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Editors

International Handbook of Education for Spirituality, Care and Wellbeing

Part One

🜨 Springer

INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF EDUCATION FOR
SPIRITUALITY, CARE AND WELLBEING

International Handbooks of Religion and Education

Aims & Scope

The *International Handbooks of Religion and Education* series aims to provide easily accessible, practical, yet scholarly, sources of information about a broad range of topics and issues in religion and education. Each Handbook presents the research and professional practice of scholars who are daily engaged in the consideration of these religious dimensions in education. The accessible style and the consistent illumination of theory by practice make the series very valuable to a broad spectrum of users. Its scale and scope bring a substantive contribution to our understanding of the discipline and, in so doing, provide an agenda for the future.

International Handbook
of Education for Spirituality,
Care and Wellbeing

Part One

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Two of her recent books are *Educating Faith* (Clements, 2006), an approach to spiritual formation, and C*onversations That Change Us* (Clements, 2007).

Jane Bone has been involved in early childhood education for a number of years in Aotearoa New Zealand. Currently she lectures at Monash University, Australia. Her interests include ethical issues in research with young children and different pedagogical approaches to early childhood education. She completed doctoral research about spirituality in three early childhood educational contexts in 2007 and since that time has written extensively about spirituality as part of a holistic approach to education, development and wellbeing. In her research, as in life, she enjoys crossing borders and exploring the spiritual possibilities always present in everyday life.

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Over the last 46 years, **John Fisher** has taught in schools (Principal for 14 years) and teacher education and has researched in chemistry, science education, psychology and health education. John's main research interest for the last 15 years has been in spiritual wellbeing in schools, universities, healthcare settings, churches and the wider community (PhD, University of Melbourne 1998 and recently completed EdD at the University of Ballarat).

Professor John C. Carey is the Director of the National Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and a Professor of School Counseling at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. His research interests focus on the development and evaluation of effective school-based interventions to promote personal–social and career development. He is the author of *Evidence-based school counseling: Making a difference with data-driven practice* and the coeditor of *Multicultural counseling in schools: A practical handbook*.

Gabriela Cassigoli has taught English in a number of well-known colleges in Chile, the UK, and the USA. These include the Universitario Inglés School and Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de La Educación in Chile, and Cedar River Montessori School and Wedgwood Montessori School in Washington, USA. She is currently a teacher of English at St. George's College, Chile. She has wide experience working with adolescents at Catholic schools, where she has participated in rural and urban missions, San Ignacio spiritual exercises and in programs for the development of young people's wellbeing.

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Professor Amelio A. D'Onofrio is Clinical Professor and Director of the Psychological Services Institute in the Graduate School of Education at Fordham University where he has been a member of faculty since 1994. He also works as an independent clinical practitioner in adolescent and adult psychotherapy in New York City where he is a licensed psychologist. Amelio teaches and provides clinical supervision to students in the Doctoral Program in Counseling Psychology. His teaching and clinical interests include developmental psychopathology, interpersonal and existential approaches to psychotherapy, the neuropsychobiology of affect regulation, and clinical supervision.

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Marian de Souza is a Senior Lecturer and Student Adviser at Australian Catholic University, Ballarat Campus and is the Editor of the *Journal of Religious Education*. Marian has published extensively, nationally and internationally on her research which has investigated spirituality as pertaining to the relational dimension of the human person. She has developed an approach to learning that encourages imaginative, creative and intuitive thinking and which addresses the spiritual dimension. Marian is also interested in how small ethnic communities hand on their religious and spiritual cultures to the next generation in the secular and pluralist context of contemporary Australia. Her most recent work has examined the role of non-conscious learning to promote and impede relationality, an important consideration in a society where problems related to religious diversity are becoming apparent.

Al Dueck is Frank and Evelyn Freed professor of psychology at the Graduate School of Psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary. He is author of *From Jerusalem to Athens* (1995) and *A Peaceable Psychology* (2009).

Judith Duncan is an Associate Professor in Education, School of Maori, Social and Cultural Studies at the University of Canterbury College of Education, Christchurch, New Zealand. When this study was carried out Judith was employed at the University of Otago, New Zealand. Judith is an established researcher with over 15 years of research experience, predominantly using qualitative research methods in a range of education settings.

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Margarita Gerouki is a researcher at the Department of Applied Sciences of Education in the University of Helsinki, Finland. Prior to her current work she worked for a number of years as a teacher in a primary school in Greece and as a language teacher in both Greece and Finland. Her current research on sexuality and relationships education is funded by the Greek Ministry of Education.

Jennifer Gidley is a psychologist, educator and futures researcher. Her transdisciplinary career spans three decades and all educational levels. She founded and directed an innovative private school inspired by Steiner pedagogy in Australia (1984–1994). She co-designed and lectured in the online Masters in Strategic Foresight at Swinburne University, Melbourne (2003–2006). Jennifer has published widely in educational and youth futures, and global socio-cultural change, including two books: The University in Transformation and Youth Futures. She is an Executive Board member of the World Futures Studies Federation (WFSF). Currently a research fellow, Global Cities Research Institute, RMIT University, Melbourne, she wrote this chapter during Ph.D. candidature, Southern Cross University, Lismore.

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Angela Hackel is a research assistant for the Center for Spirituality in Childhood and Adolescence at Search Institute. Her research interests include examining what factors hinder and assist in the spiritual development of youth in the international context.

Edward J. Hall CP is a member of the Passionist Community and resides at the Calvary Centre for Spirituality in Shrewsbury, Massachusettes, USA. He is a former director of religious education at the University of Connecticut and has lectured at Dublin City University. He has studied mediation and negotiation at the Harvard School of Law and in recent years he has turned his research towards wellbeing and emotionally disturbed youth and has worked as a mediator in community conflict.

Peter C. Hill is professor at Rosemead School of Psychology, Biola University, in La Mirada, California (USA). In 2006, he was a Visiting Senior Research Scholar on the Faculty of Divinity at Cambridge University, England. Dr. Hill has published over 60 articles in peer-reviewed journals and has co-authored (with Ralph Hood and W. Paul Williamson) *The Psychology of Religious Fundamentalism* (2005) co-edited (with Ralph Hood) *Measures of Religiosity* (1999), and co-edited (with David Benner) The *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology* (1999). He is a past president

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Edward Hoffman—Dr. Hoffman is an adjunct associate professor at Yeshiva University and director of its undergraduate psychology internship program. For the past 20 years, he has been a New York State licensed psychologist specializing in children. Dr. Hoffman has authored several books in psychology including major biographies of Alfred Adler and Abraham Maslow and works on psychological assessment. He is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. He has also written books on Jewish philosophy and spirituality, including *The Way of Splendor*, *Opening the Inner Gates*, and most recently *The Wisdom of Maimonides*. With a strong cross-cultural focus, his research interests encompass childhood spiritual experience, conscious parenting, and creative education.

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Kathryn Hunt has worked in primary schools as a teacher and a manager. She has also worked as a local education adviser for early years' education and has 17 years experience working as a counsellor educator in higher education. Since 2003, she has worked in Kenya, East Africa, training counsellors in play therapy and recently has moved into lecturing in therapeutic childcare in North Wales at Glyndwr University.

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James O'Higgins-Norman is a lecturer and researcher at the School of Education Studies in Dublin City University where he is also Chair of Graduate Teacher Education. For over 10 years, his research has been concerned with aspects of equality and wellbeing in schools, and his work on homophobic bullying is considered to be seminal in the field of Irish education. He regularly contributes to more than one journal including *Pastoral Care*, *Sexuality and Culture* and *Sex Education* and has authored a number of books and reports on aspects of equality and wellbeing in schools. He is co-founder of the Spirituality and Wellbeing in Education Research Group (SWERG) at Dublin City University.

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Mollie Painton a nationally recognized lecturer on play therapy and children's spirituality, lives in Fort Collins, Colorado, where she is a licensed psychologist since 1994; and in private practice since 1989 specializing in work with children and families. Dr. Painton founded and directs both The Interplay Center and the Spirit-Play Institute. An APT Registered Play Therapist/Supervisor and EMDR Level II trauma therapist, she taught play therapy to doctoral students at the University of Northern Colorado. Dr. Painton has discovered the world of spirit in children. She is the author of the innovative book, *Encouraging Your Child's Spiritual Intelligence*, inspired by the children in play therapy with her. These boys and girls range from developmentally disabled, ADD/ADHD, the intellectually gifted, children traumatized by events among which are the death of a parent or a divorce, and others who need help making troublesome adjustments to difficult situations, such as a move or birth of a sibling.

Kenneth I. Pargament is Professor of clinical psychology at Bowling Green State University. He is author of *The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory, Research, Practice* and *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy: Understanding and Addressing the Sacred*. He is editor-in-chief of the forthcoming two-volume *APA Handbook of Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality*. Dr. Pargament's awards include the Virginia Staudt Sexton Mentoring Award and William James Award for excellence in research in the psychology of religion from Division 36 of APA, and most recently the Oskar Pfister Award from the American Psychiatric Association for empirical and applied contributions to psychiatry and religion.

Peter Perkins is senior associate and owning partner of Global Learning Partners, Inc. and has been a practitioner of Dialogue Education (DE) since 1985, applying this progressive approach to teaching and learning to government, non-profits, NGOs, community-based organizations, and corporations. Peter is also the principal learning consultant, coach and teacher with *Five Dimensions* of Calais, Vermont, focusing on the facilitation of adolescent learning, and holistic adolescent development emphasizing spiritual growth. He started the first Prevention and Community Development Program in the United States as its founding Chair at *Woodbury College* of Montpelier, Vermont and designed two nationally recognized substance abuse prevention programs for youth. Education includes an M.A. in Human Organizational Development from Fielding Institute, Santa Barbara, California and B.A. in Sociology from Lakeland College, Sheboygan, Wisconsin. He has authored, co-authored, or contributed to works on Dialogue Education, Adolescent Spirituality, and Youth Substance Abuse Intervention and Prevention.

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General Introduction

**Marian de Souza, Leslie J. Francis, James O'Higgins-Norman,
and Daniel Scott**

In this handbook we will examine the relationship between the concepts of wellbeing, care and spirituality in educational settings and the relationship to the provision of holistic education for young people. We will argue that there are serious consequences for not recognizing the importance of spirituality as a core dimension to a person's development. Spirituality, here, is conceived as relational, the connectedness that an individual feels to everything that is other than self. Vygotsky recognized the importance of the relational character of teaching when he argued that the first stage in the construction of knowledge and meaning by an individual arises out of an "*interpsychological*" relationship with others (1978, p. 57). In other words, we come to learn about our world, society, various subjects and issues and most importantly we learn about ourselves through interaction with others. Totterdell (2000) further expounds this view when he argues that there is a connection between what we *understand* and how we *behave*:

> Acknowledging the primacy of relationships as fundamental to human flourishing leads us to advocate an ethic based on a clear-eyed estimate of the consequences of behaviour on human well-being... (p. 133).

Both these arguments point to the ethic of care which has become a central motif in the discourse surrounding teaching and compulsory schooling in Western societies. They are especially relevant today, given the social, political and cultural influences that have shaped the contexts within which individuals attempt to understand and make meaning of their life experiences and within which education systems are endeavouring to find approaches that will address the whole student.

