

Kali, Shiva, and Psychotherapy

A Hermeneutic Literature Review

A dissertation submitted

by

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Attestation of authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Vijay Mahantesh

10th January 2018

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Abstract

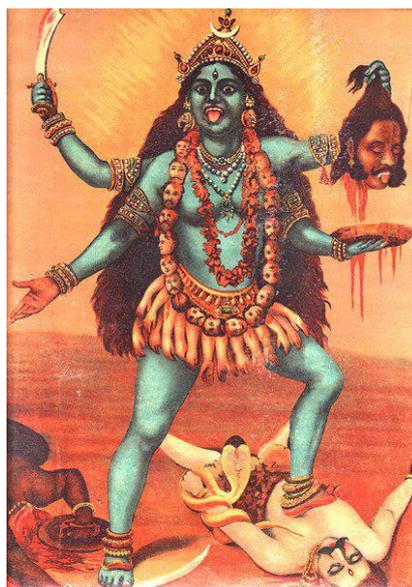
Myths are widely understood as having contributed significantly to the field of psychotherapy. This research examines psychoanalytic and other relevant literature that refers to the Vedic Hindu mythological couple, Kali and Shiva. A hermeneutic method of engaging with literature proved useful in reviewing myths about Kali and Shiva which are depicted in texts, artefacts and other media. Exploring psychoanalytic literature against the backdrop of mythological literature provided significant insights about psychotherapeutic engagement, and an updated and refreshed understanding of Kali and Shiva and their relationship. Themes that emerged span a wide range and speak of this mythological relationship being an integral part of human growth, both developmental and spiritual. Exploration of these themes in light of the clinical issues offers further insights about trauma, loss, enactments, and therapeutic transformation. New perspectives about psychodynamic formulation and treatment were gained and significant practice implications have been identified, particularly in trauma therapy. It has also been highlighted that findings from this study may have applications for future research.

Introduction

This dissertation explores the research question, “how does the myth of Kali and Shiva relate to psychotherapeutic engagement?” This section provides an introduction to the issues and context to which this research positions itself by highlighting the purpose of this research. The aim of this research has also been described along with an outline of this dissertation.

Purpose

I am an Indian man from a Hindu family. I lived in different parts of India until about 12 years ago when I decided to make New Zealand home. While living in India, I had some exposure to Hindu mythology. There are many mythological figures in the Hindu pantheon. Of these, two deities that are powerfully depicted are Kali and Shiva. Kali is usually presented in an aggressive form with weapons in her hands, and Shiva is illustrated as sitting in meditation often in the Himalayas. One particular image of Kali and Shiva which is commonly featured in Indian homes, temples, and media illustrates Kali trampling Shiva who appears dead as shown in Figure 1.



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Figure 1. Kali and Shiva. From Wikimedia Commons. Retrieved from

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Kali_by_Raja_Ravi_Varma.jpg. Copyright [2017] by Wikimedia Commons.

During the course of my psychotherapy training in New Zealand, as part of my reading, I discovered this particular depiction of Kali in a dominating position over Shiva has also featured in psychoanalytic literature. In addition, as part of my reflections about clinical issues, I recognised certain exchanges which occurred in the therapy room also resonated with this image. An initial search of literature revealed this mythological relationship had not been studied with the therapist-client dyad in mind. Because of this reason, I became curious about myths associated with these two deities and how these myths might relate to the therapeutic dyad and the psychotherapy relationship.

Aim of research

It was hoped that findings from this research would enable a critical reflection about how psychotherapy can be explored through a mythological relational lens. It was also hoped that this research would lead to an increase in awareness of how culture influences therapeutic engagement and interplay between the therapeutic couple. In particular, I am keen to find out if there is any value in reflecting over myths and mythological relationships in the context of psychotherapeutic engagement.

The aim of this study, therefore, is to understand how the myth of Kali and Shiva relates to psychotherapeutic engagement. In order to achieve this aim, the following questions laid the foundation for this research:

- a. What is there to be known about Kali and Shiva?
- b. What is the relationship between Kali & Shiva?
- c. What has been written about Kali and Shiva in psychotherapy literature?
- d. How does the Kali-Shiva relationship relate to psychotherapeutic dyad and psychotherapeutic engagement?
- e. How does the myth of Kali and Shiva relate to psychoanalytic theory and practice?

Brief overview of chapters

Thus far, I have introduced the reader to the research question and the context to which this research positions itself. Research aim and hopes about research findings have also been highlighted.

In chapter 1, I describe the methodology and research method and the rationale for my choice of these. I also reflect on my position as the researcher of this topic by describing my background and how it has led to the questions being examined in this research.

Chapter 2 examines Vedic Hindu mythology, and I offer results of the literature reviewed about the myth of Kali and Shiva and their relationship.

Chapter 3 offers a set of themes that emerged from my literature review. I also capture key psychoanalytic ideas that are associated with myths of Kali and Shiva.

Chapter 4 builds on the themes identified in chapter 3 and presents my findings about the association between Kali-Shiva relationship and the psychotherapeutic encounter.

In chapter 5, I discuss the overall research findings and identify where I got to with this literature review and what it all means. I also discuss clinical practice applications of this research and identify limitations of the current study and make suggestions for future research.

Finally, chapter 6 provides the reader a brief summary of the entire research.

Chapter 1. Methodology and methods

Introduction

It is often recommended that when choosing a methodological approach, researchers should adopt a theoretical position to which they can relate to. As such, the choice of research methodology depends on the researcher's ontological and epistemological positions (Ponterotto, 2005). Ontology refers to the philosophical study of "nature of being" and epistemology relates to the philosophical study of "nature of knowledge" and how we acquire it (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 24-25). While ontology seeks to understand the nature of reality and explores 'what is there to be known' about reality, epistemology seeks to understand the 'relationship between the knower and what can be known' (Furlong & Marsh, 2002).

Our ontological and epistemological position determines whether we choose a positivist or an interpretive paradigm to carry out the research (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). According to Neuman (2000), the goal of interpretivist research is to understand and interpret meaning subjectively as opposed to predicting cause and effect which is the primary concern of positivist paradigm. A preliminary search exploring the research question 'how does the myth of Kali and Shiva relate to psychotherapeutic engagement?' suggested there were no clear-cut answers to this question in literature. In order to develop understanding, I anticipated having to engage in a dialogue with relevant literature on the subject. An interpretive approach was therefore identified as suitable for examination of this topic. This would provide the ability to extract and interpret meaning from literature through a subjective lens. I chose the hermeneutic methodology within interpretivism because the dialogical interplay between researcher and literature is a key feature of this methodology, and this also aligned with my own epistemological position. A hermeneutic approach also offered a meaningful pathway to pursue and interpret the research question,

fully engage with the literature, immerse myself deeply and subjectively in analysis, and to incorporate my own cultural understanding and interpretation of the literature.

During the process of reflecting on my own philosophical stance, I came across the following quote by an Indian yogi that aligns with my epistemological position and, I believe, also captures the essence of hermeneutic methodology:

"It is not the object of your search that is important; it is the faculty of looking. The ability to simply look without motive is missing in the world today. Everybody is a psychological creature, wanting to assign meaning to everything. Seeking is not about looking for something. It is about enhancing your perception, your very faculty of seeing" (Vasudev, 2016, p. 15).

In addition, at the beginning of this research, I also created the following visual representation showing how the paradigm and methodology are layered over the method employed. I found it useful to think of the research question as being examined through two magnifying glasses as illustrated in Figure 2.

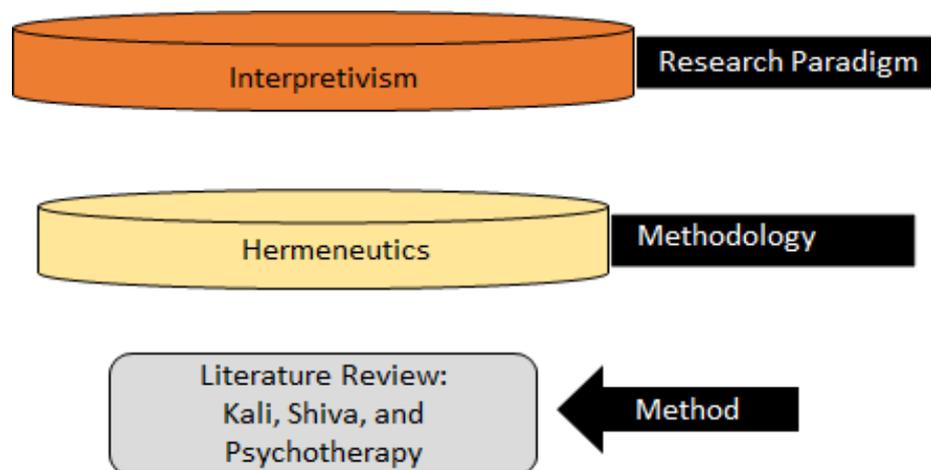


Figure 2. This research is a hermeneutic literature review of Kali-Shiva and its relationship with psychotherapeutic engagement.

In the following sections, I will describe hermeneutic methodology and the method I employed to review literature hermeneutically in further detail.

2.1. Hermeneutic methodology

Hermeneutic methodology was originally used as a way of interpreting religious and ancient texts, however, this methodology has evolved from its use with historic texts to its current applications in humanities and social sciences (Orange, 2011). Modern hermeneutics can be attributed to the work of the philosopher Martin Heidegger and his student, Hans-Georg Gadamer (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010). Shifting course away from the philosophical ideas of Schleiermacher and Dilthey who had viewed the function of hermeneutics primarily as reconstructing meaning, Heidegger proposed that interpretation of texts was not just about “meaning making” but was also about the context in which the text is read (Barrett et al., 2011, p. 187). Accordingly, it was suggested that the translation of a text must always consider the “socio-historical and cultural context” in which the text is being interpreted (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014, p.6).

Extending on the work of Heidegger, Gadamer (2004) believed that our understanding of the world depends on language. Therefore, he proposed “a dialogue between the reader and the text, between readers and between texts” as a necessary process to gain insight (p. 272). Through such dialogue, Gadamer (2004) identified an opportunity for “fusion of horizons” (p. 319); the perspective of the text meeting with the perspective of the reader. A fusion of horizons enables the reader to become familiar with the terminology and theory in the text but also, through one’s own subjective experience of the text, there is a further opening up of the text to additional interpretations (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). In essence, Gadamerian thought emphasises that hermeneutics is not about the author’s view of the truth but instead it is “about what truth the reader makes of it and how the text comes alive for the

interpreter” (Regan, 2012, p. 292). Hermeneutics invites the reader to not remove subjectivity from understanding but rather ‘move closer into it’ and become one with the text in order to co-create meaning (Bleicher, 1980).

Hermeneutics also suggests that overall interpretation and understanding is influenced by each new piece of literature examined and interpreted. Through movement back and forth between parts of a text and the whole body of literature and between what has been explicit and that which is implicit in texts, the researcher is able to deepen understanding of the subject (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010). With such back and forth movement between parts and the whole, there emerges a struggle and a sense of unrest but also an opportunity to observe with wonder how the smaller details fit within the larger whole. Gadamer refers to this process as “play,” and he invites the interpreter to occupy the space between structure and freedom where there is room to “play, to respond to the unrest, and think again” (Smythe et al, 2008, p. 1391).

In addition, Gadamer (2004) proposes that during the process, the researcher must work out any presuppositions they may have and recognise “one’s own fore-meanings” (p., 272). The researcher must situate the meaning of the text within the context of their own presuppositions. In this way, the text becomes available to many alternative interpretations making it possible to generate new understanding (Regan, 2012); it is re-awakened by way of the interpreter making sense of what has been written (Gadamer, 2004). Further, hermeneutic principles suggests that shared meaning emerges through a constant movement of contemplation, from scrutiny of the whole (review of selected literature) to scrutiny of its parts (reflections on pre-suppositions, misunderstandings, assumptions, arguments in individual texts) and back again (Gadamer, 2004).

Finally, Hermeneutics also presumes that what is important is not striving to achieve a final understanding of the relevant literature but to engage in a process of constant re-interpretation which invariably leads to deeper and more

comprehensive understanding of the text (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010). The goal is therefore not to have a final understanding but “saturation in understanding” (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014, p. 260). The point of saturation is reached when any additional publications the researcher is reading begins to make only minimal contribution to the understanding of the phenomenon (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010).

2.2. Hermeneutic literature review process

The process of reviewing literature hermeneutically has been described by Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic (2010, 2014) diagrammatically using two mutually intertwined hermeneutic circles as shown in Figure 3. These circles represent the recurring movement to which the researcher is invited, a movement between part texts and whole (Grondin, 1997). The process of carrying out research described in the hermeneutic circles was used to systematically search, analyse, and interpret the literature related to the identified research questions. As Figure 3 shows, one of these circles relate to the search and acquisition process, and the second circle refers to the process of analysis and interpretation. This approach requires the analysis and interpretation of the text to be integrated with ongoing search and acquisition (Figure 4) of literature. The systematic application of these guiding principles also adds rigour to the literature review and contributes to the justification of knowledge claims (Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). I followed this process closely, and in the ensuing paragraphs, I will describe comprehensively how this process unfolded.

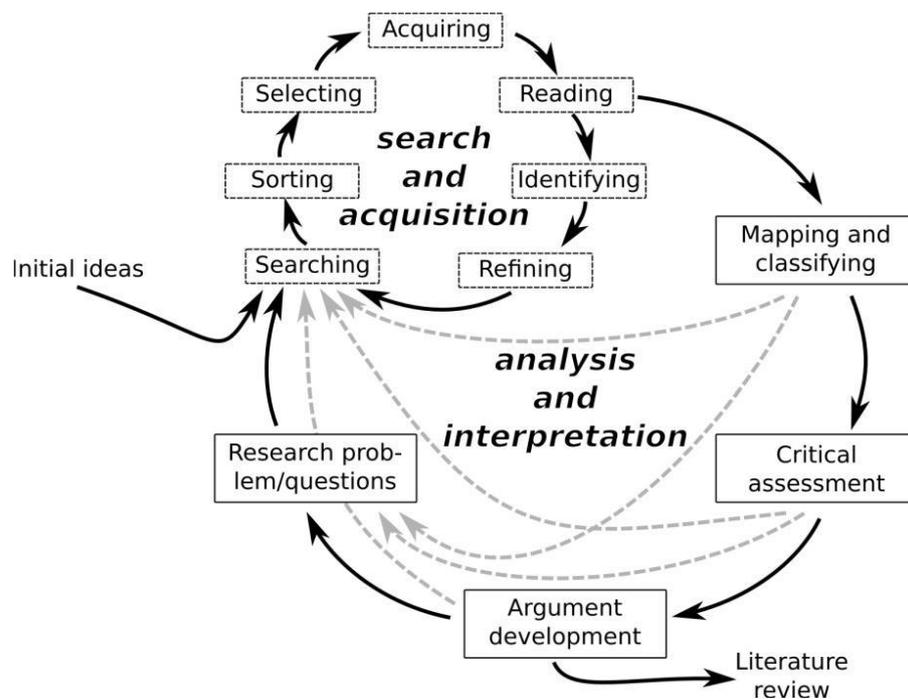


Figure 3. The two, mutually intertwined hermeneutic circles. Reprinted from “A Hermeneutic Approach for Conducting Literature Reviews and Literature Searches,” by S. K. Boell & D. Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014, *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 34(12), 257-286.

