In this paper I've sought to explore some of the connections between the ideas of baO and BaM and what happens in the group process if the individually-guided retreat.

I am conscious that trauma has been around a lot, and I have been connecting this to protomental / paranoid-schizoid material and thinking about that in relation to religious experience.

In doing this I have two Lacanian ideas at the back of my mind. One is the way he describes as "the real" what others see as structural trauma andis integral to the human experience. I am connecting that to the way Bion's O is sometimes called "ultimate reality". Rather than paint religion as a box of sticking plasters used for trauma, I am beginning to think in terms of religion as a framework which enables people to deal with reality, which includes both normal and exceptional suffering, and our connection to the sacred.

The other is Lacan's very rich way of being with lack. One of the places where religious language runs aground, at least in popular thought, is when it seems to be shot through with too much, and usually implausible, certainty. If the words can instead be used instead for lack, then we are in a different place, so speaking of God is to speak of the place held for God and hold open the space for encounters in unknowing.