The first decade of the twenty-first century has been a particularly eventful time in human history in terms of scientific and technological advances. The rapid pace of change and communication, while it may be exciting and stimulating for many, also generates an underlying level of anxiety as people barely have time to get used to one innovation before the next one is on the horizon. The ability to "dip" into

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and out of a variety of human experiences, whether it relates to a relationship, job, living accommodation or country tends to bring a certain level of superficiality. For many young people who know no other way of being, the skills and ability to ground themselves in a particular worldview that offers them meaning and purpose seems to be ever elusive.

It is not surprising, then, that statistics and anecdotal evidence reflect the fact that many young people appear to experience disillusionment and a sense of hopelessness and disconnection and that they contribute to the rising statistics of mental health problems in many Western countries. Further statistics from these countries regularly indicate the growing indifference of a large number of young people to traditional institutions, such as religion, that in previous years may have offered some hope, meaning and purpose. Instead, many declare themselves to be spiritual and not religious, and their search for meaning takes place in spaces without boundaries which can be unsatisfying and, sometimes, detrimental to their wellbeing.

Without doubt, the perceived differences between spirituality and religion have continued to attract attention with resultant discussions trying to arrive at a common understanding of contemporary spirituality, its links to religion and its role in care and wellbeing. Certainly, the fact that contemporary spirituality has been perceived as relational—a "relational consciousness" (Hay & Nye, 1998) has significant implications for the wellbeing of an individual. As well, Tacey's (2003) notion that spirituality is a search for the sacred in the everyday where "such encounters change lives and expose young people to the mystery and presence of the sacred within themselves, even as they are moved by the sacred in nature" (p. 181) has relevance.

In particular, new insights from brain research into the biological nature of spirituality have prompted the articulation of various theories of spiritual intelligence which cannot be overlooked in any discussion on education for care and wellbeing. Potentially, the individual's sense of connectedness to Self and to Other in the community, the world and to a Transcendent Other should provide him/her with a sense of meaning and purpose thereby enhancing a sense of wellbeing. It is not surprising, then, that the links between spirituality, care and wellbeing have continued to generate research, conferences, forums and debates in education, health and other related fields.

Another feature of the contemporary world that has pertinence to education for care and wellbeing is that for a variety of reasons such as large-scale disasters—floods, earthquakes, drought, famine and war, and other human reasons such as seeking employment and improved lifestyles in a world made more accessible by improved travelling opportunities, an unprecedented number of people have continued to shift and resettle across the globe. This has created tensions, overt and concealed, as hosts and new arrivals negotiate and develop new relationships often with little understanding of the cultural beliefs and practices held by the other. More particularly, on the part of the host countries, there is little real understanding of the horror and trauma that are inherent elements of the broken and uprooted lives of so many people who arrive on their shores. In particular, 9/11 marked a distinct point in the contemporary world when the act of terrorism inserted itself into the world's

consciousness and subsequently shaped global politics. One outcome has been the levels of religious divisiveness that have become features of some societies and it has successfully impeded the path that could lead from tolerance to empathy and compassion.

These are elements for concern, particularly when we consider a new generation that has grown up against this backdrop of anxiety and hostility. New and traditional avenues need to be examined to find strategies that will provide some resolutions. One way forward is to re-look at education programs. It is time to recognize that the educational frameworks that were born out of a twentieth century scientific, positivistic and reductionistic framework are not an adequate response to the world today. Instead, what is needed is an approach to education that reflects a change in consciousness and which is more appropriate to the context of the contemporary world, one that is grounded in the totality of human experience. The collection of writings in this handbook is one attempt to do this. It considers the dynamic relationship between education, spirituality, care and wellbeing. It examines the theory underpinning the practice of education in different societies where spirituality and care are believed to be at the heart of all educational experiences. As well, it recognizes that, regardless of the context or type of educational experience, education is a caring activity in which the development of the whole person—body, mind and spirit is a central aim for teachers and educators in both formal and informal learning.

The chapters also acknowledge that different understandings of spirituality have created tensions for some scholars in the Western world, particularly in the fields of religion and theology. Traditionally, spirituality was firmly placed within the framework of religion, so that often the term was used interchangeably with religion and religiosity. Hanegraaff argues that:

> "Spiritualities" and "religions" might be roughly characterized as the individual and institutional poles within the general domain of "religion". A religion without spiritualities is impossible to imagine. But. . . the reverse—a spirituality without religion—is quite possible in principle. Spiritualities can emerge on the basis of an existing religion, but they can very well do without. New Age is the example par excellence of this latter possibility: a complex of spiritualities which emerges on the foundation of a pluralistic secular society. (1999, p. 151)

The concept of spirituality that inspires the writings contained in this handbook assumes that spirituality is an innate element of the human person and an integral aspect of human development. Its nature is relational: the expressions of connectedness that an individual experiences to Self (as in inner Self) and everything that is other than self. Spirituality complements, integrates and balances the rational and emotional aspects of the human person. Accordingly, the chapters in this handbook will present and discuss topics that focus on spirituality as an integral part of human experience which is, consequently, essential to educational programs which aim to address personal and communal identity; foster resilience, empathy and compassion; and promote meaning and connectedness. Ultimately, these elements should make possible the care and wellbeing of all students.

The structure of this book is divided into two volumes with two parts in each volume. The first part will focus more on the theoretical aspects of education for

spirituality, care and wellbeing. The second part will examine the application of theory for professional practice in the respective areas of education, spirituality, care and wellbeing.

The first part is edited by Professor Leslie J. Francis and has as its theme: The psychology of religion and spirituality with attention being given to the implications for education, care and wellbeing. Francis notes that religion and spirituality used to be important factors in the field of psychology but this had somewhat diminished through the mid-twentieth century, only to resurface at the end of the century and become an important topic for consideration and study. He clearly explains why the focus of the chapters in this part is drawn from quantitative research studies where the findings and conclusions that are presented have been generally tested and established by statistical procedures. This part, then, provides a foundation for the ideas and essays that follow through the rest of the handbook.

Dr Daniel Scott is the editor of the second part which focuses on human development and identity for children and young people. He refers to the potential problems that arise when spirituality is divorced from these areas of research and highlights the need to identify and describe the nature of spiritual development. The chapters provide an extensive examination of relevant literature and draw on practice-based experience and observations to propose theories pertaining to spiritual development which may inform the practice of those in the caring professions and assist them to understand spirituality as it is experienced and expressed. The answers to questions such as: What role does spirituality play in human maturation? What are some possible ways in which spirituality may be studied? and so on, become the focus of the discussions and deliberations of the writers in this part. In the end, it becomes clear that integrating spirituality into practice can contribute to the wellbeing of child and youth.

The third and fourth parts make up the second volume. The third part is edited by Dr de Souza and concentrates on the pedagogical aspects of education for spirituality, care and wellbeing. The chapters, here, identify the concerns shared by many scholars and practitioners that many educational programs and curricula on offer today do not cater for all students and there is much evidence that, as we have entered the new millennium, there are several indications that a growing number of children and adolescents are afflicted by social and health problems and that mental illness, most commonly depression, is on the rise amongst them. These scholars highlight the fact that most education systems are failing to adequately cater for all their students since they do not have a holistic approach and, instead, continue to focus on cognitive learning. The writings provide a thorough examination of related literature and discuss various pedagogical approaches that will enable practitioners to enhance and nurture the spirituality and wellbeing of the students in their care.

Dr James O'Higgins-Norman edits the fourth and final part of the handbook. The chapters, here, draw together many of the concepts that have been investigated in the earlier parts. The focus here is on the application of the theories of spirituality, care and wellbeing to different educational settings and involving different professionals. As O'Higgins-Norman notes in his introduction, no one profession should be allowed custody of the human spirit. In particular, there is a clear understanding

that is indicated through these chapters that the care and wellbeing of a student is intrinsically bound up with the spirituality of their being. Accordingly, the central theme that underlies the writings in this part is that education is a process that is inseparable from human fulfilment.

The chapters in this handbook reflect the breadth of interest in the discipline of education for spirituality, care and wellbeing. The authors have developed excellence and expertise in their various fields: psychology, sociology, theology, education, counselling and chaplaincy, and they provide perspectives from a range of countries across the globe. Their writings are indicative of the concern and passion they have for the education and wellbeing of young people in the contemporary world. Ultimately, the writings in this handbook provide illuminating insights to inform and enhance future directions and policies in education and, indeed, in other caring professions so that they will be able to identify strategies and approaches in education that will nurture spirituality and attend to the care and wellbeing of future generations.

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Part I
The Psychology of Religion and Spirituality: Implications for Education and Wellbeing – An Introduction

Leslie J. Francis

According to its etymology, the discipline of psychology is concerned with the study of the mind, with the study of the soul, with the study of the human *psyche*. This broad definition, however, is far from unproblematic. What is meant by the human mind, the human soul, the human psyche? And what tools are available to study such phenomena anyway? The broad history of the development of psychology as an academic discipline in its own right is the story of how these two problems have been addressed: the problem of substance (what is being studied) and the problem of method (how is the study being conducted). Right from the early days of the developing discipline of psychology, religion and spirituality have been seen as a matter of central concern (see, for example, William James, 1902). Although this central concern with religion and spirituality seemed to disappear from the radar of psychology for a number of years, the topic is now firmly back on the agenda as evidenced by the foundation of the *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* in 1980, the revitalisation of the *Archive for the Psychology of Religion* in the 1990s and the development of a new journal from the American Psychological Association in 2009 dedicated to the psychology of religion and spirituality. The aim of this chapter is to provide a general introduction to and overview of the perspective on the psychology of religion and spirituality taken by and shaped within this handbook concerned with education, care and wellbeing. This perspective has been informed by three considerations.

The first consideration concerns the range of people on whom the perspective is focused. Different branches of psychology are properly concerned with different populations: the mentally ill (say, clinical psychology), the criminal and the deviant (say, forensic psychology) or the general population of people who have been diagnosed as neither "mad" nor "bad" (say, "normal" psychology). This part of the handbook is concerned with the normal population broadly conceived.

The second consideration concerns the subject matter (the data) under consideration. Different branches of psychology are properly concerned with different approaches to their subject. Some approaches are concerned with examining the functioning of the human brain (say, neuroscience) and this concern has proved to be fruitful within the broad field of the psychology of religion and spirituality. Other approaches are concerned with ways of accessing human experience and

interpreting the meaning and significance of human responses. This part of the handbook is concerned with the latter of these two approaches.

The third consideration concerns the ways in which human experiences and human responses can be accessed and studied (the methodology). Broadly within the social sciences the main methodological division occurs between qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative approach (say, using interviews) has the strength of providing rich and deep description, often allowing the voices of individuals to be heard with clarity. The quantitative approach (say, using questionnaire surveys) has the strength of providing access to a large number of people and of allowing more secure generalisations to be made. This part of the handbook is concerned primarily with the quantitative approach, although it is fully recognised that the two approaches are complementary and properly inform and enrich one another. Good use is made of the qualitative approach as and when appropriate.

Within the quantitative tradition there are certain key assumptions that shape what is taken seriously and how the methodology proceeds. The first key assumption concerns the notion of measurement. It is assumed that central psychological constructs can be accessed and calibrated in ways that mimic the measurement of physical constructs. Such a notion is far from being unproblematic. It may be relatively straightforward to measure the length of an individual's arm or the circumference of an individual's head, but it is much more problematic to measure intelligence, extraversion or spirituality. In a sense, all these psychological notions (unlike the physical notions of arms and heads) are abstractions. They are ways of talking about elusive aspects of the human psyche rather than being objective "things" in their own right. In order to measure such abstractions, it is necessary to be very clear about the way in which terms are to be used (the issue of definition) and about the way in which accepted definitions are to be translated into measures (the issue of operationalisation).