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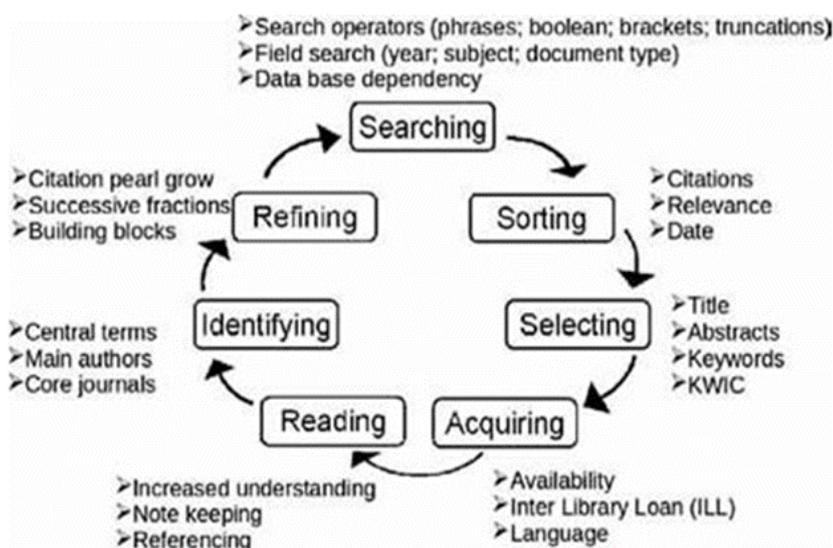


Figure 4. The search and acquisition circle. Reprinted from “Literature Reviews and the Hermeneutic Circle,” by S. K. Boell & D. Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010, *Australian Academic and Research Libraries*, 41(2), 129-144. Copyright [2010] by Australian Academic and Research

Libraries

After identifying the key concepts in the research question as Kali, Shiva, Kali-Shiva relationship, and psychotherapy; I began an initial search of relevant databases with keywords such as 'Shiva' and 'Kali.' Databases searched were PEP; PsycARTICLES; PsycBOOKS; PsycEXTRA; PsycINFO; and Counselling and Psychotherapy Transcripts, Client Narratives, and Reference Works. The initial search uncovered that in the literature, the words 'Shakti' and 'Sakti' were used interchangeably with Kali. I also identified that the word 'Siva' (without the letter 'h') is used interchangeably with Shiva. I included these as additional search terms and performed additional searches which led to discovery of other relevant articles and books.

Of the databases searched, only three (PEP, PsychInfo, and PsycARTICLES) produced results that were relevant to the research question. Articles published in a language other than English or those which did not have English translations were excluded from the literature review due to language limitations. This initial search produced 44 articles in total. Figure 5 gives an overview of results from the database search. In addition to searching for articles, relevant book and book chapters were identified. These were sourced or 'acquired' for reading. Books that were not available locally at the university library or other local libraries were sourced through inter-library loan.

Database	Keywords	Search Results	Relevant Articles
PEP	kal* and shiv*	83	24
PEP	shakt* and shiv*	24	11
PEP	sakt* and shiv*	3	0
PEP	kal* and siv*	7	4
PEP	shakt* and siv*	0	0
PEP	sakt* and siv*	5	3
PsychInfo	kal* and shiv*	6	0
PsychInfo	shakt* and shiv*	1	0
PsychInfo	sakt* and shiv*	0	0
PsychInfo	kal* and siv*	0	0
PsychInfo	shakt* and siv*	0	0
PsychInfo	sakt* and siv*	0	0
PsycARTICLES	kal* and shiv*	288	0
PsycARTICLES	shakt* and shiv*	2	2
PsycARTICLES	sakt* and shiv*	3	0
PsycARTICLES	kal* and siv*	0	0
PsycARTICLES	shakt* and siv*	0	0
PsycARTICLES	sakt* and siv*	0	0

Table 1. Initial literature search results.

Describing the hermeneutic approach, Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic (2010) note that within this method, focusing on accessible literature first is acceptable. Hermeneutic literature review supports retrieval of a small set of highly relevant

publications for reading over a large set of documents whose relevance cannot be sufficiently judged (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). It is also recommended to researchers that they judge significance of the publication after the initial reading and identify other material that needs to be acquired. Therefore, after reading the initial articles and book chapters, I was able to use snowballing (citation tracking) and citation analysis as techniques to identify further relevant literature. Snowballing is described as the process of identifying relevant literature based on what a particular author has cited, and citation analysis is a process of identifying other relevant literature that has expanded on the work of a particular author (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014).

The initial reading process allowed the identification of central themes relating to the research question which then assisted in identifying other relevant literature. This process allowed a continuous deepening of my understanding of the subject matter. Throughout this process, I was also engaged in an ongoing process of reflection. I maintained a journal and wrote down thoughts about the material being read in order to track how I was making sense of it. As my understanding of the subject increased, I found I was able to recognise and identify other, non-academic sources of relevant knowledge. Television content, newspaper articles, images, music, and art became part of the material that I engaged with and made notes about. These became part of the whole body of literature which I engaged with using hermeneutic principles.

Once I had a clearer idea of the research topic, I was able to move out of the searching and acquisition process and progress on to analysing and interpreting the information. I drew several mind maps representing key themes emerging from the literature in order to step back and observe how certain ideas linked in with each other. These allowed me to make sense of the 'bigger picture.' Figure 6 below provides an example of one such mind map which was drawn after the initial readings. Discussing my notes and thoughts in supervision was also a crucial aspect of this process and offered additional insights.

285). I often went back and re-read original texts which I had found during my initial search which also provided new insights and allowed me to identify gaps in knowledge as well as contradictory propositions. I engaged in this critical interpretation and re-interpretation process also by reflecting on arguments within a single article and evaluating it in the context of the whole body of literature read. This process only ceased when 'saturation in understanding' had been reached and when findings from the movement between parts of the text and whole texts felt less 'chaotic' and more clearer; the text 'came alive.'

2.3. Reflexivity and motivation for research

As mentioned previously, the context in which the text is read and interpreted is known to be an essential process of hermeneutic research (Barrett, 2011). In particular, the researcher's history and "tradition" are central to the research process (Gadamer, 1982, p. 293). Bringing a "hermeneutic consciousness" and reflecting on researcher's personal values and bias provides context to the research (p. 215). As such, engaging in a process of reflexivity allows an awareness of how the researcher shapes and contributes to the construction of meaning and outcome in the research. Reflecting on own personal and cultural values, beliefs, and preconceptions are part of this process. In the following paragraphs, I offer an overview of my background and preconceptions that are relevant to this research.

I am an Indian man brought up in a semi-traditional Hindu family. Although my family are originally from Southern India, I spent the early years of my life in Varanasi, a North Indian city on the banks of the holy river Ganges, referred to as the land of spirituality. Having lived in both Northern and Southern India, I was exposed to and was a participant of a wide range of festivities, rituals, and rites which observed with passion and celebrated with exuberance. Through these events and general conversations over the years, I had gained some knowledge of traditional myths, epics, and lore. I also spent a significant amount of time

living in an 'ashram' as a teenager, training in yogic practices and philosophy, which added to my knowledge of the culture.

I remember seeing images of Kali and Shiva on several occasions throughout my life, however, I knew little about this particular mythology. Based on prominent images such as those in Figure 1, I held a presumption of Kali as the aggressor and Shiva as the aggrieved. Because of the potent quality of these images in Hindu mythology and their influence on me, they also played a part during my psychotherapy training. In response to certain clinical content, I found myself identifying with Kali or Shiva. There was a recognition that parts of me felt like the aggressive Kali and that certain events caused me to take up the 'Kali position.' On other occasions, I felt like Shiva, lying on the ground with a dominant Kali standing over me. Similarly, certain events would evoke either the 'Shiva emotion' or 'Kali emotion.' I recognised also that identification with Kali gave rise to guilt and regret, and the position of Shiva brought up shame and apprehension. To me, Shiva and Kali together characterised 'aggression,' 'violence,' and 'destruction.'

In addition, my psychotherapy training was based on a predominantly Western model of psychotherapy in New Zealand with bicultural (Maori and Pakeha) undertones. On the side lines of such psychoanalytic training, I found myself exploring mythological associations which were consistent with my own cultural background as a Hindu man. It was through immersion in clinical work that my previous interest in traditional Hindu knowledge came back to life. I noticed that when theoretical formulation and treatment planning felt inadequate in capturing the essence of the dynamic relationship in the therapy room, mythological characters came through as being useful. In essence, mythological associations 'brought something home' about my clinical experience, providing insights about certain situations in a way that theory alone could not.

Based on the above reflections, I identify this research as being motivated by the following:

- a. An identified mismatch between my cultural background (including my background in yoga) and the content of my psychotherapy training in New Zealand.
- b. My experience of myths as being able to add value to what I had been learning and experiencing in a Western context, to be able to fill a gap which I had experienced between theory and practice of psychotherapy.
- c. A lack of contact with cross-cultural models during my psychotherapy training.
- d. An identified need to consciously include a familiar cultural meaning to my experience of the therapeutic dyad because of a belief that there are always cultural influences and values present in therapeutic engagement.

As such, this research occurs in the context of my background; to deepen my understanding of the relatively new psychoanalytic knowledge (new to me) through the lens of cultural knowledge which I already possess due to my roots.

Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have introduced the research paradigm of interpretivism within which the hermeneutic methodology is positioned, and I have provided a clear rationale for my choice of this methodology as a process for exploring the research question. I have described the hermeneutic literature review process and the method I employed to search, collect, read, and synthesise the literature relevant to the research question.

In the following chapter, I provide an overview of the literature I reviewed relating to the myth of Kali and Shiva. Following that, in chapters 3 and 4, I will offer the themes that emerged from a hermeneutic reading of the literature.

Chapter 2. Literature review

Introduction

This chapter contains a review of literature on the mythology of Kali and Shiva. For ease of reading and analysis, the review is categorised into segments. In the first segment, the terms 'myth' and 'mythology' have been briefly described followed by an outline of how mythology has shaped psychotherapy. An introduction to Hindu mythology has also been provided. In the second and third segments, I provide an in-depth account of available literature on Kali and Shiva. In the final part of this chapter, I explore the Kali-Shiva relationship and present themes which emerged from an examination of myths about this couple.

1.1. Myth and mythology

The term 'myth' derives from the Greek word *mythos*, and the notion of myth being 'a story' is widely accepted in literature (Segal, 2015). In addition, myths have been described as "extended metaphors" (Davies, 1988, p. 83). Joseph Campbell, a well-known mythologist and keen observer of human experience, identifies that myths have endured because of their ability to speak to human experiences on many levels - they embody processes, images, wishes, and themes that are difficult to articulate in the more logical, practical language of everyday life (Campbell, 2008). Because of their persistence over time, myths are recognised as a significant way of examining universal existential conflicts (Davies, 1988).

Mythology is a collection of myths. An inquiry of the 'exchange between mythical beings,' which is a prominent feature of mythology, provides us an insight into the character of historical figures (Campbell, 2008) and the struggles of the internal world of humans is also revealed (Anastasopoulos, Soumaki, &

Anagnostopoulos, 2010). Because of these reasons, it is recognised that there is a parallel course shared between issues presented in psychotherapy and mythology (Feinstein, 1990).

1.1.1. Mythology in psychoanalytic literature

Mythology has also made a permanent impression on psychoanalytic literature because words and descriptions from mythology bring to mind characters and emotional states that are presented in the therapeutic space (Spotnitz, 1961). Freud, followed closely by Jung, made extensive use of mythological material in formulating the schemata representing the structure of the psyche (Davies, 1988). The myth of Oedipus became well known because of Freud's use of it in his work; Jung used the myth of Electra; and more recently, in 2002, Carol Gilligan has written about the myth of Psyche (Richards & Spira, 2015). Glaveanu (2005, p. 1) refers to myth as the "producer of psychology." In the same vein, modern or contemporary psychotherapy has come to be understood as an extension of older symbolic constructs, exploring and explaining the human experience (W. Woodard, personal communication, August 30, 2017).

1.1.2. Hindu mythology and psychotherapy

Hindu mythology (Sanskrit: purana), which includes several individual myths, legends, and traditional lore, is contained within a large body of significant texts which are referred to collectively as the Vedas (Dimitt, 1978). Mythologists identify that the earliest references to Kali and Shiva in the Hindu tradition date to the early medieval period (around AD 600) (Kinsley, 2003); however, it has been argued that because of foreign invasions of ancient India and the lack of accurate historical records, current knowledge surrounding these myths is in fact a culmination of culture-religious ideas of people who entered India at different times in her historic past (Ray Chaudhuri, 1956). Additionally, it is recognised that

myths emerged when great seers of ancient India were enlightened with images of deities during their contemplative meditation or dhyān (Ray Chaudhuri, 1956).

During 'dhyān,' an individual must let go of individuality in order for the unconscious transformative material to emerge. What comes about following such forfeiture of individuality is believed to be from the depths of the unconscious mind, taking shape into a verbal form or visual imagery (Ray Chaudhuri, 1956). Further, Mahony (1997) highlights that through such a process of 'dhyān¹,' visionaries (viz. poets, priests, and meditating sages) were able to access the transformative power of imagination, become conscious of the presence of deities, and respond to such divine company in their day-to-day lives.

Literature search shows that Hindu myths have also been featuring in psychoanalytic writing for a long time. A few of these myths have also taken centre stage in psychoanalytic writing, although this endeavour appears to have been dominated by analysts and psychotherapists of Indian origin. For example, Kakar (1989) writes of the 'maternal feminine' within Hindu mythology, Venkoba Rao (1980) and Reddy (2012) provide us with interpretation of certain aspects of the Gita (a holy scripture of the Hindu), Shamasundar (1997, p. 449) has written extensively about the usefulness of anecdotal analogies from Indian mythology in therapeutic work; Jacob and Krishna (2003) use anecdotes from the epic of Ramayana (another holy scripture of the Hindu) in psychotherapy, and Wig (2004) claims to have used the myth of lord Hanuman to help clients in psychotherapy. Non-Indian psychoanalysts who appear to have had Hindu mythology at the heart of their work are Daly (1938) who discusses the interface between Kali and 'castration complex' and Groom (1991) who explores the myth of Shiva in his writing on the creative aspects of 'envy.'

¹ I recognise my association between 'dhyān' and the hermeneutic literature review process this research employs. It is said that researchers engaging in a hermeneutic literature review "immerse themselves in the reading, searching, intuiting, thinking, talking, writing" and "letting-come" a process in order to "discern what matters" (Smythe & Spence, 2012, p.14). I wonder, therefore, if dhyān was Vedic equivalent of hermeneutics and mythological characters such as Kali and Shiva a product of the 'letting-come process.'

