanalytic concepts, particularly the work of Melanie Klein, is evident. Dr. Haartman achieves his study of Methodism without the all too common reductionistic approach that still mars psychoanalytic scholarship.

Dr. Haartman is no apologist for any religious belief, his interest is in showing how personal internal harmony, expressed in Wesley's practices, achieved an integration that is similar to the secular, non-religious experience which psychoanalysis offers. The human quest for integration is at work in both these human experiences; such a quest, of course, is as old as humanity itself. Dr. Haartman in this careful, respectful and penetrating analysis offers the reader a model of applying psychoanalytic concepts that deepens their

understanding. Both psychoanalysts, as well as those interested in studying western religious traditions, will be grateful to Dr. Haartman for what this text offers.