Many of the notions with which the quantitative approach to psychology deals are highly contested within other spheres of debate (say other disciplines). There is, for example, no one accepted definition of constructs like intelligence, extraversion, religion or spirituality. It is for this reason that definitions adopted by psychologists as a basis for developing measuring instruments themselves remain contested. There are, for example, a number of generally accepted measures of the notion of extraversion, but it cannot be assumed that these instruments all measure the same "thing". The view generally taken within this part of the handbook is that it is sensible and proper to work with the precise definitions offered by the instruments used and to take care not to generalise research findings beyond these definitions to the wider area of concern. For example, if an instrument sets out to access and operationalise one definition of spirituality, it is a fundamental mistake to assume that the findings can be generalised to embrace a wide diverse range of definitions.

The operationalisation of carefully argued definitions remains problematic in its own right. Those who develop and deploy psychological measures need to demonstrate that these measures are in fact measuring what they claim to be measuring. Technically this problem involves issues of reliability and validity. A reliable instrument is one that can be trusted to produce consistent findings. If I measure the

circumference of an individual's head today and measure it again tomorrow, I would expect consistent findings. If I measure an individual's level of intelligence today and measure it again tomorrow, I would expect similar if not identical findings. A test that is not reliable cannot be valid. A valid instrument is one that can be trusted to measure the construct under review. If I measure an individual's right arm, I cannot validly claim to have measured the outstretched span of both arms. I could extrapolate from my findings and make an informed prediction, but I still need to be honest about what has been measured and about what has not been measured. There is a variety of ways in which psychologists deal with this issue.

The second key assumption within the quantitative tradition is that measurement enables precise hypotheses to be tested and the significance of associations between variables to be established by statistical procedures. The main findings from research and the main conclusions presented in this part of the handbook have been generally tested and established by these kinds of statistical procedures. The implications of findings established in this way can be illuminated and illustrated by data generated within the qualitative tradition.

Against the background of this broad theoretical perspective, the intention of the rest of this chapter is to introduce and to contextualise the 13 focused contributions. In Chapter 1, Ralph W. Hood Jr. discusses the ways of studying the psychology of religion and spirituality. Rather than applaud and promote a single method, Hood explores the range of methods available to psychologists who study religion and spirituality. He alerts us to the proper limitations associated with different methods, but is clear in his rejection of the position argued by some recent commentators claiming the primacy of experimental approaches. Hood's chapter is especially important because it helps to establish the value and the importance of the wider range of methods on which the authors of subsequent chapters draw.

In Chapter 2, Peter C. Hill and Lauren E. Maltby go to the heart of the individual differences approach that shapes this part of the handbook in order to discuss issues concerned with measuring religiousness and spirituality. After discussing general issues related to measurement, they provide a very useful introduction to and a critique of a range of existing measures in the field. This review builds on the earlier influential and authoritative volume that Peter C. Hill co-edited with Ralph W. Hood Jr. under the title, *Measures of Religiosity* (Hill & Hood, 1999).

In Chapter 3, Chris J. Boyatzis focuses attention on what is known from research about religion and spiritual development during childhood and adolescence. He tackles key questions including the following. What does spirituality look like in a child? Does religion make a genuine difference in the lives of children and youth? How do we measure spiritual and religious development in children and adolescents? How can we characterise religious and spiritual development in its processes, sequences and stages? After a long period during which empirical research in the field was conspicuous by its neglect, Boyatzis identifies the signs of new developments and growth in this field.

In Chapter 4, John W. Fisher introduces the notion of spiritual health and rehearses his well-established model of characterising good spiritual health as involving four domains of life. For Fisher the individual who experiences good

spiritual health has developed good relationships with the self, good relationships with other people, good relationships with the environment and good relationships with the transcendent, however this is conceived. This model of spiritual health is attractive because it is well defined, coherent and open to operationalisation. Fisher proceeds to describe the instruments that he has developed to assess spiritual health across the four domains: The Spiritual Health in Four Domains Index, Spiritual Health and Life-Orientation Measure, Feeling Good Living Life and Quality of Influences Survey. He illustrates the application of these instruments among school pupils, university students and other adults in Australia and the United Kingdom.

In Chapter 5, Ralph L. Piedmont examines the research evidence concerning the contribution of religion and spirituality to subjective wellbeing and satisfaction with life. Building on one of his own major contributions to the research literature, Piedmont examines the numinous constructs of religiosity and spirituality relative to one another and to the five-factor model of personality. The strength of this approach is that it highlights the ways in which spirituality and religion have an unmediated impact on levels of life satisfaction. Piedmont develops two main conclusions from this finding. First, spirituality and religiosity represent universal human motives that are additional to the areas generally covered by models of human personality. In other words, models of human functioning need to be expanded to embrace spirituality and religiosity if they are to be comprehensive. Second, because spirituality and religiosity are capable of impacting subjective wellbeing and satisfaction with life, they suggest the potential for identifying a new class of intervention techniques that can promote durable psychological change.

In Chapter 6, Kate M. Loewenthal examines the interactions between culture, religion and spirituality in relation to psychiatric illness. Given that most of the extant research in this area has been conducted in Western Christian cultures, Loewenthal focuses on the research evidence from other religions and cultures. She asks whether such evidence generates new perspectives on the problems and conclusions. She illustrates her case by discussing four well-developed areas: somatisation, schizophrenia, obsessive compulsive disorder and depression. Loewenthal's analysis clearly demonstrates that religion and spirituality are neither "a universal destroyer of wellbeing, nor a universal panacea". The effects of religion and spirituality on wellbeing are many and varied, and can definitely be modulated by culture.

Personality theories provide one of the main frameworks within which the individual differences approach to religion and spirituality operates. In Chapter 7, Leslie J. Francis provides an introduction to one personality theory that has been particularly influential in recent years in shaping an awareness of the association between personality and ways of expressing religiosity and spirituality. This is the notion of psychological type as proposed by Carl Jung and modified and developed by assessment tools like the Myers Briggs Type Indicator and the Kiersey Temperament Sorter. This model distinguishes between two orientations (introversion and extraversion), two perceiving functions (sensing and intuition), two judging functions (thinking and feeling) and two attitudes towards the outer world (judging and

perceiving). In this chapter, Leslie J. Francis draws on recent, empirical research concerned with profiling religious professionals, with profiling religious adherents and with examining the association between type preferences and preferred modes of spirituality.

Research concerned with establishing the correlates of individual differences in levels of religiosity and spirituality has to confront the problem of the way in which these constructs are multidimensional. In Chapter 8, Leslie J. Francis distinguishes between distinct dimensions of religion and spirituality defined as self-assigned affiliation (the groups with which individuals identify), self-reported practices (the things that individuals do), beliefs (the cognitive aspect of religion and spirituality) and attitudes (the affective aspect of religion and spirituality. Then Francis proceeds to argue for the primacy of the attitudinal dimension in accessing the core of an individual's religion and spirituality. The chapter concludes by summarising a wide field of research concerned with establishing the correlates, antecedents and consequences of individual differences in the attitudinal dimension of religion and spirituality.

In Chapter 9, Chris Baker offers a psychological perspective on the growing literature concerned with the notions of social, religious and spiritual capital. These notions have their roots in thinkers like Coleman and Bourdieu and were brought to wider public attention by Putnam's now classic study, *Bowling alone* (Putnam, 2000). Using the ideas of capitals, these notions trace the contributions made to individual lives and to society by social networks, by religious organisations and by the realm of spirituality. Drawing on original data generated by his association with the William Temple Foundation, Chris Baker profiles the considerable benefits to individuals and to society associated with religious and spiritual capitals.

From the early and original work of William James (1902) in his classic study, *The varieties of religious experience*, researchers have been concerned with the experiential aspects of religion and spirituality. In Chapter 10, Ralph W. Hood Jr. discusses the variety of ways in which the terms religious and spiritual experience are employed in current discussion and how they are distinguished one from the other. Then Hood examines the implications for education and wellbeing of five recent research traditions concerned with deconversion, conversion, glossolalia, different forms of prayer and meditation, and mysticism. In this last part, Hood draws on his own pioneering research, begun in the 1970s with the development of the Hood Mysticism Scale as a means of accessing and measuring responses to religious experience (Hood, 1975).

Kenneth I Pargament is well-known within the fields of the psychology of religion and spirituality for his original and pioneering research linking religion and coping strategies, as displayed in his book, *The psychology of religion and coping: Theory, research and practice* (Pargament, 1997). In Chapter 11, Pargament suggests that religion is designed first and foremost to facilitate spirituality and to help people achieve spiritual goals. Building on this premise, he maintains that attempts to understand religion in purely biological, psychological or social terms can provide, at best, an incomplete picture and, at worst, a distorted view of religious life. Demonstrating this point, Pargament presents a model for understanding

spirituality as a normal and natural part of life. Then he examines the spiritual dimension of coping with life stressors within the context of that larger model of spirituality.

The notion of the psychology of faith development is now closely linked with the pioneering empirical research and theory construction undertaken by James Fowler. In Chapter 12, Jeff Astley provides an overview of Fowler's theory. He argues that, although the theoretical framework and the research support for it have both been vigorously critiqued, many educators, pastors and counsellors have found their own thinking illuminated by Fowler's claims. Fowler uses the term "faith" in a wide, generic sense. According to Fowler, religious faith is only one species of human faith; it is faith directed to religious things, in particular to a transcendent God or gods. According to Fowler, everyone has his/her "gods" in the wider sense of realities and ideas that they value highly and to which they are committed including their health, wealth, security, family, ideologies and their own pleasure. In this chapter, Astley identifies the theological and psychological roots of Fowler's theory, its empirical support and the critical literature that it has attracted. Then Astley traces the relevance of Fowler's account of faith for those concerned with pastoral care, with spiritual counselling and with wider educational contexts.

A number of early researchers concerned with the psychology of religion and spirituality identified prayer as being the core expression of what it means to be religious or spiritual (see Francis & Astley, 2001). Empirical research in these areas, however, was largely eclipsed until a renaissance in the 1990s. In Chapter 13, Tania ap Siôn and Leslie J. Francis present and evaluate three strands of the research that have re-established prayer as of central importance in understanding the role of religion and spirituality in human development and human functioning. The first strand of research is concerned with the subjective effects of prayer, looking at the correlates of prayer among those who engage in that activity. The second strand of research is concerned with the objective effects of prayer, giving particular attention to clinical trials of "prayer treatment", examining the medical outcomes of patients who do not know that they are being prayed for. The third strand of research is concerned with the content of prayer as a window through which to view the religion and spirituality of ordinary people.

The 13 chapters in this part of the handbook have all been written by acknowledged authorities in the particular aspect of the psychology of religion and spirituality on which they have contributed. The editorial process has deliberately allowed the distinctive voices and perspectives of these authors to stand on their own terms. Contradictions of interpretation and discrepancies of evaluation simply serve to remind us that the psychology of religion and spirituality is an ongoing and developing field of enquiry stimulated by debate, controversy and disagreement. Enough secure evidence has, however, been marshalled to make the irrefutable case that religion and spirituality matter a great deal in the fields of education, pastoral care and wellbeing. Practitioners within these applied fields are already able to draw valuable insights from the research literature. At the same time, the case has been clearly made for the value of investing further in the promotion of ongoing empirical

research, informed by the insights of psychology, into the correlates, antecedents and consequences of individual differences in religiosity and in spirituality.

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Chapter 1
Ways of Studying the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality

Ralph W. Hood, Jr.