1.2. Myths about Kali

Kali, also a product of the unconscious derived through contemplative meditation, is believed to be projected out in a crude and raw form; without modification, without attempt at secondary elaboration, and without attempt to make it meaningful to the conscious mind (Ray Chaudhuri, 1956). Kali is portrayed as having a terrible and frightening appearance, always black or dark, usually naked with long and dishevelled hair, her lips have blood smeared over them, and her tongue protrudes out showing dreadfully sharp teeth (Curran, 1996). She has blood rolling down the side of her cheeks which glistens over her body (Colonna, 1980), and Kali is often seen adorned with garlands of human heads and she wears dead bodies of human infants as earrings. Her bracelets are made of serpents, and her loin has a girdle of severed human hands (Ray Chaudhuri, 1956). Kali has well-formed fleshy breasts (Shukla, 2014), and her four hands are shaped like a lotus. In her left hands, she holds a bloody sword and a freshly severed human head and from her right hands, she offers assurance (Curran, 1996). She is often seen engaged in a wild dance (Shukla, 2014).

She gives blessings (with her right hands) and also decapitates (with her left hands) and is referred to as ‘the Black Goddess’² – she who “brings opposites into harmony” (Colonna, 1980, p. 349). Literature reflects both her terrifying and nurturing nature in much detail. Not only does Kali get drunk on the blood of her victims (Shukla, 2014) and is described as cruel and shameless (full of lust and death) and as someone “who frightens man with her gaping vulva, humiliating, mistreating, and castrating him” (Kohen 1946, p. 50); but she is also recognised as a mother who consoles, nurtures, and protects (Kripal, 2013). Kali is, therefore, both “good and evil, motherly as well as cruel, chaste and shameless, and in whom heaven and earth are enclosed” (Kohen, 1946, p. 50).

² ‘Black,’ in Indian culture, has connotations with evil; the contradiction, therefore, being the association of this colour with a ‘Goddess.’

1.2.1. Kali- The fierce warrior

In mythological texts, Kali is located either on the battlefield or on the fringe of society. Kinsley (2003, p. 25) gives an account of Kali's different forms and describes her manifestation as "being brought into being³." One of Kali's well-known manifestations occurs during a great war. When Gods were trying to save the world from Raktabija, the king of the demons, two other demons, Chanda and Munda, approach 'Goddess Durga⁴' with readied weapons (p. 25). Upon seeing Chanda and Munda prepared to attack, Durga becomes enraged and from her "furrowed brow," Kali springs forth and leaps into battle (Humes, 2003, p. 146). She tears these demons apart with her hands, crushes them in her jaws, and decapitates them with her sword (Kinsley, 2003). Kali, therefore, representing "Durga's personified wrath, her embodied fury" (p. 25).

In the same battle, there is a cosmic conundrum. With each spilt drop of the demon Raktabija's (*translation: blood seed*) blood, "rise one thousand more demons" (Dowd, 2012, p. 15). Kali manifests herself again and joins in the fierce fighting to annihilate the reproducing demonic 'male power' and restore peace and equilibrium (Mookerjee, 1988). To keep Raktabija from multiplying and rid the world of demonic threat, Kali drinks his blood (Kinsley, 2003). Although she has come into existence to slay demons and restore order, Kali is consumed by bloodlust after drinking Raktabija's blood and becomes demonic herself on the battlefield, and her rage threatens to destroy the world which she is supposed to protect (Dowd, 2012).

³ I recognise 'being brought into being' as similar to the 'letting come process,' a product of 'dhyān' described previously

⁴ Gupta (2003) identifies that other Hindu Goddesses (Durga, Shakti, Sarasvati, Lakshmi, Parvati) are all facets of Goddess Kali. They are all collectively known as Devi (*translation: Goddess*).

1.2.2. Kali rituals

Kali rituals take many forms. In the 16th century, kings in India were observed ceremoniously slicing themselves to bits in the temples of the Black Goddess Kali (Campbell & Campbell, 1968); and Kinsley (2003) reports a history of human sacrifice to Kali until this was prohibited in 1835. Several other forms of self-torture and sacrifice in the name of Kali has been recorded and some have persisted even to this day. These range from burning incense on the head, drinking one's own blood, offering one's flesh to the sacrificial fire, slaughter of goats and other animals, and immolation of animals (Kinsley, 2003).

Kali's devotees are also well known for their trance-like, free-spirited dancing, at times losing control over themselves and their capacity to regulate their responses and actions – often such dancing symbolises the embodiment of Kali in the dancer who is both revered and feared. In addition, Kali's most admired devotee, Shri Ramakrishna, a seer in his own right, would often go into samadhi (a blissful, trance-like state of meditative consciousness) at the mere mention of Kali (Moloney, 1954). Through Kali's *maya* (*translation: illusion*), people become entangled and imprisoned by worldly pleasures; and through her grace, they attain liberation⁵ (Campbell & Campbell, 1968).

1.3. Myths about Shiva

Godlaski (2012, p. 1067) describes Shiva as the “the most complex God in the Hindu pantheon.” In the Hindu tradition, Shiva is generally venerated as a serpent (Nagaraj) or a phallus (Lingam), the latter arising often from within a ring, or female genital (Yoni). This construct, the lingam and yoni, stands for procreation and fertility (Lederer, 1964-65). He is often featured as an ascetic sitting in peaceful contemplation in the Himalayas. He wears a snake around his

⁵ The term associated with such liberation in Hindu philosophy is 'moksha' and in Buddhism, it is called 'nirvana.'

neck, and he is said to be aware of all phenomena coming into existence and passing away (Godlaski, 2012). Similar to Kali, Shiva is also known as the destroyer of evils; and through his cosmic dance (*Sanskrit: tandab nrithya*), he also creates and preserves (Sinha, 1972).

At the beginning of this research, I was surprised one evening to hear Shiva mentioned in a dialogue between two actors (Michael and Arthur) on television. Michael and Arthur are characters in an American movie called Michael Clayton.

MICHAEL: "You're a manic depressive"!

ARTHUR: "I am Shiva, the God of death".

(Pollack, Samuels, Fox, Orent, & Gilroy, 2007)

The words, 'God of Death' in the movie was interesting because Shiva was being associated with death. An association that was unfamiliar to me. Such reflections and associations became part of the literature review process. In the following paragraph, I offer my findings from the literature reviewed about Shiva.

1.3.1. Shaivism

Shiva is the supreme God according to Shaivism which is one of the major traditions within Hinduism. According to Shaivism; creation, destruction, and death are not separate, but they are part of an eternal continuum (Godlaski, 2012). Shiva embodies such cosmic conundrum which suggests that "without destruction, there can be no creation; without death, there can be no life" (p. 1078). Shaivism also proposes that all instinctual acts are creative and 'worthy of worship' (Patel, 1960). Therefore within Shaivism, sex (often repudiated by most religious traditions), is not condemned but accepted as the primary need of life (Patel, 1960). There is recognition that our instincts are not to be feared, rejected, or destroyed but accepted. This philosophy may, therefore, also

underlie the worship of sex organs (Shiva Lingam) which is prominent among followers of Shiva philosophy.

1.3.2. Master yogi

Shiva is popularly known to be the first and 'master Yogi' (*Sanskrit: Adiyogi; adi, meaning first*), the God who gave Yoga to the world. As part of his yogic practices, Shiva abstains from completed intercourse with his consort⁶. When the sexual act is carried out, it "is disciplined and ritualized: The seed must not fall" (Cantlie, 1993, p. 225). Tantric⁷ literature and practices which also endorse the practice of an 'uncompleted intercourse' have honoured Shiva with a special place for his virtue of discipline and ritual (Feuerstein, 1998). Some also regard Shiva as the "primal shaman" who has impeccable understanding of all shamanistic arts and taught these to humankind (Ratsch, p. 1067, as cited in Godlaski, 2012).

Furthermore, it is known from a particular myth that when Gods and demons churn the ocean for the divine nectar of immortality (*Sanskrit: amrita*), the process produced a poison (*Sanskrit: visha*) capable of destroying all creation (Patel, 1960). All activities had to cease until the master yogi, Shiva, drank the poison. Through yogic discipline, Shiva held the poison in his throat; earning him the name 'blue throat'⁸ (*Sanskrit: neela kanta*) (Nair, 2009). Shiva also lives in the cremation ground where he dances, and through his dance, all appearances of illusion (*Sanskrit: maya*) are destroyed and reintegrated into the 'absolute' (Groom, 1991).

⁶ Shiva's consort is 'Shakti' or 'Devi' who is also known through her different names and forms (Parvati, Kali, Durga, etc).

⁷ Tantra is recognised as one form of yoga (Vasudev, 2013).

⁸ Blue signifying the effects of poison; as in, the throat going 'blue' due to a lack of oxygenated blood.

1.3.3. Shiva rituals

Similarly, writing about the ritualistic practices and discipline of Shiva devotees, Johnson (1987) describes watching a young devotee in India hitting himself with a whip; and as blood began to flow from his wounded body, “his face was transformed from pain to ecstasy by his dance” (p. 144, as cited in Pearson, 1991). The devotee was able to transmute suffering and pain unto joy. Furthermore, in the holy Indian city of Varanasi, it is common to see Sadhu and Sadhvi (male and female ascetics and worshippers of Shiva) near the cremation ground. These ascetics actively seek to detach themselves from all worldly attractions and strive to overcome all feelings associated with “I, mine, you, yours, they and theirs” (Nair, 2009, p. 47). An attempt at destruction of the illusion of life and in order to reintegrate into the ‘absolute;’ achieve salvation. In contrast to such people are those who are under the influence of maya (illusion) and only seek sanctity when they are “mentally, physically and financially depressed, helpless and in agony” (p. 47).

1.4. Kali-Shiva relationship

Shaktism, another major tradition within Hinduism, features extensively in literature about Kali and Shiva. Somewhat in contrast to Shaivism (discussed previously) which holds Shiva as the supreme God, Shaktism upholds the view that the world is made up of the ‘divine feminine’ and is infused by the supreme duality of Shiva and Shakti (Kali). In addition, people who follow Shaktism (known as Shaktas) believe Shiva is the “unchanging, masculine aspect of divinity” and Kali is the “changing female aspect” (Miller, 1972, p. 182). And, just as parents are concerned about the wellbeing of the family, Shiva and Shakti are said to be concerned with the affairs of the world (Sivananda, 1996). Although Shiva is represented as the ‘lord’ in mythological texts, his strength or power is

represented in the form of Shakti⁹ (Sivananda, 1996). According to Shaktism; without the energizing feminine force that ‘stimulates,’ the masculine potential lies dormant or even becomes dead (Ray & Moodley, 2014). In addition, because of a belief that it is the ‘feminine’ that “conceives, bears, gives birth to, and nourishes the universe and all beings,” Shakta worshippers speak of divinity as “Mother,” i.e., the ‘divine feminine’ (Miller, 1972, p. 182). As such, these masculine and feminine principles exist in all beings including Kali and Shiva according to Shakta philosophy.

This understanding of the ‘divine feminine’ is also supported by archaeological discoveries which tell us that the active potency of God in the ancient world was usually perceived as female, i.e., ‘mother Goddess,’ which is contrary to the “unambiguously male” nature of God in later world religions such as Christianity and Islam (Leach, 1988, p. 97). In addition, Bachofen (1992), an anthropologist, identifies that it was human migration that led to the shift from a primeval ‘matriarchal spirituality’ to a patriarchal God. Furthermore, Sarin (2012) writes that a heavy patriarchal influence on Western spirituality has also contributed to the difference in perception about masculinity and femininity between the West and the East. As opposed to femininity being associated with passivity, and masculinity associated with activity; Buddhist and Hindu ontology acknowledge “the complementary and bipolar nature of masculine and feminine power” (p. 145).

Similarly, Leach (1988) proposes that ‘deity’ is neither male nor female; and “if it is one, it is also the other” (p. 97). This principle of complementarity is echoed in Shaktism which holds that male and female, when together, form a unified whole. This is symbolically represented as ‘Ardhanarishvara,’ the hermaphroditic form of Shiva and Shakti (Maduro, 1980). People who are engaged in the study of art and art history appear to recognise that ‘creative genius’ is generated, and natural growth and healthy balance only occurs when there is a union of

⁹ Shakti is defined as the cosmic energy that generates and activates the universe (Ray & Moodley, 2014)

polarised masculine-feminine opposites (Maduro, 1980). This masculine-feminine complementarity appears to also be characterised in myths about the Kali-Shiva relationship which I will describe next.

1.4.1. Kali-Shiva myths

Although iconographic representations of Kali and Shiva mostly depict Kali in a dominant position over Shiva (Kinsley, 2003), the ferocity that exists between this couple and their complementarity is depicted in several mythological exchanges between the two. For example, when Kali becomes intoxicated by blood lust of battle and her rage threatens to destroy the world; in an attempt to soothe her, Shiva invites her to a dance (Kinsley, 1998). In their dance, they both “appear as mad partners,” destined to destroy creation (Kinsley, 1975, p. 105). Similarly, Kakar (1989) writes of a myth whereby Kali becomes frenzied after slaying a demon. When Kali’s world-destroying frenetic dance does not come to an end after the demon’s death, Shiva throws himself “under her feet” (Curran, 2005, p. 184). After realising that she is trampling him, Kali “hung out her tongue in shame and stopped” (Kakar, 1989, p. 360). It is recognised that although Shiva enters the scene supine, he becomes a ‘container’ for Kali’s destructive energy and power (Kakar, 1989).

In yet another myth, Kinsley (2003) writes; in order to destroy a demon who has been given the boon that he can only be killed by a female, Parvati (Shiva’s consort and a loving, less aggressive form of Kali) enters the body of Shiva and transforms herself from the poison stored in his throat; reappearing as the ferocious Kali, she slays the demon. Further, after a particular battle, Kali’s fury does not dissipate and threatens to destroy the world. Shiva then transforms himself (through maya) into an infant (Kramrisch, 1988). Hearing the infant’s cries, the Goddess cradles it as if it was her own child and suckles the infant at her breast – an act through which infant Shiva is able to drink the fury of the dire Goddess along with her milk (Kramrisch, 1988). These myths convey the

transformative qualities of the Kali and Shiva relationship and also highlight the perils and vulnerabilities inherent in them.

Referring to this relationship between Kali and Shiva, Chassay (2006) notes; “there is an archetypal patterning to the proximity of creativity and destruction,” and they reside a heartbeat away from each other, “each infused with the seed of the other” (p. 212). Central to this relationship is the view that destruction or “sacrifice is necessary for creation, or creative change” (Miller, 1972, p. 183). Elements such as destruction, dying, and death are epitomised in the Kali-Shiva relationship and recognised as the “longed-for method of being un-born and then re-born” (p. 30).