Abstract Psychology is far from a unified discipline. There are strongly differing opinions on how it is to be defined. One consequence of this diversity is methodological pluralism. Methodological pluralism includes the descriptive fact that different schools of psychology favor different research methods as well as the philosophical position that psychology cannot and ought not be defined in terms of a single methodology assumed appropriate for all investigations. Thus, while some would argue for the experimental method combined with the quantitative assessment of change in measured variables as the gold standard for research in religion and spirituality, this position must be balanced by a consideration of a wide variety of other methods used in the study of religion and spirituality. These include quasi-experimental methods when participants cannot be randomly assigned to treatment groups and ethnographic and participant observation often focused on qualitative assessments. The psychological study of religion and spirituality has always been identified with questionnaires and scales designed to measure particular phenomena of interest. Phenomenological studies are of descriptive value in their own right, as well as providing means to operationalize and measure reports of religious and spiritual experiences. Advances in neurophysiological imaging techniques are providing a rich database for correlating brain states with the report of religious and spiritual experiences. Finally, survey research allows the placing of religious and spiritual phenomena within a normative cultural context. A commitment to methodological pluralism assures that both religion and spirituality can be studied in ways appropriate to the richness and diversity that these terms connate.

The psychology of religion has since its inception struggled with what are the appropriate methods for studying religion and spirituality. As we shall see the questions of methods remain controversial among contemporary psychologists. However, rather than applaud a single method our purpose in this chapter will be to explore the range of methods available to psychologists who study religion and spirituality. Our presentation of various methods necessarily focuses on American psychology of

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religion dominated until recently by studies of largely Protestant college students (Gorsuch, 1988). While this is unfortunate, it characterizes, as we shall soon discuss, the American turn to experimental methods as the gold standard by which to judge psychological research as well as the American reliance upon undergraduate psychology students for their dominant subject pools (Sears, 1986). Thus we will provide some critical discussion of mainstream American psychology's adaptation of the experimental method as exemplars of scientific psychology and American psychology's compromise appeal to quasi-experimental methods as the ideal method for the psychology of religion. We do not accept this claim and argue for the expansion of methods within the psychology of religion. Furthermore, we will note that the methods used in the psychology of religion are additive in that older methods such as correlation and measurement are not abandoned but rather used alongside new ones. We accept a variety of methods, only some of which are quantitative. Qualitative methods add insights into the psychology of religion that quantitative methods miss. Furthermore, we applaud the use of mixed methods in the study of religion and spirituality where both quantitative and qualitative methods are used *simultaneously* in a single study (Kohls, Hack, & Walach, 2008).

In one of the earliest reviews of the psychology of religion, Dittes (1969) identified four conceptual options available to those who study the psychology of religion and spirituality. Each has methodological implications.

Two of Dittes' options are reductionistic. The first is the claim that the only variables operating in religion are the same that operate in mainstream psychology. Therefore the psychology of religion need have no unique methodologies as its subject matter is not unique. The second option is that, while the variables operating in religion are not unique, they may be more salient in religious contexts and thus their effect is greater within rather than outside religion. However, they remain purely psychological variables.

The other two of Dittes' conceptual options suggest something is unique about religion and thus it may need methods that mainstream psychology ignores. The least controversial of these is that established psychological variables uniquely interact in religious contexts and thus there is a unique contribution from the interaction of psychological with religious variables to the total variance explained. The final option is that there are unique variables operating in religion that either do not operate in or are ignored by mainstream psychologists. We will confront Dittes' various conceptual options as we gradually explore methods in terms of our additive comments above.

Method 1: Personal Documents and Questionnaires

Many of the techniques employed today were first used by the founding fathers of our discipline. William James (1902/1985) focused on personal documents describing the experiences of individuals who felt themselves to be in the presence of the divine. His focus on the *varieties* of religious experience left open all of Dittes' four options. He also relied on questionnaires employed by Edward Starbuck in his study of the growth of religious consciousness (Starbuck, 1899). The method is simply to

ask persons to describe their religious experiences, either in an open-ended fashion or by responding to specific questionnaire items. Perhaps most congruent with the James and Starbuck tradition of the use of personal documents to understand religious experience has been the work associated with what was originally known as the Religious Experience Research Unit of Manchester College, Oxford University. This unit continues as the Alister Hardy Religious Experience Research Centre at the University of Wales, Lampeter. Alister Hardy achieved scientific accolades as a renowned zoologist. Yet his lifelong interest in religious experience led him upon retirement from his career in zoology to form a research unit in 1969 devoted to the collection and classification of religious experiences, for which he was awarded the Templeton Prize for research in religion. Hardy's basic procedure, stemming from his zoological training, was to solicit voluntary reports of religious experiences and to attempt to classify them into their natural types. Typically these reports were solicited via requests in newspapers, as well as newsletters distributed to various groups, mostly in the United Kingdom. Requests were not simply for the more extreme and intense types of experiences favored by James, but for the more temperate variety of religious experiences as well. Often individuals simply submitted experience unsolicited. In *The spiritual nature of man*, Hardy (1979) published an extensive classification of the major defining characteristics of these experiences from an initial pool of 3,000 experiences. Here the method is to impose classifications upon a set of data. A criticism often applied to classifications concerns the lack of any systematic metric properties.

Hardy's major classifications included sensory or quasi-sensory experience associated with vision, hearing, and touch; less frequent, but still fairly common, were reports of paranormal experiences. Most common were cognitive and affective episodes, such as a sense of presence or feelings of peace (Hardy, 1979). Not surprisingly, other surveys (discussed as Method 2 further) of a more scientific nature, such as Greeley's (1975) survey of 1,467 people, show some overlaps with Hardy's classifications, especially with the cognitive and affective elements but also reveal many differences. It seems that there is little agreement about exactly what might constitute the common characteristics of religious experience. Perhaps the term is simply too broad for agreement to be expected across diverse samples and investigators. The focus, then, must be on not simply religious experience, but the varieties of experience that are interpreted as religious. What makes an experience religious is clearly not the discrete, isolated components that can be identified in any experience as James long ago noted. Thus when persons are asked to describe their religious or spiritual experiences, the widest possible range of experiences are obtained. It is up to the psychologist to impose some order and classification on the diverse material.

Method 2: Survey Research

More sociologically oriented psychologists have used survey methods to determine the frequency and correlates of various types of spiritual and religious experiences. For instance, it has been over 40 years since Glock and Stark sampled churches in

the greater San Francisco area using this question, "Have you ever as an adult had the feeling that you were somehow in the presence of God?" (Glock & Stark, 1965, p. 157, Table 8-1). With a sample size of just under 3,000 respondents (2,871), 72% answered "yes". Not surprisingly, the majority were religiously committed persons. However, Vernon (1968) demonstrated that even among those answering "none" in response to their religious identification, 25% answered "yes" to the Glock and Stark question. More recently, Tamminen (1991) in a longitudinal study of Scandinavian youth modified the Glock and Stark question slightly by omitting the phrase "as an adult," Tamminen asked, "Have you at times felt that God is particularly close to you." He found a steady decline in the percentage of students reporting experiences of nearness to God by grade level (and hence age).

The most frequently used survey question is associated with the General Social Survey (GSS) of the National Opinion Research Center. The GSS is a series of independent cross-sectional probability samples of persons in the continental United States, living in non-institutional homes, who are 18 years of age and English-speaking. The question most typically used is "Have your ever felt as though you were close to a powerful spiritual force that seemed to lift you out of yourself?" as first asked by Greeley (1974). The question has been asked to persons in Great Britain by Hay and Morisy (1978) with a 36% affirmative response. It was found that overall, in a GSS sample of 1,468, 35% of the respondents answered "yes" to this question (Davis & Smith, 1994).

Yamane and Polzer (1994) analyzed all affirmative responses from the GSS to the Greeley question in the years 1983, 1984, 1988, and 1989. A total of 5,420 individuals were included in their review. Using an ordinal scale where respondents who answered affirmatively could select from three options—"once or twice," "several times," or "often"—yielded a range from 0 (negative response) to 3 (often). Using this four-point range across all individuals who responded to the Greeley question yielded a mean score of 0.79 (SD = 0.89). Converting this to a percentage of "yes" as a nominal category, regardless of frequency, yielded 2,183 affirmative responses, or an overall affirmative response of 40% of the total sample who reported ever having had the experience. Independent assessment of affirmative responses for each year suggested a slight but steady decline. The figures were 39% for 1983 and 1984 combined ($n = 3,072$), 31% for 1988 ($n = 1,481$), and 31% for 1989 ($n = 936$).

The major consistent findings based on survey studies can be easily summarized in terms of Dittes' first two conceptual options. Women report more religious and spiritual experiences than men; the experiences tend to be age-related, increasing with age; they are characteristic of educated and affluent people; and they are more likely to be associated with indices of psychological health and wellbeing than with those of pathology or social dysfunction. Finally, Religious and spiritual experiences are common and reported by at least one-third of the populations in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. The focus on belief ignores any actual ontological claims, so that belief in God as well as parapsychology and contact with the dead is found to be common. Such issues are best explored by phenomenological methods discussed later in this chapter.

Method 3: Scales, Measurement, and Correlation

The diversity of experiences reported in surveys and open-ended questionnaires can be ordered by the use of scales that operationalize a particular researcher's definition of religious and/or spiritual experiences. As opposed to survey research that typically uses one or a very limited number of religious questions, scales can have many items. Combined with exploratory factor analysis, items can be clustered together metrically leading to various sub-scales. These factored scales can be correlated with other scales to identify relationships. Most religious variables are multidimensional. One example is the Religious Orientation Scale first devised by Allport and Ross (1967) and perhaps the widest used scale in the psychology of religion (Donahue, 1985; Kirkpatrick & Hood, 1990).

However, Gorsuch (1984) noted how measurement via the use of scales was a mixed blessing for the psychology of religion. It emerged in the 1960s as American psychologists began to return to an interest in religion. On one hand, it proved to be as easy to measure religious and spiritual constructs as any other psychological constructs. However, on the other hand, a focus on measurement could inhibit systematic programs of research involving other than correlational methods. Hill and Hood (1999) have collected the most commonly used measures of religion and to a lesser extent of spirituality. Readily available are scales to measure religious belief and practices, religious attitudes, religious coping and problem solving, and concepts of God, to mention only a few. The important point here is that one ought to consult existing measures before constructing new ones. Likewise, once religious or spiritual measures are identified, they can be correlated with a wide variety of existing measures in mainstream psychology. Most of this research stays within the first two conceptual options noted by Dittes.

Method 4: Clinical Psychoanalysis and Object Relations

The measurement of God concepts has been a concern of the empirical psychology of religion with its re-emergence in the 1960s. This is relevant to the second wave in the study of religion after the founding fathers. Here the influence was from psychoanalysis with the imposition of its clinical methods and a focus on unconscious processes. Few psychoanalysts remained silent or neutral on the subject of religion. Thus, while academic psychology remained largely quiet on religion and spirituality after the founding father's interest, psychoanalysts explored it fully with their own methods. They ranged from Freud's well-known reductionist treatment of religion, placing the psychoanalytic study of religion within Dittes' first two conceptual options (Hood, 1992) to Jung's treatment of religion squarely within Dittes' options 3 and 4 (Halligan, 1995). The methods employed by psychoanalysts and analysts have seldom been championed by academic psychologists, but the focus on therapeutic transformation as a criterion of success does allow for some assessment that these are legitimate human sciences.