Chapter summary

This chapter began by describing the birth of Vedic Hindu myth and deities through contemplative practice or ‘dhyān.’ The reviewed literature suggests that the myth of Kali and Shiva are represented in many forms. Kali is depicted as both the destroyer and the protector. Shiva on the other hand is described as the procreator, preserver, destroyer of evils, as the master yogi, and it is his complexity and omnipresent persona that is revered through Shaivism. Finally, the myth of Kali and Shiva was presented.

Myths about Kali and Shiva speak of the complementarity of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine.’ Shaktism upholds this complementarity which is represented symbolically as the hermaphroditic Ardhanarishvara who is associated with creative genius and as being able to bring about natural growth and balance. Myths of Kali-Shiva relationship embody this complementarity. In addition to complementarity, Kali-Shiva myths also place value in the master yogi’s ascetic qualities, ritualistic discipline, and ability to ‘sacrifice’ and ‘contain the poison’ through which there is a possibility of destroying illusion, prevent cosmic

destruction, and achieve transformation – transformation toward creative change, to be reborn.

Chapter 3. Psychoanalytic themes

“I am not interested in offering anything new. I am only interested in what is true. But I hope...the following...will offer you some moments when the two converge. For at those junctures when the conditions are right-when an insight is articulated from a place of inner clarity...when it meets a reader at the right moment of receptivity, an age-old truth is explosively alchemical. All of a sudden, it is fresh, alive, radiantly new, as if uttered and heard for the very first time in history” (Vasudev, 2016, p. 5).

Introduction

This is the first of two chapters which present the themes that emerged from a hermeneutic review of literature about myths of Kali and Shiva, their relationship, and psychotherapeutic engagement. In this chapter, I extend on the initial mythological literature that has been presented in the previous chapter. During the process of engaging with the literature, I became aware that in order to gain insight about the research question, ‘how does the Kali-Shiva myth relate to psychotherapeutic engagement,’ it was first necessary to begin with a hermeneutic understanding of the myth of Kali. This chapter, therefore, reflects the result of this process. In presenting these themes, my ongoing reflections as they relate to the text have also been made explicit. This reflects the hermeneutic process of contemplation and interpretation in which shared meaning emerges between the text, the author, and the reader.

3.1. Birth of human anxiety

A hermeneutic movement between parts and whole of the Kali myth within psychoanalytic writings led to insights about her rage which was not explicitly available in the literature. These insights relate to the developmental nature of Kali’s rage and address the question, ‘what caused her rage?’ In the next few paragraphs, I provide an overview of themes which emerged from hermeneutically reviewing literature to address this question.

Writing about the archaeological figurine Venus of Willendorf from Palaeolithic Europe, Kohen (1946) suggests that psychoanalytic study of characters such as Kali, Medusa, Demeter, and Madonna shed light on unconscious human anxiety. This is the anxiety that is first experienced when we are pushed out of the warm comfort of the womb through the birth canal into the “hardship of individual life” (Kohen, 1946, p. 50). Similarly, it has been argued that this separation from the mother’s womb is the origin of all neurosis (Rank, 1924). Birth has been referred to as the first experience of ambivalence toward the mother (Kohen, 1946); “the original violence that gave rise to the ‘I’ as a divided consciousness” (Arvanitakis, 1998, p. 42).

Furthermore, the felt experience of the infant at the very moment of birth has also been wondered about widely in literature. Woolverton (2011) puts forward the idea that, upon birth, the infant’s sensitive and immature brain is “bombarded by the myriad and complex sensations of internal and external life” (p. 1). It is perhaps for this reason the womb is identified as the “paradise lost,” and the endeavour to find this lost paradise is recognised as our eternal, unconscious aim (Kohen. 1946, p. 50). Holding these notions of “original violence” and “paradise lost” at the fore invites a curiosity about Kali’s possible anguish in response to her birth. What was Kali’s experience of losing the paradisiacal womb?

Literature does not provide straightforward answers to these questions. It must, however, be remembered that the myth of Kali speaks of her birth from the brow of Goddess Durga; Kali was “brought into being” (Kinsley, 2003, p. 25). Although there are several mythical narratives in literature about Kali, I did not come across a mythological account of Kali’s early life. The myths depict Kali in her adult form, her fully formed body and ferocious appearance often taking centre stage. However, a particular myth about the Greek Goddess Athena, I believe, offers some insight because Athena had a similar birth to Kali. Athena was born from the head of her father, Zeus. Clark (2009) states, without the

experience of mothering, Athena (the Goddess of Wisdom) had no opportunity to learn about relationships; she emerged into an emotionally disadvantaged position of being “fully armed—a well-defended female, then, intellectual and dominant” (p. 249). In essence, both Kali and Durga were born from the head (i.e., Kali from the brow and Durga from the forehead) – a part of the body known to be associated with cognitive capacities and at some distance from the ‘heart’ and ‘gut’ which are often associated with emotional capacities.

In addition, the myth speaks of Kali coming into being in response to atrocities by demons. An enraged Durga gave birth to Kali while in battle with demons and the demon king. This is reminiscent of an emotionally distressed and excruciated mother in labour, not only battling her painful contractions but also aggressively fighting her own survival. Research tells us that a significant amount of women report childbirth as being traumatic (Soet, Brack, & Dilorio, 2003), and there are also claims that psychological trauma during childbirth can lead to difficulties in mother/child bonding and attachment (Ballard, Stanley, & Brockington, 1995). In light of these, it is easy to question Durga’s capacity for mothering on the battlefield. Additionally, Kali also had to ‘spring into action’ against the demons soon after her birth. This takes my attention away to neonates who are taken away from their mothers for various reasons. Stern’s (1985) research with infants speaks to the importance of sensory stimulation infants seek and their distinct sensory preference for mothers; the absence of these elements is known to be associated with distress.

3.2. The forgotten infant

In this section, I delve deeper into literature that crosses path with Kali’s early development. Again, literature does not offer anything directly about Kali in this phase. However, object relations theory, child observation research, and Jungian archetypal literature provides us insights into both the emotional and psychic life of infancy (Klein, 1932; Winnicott, 1941; Bick, 1964; Harris, 2011; Curran,

2005; Kalsched, 2013). Further, a hermeneutic reading, with an 'as if' quality, offers additional insight about Kali's infancy which is not available in literature.

It is known that with the appearance of the breast in response to its cries, the infant comes to believe the breast has been created due to the infant's will and the mother is an extension of the self (Winnicott, 1941). Kohut (1972, p. 386) refers to this experience as "omnipotence." Moments which the infant knows as "not yet," "just now," and "no more" are said to be critical to the experience of itself and the mother (Ray Chaudhuri, 1956, p. 134). It is recognised that when basic needs (to eat, sleep, and feel warmth) are not met, the infant recognises the mother for her power and also associates the mother with experiences of pain (Otero, 1996). In addition, Klein (1932) identifies that hunger and frustration leads to further anxiety caused by the "death-instinct" within (p. 180). This dichotomous good mother-bad mother experience of the child is represented in Kali who is described as being "fascinating, orgiastically indulgent, abundant in fertility, and possessing multiple breasts" or presenting as a "threat to life and procreation, cruel, demanding the self-castration of her devotees or the sacrifice of new-born children" (Weigert, 1950, p. 262). For these reasons, in psychoanalytic literature, Kali is seen as a condensation of early fantasies the infant-child entertains about the mother (Ray Chaudhuri, 1956).

Further, relating the destructive aspects of Kali to Kleinian "bad breast" and Jungian "terrible mother archetype," Buhrmann (1987) identifies that it is not the good, nurturing parts of the mother but rather the depriving, devouring aspects that becomes the source of dread for the infant. Dowd (2012) describes such a process as "primitive pain of un-placement" which leads to the "displacer" being recognised as a "primal, destructive force" (p. 9). In relation to the myth of Kali, the 'primal, destructive force' being the mother from whose 'paradisical womb' the infant was separated and the mother who delivered the infant into a 'battlefield.' As a way of dealing with the bad aspects of the mother and avoiding the agony of separation, the infant adopts defense organisations which

substitute the external reality with a self-created inner reality (Ogden, 2014). Splitting of and suppression leads to projection on the other and there is part identification with the recipient of the projections (Klein, 1946). Therefore, is Kali the deified form of the introjected “bad object” (Fairbairn, 1952, p. 121); a desperate attempt of the infant to control the depriving mother? Buhrmann (1987) appears to suggest, ‘yes, she is.’

It is also recognised in literature that fury is evoked in the infant as it realises the mother is an independent object and that it does not have control over her (Shukla, 2014). Writing of such fury, Winnicott (1965) identified that the infant’s spontaneous self reaches the world through the two channels of “love” and “hate” (p. 17). These emotions must then be humanised through a “vigorous intercourse¹⁰” with important people in the infant’s life (Kalsched, 2013, p. 90). This allows the infant to integrate these emotions and use “aggression in the service of love instead of hatred and defense” (p. 90). Failing such a process, love and aggression remain archetypal and is played out as repetition compulsion and sado-masochistic defences (Kalsched, 2013). Again, my attention is drawn to Kali on the battlefield. Was her rage really about the demons or was it a projection of hate about the unavailability of a ‘vigorous’ other? I explore these questions further in the next few sections by shifting focus from the ‘preoedipal Kali’ to literature that places Kali in the oedipal stage and beyond.

3.3. Desired mother who also castrates

Oedipal themes of parental murder, incestuous desire, and threat of castration have also been recognised in psychoanalytic literature as originating from the need for mother's love and wish for fusion with her (Olberg, 1943). As opposed to the Oedipal castrating father that had dominated psychoanalytic thinking of the time, Daly (1938) extended on Freud’s Medusa myth and identified the mother as the source of castrating anxiety. Daly, an English psychoanalyst who

¹⁰ Winnicott (1965) refers to this process as responding “well enough” (p. 32).

was practicing in colonial India, had first-hand exposure of Kali myths and ritualistic practices about her (Kripal, 2003). Reflecting on the phallic symbols such as her girdle of severed arms and garland of decapitated heads, Daly proposed that Kali represents a displacement and projection of the child's guilt about the incestuous desire; a desire for union with the mother (Daly, 1938). Guilt is generated because of the mother who does not allow such incest but instead corrects severely (Daly, 1930). This idea is supported by Kohen (1946) who also proposes that Kali represents the child's struggle about the loving and dreaded parts of the mother, the disappointment at not finding the loving mother in the object of desire. Further immersion in the literature revealed that this dread of castrating mother appears to continue on to adulthood. In the next two sections, I offer literature that explores how this "dread;" the fear of death, manifests in men and women.

3.4. Dread and disparaging male

This phenomenon of being enchanted in love and then experiencing dread has also been explored by Karen Horney (1932), a psychoanalyst. She identifies that the "dread of being rejected and derided is a typical ingredient in the analysis of every man" (p. 358). Furthermore, she maintains that "the masculine dread of the woman (the mother) or of the female genital" is "energetically repressed" and "conceals itself behind the dread of the father" (p. 353). It is proposed also that this repressed dread of the woman has not only influenced psychoanalytic thought but also patriarchal and monotheistic religions which have substituted "a relatively benign father deity in place of a more archaic and decidedly more terrifying mother figure" (Cornes, 1986, p. 10). Speaking to this masculine dread of the woman reflected in the myth of Kali, Schaffner (1972) also notes, "through the vision in which she becomes a Goddess, removed beyond physical seduction of temptation, he retains her soothing and restorative powers, he can depend upon her, worship her, and safely feel that she will not abandon him" (p. 193). The terrifying Kali, therefore, functioning as a defensive projection of the desired, dreadful mother.

The dread of the terrifying mother, represented in figures such as Kali, has been identified as also contributing to male dominance over women cross culturally. Otero (1996) writes of the masculine tendency to resort to use of guns, bombs, and missiles, all symbolically representing the phallus or being the “superphallus;” to “blow away” the threat of castration, to counter the threat of the vagina dentata by breaking the teeth and “copulate with these women” (p. 276). Such disparagement of women, in its subtle form, Horney (1932) believes, is evident in men who display their love and adoration of women ostentatiously with comments such as “there is no need for me to dread a being so wonderful, so beautiful, nay, so saintly” (p. 352). Such ostentatiousness has been described as a reactive strengthening of their "phallic narcissism" in order to restore the masculine self-respect eroded by their unconscious dread of women (p. 359). In other words, an individual keeps on trying to defend against the threat of rejection and being depreciated, his dread of narcissistic wounding, by expending “an astonishing amount of energy and intellectual capacity in proving the superiority of the masculine principle” (p. 361).

Furthermore, Moulton (1977) claims that men have always unconsciously "resented their early dependence on mothers, tried to deny it, and turned the tables by taking possession of women, stressing their superior physical strength, useful for big game hunting and warfare," and have confined women to domestic tasks such as childrearing and farming. Men have further been able to exercise an exaggerated extraverted activism” which neglects their spirit and their anima, the essential ‘feminine’ in them, as a response to historical passivity of “unconscious” women (Colonna, 1980, p. 348). What follows then is as an “agonising attempt to recover the total anima¹¹” (p. 348). As such, the reverence of Kali devotees speaks also to this process of recovering the neglected anima. It is useful here to recollect that for the Indian seer, Ramakrishna, the entire

¹¹ A particular cowboy song which I came across during this research, I believe, articulates the self- and mutual-destructiveness of men quite well (blowing things up). Although outwardly offensive, when listened to hermeneutically in the context of men’s defensive responses highlighted in this research, themes such as desire, love, disparagement, dread, aggression, violence, death, and grief become apparent (Brand & Sear, 1963).

purpose of his life had become the wish to have a 'vision' of Kali – perhaps a form of recovering of the spirit and anima.

3.5. Dread and self-defeating female

While the dread of the castrating mother and resulting “superiority of the masculine principle” manifests as phobia, sadism, and compulsion neuroses in men (Horney, 1932, p. 361); it is believed, this dread takes the form of penis envy, hysteria, and pathological masochism in women (Daly, 1938). In addition, it has also been proposed that while men negotiate their dread and accomplish their wish for union with the mother to a certain extent through the sexual act, women achieve such union by developing an identification with men (Rank, 1927). About this process, Freud (1927) states, women develop a sense of inferiority and begin to “share the contempt felt by men for a sex which is the lesser in so important a respect,” therefore, “she clings obstinately to being like a man” (p. 138). Further, it has also been suggested that the inherent aggressiveness in such a stance that has been “internalized” by women has gained momentum and is being increasingly reflected in interpersonal relationships (Dalmau, 1957, p. 1).

While most of the earlier writing I reviewed about women’s dread of the mother (the feminine) has been authored by men; in recent times, Marion Woodman, a Jungian analyst, has debated this issue widely. Woodman (1994, audio file) identifies that women who abandon the feminine and identify with the masculine “can be far more patriarchal than men;” they become “father’s daughters” and develop a “crippling relationship with her inner man” (Woodman, 1990, p. 133). In addition, Colonna (1980) cautions that when women identify themselves with or when “in the possession of” the animus, there is an internal “phallic protest,” they are at risk of “segregating themselves from their feminine values” (p. 349). Because of a passive adoption of patriarchal

intellectual values¹², “women are in danger of assuming a mask of intellectuality and living in a too unilateral and unbalanced way—an extremely dangerous position of false consciousness, and destructive of them as persons” (p. 340).