The second generation of psychoanalysts moved from purely Oedipal considerations to early infant/human interactions, including those with the mother. Object relation theorists have been accused by some as being apologists for religion (Beit-Hallahmi, 1995). Most are clearly within Dittes' third and fourth conceptual options and their methods are not unrelated to methods discussed latter in this chapter. While the methods of object relation theorists stay within the psychoanalytic hermeneutics of therapeutic transformation, they have produced some contemporary classics in the psychology of religion (Pruyser, 1976; Rizutto, 1979).

Interlude: The Question of the Experiment as Privileged Method

There have been only two reviews of the psychology of religion in the highly influential *Annual review of psychology* series. The first identified and ushered in measurement and correlation as the dominant paradigm in the academic psychology of religion (Gorsuch, 1988). Fifteen years later, the second review of the psychology of religion in the *Annual review of psychology* by Emmons and Paloutzian (2003) focused on experimental, not correlational research. This shift marked in some eyes the heeding of Batson's plea from over a quarter of a century earlier for achieving respect for the psychology of religion (Batson, 1977, 1979). His plea went largely unheard as American psychology of religion was dominated by measurement and correlational research. Achieving respect for the psychology of religion would require courting mainstream methodologies of American psychology. More precisely, a single methodology was then, and for many still is, privileged: the experimental method. Batson's argument was that, if true experimental research was impossible (largely due to violating the requirement of random assignment of subjects), then quasi-experimental research would at least assure the psychology of religion a silver medal and respect in mainstream journals.

In the decade prior to Gorsuch's (1988) identification of a measurement paradigm, Capps, Ransohoff, and Rambo (1976) noted that, out of a total of almost 2,800 articles in the psychology of religion to that date, only 150 were empirical studies. Of these 90% were correlational. Dittes (1985) noted the same dominance of correlational studies in the only review chapter on the psychology of religion to appear in the *Handbook of social psychology* (which has gone through four editions with only the second carrying a chapter on the psychology of religion). This is evidence for the dominance of Gorsuch's (1984) measurement paradigm that some have criticized (Batson, 1977, 1979).

The Emmons and Paluotzian review does not abandon the correlational paradigm nor the measurement paradigm but simply embeds correlational and measurement studies in research methods exhibiting the characteristic of mainstream psychology. Persons trained in experimental research (typically social or personality psychologist) do much of the current empirical research in the American psychology of religion. Not surprisingly then, the theme that dominates the contemporary empirical psychology of religion is for research modeled after what is acceptable to the

flagship journal in American social psychology, *The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (JPSP).

Emmons and Paloutzian call for a new *multilevel interdisciplinary paradigm* to replace the measurement paradigm (2003, p. 395 emphasis in original). This multilevel interdisciplinary paradigm is accompanied by the assertion of the value of using data at multiple levels of analysis as well as the value of non-reductive assumptions regarding the nature of religious and spiritual phenomena. This suggests the possibility of all levels of Dittes' conceptual options, depending on what and how variables are selected and measured. The call for this new paradigm is echoed again in the *Handbook of the psychology of religion and spirituality* (Park & Paloutzian, 2003).

The history of interdisciplinary paradigms in American psychology suggests that, in terms of methodology, experimental paradigms trump all others. Thus interdisciplinary efforts with a plurality of methods have seldom succeeded. Jones reminds us that Harvard's Department of Social Relations established in 1946 as an interdisciplinary department (clinical psychology, cultural anthropology, sociology, and social psychology) is now but "a concession to nostalgia" (Jones, 1998, p. 4). Other interdisciplinary efforts such as the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, as Jones also reminds us, has more to do with funding and space than "intellectual convergence" (1998, p. 4). Stryker (1977) has identified two social psychologies, psychological social psychology (PSP) emphasizing quantitative experimental methods and sociological social psychology (SSP) emphasizing qualitative methods such as symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology. House (1977) identifies a third SSP that is quantitative but focused on data derived from survey studies rather than experimentation. This would make for four social psychologies if historical studies are also acknowledged (Gergen, 1973).

Efforts to create a specifically interdisciplinary social psychology have as poor history as the interdisciplinary efforts noted above. In one of the most widely adopted social psychology textbooks of the 1960s, a team comprising a psychologist (Paul F. Secord) and a sociologist (Carl W. Backman) tried to create an interdisciplinary social psychology noting that "social psychology can no longer be adequately surveyed by a person trained in only one of its parent disciplines" (Secord & Backman, 1964, p. vii). However, both *Annual Reviews* discussed above attest to the fact that even within social psychology the literatures of one social psychology seldom reference the other. Furthermore, it is worth noting that when the criticisms of laboratory-based research were most intense by sociologically oriented social psychologists (in the decades of the 1960s and 1970s), the percent of experimental studies in JPSP *increased* (Moghadam, Taylor, & Wright, 1993, p. 26). Thus, American psychological social psychology has become a unitary subdiscipline of psychology with a singular ideal methodology, the laboratory experiment. This has occurred despite telling conceptual criticisms of the limits of a laboratory-based psychology and the philosophical assumptions that support it (Belzen & Hood, 2006; Hood & Belzen, 2005). In reviewing the history of social psychology, Gordon W. Allport noted that it had become a subdiscipline of general psychology, just as many today proclaim the psychology of religion to be a subdiscipline of psychology.

However, Allport noted that by defining the laboratory-based experiment as the gold standard what we identify as psychological social psychology has the obvious *disadvantage* that it can seldom generalize beyond the laboratory setting. In Allport's words:

> Even if the experiment is successfully repeated there is no proof that the discovery has wider validity. It is for this reason that some current investigations seem to end up in elegantly polished triviality – snippets of empiricism, but nothing more (Allport, 1985, p. 68).

Allport, widely acknowledged as one of the major early academic psychologist's of religion did not attempt to apply the experimental method to the psychology of religion.

Method 5: The Experimental Paradigm as an Unachievable Ideal

It may seem ironic that we include here as our fifth method a negative exemplar. Psychologically oriented social psychologists applaud the experiment as the single best source of legitimate scientific data. Aronson, Wilson, and Brewer (1998, pp. 118–124) identify four steps to the true experiment: (1) setting the stage for the experiment, (2) constructing an independent variable, (3) measuring the dependent variable, and (4) planning the post-experimental follow-up. Included in the follow-up is a concern that the "cover story" of the experiment was accepted by the participant since many experiments utilize deception. Deception, while guided by APA ethical codes and University IRB boards, nevertheless raises serious ethical issues (Kelman, 1967, 1968). Laboratory social psychology is almost totally deception based, and this as we will note became a concern in laboratory-based dissonance research. When deception is extended to field work it arguably raises even more serious ethical issues. Richardson (1991) has noted this with respect to a classic field study in the psychology of religion, When prophecy fails (Festinger, Riecken, & Schachter, 1956), and Hood (1995) has raised similar concerns with Dennis Covington's Salvation on sand mountain (Covington, 1995) dealing with deceptive participatory research with the contemporary serpent handlers of Appalachia. Likewise, Jones (1998) noted that ethical concerns with increasingly deceptive laboratory experiments attempting to induce cognitive dissonance was a factor in the eventual waning of interest in laboratory studies. Ironically, Festinger acknowledged that the type of laboratory research that he and his colleagues did in the "good old days" would be unlikely to be allowed today (Festinger, 1999, p. 384). As he succinctly states the case, "I don't know how we would have gotten anything through ethics committees" (Festinger, 1999, pp. 384–385).

Method 6: Quasi-Experimental Studies

Batson in seeking respect for the psychology of religion noted, "Although an experimental psychology of religion does not exist; one seems badly needed" (Batson, 1977, p. 41). However, he recognized that a true experimental design requires

random assignment of participants to experimental and control conditions. This is not possible using religious variables, if for no other than ethical reasons. However, this is not unique to the psychology of religion. In his presidential address to the APA, Campbell (1975) noted that in some areas we are "unable to experiment" (p. 1193). However, if one is precluded from random assignment of participants to groups, one can still do quasi-experimental designs (Campbell & Stanley, 1966; Deconchy, 1985). Quasi-experimental designs can be done both in the laboratory and the field, fulfilling most of the requirements of internal validity regarded as the "sine qua non of good experimental research" (Aronson et al., 1998, p. 129). Criticisms that experimental and quasi-experimental designs often lack external validity (the ability to generalize to the non-experimental settings) are no longer prominent among psychologically oriented social psychologists, but are often raised by sociologically oriented social psychologists whose research occurs in a real world context. As laboratory-oriented experiments confront "realism" there is a radical shift in the meaning of the term.

Aronson and his colleagues have taken the lead in identifying three basic kinds of realism, all of which we subsume under the term *contextual realism*: mundane, experimental, and psychological realism. Mundane realism is the extent to which the experimental task is similar to the one that occurs in everyday life, while experimental realism is the extent to which participants take the experiment seriously (Aronson & Carlsmith, 1968). Psychological realism is the extent to which the processes that occur in the experimental situation are the same as those that occur in everyday life (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 1994). Contextual realism is equally relevant to both experimental and quasi-experimental designs. These realisms operate in quasi-experimental designs in research on the psychology of religion. For those with a more positivistic orientation to psychology they provide the best evidential base for establishing causal determinants of religious phenomenon viewed as dependent variables. While there are numerous examples of quasi-experimental research in the psychology of religion (Hood, Hill, & Spilka, 2009), we will focus on one area where the research is now state of the art and yet the area of investigation is not without controversy: the use of chemicals to facilitate mystical experience.

The first and most widely cited study of the uses of entheogens to facilitate mystical experience is a doctoral dissertation by Pahnke (1966). It has become widely known as the "Good Friday" experiment as 20 graduate students at Andover-Newton Theological Seminary met to hear a Good Friday service after they had been given either psilocybin (a known entheogen) or a placebo control (nicotinic acid). Participants meet in groups of four, with two experimental and two controls, all matched for compatibility. Each group had two leaders, one who had been given psilocybin. Immediately after the service and 6 months later the participants were assessed on a questionnaire that included all of Stace's common core criteria of mysticism. Results were impressive in that the experimental participants scored high on all of Stace's common core criteria while the controls did not.

In what is also a widely quoted study, Doblin (1991) followed the adventures of the original Good Friday participants. He was able to locate and interview nine of the participants in original experimental group and seven of the participants in the original control group. He also administered Pahnke's original questionnaire,

including Stace's common core criteria of mysticism. In most cases, comparison of Doblin's result with both of Pahnke's results (immediately after the service and 6 months later) reported that participants in the experimental group showed *increases* on most of Stace's common core criteria of mysticism after almost a quarter of a century. Despite serious critiques of the Good Friday study (Doblin, 1991; Nichols & Chemel, 2006, pp. 10–11), it has until recently been the most significant study attempting to facilitate mystical experience in a religious setting.

The benchmark study in the tradition of the Good Friday experiment is the recent study by Griffiths, Richards, McCann, and Jesse (2006). They replicated Pahnke's original experiment with individual rather than groups sessions, using a more rigorous experimental control, a more appropriate placebo (methylphenidate hydrochloride). The double blind study was effective at two levels: first, the double blind was not broken in what is a very sophisticated between group crossover design that involved two or three 8-h drug sessions conducted at 2-month intervals. While the complexity of the research design need not concern us here, suffice it to say that of 30 adult volunteers, half received either the entheogen first, followed by the placebo control; half the placebo control first, followed by the entheogen. Six additional volunteers received the placebo in the first two sessions and unblinded psilocybin in the third session. This was to obscure the study design and protect the double blind. Unlike the Good Friday experiment, the double blind in this John Hopkins study was successful (Griffiths et al., 2006, p. 274).