In his text about Kali, Mookerjee (1988) relates the Goddess to this struggle that women are called into. He identifies that when faced with circumstances where a woman is "unable to move around freely, both physically and psychically;" i.e., patriarchal dominance, she will put herself beyond reach, "rejecting womanhood itself" (p. 9). With an internalised “macho attitude or destructive animus,” she unconsciously feels “a contemptuous devaluation, or demeaning hatred for her own true receptivity” and will “rage at the part of herself that is still identified with some archaic feminine mode” (Michan, 2000, pp. 313-318). Mollinger (1983) also makes reference to this dilemma faced by women by identifying that the pressure to either be angels or witches, leads to “hysteria, illness, and madness” which Kali represents – the woman who “unsexes herself” and “becomes terrifying not only man but to herself” (p. 447). Therefore, according to the literature reviewed, ‘Kali rage’ is self-defeating.

Chapter summary

In this chapter, I began by presenting literature that suggests the myth of Kali is a condensation of the trauma of separation at birth which informs the infant’s early experiences. Kali’s birth which takes place while her mother is in battle has also been identified as problematic, leading to difficulties in attachment and bonding. The challenges of emotional unavailability in the early stages of life have been explored. These insights only emerged through a process of hermeneutic engagement with the literature. Kali has been identified in literature as the unconscious projection of the bad, depriving mother. The defense of splitting and introjection have also been associated with Kali, and she

¹² I have proposed earlier in this dissertation that because of Kali and Athena’s birth from the head (brow and forehead respectively), these are cognitively robust but emotionally disadvantaged.

is recognised as the castrating mother who does not permit fulfilment of incestuous wishes and desire. The threat of the dreadful, castrating mother appears to have infused major world religions and psychoanalytic thought. The findings from this research also offer insight into how the 'Kali nature' manifests in women and men and their relationship with others.

In the next chapter, I extend on these findings by offering the second and final set of themes that emerged from a hermeneutic engagement with relevant literature. These themes relate to how the dread of the mother manifests in the therapeutic space as Kali and also what is required on the part of a therapist to work effectively with 'Kali in the room.'

Chapter 4. Psychotherapeutic engagement

Introduction

In this chapter, I arrive at what I believe is the crux of the research question, - 'the psychotherapeutic engagement.' Although a vast amount of literature deliberates over the myth of Kali and Shiva, the relationship between the Kali-Shiva myth and psychotherapeutic engagement was often hidden in writings. It was only through a hermeneutic process of engaging with the literature that I was able to arrive at the final set of themes presented in this chapter. This chapter, therefore, brings what has been hidden into focus, examining how the elements associated with the myth of Kali and Shiva and the Kali-Shiva relationship could present in the therapeutic space and play out in the therapeutic relationship.

Themes presented in the previous chapter were (a) experience of loss due to separation from the womb, (b) unsuccessful quest for lost love during development, (c) unfulfilled wish for fusion (union) with the mother, and (d) a dread of the separating, castrating mother leading to disavowal of the 'feminine' and its manifestation in men and women.

During the process of my reading and engaging with literature, I came across the following quote which I believe not only captures the grief of the lost 'womb' eloquently but also sets the scene for the themes presented in this chapter:

"The very best of all things is completely beyond your reach: Not to have been born, not to be, to be nothing. But the second best thing for you is – to meet an early death" (Nietzsche, 2000, p. 27).

4.1. Kali rage as a response to trauma

What emerged from additional review of literature is that the 'dread of the mother' and 'rage' crosses path with trauma literature in many ways. For example, Roth (2000) notes "frustration of" and "failure in" love gives rise to "insecurity and aggressive disharmony" (p. 17). Additionally, Winnicott (p. 95) writes that people who suffer a traumatic disruption often live in a "fear of breakdown that has already happened but has not been experienced" (as cited in Ogden, 2014). Anger, guilt, sadism, and masochism are said to pervade the world of these individuals (Roth, 2000). Although some adapt to traumatic experiences with "flexibility and creativity," others are caught up in the trauma memory and lead a "traumatized and traumatizing existence" (van der Kolk & McFarlane, 1996, p. 3)." I find these descriptions support the understanding of 'Kali-rage' as representing an unlocking of repressed emotions associated with early losses, which then finds voice through aggression (chapter 3).

A deeper engagement within the trauma literature also brought about a deeper understanding of Kali's uncontrollable rage on the battlefield. Trauma literature suggests that the freneticism which Kali presented on the battlefield is common in those who have suffered trauma. During these experiences, survivors of trauma regress into discrete child selves (Davies & Frawley, 1992); with limited ability to contain experiences and function effectively (van der Kolk, 1996). In particular, when the "traumatic complex is triggered," the individual becomes "absorbed, preoccupied and taken over" and appears not to be able to function or consider others, nor is the person able to mentalize in the way they usually might (West, 2013, p. 85). This sense of being 'taken over' can be compared with the symbolic image of Kali 'becoming' drunk with blood lust and her ensuing wrath appears to exemplify the aftermath of trauma in all its rawness.

In addition, literature also suggests that traumatic experiences become encoded at an implicit level within an individual, as sensory fragments (van der Kolk,

1996). In this regard, Levine (2005, p. 35) highlights physiological and psychological responses to trauma are “locked in” the body. It appears, as if, the trauma becomes a ‘demon’ that is internalised and wreaks havoc on both the internal and external world of the survivor; and they in turn express rage toward themselves and others. I recognise such ‘internalised trauma demons’ and ‘rage’ in Schneiderman’s (1964) comments about Kali; he notes, these deities have to slay the ubiquitous demons over and over again but in doing so place themselves at ‘risk of turning into the demons’ being pursued.

Based on my own experience of psychotherapeutic engagement, I have been witness to such ‘Kali-rage’ expressed by clients. Writing about the raging clients, Seinfeld (1996, p. xi) notes, these clients live in an “inner hell” made up of “demons, witches, sirens, and monsters” and are unable to leave because of fear that they may fall into an even darker “objectless black hole.” Therefore, by inference, it appears, as if, the psychotherapy process offers a path out of such darkness; providing an opportunity to process what “has not been experienced” (Winnicott, as cited in Ogden, 2014, p. 95).

4.2. Kali as transference phenomenon

When considering how Kali’s rage relates specifically to psychotherapeutic engagement, the literature points in the direction of the transference process. Transference has been described as the unconscious displacement of experience from the past to symbolic representations in the present “in the hopes of re-experiencing old persons or objects” and in order to succeed “where formerly we failed” (Roth, 2000, p. 18). It is also understood that transference often emerges in such manner “as to lead both patient and therapist to the clinically relevant events and conflicts of psychic life” (p. 39). Similarly, Kali has been described in literature as a projection of mother dread “on to the hated father” (Daly, 1950, p. 222) and a “projection outwards of the unadjusted portion of mental life” (Ray Chaudhuri, 1956, p. 133). Based on these descriptions, therefore, it could be

argued that Kali's wrath is the mythological equivalent of one form of transference and therefore carries the potential to offer good, clinically relevant insight.

Furthermore, it is known that many with a history of trauma repeat their family patterns in interpersonal relationships, alternating between the role of victim and persecutor which stem from previous experiences of "betrayal and helplessness" (van der Kolk, 1996, p. 196). In a clinical setting, the "abuser figure, which is disavowed by the patient, becomes manifest in prosecuting the analyst for the 'wounds' that the analysis evokes" (West, 2013, p. 73). Kali's rage upon Shiva who invited her to dance, therefore, reflects a transference of the original aggression felt toward Durga; the mother, whom Kali, could not "directly confront or hold to account" (West, 2013, p. 87). It is this disavowed relational hatred that is projected onto the therapist so he or she can 'feel the pain.' In psychoanalytic literature, this process is typically characterised as the defense of "projective identification" (Klein, 1946, p. 104).

It is known that such defensive operation is set up to prevent further trauma and protect the self, however, it also leaves the individual with the disastrous effect of killing outer relations which eventually affects both the self and the relationships (Kalsched, 2013). In this regard, Roth (2000) notes, transference can either be "maladaptive" because of its potential to leave us a "perpetual victim to the repetition compulsion," "adaptive" because it reflects the urge to repair the past and provides opportunity to do so; or it can be "integrative" because it "draws the richness of the no-longer-visible past into the present" (p. 18). In light of this, it would be the task of the therapeutic other (the Shiva-therapist) to recognise these possibilities and facilitate movement away from the maladaptive toward the adaptive and integrative aspects of transference. In relation to the trauma survivor, it has been identified that unless "masochistic-sadistic characteristics (passive, traumatized, victim or aggressive, traumatizing, abuser)" projected out in the transference are overcome; they will continue to "dominate the individual's psyche and way of relating" (West, 2013, p. 75).

4.3. The wild dance of the therapist and client

I find the following quote by Colman (1994) powerfully descriptive of Kali's primary traumatic loss and ensuing destructiveness:

“people who have fallen out of love remain ensnared in love's dark side – unable to stay together, unable to separate, caught up in a merry-go-round of mutual destructiveness from which neither can escape” (p. 500).

Kali's rage from which even Shiva, her consort, is not safe and the ensuing wild dance between this mythological couple epitomises the 'mutual destructiveness' resulting from the trauma of losing love. During the process of this research, it became apparent that this wild, cosmos-threatening dance between Kali and Shiva very closely parallels the process of enactment common to the psychotherapeutic dyad. Jacobs (1986) identifies enactments in psychotherapy as often following well-meaning attempts by the therapist to help the client. In my view, Shiva approaching Kali in an attempt 'to soothe her rage,' is one such 'well-meaning attempt;' the ensuing wild dance in which they are both carried away to the brink of destroying the worlds, therefore, an enactment much like what occurs between a therapist and client.

The opportunity for insight available through such enactments is well documented in literature. Clients are known to “externalize and constellate the traumatising-abusive figures from their past” as part of an enactment (West, 2013, p. 91). Similarly in the Kali-Shiva myth, the trauma of separation from the womb and the trauma of the battlefield 'externalised and constellated' by Kali unto Shiva, her consort who invites her to dance. I find the following suggestion by Whitmont (p. 86) about archetypal elements of Kali to be in line with what needs to occur to resolve enactment in a therapeutic situation. He suggests,

“unless men and women come to relate to the archetypal figures with awareness and consciousness, these archetypal figures will possess, obsess and rule them in primitive and uncompromising ways, rather than

contribute to their personal growth and individualisation/individuation” (as cited in Gordon, 1997).

In addition, mythological literature suggests that ‘awareness and consciousness’ were not only the objective of practices within Shiavism and Shaktism (chapter 2) but is also embodied in Kali and Shiva myth. For example, it is known that devotees of Kali identify with their powerlessness against human tragedy (birth, separation, and attachment injury) and recognise that the pathway to accessing her nourishing, creative, and constructive aspects is by “having a vision” of her through worshipping, submitting, and willing to sacrifice to her (Schaffner, 1972, p. 191). I find this view of Kali worshippers also relevant in explaining Shiva’s eventual act of lying down supine in front of Kali, offering himself to be trampled upon. It is, as if, Shiva was able to ‘have a vision’ of Kali and recognised her ‘good’ side despite the threatening and dreadful, ‘dark,’ ‘devouring,’ and ‘castrating’ side. I outline literature relevant to this idea in the following sections.

4.4. Hermaphroditic consciousness

It has been suggested that one has to develop a conscious ego-ideal in order to escape the domination of primary emotions such as those which Kali characterises (Daly, 1938). Contrasting it with the unconscious super-ego, which is identified as primitive and created in infancy; Freud (p. 102) describes conscious ego-ideal as "consciously held values acquired in later life by which conduct is guided in outer contemporary reality" (as cited in Guntrip, 1995). It emerged from the literature review that the hermaphroditic form of the unified Shiva and Shakti (complementarity of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’) known as Ardhanarishvara (Maduro, 1980), embodies such necessary consciousness to address Kali’s rage. It is considered that Ardhanarishvara (figure 6), Michelangelo’s hermaphroditic sculptures, and other such figures depicted in world art speak to the experience of primal fusion and is evidence of our inherent hope of “regaining the mother(s) lost in childhood” (Oremland, 1985, p.

422). Further, these images are said to capture human attempt at undoing “early maternal losses” by fusing with her rather than being the “abandoned child” (p. 422). Psychoanalytic literature has also witnessed many assertions in support of such primal fusion. For example, Freud (1905) recognised that all of us are constitutionally bisexual, that masculine and feminine elements coexist in everyone. Additionally, Jung wrote widely about anima and animus, the concepts which primarily communicated that we cannot attain spiritual health by neglecting either one of these elements (as cited in Kast, 2006).



*Figure 6. Shiva as Ardhanarishvara. Reprinted from “Michelangelo's Ignudi, Hermaphroditism, and Creativity,” by J. D. Oremland, 1985, *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 40, 399-433.*

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As such, the Kali-Shiva relational exchange also is a constant endeavour to attain union with the ‘divine feminine.’ For example, tantric cosmology maintains that

the universe is built with and sustained by masculine-feminine principles of Shiva and Kali; and in certain traditions, Shiva and Kali are also known to be eternally conjoined (Mookerjee, 1988). In this union, it is reported that the feminine principle aspires unity whereas the masculine principle, “with each thrust,” invariably causes separation (p. 41). Therefore, it is suggested that the annihilating Kali depicted standing over Shiva represents the active, separating, and masculine principle met by a feminine, unity-urging Shiva who is lying on the ground (Mookerjee, 1988). The Kali-Shiva union represented as Ardhanarishvara, therefore, a transformation from the ‘separating’ masculine to a unifying and unified ‘feminine;’ a shedding of the egocentric male outlook in both men and women in order to create unity from duality. Neumann (p. 336) refers to this process as “recovery of the matriarchal consciousness” (as cited in Colonna, 1980); to form the “ouroboros,” the “great round in which the positive and negative, male and female, elements of consciousness, elements hostile to consciousness, and unconscious elements are intermingled” (Neumann, 1972, p. 18).

4.5. Transformation

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I present themes that emerged from the research which relate to the process of transformation as represented in both the Kali-Shiva myths and also one that takes place in the therapeutic space. Various Hindu, Vedic, Tantric, and Yogic concepts which emerged from the hermeneutic process of engaging with the literature have also been incorporated into the thinking, intuiting, and writing process consistent with hermeneutic principles. For ease of reading, on occasion, when there has been a need to highlight the similarity between ‘therapists and Shiva’ or ‘clients and Kali,’ I have referred to these as Shiva-therapist and Kali-client; however, this has been done so with an awareness that both masculine and feminine elements exist in Kali, Shiva, therapist, and the client.

4.6. Availability to be trampled upon and the invitation for vigorous intercourse

Drawing from the themes and ideas presented thus far, I return to the process of enactment in order to further explore this transformation from the separating masculine to a unifying feminine. Reflecting on the necessary transformational aspects of psychotherapy to address the forces of enactment is particularly relevant. It has been recognised that the “patient’s experience of the analyst’s availability and constancy, the analyst’s willingness to participate in the shifting transference-countertransference re-enactments, and, finally, his or her capacity to maintain appropriate boundaries and set necessary limits” (Davies & Frawley, 1992, p. 30-31) are essential to resolve enactments.

A particular image I found of Kali and Shiva, in my view, stands out as a mythological equivalent to these elements. As Figure 7 shows, Shiva is depicted lying supine with an erect penis and Kali is standing over him with one of her feet on his chest. As discussed in chapter 2, mythological literature identifies that Shiva throws himself on the ground (after their dance) in order to stop Kali’s destructiveness; however, an understanding of the purpose of Shiva’s erect penis is not offered in literature. In a therapeutic sense, however, it is plausible that this is symbolic of a therapist’s willingness to meet with both the client’s love and aggression; emotions recognised as archetypal affects that “must be humanized through vigorous intercourse” (Kalsched, 2013, p. 90). In addition, I also relate this aggressive position of Shiva to what Kohut (1972) describes as the “mirroring self-object,” the therapist occupying a position that allows the client to really ‘be oneself;’ and what Symington (1983, p. 283) refers to as “analyst’s act of freedom” which is identified as a catalyst for therapeutic change. Kali’s aggressive rage, therefore, is met with Shiva’s availability, constancy, will (for union), boundaries, and a capacity to enforce limits. Shiva must be available to be trampled upon but he must not die.



Figure 7. Availability. From *The Walters Art Museum*, Retrieved from <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/10042>. Copyright [2001] by Walters Art Museum.

Based on some of my own experience and knowledge of psychotherapy, therapists also often ‘meet with’ clients in a similar way; leading with their will and availability, courageously presenting their vulnerability to the client. However, it appears that on the other side of such a position also lies a dread of the devouring, engulfing, and annihilating aspects of the Kali-client (Nitsun, 2014). In psychotherapy literature, such devouring and engulfing elements are associated with the ‘sadistic introject’ parts of the client. Courtois (1996, p. 460) identifies that when a therapist yields to “necessary and sometimes unnecessary demands,” which are common in enactments; there is a risk of acting out a masochistic surrender which could give rise to the “sadistic introject,” the part of client that is identified with the abuser. As such, it could be said that just as Shiva

who is 'available to be trampled upon' but 'does not die' in the process, the therapist must also make oneself available to 'meet' the client's affective demands, serve as a therapeutic container, and survive the raging client. In the next section, I will offer my understanding of literature on what aides the Shiva-therapist 'meet' Kali's rage despite the risk of annihilation.

4.7. Sadhana

Sarkar (1943) interpreted the dreams of a student of asceticism in India. He notes that in the dream, the student was being shown that the way to spiritual contentment was not through aggression toward the father substitute or the father himself who forbids satisfaction of desires, but it was through absolute submission. This aligned with Hindu philosophy – "he must extinguish all aggression and sexual desire and be born again in a spiritual sense" (p. 173). Further, in the dream, the student was told, "as long as the penis remains, one cannot be a true ascetic. Under the influence of spiritual practice, the penis will have to not only be controlled but be made to disappear within the body" (p. 173). Sadhana¹³ (restraint of sexual passion) is a Sanskrit term discussing a yogic spiritual resolve to transform the libido, to develop the necessary capacities for spiritual contentment. Freud (1905) has also used the term "libido" to describe sexual drives, sexual appetite, and also all instinctual drives.

Similar to the ascetic's call for transformation of libido, psychoanalytic literature recognises that the "libidinization" of penis (the erect penis) represents the ego; and the erect penis also has "comparable narcissistic values" (Payne, 1939, p. 166). With this in mind, just as the advise received by Sarkar's ascetic student in his dream, it could be said that Shiva (Figure 7) is engaged in an act of transforming the libido. By offering his erect narcissistic phallic-ego (his aggression and his desire), he is able to invite the castrating Kali to a unified state

¹³ Sadhus (male Shakta worshippers) are known to practice self-castration because of the penis being perceived as "disturbing" their religious practice (Saini, Saxena, Garg, Saini, Buri, & Mathur, 2009, p. 260). This is a form of sadhana.

(the womb) once again - to realise broader spiritual goals, to be symbolically born again. Furthermore, I wonder also if this act of Shiva is also exemplified in what Rosen (1976) describes as "egocide" or "ego death," a symbolic suicide which allows for contact with "the original psychic state before birth" (p. 213); thus creating opportunity for "rebirth, positive transformation, growth, creativity, and significant spiritual reawakening" (p. 209).

I find the following quote by Jung (2014) useful in summarising the actions of Shiva and the therapist (the Shiva-therapist) in the presence of the annihilating Kali-client:

"For a hero, fear is a challenge and a task, because only boldness can deliver from fear. And if the risk is not taken, the meaning of life is somehow violated, and the whole future is condemned to hopeless staleness, to a drab grey lit only by will-o'-the-wisps" (para, 551).

The discipline and skill required on the part of the therapist in order to achieve such 'ego death' appears to be reflected in tantric texts and practices. These texts call for the yogi to intercourse but not orgasm (Cantlie, 1993). Perhaps, therefore, Shiva's erect penis also refers to such an invitation, one that communicates wilful trust and seeks union despite the risk of death. These qualities (trust and intimacy) form the core therapeutic goals when working with those who have survived trauma (Jongsma Jr, Peterson, & Bruce, 2014; Herman, 2015). Kakar (1992) notes, there is incredible strength in being able to trust completely in this way, and such trust is essential in being able to reach not only therapeutic but also spiritual goals.

Alongside trust and courage which enables one to assume such a vulnerable position against the forces of fear, the therapeutic task also entails containment, to bear the aggression and murderousness (Bion, 1959). Shiva's ability to drink poison and hold it in his throat through yoga symbolically speaks to the process of containment and his ability to 'contain.' Patel (1960) draws our attention to the physiological effects felt in the throat when one is emotionally in pain, and

he suggests that Shiva's act of containing the poison and the process of containment of the ego are both excruciatingly painful¹⁴. It is, as if, such a capacity for containing the 'ego poison' is also a necessary ingredient in the therapeutic space, particularly when working with the annihilating client and to address enactment. In the next section, I will present literature on what helps the Shiva-therapist 'contain' not only the rage but also his own ego defences (i.e., therapist's instinctual, aggressive impulses) while lying supine the ground.

4.8. Samadhi

"it is essential to recognize our countertransference feelings and emotions, and especially to develop the capacity to tolerate and contain them. But at the same time, it is the flexibility of the analyst's ego defenses that will permit him to retain a sort of indispensable 'vulnerability;' his technique establishes an intermediate zone of experience between patient and analyst, assuming a symbolic meaning." (Fabozzi, 2012 p. 47)

Writing of the 'visions' Ramakrishna would have of Kali and his deep reverence of the Goddess, Kakar (1992) notes that what is present in those moments is 'bhava' which is described as experiencing something with "all one's heart, all one's soul and all one's might." Kakar (1992) further suggests that there is a need in the analytic situation to also develop such openness and have "analytic bhava" which corresponds with Bion's notion of "experiencing experience" (p. 224). The invitation for such openness also has similarities with the therapist's "unconditional positive regard" for the client (Rogers, 2007, p. 241). Literature suggests that it was only because of 'bhava,' Ramakrishna (chapter 2) could go into 'samadhi;' a trance-like state of elevated consciousness which allowed for identification with Kali (Moloney, 1950). The field of transpersonal psychology refers to this as "non-ordinary states of consciousness," a deep meditative state which allows us to see beyond the postnatal causes of emotional, psychosomatic, and interpersonal issues and consider domains of unconscious that are not readily accessible (Grof, 1984, p. 20).

¹⁴ Here, I also identify the 'pain' of offering the erect penis to Kali despite the 'threat of castration.'

The mythological narrative refers to Shiva's wild dancing with Kali prior to throwing himself down in front of Kali, however, literature does not offer sufficient insight about the process which led to his act of lying down in front of her. A hermeneutic process of engaging with relevant literature, however, allows us to reflect upon this gap in knowledge. As discussed in chapter 2, Shiva is recognised as the 'master yogi,' one who is aware of all phenomenon. Based on this association, it becomes plausible that Shiva also features the capacity to be ecstatically consumed by 'bhava' and achieve 'samadhi;' a deep reverence about the Goddess with capacity to raise consciousness. Similarly, in a clinical setting, it could be argued that 'analytic bhava' is reflected in a therapeutic moment when there is an experience of complete empathic understanding, a total openness to the therapeutic situation; opening the door for both therapist and client to 'enter samadhi,' and 'elevate their consciousness.' Further, Kakar (1992) describes 'samadhi' as "being like a child" in the presence of divinity; not "fearful, submissive, or meek but existing in the bright-eyed confidence of continued parental presence and demanding its restoration when it is felt to be lacking or insufficient" (p. 222). Ghent (1990) proposes that such a process of letting down defensive barriers carries a "quality of liberation and expansion of the self" (p. 108). Throwing oneself on the ground to be trampled, therefore, not a masochistic capitulation but a conscious (articulated and experiential) yielding to the forces at play; to the forces that threaten to destroy creation.

In essence, in relation to the circumstances that led up to Kali's rage, it appears that Shiva's act of throwing himself on the ground in front of Kali conveys not only an empathic understanding of her loss (of the womb) and ensuing suffering (from the battlefield of life) but also an acknowledgement of the vulnerability in the current situation; as if, Shiva were to be saying 'there is much to lose if we continue to dance ourselves into cosmic destruction.' Similarly, empathic suggestions such as, there is "no stance I can take and win" in a clinical setting is known to have the capacity to evoke in clients a realisation of the position that one puts the therapist into (Roth, 2000, p. 22). It is also recognised that such a response from therapists allow clients to move from experiencing oneself as the

victim to observing the “powerful self-protective responses” within them which have the capacity to hurt others (West, 2013, p. 88). Davies and Frawley (1992, p. 30) refer to this process as “familiarizing the patient with the sadistic introject.”

4.8. Death, liberation, and expansion of self

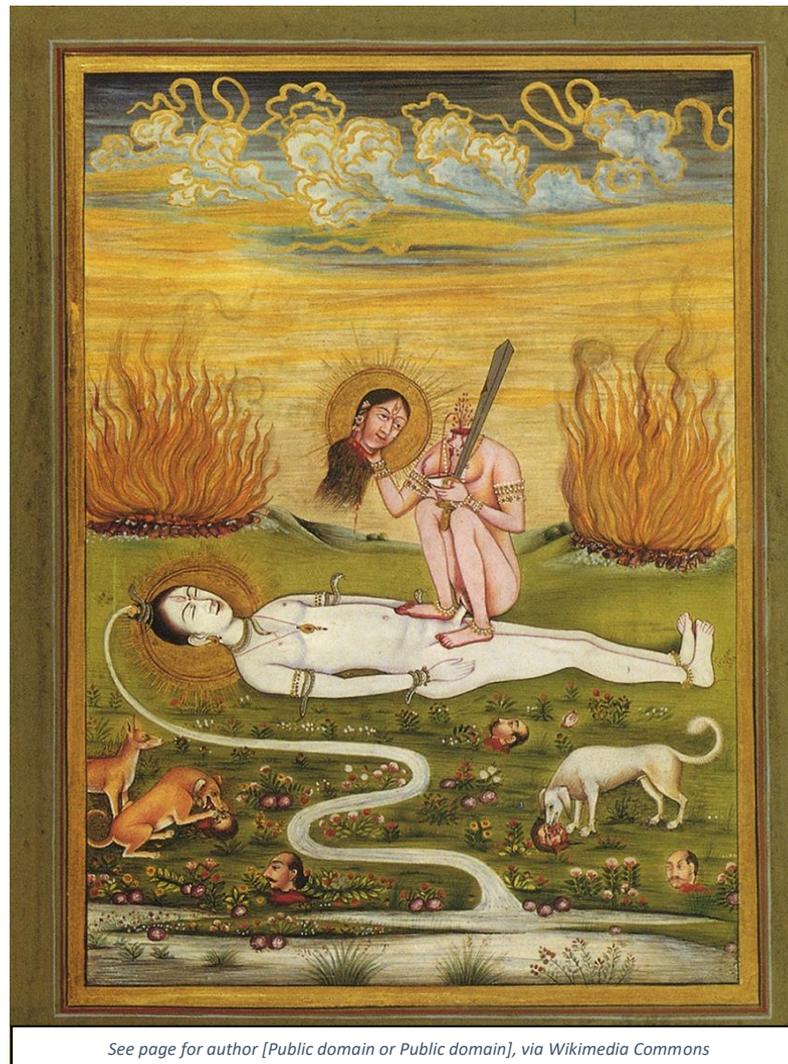
Literature also suggests that in the face of such therapeutic responses, clients feel as if the ground is “being pulled out from under one's feet” (Curran, 2005, p. 108). An experience similar to death because “elements that until that time had dominated the life of the soul rot away” (p. 108). The fear of death, therefore, comes to the fore once again (as it did during ‘separation’ from the womb and from mother’s ‘correction’ of incestuous desire). However, alongside this dread, there is also an identification with the therapist’s “will and power” which the client internalises (Ghent, 1990, p. 121); the ‘will’ to lie on the ground to be trampled upon and the ‘power’ to ‘not die’ but rather call attention to the inherent vulnerability. Through this, the longing in clients “to be found, recognised, and penetrated to the core so as to become real” is able to surface once again (p. 121). There is an opportunity to let down the defensive barriers, to achieve “liberation and expansion of the self” (p. 108). The conflict between these two states, i.e., the experience of dread and the prospect of liberation, gives birth to new possibilities; there is an opening to “surrender” (Ghent, 1990).

Ghent (1990) further writes of the difference between the West and the East when it comes to surrender. His explanation, I believe, provides additional insights not only about Shiva’s act of lying down in front of Kali but also the opportunity that becomes available for Kali to ‘lay down arms.’ Ghent (1990) notes; while in the West, surrender is associated with “defeat;” in the East, surrender is associated with “transcendence” and “liberation” (p. 111). Similarly, Ghent (1990) also identifies the difference in the term “ego” between the West and the East. He notes, in the West, ‘ego’ “has meant one's strength, rationality;” whereas, “in the East, ‘ego’ means maya (dream, the illusion of one's self).”

Further, in relation to the 'destruction' of ego and surrender, Moloney (1954) proposes that when an individual "relaxes in his inner struggle, and gives up trying to maintain this armed neutrality," there is then an opportunity to "experience a theophany or kenosis—a blinding flash of inspiration which seems to light the way toward resolution of his inner conflicts" (p. 122). The individual becomes "the vicar of the very authority (the mother) which he originally attempted to offset, defeat, and destroy." (p. 122). Therefore, death, as in Rosen's (1976) egocide¹⁵, becomes the "supreme liberation" (Twemlow, 2003, p. 677); or, as Hillman says, there is an "expansion of consciousness" and "shifting of psychic energies" (p. 347, as cited in Colonna, 1980).