While the Good Friday participants took psilocybin in a specifically religious setting, volunteers in the John Hopkins study had all session in an aesthetically pleasant living room like setting. While the volunteers had spiritual interests the setting itself did not contain religious artifacts or cues. All session were monitored by an experienced male guide who had extensive experience with entheogens. However, unlike the Good Friday experiment, the experienced male guide nor a companion female guide took psilocybin while serving as guides. Second, numerous measures and observations were involved in this study, including Pahnke's original questionnaire and Hood's *Mysticism Scale*. Results indicated that the experimental controls had higher mysticism scores than the active placebo controls. Further, in a follow-up study, only scores as measured by Hood's M-Scale predicted meaningfulness of the experience, judged by all experimentals as to be one of, if not, the most significant experience in their life (Griffiths, Richards, Johnson, McCann, & Jesse, 2008).

Method 7: Neurophysiological Measures

Closely related to entheogens being used to facilitate religious experience are studies employing new technologies to identify neurological processes that occur during spiritual and religious experiences. Many of these are advancements over previous nuerophysiological methods. All neurophysiological studies essentially use the older correlational paradigm, but correlate a given experiential state with ongoing neurological processes. Among the functional neuroimaging techniques are single photon emission tomography (SPECT), positive emission tomography (PET), and

functional magnetic resonance (fMRI). These procedures vary in how they assess glucose and oxygen consumption in the brain. What is crucial is that these techniques are relatively non-invasive and can allow researchers to determine which areas of the brain are active when individuals are in various spiritual or religious states. The correlation of brain activity with specific religious and spiritual states is best viewed as merely correlational, not causal (Azari, 2006, pp. 34–35). Functional magnetic imaging can be used in quasi-experimental studies to facilitate religious and spiritual experiences by activating relevant brain areas thought to be involved in such experiences (see McNamara, 2006, for reviews). As with our discussion of research employing entheogens, research employing neuroimaging techniques indicates that psychology of religion can use quasi-experimental methods and advanced technologies to develop research programs in the psychology of religion and spirituality that are as rigorous as any in mainstream psychology. However, there are voices cautioning against this as an ideal or preferred method. Hood & Belzen (2005) have provided and suggested yet another paradigm for the psychology of religion, one that is hermeneutically based. Under this broad umbrella we can cite several other methods used in studying religion and spirituality.

Method 8: Ethnography, Participant Observation and Field Research

While there are various approaches to field and participant observation research in the psychology of religion we can note one major distinction. Field research occurs in a natural as opposed to a laboratory setting. The difference does not, however, mean that measurement or quasi-experimental studies cannot occur in these settings. For instance, in two separate studies Hood (1977, 1978) measured anticipatory set stress and assessed actual setting stress in a program that required students to spend a week in various activities from canoeing to a night alone without shelter other than a tarp. In addition, since on some days it stormed and other it did not, Hood was able to use this naturally occurring difference to test variations in setting stress that were planned (canoe versus solo night alone) and simply occurred (solo during storm versus solo without storm). The thesis that setting/set stress incongruities facilitates mystical experience was supported. Mystical experience was measured after each activity in the natural setting.

Ethnography overlaps considerably with participant observation research. Ethnographers are more committed to "thick" descriptions of phenomena from many points of view of the various participants. An example is Poloma's and Hood's 4-year study of an emerging Pentecostal church dealing with the poor in the inner city of a major American city in the deep south (Poloma & Hood, 1908). Similar to field and ethnographic research is participant observation research. This research tends to be less detailed in its descriptions but like ethnography it occurs in a natural setting. Both participant observation and ethnographic research differ from field research in that the investigator participates and observes the participants he or she is studying. Importantly, participant observation research often yields diametrically

opposite results to laboratory-based research on the same topic. For instance, studies of failed prophecy employing Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance are often supported by laboratory-based studies, but not by participant observation studies (Hood & Belzen, 2005).

Participant observation and ethnographic studies are especially useful when investigators wish to understand rather than explain religious phenomena and practices. Recent examples in the psychology of religion are Belzen's (1999) participant observation research on the "bevindelijken" and Hood and Williamson's (2008) study of the contemporary Christian serpent handlers of Appalachia.

Method 9: Phenomenological Research

Phenomenological research is another in the hermeneutical tradition broadly conceived. It seeks to describe the appearance of phenomena to participants. There are variations in precisely how investigators utilize phenomenological methods, but what is significant for the study of religion and spirituality is that judgments as to the ontological status of objects experienced are not made. This has led to significant studies of phenomena long associated with spirituality such as near-death experiences, out-of-body experiences, and psi or parapsychological experiences (see Cardeña, Lynn, & Krippner, 2000). The bracketing of ontological claims allows psychologists to study the condition under which such experiences occur as well as to describe their significance and meaning to those who have them. This has led phenomenological researchers to identify set and setting effects that influence the report of religious and spiritual experiences. Set effects include the state of the participant just prior to the experience. The two most studied set effects are mood and expectation. Setting effects refer to the location of the experience. Setting effects can be separated into proximate and distal. Proximate setting includes the immediate location and interpersonal environment where the experience occurs. Distal setting expands to include the historical period and culture within which experiences are encouraged or discouraged. Thus, phenomenological methods have merged for some into cultural psychology which seeks to understand religious phenomena in their historical and cultural context (Belzen, 1999; Belzen & Hood, 2006; Gergen, 1973).

Method 10: Confessional Research

As a final method of research in religion and spirituality, reference must be made to what can be identified as confessional investigators. By confessional we identify researchers who explicitly identify their own religious convictions as part of their investigative process. Porpora (2006) has noted that a methodological agnosticism is more adequate to the study of religious and spiritual phenomena than methodological atheism assumed by those who wish to restrict the social sciences to natural

science methods. Agnosticism allows religious phenomena to reveal themselves, perhaps more so to investigators sensitized to them by their own participatory faith commitments. Examples including Poloma's (2003) own acknowledge Pentecostal commitment and how it facilitated her participatory observation study of the Toronto Blessing. Another example is provided by the confessional scholars of mysticism who have used their own experiences to affirm that mystical experiences occur and that, among what appear to be different descriptions of mystical experiences, an underlying commonality nevertheless exists (Barnard, 1997; Forman, 1999). Confessional methodologists applaud the value of returning psychology to the researcher as a subject that characterized psychological research at its inception as a laboratory science (Danziger, 1994). They also tend to support Dittes' conceptual option asserting that there are religious variables that uniquely interact with psychological variables such that religion cannot be explained by reductionistic theories. They also assert that some religious variables are unique, such that part of the sense of God may indeed come from God (Bowker, 1973; Porpora, 2006; Smith, 2003). The psychology of religion and spirituality in America is beginning to be dominated by confessional research due to the influence of The John Templeton Foundation. With over 1 billion dollars in assets this foundation gives out roughly 60 million dollars annually (www.templeton.org). The shifting to research in the psychology of religion and spirituality by those with a confessional stance has been criticized by Wulff (2003). However, the history of the psychology of religion in America has always been driven by powerful interests and individuals who often had either confessional or antagnostic stances toward religion (Hood, 2000). This issue is not whether one takes a confessional stance or not, but simply the quality of the research done.

Summary and Conclusion

We have far from exhausted the methods available to psychologist who study religion and spirituality. However, it is our position that the psychology of religion is not well served by an appeal to a single method. The choice of a method is dependent on what question is being asked. All four conceptual options proposed by Dittes are relevant to the psychology of religion. If this is accepted, then our appeal to an additive approach is more than appropriate. One can derive measurement from conceptual criteria established by other methods, such as Hood (1975) did operationalizating of Stace's (1961) phenomenologically derived common core of mysticism or as Francis and Louden (2000) did with operationalizing Happold's (1963) seven criteria of mysticism. In both cases, factor analyses confirmed the metric validity of the classifications. Thus phenomenology and measurement are used to complement one another.

Especially relevant cases are when different methods lead to contradictory results (Hood & Belzen, 2005). It may be that the mundane realism of laboratory settings is too controlled to allow more complex interactions that characterize life outside the laboratory. Hence, the precision and control of laboratory studies may be of

limited usefulness when the questions are of a broader cultural concern, as they often are in religious studies where field research and participant observation may be more veridical to what is actually the case. The elicitation of mystical experiences under quasi-experimental conditions still must be explored in terms of longitudinal research designed to examine what people, who have these experiences, actually do in terms of their own religious and spiritual development as they live their lives out in particular cultural contexts.

Finally, if phenomenological methods bracket ontological claims, they serve to remind us that religious and spiritual experiences are interesting in their own right and deserving of a thick description. They are contrasted to confessional methods primarily on the basis of ontological claims. Confessional methods provide the intriguing option that what psychologists study may be real. The old sociological dictum that things believed to be true are true in their consequences is perhaps but a partial truth. Methodological agnosticism acknowledges that what confessional methods claim might also be not simply consequentially true, but true.

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Chapter 2
Measuring Religiousness and Spirituality: Issues, Existing Measures, and the Implications for Education and Wellbeing

Peter C. Hill and Lauren E. Maltby

Abstract This chapter consists of three major parts. The first part discusses general issues related to measurement in the psychology of religion. The second part reviews major measures of religiousness and spirituality by general religious and spiritual domain, concentrating on those areas and measures that have been (or might be) associated with educational processes and outcomes as well as general wellbeing. Only those measures judged to meet adequately acceptable standards for research purposes on the following criteria are discussed: theoretical basis, representative sampling and generalization, reliability, and validity. The final section talks about new developments in the measurement of religion and spirituality and alternatives to self-report or paper-and-pencil measures and offers guidance in choosing a measure for research in education and wellbeing.

In 1770, Pieter Camper, a Dutch scholar and one of the first proponents of craniometry, invented the concept of the "facial angle" as a way to measure intelligence among various races. A "facial angle" was formed by drawing two lines—one horizontally from the nostril to the ear and another perpendicularly from the upper jawbone to the forehead. Camper maintained that the closer the angle of the lines was to $90°$, the more intelligent a person was. He claimed that Europeans consistently had angles of $80°$, Africans of $70°$, and orangutans of $58°$. Samuel George Morton extended Camper's work by using cranial capacity (the volume of the interior of the skull) as a measure of intelligence. He, too, concluded that European Americans were the most intelligent, followed by African-Americans and Native Americans. These "scientific" findings were used to perpetuate racial stereotypes and justify racist practices for decades.

Clearly, measurement matters. As the means by which one tests a hypothesis or an idea, measurement is often the bridge between theory and practice; it not only allows us to test our conceptual framework and assumptions, but often does so in various practical and applied settings. How a particular concept is defined and measured significantly impacts understandings of the world, and influences not

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only subsequent research questions, but also the answers found in relation to those questions. This is especially true in a field such as the psychology of religion, which in essence looks at the measurable effects of such abstract experiences as religion and spirituality (RS).

If, indeed, interest in and attention to measurement is a sign of a field's scientific development (see Hill, 2005), then the psychology of religion has achieved some degree of maturity, though not without the experience of growing pains. It is now a quarter century since Gorsuch (1984) claimed that the dominant paradigm in psychology of religion was then one of measurement. Although near obsession with measurement by RS researchers meant that there existed a measure for virtually any RS research question, it also led to a proliferation of scales, some of which certainly overlap conceptually. Gorsuch (1990) later suggested that new scales should not be established unless (a) existing measures are not psychometrically sound; (b) new conceptual or theoretical advances require changes to current measures; (c) a measure is needed for use with a new population; or (d) a new construct needs to be measured. Hill (2005) also dissuaded researchers from constructing unnecessary new scales and suggested modifying current measures to adapt to new needs if at all possible. That being said, as the psychology of religion grows and is applied to an ever increasing set of questions and to more heterogenous RS populations, we should expect some continued development of new scales. To be sure, any inability of the field to move forward will *not* be due to a lack of attention to issues of measurement.

By 2003, Emmons and Paloutzian suggested that the psychology of religion was operating by a *multilevel interdisciplinary paradigm* that "recognizes the value of data at multiple levels of analysis while making non-reductive assumptions concerning the value of spiritual and religious phenomena" (p. 395). Some (e.g., Belzen & Hood, 2006), it should be noted, have questioned whether the psychology of religion is, in fact, operating by an interdisciplinary paradigm. At the very least, it can be argued that the substantial increase in recent years of various publications (such as this volume) suggests that the application of RS research to various domains is gaining momentum. For the implications of RS research to such applied domains, such as education and wellbeing, to be fully realized, issues of measurement must be seriously considered. To this end, this chapter will first discuss general issues to be considered in relation to measurement of RS variables, then review some existing RS scales, and finally discuss the application of measurement in psychology of religion to education and wellbeing.

General Issues Related to Measurement

Although researchers with applied interest in RS variables may choose to use any of the measures reviewed in this chapter, as they all represent "good" (or good enough) measures, any educator knows that this is only a temporary solution. As the old maxim goes, *give a man a fish and you've fed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you've fed him for life*. And so the more important question than "which measures

are good measures?" is "what makes a measure good?" There are three major issues with which all measures must interact. Their successful navigation of these issues is what makes them "good."

Theoretical Considerations

Without conceptual clarity about what one is measuring, the significance of one's findings is severely constrained. Although the 1980s and the 1990s saw a continued proliferation of RS measures, a conceptual or theoretical focus to provide a coherence and unity to the field was often missing. During the measurement paradigm, the pull toward establishing a strong empirical framework often led to measures that, while psychometrically sound, were lacking a clear theoretical grounding. As a result, there are many empirical findings that lack the theoretical coherence necessary for real scientific progress. For example, the most dominant theoretical framework of psychology of religion has no doubt been Allport's (1950) distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation. Although it was promising, systematic research did not further elucidate these orientations, and by 1990, Kirkpatrick and Hood claimed that the model was "theoretically impoverished and has really taught us little about the psychology of religion" (p. 442), largely because the intrinsic–extrinsic framework had become enmeshed in psychometric issues with little, if any, theoretical guidance.

Without well-defined conceptual frameworks, systematic, top-down research programs are difficult to maintain. As a result issues of scale validity are difficult to assess, and there is almost a complete absence of normative data for many scales.[1] However, as the field matures, we are beginning to see notable exceptions, where systematic programs of research are emerging: religious questing (see Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993), mysticism (see Hood, 1975, 1995, 1997), religious coping (see Pargament, 1997), forgiveness (see Worthington, Berry, & Parrott, 2001), and attachment processes (see Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2004). The strong theoretical base of such systematic research programs will yield measures used with greater frequency across a broader population range.

When choosing an RS measure, theoretical clarity cannot be emphasized enough. No one scale will be the most appropriate for every study, and it is important that the concept which the researcher intends to study is well represented in the measure. Of course one can only be certain that this is the case if the scale itself and the research to which the scale is applied, were both designed from clear, conceptual frameworks. Thus, when choosing a measure, theoretical clarity is essential.

Psychometric Considerations

If theoretical considerations seem broad and abstract, the additional psychometric considerations that a scale must address are at the other end of the spectrum. The two most important psychometric considerations are that of validity and reliability.

Validity refers to whether a scale is measuring the thing it is trying to measure. A careful read-through of the scale's items should give you some idea of what the scale is measuring, and this is referred to as *face validity*. However, this is not an objective or empirical form of validating a scale and therefore not as useful as other types of validity. For instance, *convergent validity* refers to the extent to which a given scale is correlated with measures of similar or related construction. For example, one would expect religious identification to correlate with what type of religious institution one attends. Hand in hand with convergent validity is *discriminant validity*. This is the degree to which a given scale is not correlated with measures of constructs that it should not, in theory, be similar to. Two other important types of validity are *criterion* and *content*. The former refers to the correlation between a given scale and some other standard or measure of the construct of interest. The latter, content validity, refers to the degree to which a given scale includes all the facets of the construct under investigation. For example, if one wanted to measure spiritual practices, but only asked questions about prayer and attendance at religious services, one would have neglected other spiritual practices such as reading a holy text, giving alms, etc. A validity concern unique to RS scales pertains to construct validity. Because RS correlates highly with other constructs (such as physical and mental health; Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001), it is important to establish RS construct validity in order to avoid faulty conclusions.

Consideration of *reliability*, or the extent to which a scale is consistent, is also important. Ideally, a scale should be both *internally consistent* and *consistent across time*, though typically the reliability of a scale is measured by only one of these two criteria. Internal consistency refers to the degree to which all of the items on the scale are measuring the same thing. It is measured by the statistic Cronbach's alpha, and can have a value ranging from zero to one; the higher the value the more internally consistent. Additionally, scales should ideally be consistent across time. This is referred to as *test–retest reliability*, and is generally measured by the correlation coefficient between individual's scores on the same test given on separate occasions (the time elapsed between testing can range from 2 weeks to 6 months; Hill, 2005). For practical reasons, Cronbach's alpha is used much more frequently than test–retest reliability when establishing the reliability of a scale.

Sample Representativeness and Cultural Sensitivity

The proliferation of measures in RS research has not protected the psychology of religion from one of measurement's most baleful banes: unrepresentative samples. Although psychology of religion has amassed quite an impressive amount of information throughout its development, perhaps there is no group we know more about than young, middle class, American (and to a lesser extent British) college students (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Such *convenience samples*, so called because they are easily accessible for study purposes at academic institutions, are highly problematic since age, SES, and education are three variables quite strongly correlated with religious experience (Hill, 2005). Therefore the unrepresentative sample upon which

a large number of measures have been validated may fail to represent accurately the population at large with which the measures are eventually used. Age and education are not the only two variables biasing samples, however. Most RS research and measuring instruments have, until recently, assumed a Judeo-Christian context, with a disproportionate focus on White Protestants (Gorsuch, 1988; Hill, 2005; Hill & Hood, 1999). Caution is necessary should one choose to use such a scale for a population with a different demographic or outside the Judeo-Christian context.

Scales created on the basis of either unrepresentative samples or samples representing a narrow population (e.g., a single denomination) are usually insensitive or inapplicable to broader groups. Furthermore, RS scales are certainly not exempt from a lack of cultural sensitivity (Chatters, Taylor, & Lincoln, 2002). For example, Protestant African Americans emphasize community service (Ellison & Taylor, 1996) as well as the notion of reciprocal blessings with God (Black, 1999), both of which are often overlooked in traditional measures of Protestantism in favor of other issues that may even be irrelevant in these religious communities.

The difficulty of generalizing scales to other groups is not only a problem when measuring tradition-specific constructs within a religious group (such as Protestantism), or when using scales in the United States or Great Britain. Many RS scales, although purporting to measure a trans-religious construct, are culturally insensitive and do not generalize well to other cultures and religious traditions outside of that with which it was first created. For example, Hill and Dwiwardani (in press) have chronicled their difficulty in applying the widely used Religious Orientation Scale (ROS; Allport & Ross, 1967) with an Indonesian Muslim population. In order to make the scale applicable, more than just the language of the scale needed to change (e.g., changing church to mosque). Because Islam is such a strong pillar in the overall collectivistic culture in Indonesia, the concept itself of extrinsic-social religious orientation was not as applicable to Muslims as to Christians. However, careful research has yielded the Muslim–Christian Religious Orientation Scale (MCROS; Ghorbani, Watson, Ghramaleki, Morris, & Hood, 2002), with which researchers demonstrated "incremental validity of their new … [s]cale (MCROS) beyond the Allport and Ross's (1967) ROS when the extrinsic social dimension was measured in relation to the broader community and culture rather than to the mosque" (Hill & Dwiwardani, in press). RS research must continue to move in this direction in order to create measures that can be utilized in more applied and diverse settings than has traditionally been the case. Sample representativeness when creating a measure and its cultural sensitivity are important factors to examine when picking a measure for use with a new population.

Review of Measures

Clearly the theoretical framework, the psychometric properties, and the sample representativeness/cultural sensitivity of a scale are all important aspects to consider when choosing a measure. Although a basic understanding of these issues will aid researchers in picking a measure independently, we offer some guidance by

reviewing measures which we feel have successfully navigated the three issues discussed above. Of course, a thorough review of all or even most of the RS scales available is beyond the scope of this chapter, and the reader looking for a scale to serve an already specified purpose is pointed toward Hill and Hood's (1999) comprehensive review for scales developed prior to 1999, and Hill (2005), for a more updated list. Here, however, we will utilize Tsang and McCullough's (2003) two-level hierarchical model as a way to organize RS measures conceptually.

Tsang and McCullough (2003) propose that RS researchers think about RS variables on two levels. Level I represents a trait-like quality of religiousness or spirituality. This level represents a higher level of organization, or a disposition of, religiousness. Level II, on the other hand, represents a more behavioral or functional quality of religiousness or spirituality. This level includes measures that assess how RS functions in people's lives: the motivation toward RS, utilization of RS to cope with life demands, etc. Of course Level I and Level II interact, as dispositions influence behaviors and vice versa.

The measures reviewed here will be grouped into Level I and Level II categories. Only measures that have met three criteria are included for review. First, all scales reviewed in this chapter were grounded in at least some sort of theoretical framework (which was at least plausible, if not necessarily consensual). Second, all scales have demonstrated at least good reliability (alpha > 0.70) across two or more studies, and have demonstrated a good correlation ($r > 0.70$) across multiple samples on at least two of the five types of validity. And lastly, the measures we review represent a more broadly construed population (e.g., the scales do not apply only to Mormons, only to Evangelicals, etc.).

Measures of Dispositional Religiousness

Tsang and McCullough (2003) argue for a disposition of general religiousness or spirituality based on three factors. First, various indicators of religiousness are consistently correlated in research (e.g., attendance at a religious service, prayer, reading of sacred text, etc.). Second, factor analytic studies on measures of religiousness reveal factors that are intercorrelated, suggesting the presence of a higher order factor, such as a disposition toward religiousness. Third, some research has suggested that religiousness may be heritable to some degree. Finding and including a measure of dispositional religiousness in a study of RS variables is especially important for researchers in the study of education and wellbeing. By statistically controlling for dispositional variables, the relationship between other more functional RS variables and outcomes is better clarified. In order to design appropriate interventions or strategies in the fields of education and wellbeing, one must be able to disentangle specific factors from more general dispositional differences between individuals.