It is, 'as if,' with the surrender of his own 'ego defenses,' Shiva was able to also destroy the ego, both his own and Kali's; destruction of the maya, the illusion of the rage and the entanglement within the dance (enactment) which could have caused cosmic destruction. In addition, it is useful here to recollect myths about Kali and Shiva's maya (chapter 2): Through Kali's maya, people become entangled and imprisoned by worldly pleasures; and through her grace, they attain liberation (Campbell & Campbell, 1968); through Shiva's dancing all appearances of maya are destroyed and reintegrated into the 'absolute' (Groom, 1991). Therefore, it could be said, the Kali maya (ego) of the therapist and the client causes illusion; and dancing like Shiva (his 'tandab nrithya') is necessary to destroy the illusion of both therapist and client. Furthermore, Twemlow's (2003) view of Shiva supports these discussions in that he associates Shiva with 'Thanatos,' the God of death; "guardian of a merciful sleep to end misery" (p. 677). Thus, in light of my understanding of what has been described here, I have come to believe that the title 'God of Surrender' also befits Shiva.

¹⁵ Rosen's (1976) notion of "egocide (the ego death and the resulting disintegration)" which "allows for contact with the Self (the original psychic state before birth);" creating an "opportunity for rebirth, positive transformation, growth, creativity, and significant spiritual reawakening" (p. 209).



See page for author [Public domain or Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Figure 8. Chinnamasta form of Kali – Egocide. From *Wikimedia Commons*. Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chinnamasta_with_Shiva.jpg. Copyright [2017] by *Wikimedia Commons*.

Finally, in the Kali-Shiva myth, the expansion of consciousness and shifting of psychic energy is reflected in Kali's realisation that she had trampled her consort; she "hung out her tongue in shame and stopped" (Kakar, 1989, p. 360). Here, it is relevant to make note of the Chinnamasta form of Kali (Figure 9) who severs her own head. It is, as if, this image speaks to Kali's experience upon the realisation of her actions. The act of severing her own head appears to represent Kali's acknowledgement of 'shame' symbolically. It is also interesting to note that in this image (Figure 9), Kali is also in 'union' with Shiva, perhaps representing the idea that through expansion of consciousness (bhava) and egocide (sadhana), she was able to experience shame and realise the much-longed-for union

(samadhi). There is much literary evidence that parallels such a process of transformation within a therapeutic setting; with the realisation that terror and aggression was not “out there” but coming from within them, clients become familiar with and take ownership of the abusing parts of their own self (West, 2013, p. 80). As if, the Kali-client is able to ‘kill off’ the annihilating parts of her own self “without annihilating essence” (Twemlow, 2003, p. 677).

Chapter summary

This chapter has portrayed the complexity of interplay between the Kali-Shiva relationship and psychotherapeutic engagement. The notion that Kali is a result of the trauma of birth is central to this exploration. The primary focus of this and the previous chapter has been on hermeneutically exploring literature about the myth of Kali and Shiva, its relationship to psychoanalytic thought, and the process of psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic engagement with Kali and Shiva in mind. Several gaps were identified initially in literature where there was no meaning attached to certain symbolic rituals, practices, beliefs, and images. Re-reading the literature with a hermeneutic ‘as if’ quality provided significant insights.

In the next chapter, I will offer my discussion of these findings in relation to the original research question which is ‘how does the myth of Kali and Shiva relate to psychotherapeutic engagement.’ I will also explore the relevance of my findings to the wider psychotherapy community, strengths and limitations of this research, and identify future research possibilities.

Chapter 5. Discussion

Introduction

The impetus for this research came from reflections about therapeutic exchanges with clients. My reflections led to a curiosity about how the therapeutic exchange between client and therapist relates to the myth of Kali and Shiva and their relationship. I expected an understanding of this question would bridge the gap between my culture (an Indian Hindu man) and my psychotherapy training in bicultural Aotearoa New Zealand.

Heideggerian and Gadamerian hermeneutics invites the researcher to subjectively interpret the literature because this results in not just one understanding but several layers of understanding. This method of interpretation provided an opportunity for familiarisation with a vast amount of literature relating to this research. I was able to also traverse several subject areas such as art, mythology, anthropology, and psychotherapy. Although originally beginning with a relatively small amount of articles and books, an understanding of this research topic demanded further reading of a wide range of literature through methods such as snowballing and citation tracking. Therefore, it became important to map and classify methodologically how the literature links with each other and how they relate to the whole body of relevant literature. As a result of this process, I was able to arrive at a key set of relevant findings which are described here.

The most pertinent insights gained through this research are:

- a. Kali is a response to the anxiety of birth, separation from the womb, the process of individuation from the mother, and the unavailability of mothering (failure in attachment and bonding). She personifies defenses such as splitting

and introjection. Engaging with her presents the risk of mutual destructiveness.

- b. The psychic conflict between incestuous desire of the mother and threat of castration by her is also symbolised in Kali.
- c. The myth of Kali has many parallels with trauma literature.
- d. The myth of Shiva speaks to the need to actively engage with the persecuting other.
- e. The philosophy of Shiva (Shaivism) and the philosophy of the 'divine feminine' worshippers (Shaktism) run parallel to hermeneutic philosophy.
- f. The unified masculine-feminine principle upheld by Shaktism (philosophy of divine feminine) is represented as Ardhanarishvara and has transformational potential. With an expansion in consciousness about the unifying principle, one can escape from forces of primitive emotions and the superego. This further allows men and women to shed their narcissistic, phallic-masculine ego (egocide) and attain spiritual awakening.
- g. The Kali-Shiva relationship has many parallels with psychotherapy. In particular, this exchange is reflected in 'enactments' which are an inevitable part of psychotherapeutic engagement. The therapist's vulnerability and capacity to 'contain' are essential for dealing with enactments. These elements are reflected in Shaivism. The threat of the annihilating client can only be contained through vulnerability and invitation for intimacy. This is a frightening experience and requires the therapist to cultivate 'absolute openness' to the therapeutic situation.
- h. With ego death and surrender, there can be transformation, transcendence, and liberation; an experience of becoming one again and be 'reborn' in a spiritual sense.

In the following sections of this final chapter, I discuss these findings of my research and identify what conclusions I have drawn from the findings and how this is different to my original presuppositions. I also reflect on and evaluate the significance of this research to the discipline of psychotherapy. I will also identify

strengths and limitations of this research and identify how this research can be built upon in future.

5.1. Overview of findings

Kali is a dreadfully depicted mythological goddess in Vedic Hinduism. She represents the symbolic contradiction between experiences of terror and loving nurturance. Her myths give an account of both these aspects. She is 'bringer of opposites' – she is good and evil, destroyer and protector, motherly and cruel, chaste and shameless, and in her, heaven and earth are enclosed. Recognising these capacities, devotees of Kali both fear her and attempt to appease her through sacrificial rituals. Other ritualistic practices suggest that Kali devotees immerse themselves in her glory, dance into a trance-like state of elevated consciousness, and seek to liberate themselves from the illusion of life.

Although there was a void in literature about Kali's birth and early life, a hermeneutic process of reviewing literature, with an 'as if' quality, allowed me to identify themes which suggested Kali as having 'come into being' in response to the anxiety of birth, separation from the womb, and individuation from the mother. Reading literature about other relevant mythological figures and adopting the method of 'citation tracking' and 'citation analysis' helped further identify Kali as having suffered a lack of mothering, therefore, bringing forth a need to rely on her primitive defensive structures for survival. In addition, literature suggests that anxieties of the child who does not receive necessary nurturance and love has been condensed into the myth of Kali. This anxiety is represented in her good (giving) and bad or dark (separating/destroying) aspects of her (ambivalence).

Kali is also associated with the defensive process of splitting and introjection. She is recognised as the deification of the infant's psychic struggle, a conflict that

arises because of the incestuous wish for union with the mother but also the unconscious dread that arises because of a threat of castration by her. Literature suggests, this dread of the desired-castrating mother continues into adulthood and is experienced by both men and women. In response to their dread of the castrating mother, men resort to aggression and disparagement. On the other hand, women defend against this dread by abandoning womanhood and identifying with masculine patriarchy which is perceived as being 'powerful.' This dread therefore leads both men and women toward self- and mutual-destructiveness.

Literature also tells us that there are powerful unconscious forces at play which conceal this psychic conflict between incestuous desire and threat of castration. For example, monotheistic world religions have replaced a castrating 'mother' god with an unthreatening father god. This is in contrast to anthropological evidence which suggests the feminine goddess was at the centre of ancient spirituality. Hinduism also defends against this threat by projecting out the threat of the castrating mother onto the image of Kali. Even psychoanalysis has evidenced a defending against this dread.

Further hermeneutic engagement with the literature found the myth of Kali has many parallels with trauma literature. Kali's rage is identified as an uncontrollable outpouring of repressed feelings associated with traumatic loss. Similarly, those who have suffered trauma also find it a challenge to regulate their emotions or relate to others. Both Kali and trauma survivors rage in self-defeating ways toward themselves and others. Kali's rage and wrath manifest in the therapeutic relationship as transference phenomenon, a desperate attempt to repair and heal from trauma of the past. The desire for union, however, is often buried underneath persecution of the therapist. This maladaptive process further fuels the self-defeating nature.

Both psychotherapy literature and the myth of Shiva indicate that a will to actively engaging with the persecuting other is necessary for therapeutic growth. Shiva is known as a mindful ascetic aware of all phenomenon. He is the destroyer of evils, the preserver, and the creator of new life. In contrast to Kali who appears to fight demons that pose a threat of death, Shiva philosophy (Shaivism) welcomes these instinctual responses and considers them as 'worthy of worship' and 'contemplation.' Shiva lives on the cremation ground which symbolises these beliefs.

It was recognised as part of this research that practices of both Kali and Shiva worshippers run parallel to hermeneutic philosophy. For example, hermeneutics invites the researcher to subjectively move in close to the literature and occupy the hermeneutic position fully. Similarly, Kali devotees appear to move in close to the wild characteristics of Kali through their trance-like dancing (as if, one were to be possessed by Kali¹⁶) in order to seek greater consciousness through sadomasochistic rituals. On the other hand, Shiva practitioners get close to his ascetic features by practicing disciplined tantric exercises and renouncing worldly pleasures.

In addition, Shaktism or Shakta philosophy appears to marry the masculine (Shiva) and feminine (Shakti) elements of divinity into a unified whole represented in the form of Ardhanarishvara ('half female-half male' or 'hermaphroditic god'). This unified masculine-feminine form symbolises the masculine-feminine complimentary whole. It is recognised that significant creative and artistic potential exists in such a state. Within this, Shakta worshippers also consider the 'feminine' principle as sustaining and stimulating the otherwise-dead 'masculine.' Archaeological discoveries and anthropological studies also support that it was the 'feminine' principle which was at the forefront of ancient spirituality.

¹⁶ Devotees who dance in front of Kali temple in their free spirited dance are considered to be possessed by Kali. The expression 'Kali has come to them' captures the essence of this process.

The unified masculine-feminine principle of Shaktism represented in Ardhanarishvara is also a central theme in myths about the Kali-Shiva relationship. Their relational exchange speak of the process of transformation from individual states into a unified whole. Shiva, although intending to soothe Kali's rage, is known to become enticed into a mad, creation-threatening dancing. The potential for transformation through such dancing (tandab nrithya) is also described in the myths, particularly as it brings forth the consciousness to enter into a vulnerable position. At its core, myths about Shiva and Kali tell us that creation and destruction are two sides of the same coin and that in order for creative change to occur, there has to be sacrifice.

Myths about the Kali-Shiva relationship suggest further that there is an expansion in consciousness during their dancing. Literature suggests that 'consciousness' is an element that is essential to not only to the Kali-Shiva dyad but also within psychotherapeutic engagement. This is recognised as offering a path forward to address rage and, therefore, aide recovery. Part of such consciousness relates to an awareness of the human tragedy - of birth, separation, and attachment injury. Through awareness, there is an opportunity for expansion of consciousness. This is recognised in literature as 'essential' to escape from the death grip of primitive emotions and superego.

Further expansion of consciousness occurs between Kali and Shiva through their union as Ardhanarishvara. In contrast to their sexual characteristics, literature identifies Kali as representing masculine principles and Shiva as the unity-urging feminine. Their union as Ardhanarishvara therefore represents victory of the 'feminine' which "conceives, bears, gives birth to, and nourishes the universe and all beings" (Miller, 1972, p. 182). This is an essential element in Shakta philosophy and a key finding of this research. This union also represents symbolically an awareness of the eternal human wish to experience primal fusion with the mother and undo early losses.

In psychoanalytic literature, this process has been called 'transformation of libido' and recognised as necessary for ego development. Mythology further identifies such states are possible through sadhana (spiritual practice) in which the 'penis has to be transformed.' These two elements (transformation of libido and sadhana) further describe the shedding of narcissistic phallic-masculine ego in favour of a spiritually content feminine ego. This process in psychotherapy literature is also associated with egocide which can offer spiritual awakening.

This research found that although engaging with the raging 'Kali-client' has its perils, the 'Shiva-therapist' must endure with courage in order to achieve therapeutic gain. One of the risks in the therapeutic space becomes evident when Kali and Shiva's cosmos-threatening dance is placed alongside the process of enactment in psychotherapy. The process of enactment necessitates a willing, available, and vigorous other for transformation to occur. However, such will and availability also presents the risk of annihilation. In therapeutic situations, this presents as the 'sadistic introject' part of clients. Both vulnerability and the capacity to contain 'sadistic rage' are identified as necessary elements in therapeutic engagement. Shiva's act of throwing himself onto the ground to be trampled upon reflects these elements.

As part of this research, it was also found that the threat of castration is a terrifying experiences and parallels egocide or 'ego death.' Therapist and Shiva have to both present their vulnerable selves and invite intimacy despite a threat of annihilation. This has been referred to as "risking the emotionally painful process of change" (Rosen, 1977, p. 213). Both therapist and Shiva need to contain their own murderousness and rage. Shiva's capacity for this is reflected in his ability to drink and hold poison in his throat, a 'containing' of the ego poison.

Such drinking of 'ego poison' is possible through the activation of 'bhava,' an absolute openness reflected in Kali devotion which is similar to 'unconditional

positive regard.’ This research proposes that it was only through ‘bhava’ that Shiva was able to have a ‘vision¹⁷’ of the raging Kali and see her as the ‘traumatised other,’ therefore, become conscious of the destructiveness of their cosmos-threatening dance. Clinical issues also necessitate ‘analytical bhava;’ an openness to therapeutic situation which has the potential to liberate, lead to expansion of consciousness, and access insights previously inaccessible.

In addition, literature suggests that Shiva throwing himself at the feet of Kali also parallels the process of a therapist acknowledging his own vulnerability; an ‘ego death.’ Such acts clinically are transformative and evoke insight. The client is able to move from the position of ‘abused’ to recognition of self as the ‘abuser.’ This process is referred to as familiarising the client with the ‘sadistic introject.’ This abusing self is frightening to the client, however, the analyst’s will and vulnerability also create a possibility for these to be internalised by the Kali-client. This makes way for liberation, expansion of self, and to find the will to surrender.

The Kali-Shiva mythology identifies Shiva as holding the capacity for ‘egocide’ and to bring himself forward with vulnerability and courageously surrender; through this act, there was a raising of Kali’s consciousness making room for her own egocide, experience shame, and surrender which then enabled transcendental union with the feminine principle. Similarly, psychoanalytic literature also suggests that with surrender, there can be ego death or destruction of maya (illusion) and liberation from illusion. A psychotherapeutic process of working with Kali-rage would, therefore, ideally have these elements embedded in it.

¹⁷ I notice my associations with such a ‘vision,’ as in, being ‘seen.’ Oftentimes, clients are ‘seen’ and are able to ‘see themselves’ for the first time in the therapy room.

5.2. Meaning of findings

Kali is the mother Goddess; a representation of the mother, our first love through the act of having been in her womb. The findings of this literature review tell us that it is necessary for mothers, both actual and representational, to make themselves available for a vigorous intercourse ('meet') with Kali-rage and to do so with vulnerability. Through the availability of such a wilful mother, it is possible to lay aggression to rest (egocide) and eventually surrender. In the picture below (Figure 9), Kali is held by Shiva on his lap. It appears, as if, this couple is supported and nourished by the umbilical cord of Ardhanarishvara. Both this picture and this research extend an invitation to the profession of psychotherapy to strive toward creating a 'hermaphroditic consciousness' in the therapeutic space, a space that transforms from domination of the 'masculine' toward a unified 'feminine-masculine.'

Image blocked due to copyright restrictions.

*Figure 9. Transformation. From *Shakta Wisdom Blog*, Retrieved from <http://shiva-parvati.blogspot.co.nz/2016/08/why-does-goddess-kali-stand-on-lord.html>. Copyright [2016] by Shakta Wisdom Blog.*

In my experience, contemporary psychoanalytical literature, psychotherapy training, and practice of psychotherapy focus impartially on trauma which has occurred after birth. The Kali-Shiva myth, however, extends this thinking by recognising trauma of birth as being the 'primary trauma.' This myth also gives credit to the significance of the experience in the womb and the ongoing, unconscious wish to return to the maternal womb. Several early psychoanalytic writings support the unconscious struggle captured within these myths, the ubiquity and essentiality of the masculine-feminine principle, and the psychic conflicts that underlie such union. The significance of these to clinical issues became particularly obvious through this research.

As part of engaging with literature hermeneutically, I have come to believe that mythological encounters have much in common with psychotherapeutic encounters. I now also view mythology as having the potential to not only usefully hold the interpersonal exchange in the room but also serve as a spine for formulating psychodynamics of clients affected by trauma and those who have experienced a failure in attachment and bonding. I have also gained confidence about the myth of Kali as being a useful template to relate to the 'after effects of trauma.' It is also my opinion that hermeneutic philosophy and methodology has elements that are parallel to philosophy and practices of Hindu visionaries and Shakta worshippers.

Overall, findings of this research have enabled me to draw conclusions that are significantly different and much more robust than my original presupposition of Kali and Shiva as being the 'aggressor' and 'aggrieved.' More importantly, I have found, by way of this research, that the Kali-Shiva myth could also offer a template for the resolution of traumatic enactments, to step outside of the cycle of trauma and the compulsion to repeat trauma. These findings can be used as a useful template to survive the violent regressive backlash of clients; and in the process, conceive the raging client again in the womb of the therapeutic space. As a result of this research, I am also left with increased confidence that the Kali-Shiva relationship could serve as a scale to measure the ongoing therapeutic relationship against, particularly when working with survivors of trauma. I believe this 'Vedic way' of working with clients will add value to my Western psychotherapy training and empower me as an Indian psychotherapist. Now anchored also with Vedic wisdom and a cultural understanding of therapeutic change, I hope to enrich the process of facilitating transformation of my clients and aide their rebirth and growth.

5.3. Implications for theory and practice

I have proposed that a hermeneutic engagement with Kali and Shiva myth opens the possibility of an alternative model of thinking about the psychotherapy

process. There were several theoretical and practice implications which I was able to identify through this research. I highlight the most relevant theory and practice implications in the following paragraphs.

Branman (2015) states that apart from those trained in feminist psychology, clinicians have little awareness about the strength of the feminine principle and that these have been considered a hindrance to advancement. While I agree with Branman comments; based on my own clinical experience, the content of my psychotherapy training, and the findings of this research, I believe due credit must also go to field of Jungian analysis for the key role it has played in bringing feminine principles onto the stage of psychoanalytic theory and practice.

Further, this research began with my associations of the 'female' Kali as aggressor and the 'male' Shiva as the aggrieved. This split between the male as victim and female as perpetrator was influenced by the images of the 'female' Kali in a dominant aggressive position over a submissive 'male' Shiva. The findings of this research; however, depict a 'masculine' Kali who is aggressive, destructive, and powerful and a 'feminine' Shiva who is passive but potent. As it did with me, through the process of a 'fusion of horizons,' others may also be able to integrate the split between women who are considered passive and men who are considered active; this dichotomy, I believe, has been a historical 'sexist' blind spot in certain cultures. Such integration would be particularly crucial for psychotherapists to embody.

Additionally, during the course of this research, I came across a job advertisement seeking a counsellor at a women's correctional facility in Auckland. The advert read, "three-quarters of women in prison have been victimised through family violence, rape and other sexual assault" and many have an intergenerational history of poverty, discrimination, grief and violence; these traumatic experiences leave them with "on-going effects, which can be compounded in prison" (Department of Corrections, n.d.). The narrative of Kali, I

believe, fits the description of these women in the correctional facility very well. It may, therefore, prove useful for counsellors to carry the spirit of the findings from this research to such female trauma victims with a view to support them engage in reflection about their own aggression as being key to the work. Similarly, the findings of this research also have applications in male prisons, and carrying the 'spirit of Ardhanarishvara' to these men may offer insights about elements such as disparagement, aggression, and violence in their behaviour.

I believe also that this research challenges traditional approaches to psychodynamic formulation and treatment planning. The impetus for this research came from an identified gap between my cultural background and the content of my psychotherapy training in New Zealand. As a result of this research, I have come to believe in the following personal reflection which I made note of in my journal: 'When theory does not cut the mustard, mythology could come to the rescue!' With this in mind, it is hoped that this research might enable other therapists to recognise Kali and Shiva in their own practice. In addition, I propose that mythological reflections and an active, conscious discussion about possible threat of emasculation or disparagement may also be a useful exercise in psychotherapy training to help therapists work with the psychic tension that may emerge in the therapeutic space because of emasculative fears and experience of powerlessness against the 'disparaging masculine.'

I view the findings from this research as also having practical application in relationship counselling. On a particular occasion, during the course of this research, as I was browsing through a book by Harville Hendrix from Imago relationship counselling, I came across the 'polar attract principle.' Hendrix (1993) highlights the importance of complementing one another in relationships, to not just being a permanently fixed personality but to be fluid and adapt as necessary. I believe the findings of this research also support such complementarity. In addition, findings from this research; particularly, the philosophical belief that instincts are not to be feared or rejected or destroyed

but accepted and welcomed has practical applications in sex therapy, end-of-life care, and grief counselling. Concepts such as 'liberation' (moksha/nirvana) can be particularly helpful for those nearing death or struggling with grief.

Finally, since I practice psychotherapy in the bicultural nation of Aotearoa New Zealand, I have also wondered about Maori myths that are similar to the myth of Kali and Shiva. The limitations of this research did not allow for an exploration of these. Following on from this research, it is hoped that I may be able to transfer some of my learning from this research to interpret and develop further understanding of other myths, both Maori and non-Maori. Additionally, given the multicultural makeup of New Zealand, I find the Vedic Hindu mythological knowledge held within this research would be useful for those therapists working with clients who have a cultural or familial background of Vedic Hindu philosophy.

5.4. Strengths of this research

Woodman (1985) tells us that a scarcity of ritual containers hinders our ability to transition between different levels of consciousness. She notes,

“without an understanding of myth or religion, without an understanding of the relationship between destruction and creation, death and rebirth, the individual suffers the mysteries of life as meaningless mayhem—alone” (pp. 24-25).

This research adds to the growing psychotherapy literature on mythology and meets the needs of a number of people looking for guidance in the practices of our ancestors and knowledge held within ancient scriptures. In addition, I believe this research holds the capacity to demystify psychoanalytic thinking (at least, this is the effect it had on me). Further, given the stigma associated with mental illness and accessing mental health services, a mythology-guided approach to supporting people therapeutically may be of appeal to those who would prefer

an alternative to 'disorders' and 'labels.' In addition, clients and therapists who have an interest in mythology may also find this research useful.

This research also places a mythological couple on the side lines of trauma therapy. Researching Kali-Shiva myth has been particularly useful to me in developing an appreciative understanding of enactments. It offers a way to make sense of traumatic enactments and also therapist's dread and shame in response to an annihilating client. This research suggests that being vulnerable helps aggression and shame to be worked through. Allowing the client see the vulnerability is an essential part of this process. As such, Kali and Shiva myth provides me a template to be a vulnerable but also effective therapist, and I believe it might do the same for others. Finally, by way of this research, I was able to extrapolate meaning from mythology in a way that I found useful, and this was only possible through a hermeneutic reading of the literature. This hermeneutic research may similarly aide other researchers to apply the methods I employed with other myths.

5.5. Limitations and future research recommendations

Hindu mythology is a vast subject area and was recorded in Sanskrit and other Indian languages prior to English translations. An identified limitation of this research comes in the form of exclusion of articles and books that have been published in languages such as Sanskrit, Hindi, German, and various other Indian regional languages. Although there was a saturation of understanding, there is a possibility that additional insights about the Kali-Shiva mythology available in non-English-language texts could alter the findings of this research.

In addition, during the process of this literature review, it was tempting to go off course and explore the elements of Kali-Shiva dynamic in geopolitical, environmental, and ecological issues. In particular, during my hermeneutic

wonderings, I experienced the masculine dread of the desired-dreadful mother and resultant disparagement and rejection of feminine principles as having permeated society at various levels - all the way from religion to what occurs in individual households. I also found myself attributing this dread of the mother to politicians across the globe, recognising the disparaging masculine in their words and actions. The readiness to jump into war, carry out mass killings, preparedness to obliterate vast sects of people, or abuse natural resources of our planet, in my opinion, are only a few examples of the 'masculine' defending against a dread that is primal. The confines of the research question and limitations of time and resources did not allow deeper exploration of these reflections, however, it is hoped that future research might be able to build on the findings of this research and examine these broader socio-political and cultural issues.

Further, having previously lived in India for a significant amount of time, I do have an advantage of having an implicit understanding of certain philosophical concepts and mythology. Therefore, a critique of this present study may come in the form of my ethnic origin as an Indian Hindu man and the possibility that this may have biased my findings. Additionally, I am 'male' and recognise the 'male psyche' has had an influence on my being. Therefore, I recognise that a gender bias could also be attributed to my hermeneutic engagement with the literature identified in this research.

This research has at certain places also made reference to mythological figures as 'he,' and 'she.' Despite the masculine and feminine principles attributed to both Kali and Shiva, I was not able to present them easily as gender-neutral beings or be inclusive of the range of genders in my writing. Therefore, I would like to acknowledge this issue as one of the limitations of this particular research; the inability to extend on this dualism and be inclusive of LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intergender, and Queer). Further, I am curious about the interface of LGBTIQ literature with the findings of this research; in particular, an

investigation into literature about Ardhanarishvara is particularly appealing. Again, while this would have also been an exciting exploration; time and resources available for this study did not provide opportunity to explore these subjects.

Finally, this is a one-person study and a study that predominantly focused on one particular mythological relationship. There are several other world myths that possibly describe a similar process. While some of these myths are called 'creation' myths, others are referenced as 'descent' or 'death-rebirth' myths, or symbolised as 'ouroboros' from ancient Egypt. Resources, time, and energy have limited my capacity to explore and bring forth the wisdom that are possibly held in these other narratives and evaluate how that knowledge influences the findings of this literature review about Kali and Shiva.

Chapter summary

In this chapter, I introduced the reader to the findings of this research before providing a comprehensive overview of the findings of this research. I have also offered to the reader my understanding of this research, how I made sense of the findings, and how these may be of use to me in my practice as a psychotherapist. In addition, implications for theory and practice of psychotherapy were highlighted along with strengths, limitations, and recommendations for future.

Chapter 6. Summary of research

“It is time for the invocation:
Kali, be with us.
Violence, destruction, receive our homage.
Help us to bring darkness into the light,
To lift out the pain, the anger,
Where it can be seen for what it is—
The balance-wheel for our vulnerable, aching love.
Put the wild hunger where it belongs,
Within the act of creation,
Crude power that forges a balance
Between hate and love.
Help us to be the always hopeful
Gardeners of the spirit
Who know that without darkness
Nothing comes to birth
As without light
Nothing flowers.
Bear the roots in mind,
You, the dark one, Kali,
Awesome power.”

May Sarton (p.13, in Woodman & Dickson, 1996)

In summary, this dissertation is about the journey that extends on either sides of the continuum between the womb and the tomb and the painful course in between. The literature reviewed for this research suggests that at the core of the answer to the research question (how does the myth of Kali and Shiva relate to psychotherapeutic engagement) is the trauma that is first experienced at birth because of separation from the womb. Infants, children, men, and women engage in an agonising process of returning to the paradise of the womb. Having suffered the dread of the mother in the realm of the unconscious, it appears we continue to defend against the ‘dreadful desire’ for union. We rage, disparage, and act out our inner conflict toward ourselves and others in self-defeating ways. A hermeneutic engagement with the myth of Kali and Shiva makes this knowledge available to us.

In addition, findings from this research offer a way to exit the mutually destructive cycle. Concepts from Vedic Hindu philosophy such as Bhava, Sadhana, and Samadhi have been used to capture the key psychotherapeutic themes such as empathy, unconditional positive regard, insight, consciousness, vulnerability, egocide, containment, and surrender to name a few. This research identifies these elements as crucial to resolution of conflicts that clients bring to psychotherapy. When applied, it leads to expansion of self, liberation, and transcendence; referred to, in the East, as 'moksha' or 'nirvana.' Overall, I have proposed that a hermeneutic engagement with Kali and Shiva myths open the possibility of an alternative model of thinking about the psychotherapy process. It is hoped that this reading will open the reader to recognising Kali and Shiva not just in their own practice but also in wider issues that face us today ecologically and socio-politically.

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