Assessment of General Religiousness or Spirituality

Scales assessing general religiousness or spirituality often use very broad language, thereby increasing the likelihood that they would be appropriate for use with a diverse sample. Measures such as these are often used in conjunction with measures

of other constructs, and used to correlate religiosity with some over variable. For instance, researchers in education may consider using any of the following scales as predictors of various educational outcomes, or test for interactions between general levels of religiosity and type of educational intervention. Of all the scales designed to measure a general religious disposition, perhaps the best-validated and most widely used is the Spiritual Wellbeing Scale (SWBS; Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982). The SWBS consists of two, 10-item subscales measuring Existential Wellbeing (EWB) and Religious Wellbeing (RWB). The 10 items comprising the RWB subscale consistently load together in factor analytic studies, which suggest that it is indeed measuring a general RS factor. Although some may be put off by the scale's title as a measure of *wellbeing*, it has been used as a general RS measure in many studies. The Spiritual Transcendence Scale (STS) developed by Piedmont (1999) measures the ability of an individual to "stand outside of their immediate sense of time and place to view life from a larger more objective perspective" (p. 988). Overall, the STS has demonstrated good reliability and validity. It consists of three subscales measuring universality, prayer fulfillment, and connectedness. Although the STS was originally tested with American Christian samples, recent research has demonstrated its generalizability to populations in India (Piedmont & Leach, 2007), Malta (Galea, Ciarrocchi, & Piedmont, 2007), and the Philippines (Piedmont, 2007). And finally, Hood's Mysticism Scale (1975) has also been widely used and is applicable across religious traditions.

Assessment of Religious or Spiritual Commitment

Although many people identify themselves with a given religious tradition, the importance of that identification varies from person to person. Measures of RS commitment seek to ascertain how invested a person is in their given RS beliefs, whether within or outside a religious tradition. RS commitment measures often conceptualize the religiously or spiritually committed person as having developed a spiritual lens through which they perceive and understand the world and their circumstances. People who filter the majority of their experience through an RS lens may have a higher meaning-making potential (Park, 2005; Silberman, 2005), and the ability to create meaning has been significantly related to subjective and physical wellbeing (Brady, Peterman, Fitchett, Mo, & Cella, 1999). The Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10) measures religious commitment outside of a specific religious tradition (Worthington et al., 2003). The RCI-10 has demonstrated excellent test–retest and internal reliabilities, as well as criterion, construct, convergent, and discriminant validity. It has also fared well on student samples of Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims. The Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire (Plante & Boccaccini, 1997) is another measure of RS commitment, and uses language that is broad enough to apply to the general public (as opposed to simply the "religious"). Although the original scale was comprised of only 10 items, a shortened 5-item version of the Santa Clara scale has been developed (Plante, Vallaeys, Sherman, & Wallston, 2002). Both the original and shortened forms have demonstrated good reliability and validity (Storch et al., 2004), although some research has suggested that it is susceptible to a ceiling effect among the religiously committed (Plante & Sherman, 2001).

Assessment of Religious or Spiritual Development

In as much as education is the process of growth, change, and maturity, educa-tors should be interested in RS development. The broader question regarding RS development and maturity is one of conceptualizing growth, change, and maturity in spiritual and religious terms. How one conceives of RS maturity should cer-tainly guide their choice of measure. The psychometrically sound Faith Maturity Scale (Benson, Donahue, & Erickson, 1993) is recommended if one defines reli-gious maturity through mainstream Protestant traditions. The Religious Maturity Scale (Leak & Fish, 1999) measures religious maturity as conceptualized by Allport (1950). Within Allport's framework, religious maturity is marked by a commitment that directs one's life, a deep understanding of religious issues, the ability to doubt, and tolerance. Empirical studies have shown the scale to have excellent convergent, discriminant and predictive validity, as well as internal and test–retest reliabilities. It also appears that the scale can be used across denominations in Christianity. How-ever, the degree to which it is generalizable to other religious traditions, even in modified form, has yet to be tested.

The Faith Development Scale (FDS; Maiello, 2005) is based on the assumption that there exists a core set of beliefs that transcends religious and cultural differ-ences. Therefore, the FDS measures a participant's level of core religious belief, and uses this as an indication of maturity. The scale was initially developed on a sample of various European nationalities and religious traditions. Despite this, the scale requires additional research to verify its psychometric properties. However, because this scale was designed to transcend cultural differences the verification of its psy-chometric properties would offer another promising measure for cross-cultural RS research.

Two measures of reported RS experiences with the transcendent are worth noting. First, the 23-item Spiritual History Scale (SHS; Hays, Meador, Branch, & George, 2001) measures four dimensions (God-helped, Family History of Religiousness, Lifetime Religious Social Support, and Cost of Religiousness). Its validity and reliability are adequate among samples from a theistic background. Interestingly, it was developed on samples consisting primarily of the elderly, and was intended to be used as a measure of the relationship between its four factors and health in later-life. Therefore, its continued use with the elderly and/or in health research is strongly recommended. The degree to which it is useful with other populations has yet to be well established. Second, the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES; Underwood & Teresi, 2002) measures reported RS experience with the transcen-dent among those who do not necessarily come from a theistic background. The developers claimed that spirituality exists as a more stable internal construct than religiousness, and therefore attempted to design a scale that would measure the extent to which one feels the transcendent is a part of their daily lives (as opposed to extraordinary or miraculous encounters with the transcendent) as manifested in such experiences as awe, joy, and inner peace.

Two measures of religious maturity based on theories of development include the Attachment to God Inventory (AGI; Beck & McDonald, 2004) and the Spiritual

Assessment Inventory (SAI; Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). The AGI measures attachment to God based on Bowlby's (1969/1973) notion of infant attachment; it assesses the degree to which one exhibits fear of abandonment and/or avoidance of intimacy with God. Although attachment theory provides a rich conceptual framework from within which to develop measures and conduct research, the AGI has yet to receive much interest from outside a Western, Judeo-Christian tradition. However, within this population, evidence of internal reliability and convergent and construct validity have been consistently demonstrated. The SAI, designed for a Christian population, is a closely related measure based in object-relations theory. Specifically it measures awareness, instability, grandiosity, realistic acceptance, and defensiveness in the participant's relationship to God. The SAI has shown incremental validity above and beyond Paloutzian and Ellison's (1982; Ellison, 1983) Spiritual Wellbeing Scale (SWBS) and Gorsuch and McPherson's (1989) Intrinsic–Extrinsic Religious Motivation Scale.

Measures of Functional Religiousness

Assessment of Religious Motivation

As any educator knows, a major factor in successful education and development is the motivation of the individual; how one approaches the task is paramount in predicting the outcome. The same is true for RS. Among frameworks for understanding RS motivation and orientation, Allport's (1950) distinction between intrinsic (I) and extrinsic (E) motivation has been the most widely accepted. Allport's original Religious Orientation Scale (ROS; Allport & Ross, 1967) is still widely used, despite many well-documented methodological and theoretical criticisms and problems (Hill & Hood, 1999). Researchers have tried to improve on the ROS (see Hill & Hood, 1999 for a description of these measures) with perhaps the Revised Religious Orientation Scale (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989) emerging as the most psychometrically sound. This does not mean it has escaped criticism, however. The entire I–E concept has been criticized by Batson and colleagues (Batson et al., 1993) as too simplistic, and they propose religious questing as an overlooked process necessary for religious maturity. During this quest, people ask challenging questions of their own faith and must ultimately reconcile themselves to the realization that the answers to such penetrating questions are often not black and white. In order to measure religious quest, the Batson and Schoenrade (1991a, 1991b) Quest Scale measures whether "an individual's religion involves an open-ended, responsive dialogue with existential questions raised by the contradictions and tragedies of life" (Batson et al., 1993, p. 169).

Assessment of Religious or Spiritual Practices

Researchers are often interested in the practical and applied questions of how outcomes are affected by what one *does*. As a result, several measures exist to assess

both the public and private aspects of RS participation and activities. The Religious Involvement Inventory (RII; Hilty & Morgan, 1985), for example, measures participation in church activities beyond Sunday attendance for those who identify with the Christian tradition. The scale consists of 14 items and has demonstrated reasonably good validity and reliability. Similarly, the Christian Spiritual Participation Profile (CSPP; Thayer, 2004) measures one's involvement with each of the four spiritual development modes (which consist of both private and corporate spiritual disciplines). The Springfield Religiosity Scale (Koenig, Smiley, & Gonzales, 1988) also distinguishes between regular service attendance and additional involvement in religious group activities (e.g., Bible study groups, Sunday school class, and religious discussion groups). However, like the RII and the CSPP, the Springfield Religiosity Scale was created only for use with a Christian population. None of these scales have been modified and validated for use outside of this religious tradition.

By way of measuring more private RS practices, such as reading a sacred text, meditation, and solitary prayer, the Duke Religious Index (DUREL; Koenig et al., 1988) uses only one item. The entire DUREL consists of only five items, but the brevity of this measure has not diminished its psychometric properties, and it has continued to demonstrate strong reliability and validity. The Religious Background and Behavior Scale (RBB; Connors, Tonigan, & Miller, 1996), developed for use with a clinical population, is not tradition specific and measures more solitary RS behaviors.

Assessment of Religious and Spiritual Supports

Researchers have frequently posited social support as a mediator in the oft found linkage between religion and positive health outcomes. Measures of religious and spiritual supports attempt to get at the unique benefits of religious support, which may extend beyond just general social support. For example, Kahn and Antonucci (1980) described a collection of like-minded people with compatible worldviews who function to support each other through prayer and companionship as a *support convoy*. Because people within the same religious tradition are likely have similar or compatible worldviews, fellow congregants may be uniquely suited to function as a support convoy. The Religious Support Scale (RSS; Fiala, Bjorck, & Gorsuch, 2002) was created to measure perceived religious support among those in the Christian tradition. The scale consists of three subscales—support from God, support from the congregation, and support from church leaders. The RSS demonstrated adequate validity and excellent reliability. More research with scales such as these are needed to ascertain the unique contribution of religious support above and beyond general social support.

Assessment of Religious and Spiritual Coping

Education is more than the transmission of information; it is also the process whereby an individual is changed by the gained information, and good education always involves the teaching of how to apply that information appropriately.

Although many people hold RS beliefs and values, how they use and apply their RS to cope with demanding life circumstances is equally important as the other variables previous discussed. In fact, the ability of the individual to apply their RS framework successfully to cope with demands of life is likely a significant factor in the adaptiveness or maladaptiveness of their RS. Perhaps the most comprehensive and frequently used measure of RS coping is the Measure of Religious Coping (RCOPE; Pargament, Koenig, & Perez, 2000). The RCOPE has been tested on both physically healthy and ill patients and has moderate to high reliability and good validity. Recently, alternative versions of the RCOPE have been created and validated for use among Asian Indians in the United States (Tarakeshwar, Pargament, & Mahoney, 2003) and Pakistani Muslims (Khan & Watson, 2006). Not all use of RS to cope with circumstances outside of one's control is adaptive, however. In order to assess maladaptive religious coping, Pargament and colleagues created the Negative Religious Coping Scale (Pargament, Smith, Koenig, & Perez, 1998). Both the RCOPE and the Negative Religious Coping Scale assess styles of religious coping. Wong-McDonald and Gorsuch (2000) suggested a surrender style of coping in addition to the styles represented in the RCOPE. The Surrender Scale has good psychometric properties and has demonstrated incremental validity above and beyond the RCOPE.

Among groups frequently studied in conjunction with religious coping are the chronically ill. The Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy—Spiritual Wellbeing Scale (FACIT-Sp; Peterman, Fitchett, Bardy, Hernandez, & Cella, 2002) was designed for use specifically with this population and is applicable across religious traditions. The FACIT-Sp consists of two subscales: Faith and Meaning/Peace, both of which have sound psychometric properties. The Faith subscale has been associated with religiousness, while the Meaning/Peace subscale seems to measure RS independent of specific religious identification. Given that religiousness has some overlap with spirituality, but also some distinctiveness (Hill et al., 2000), this measure is useful for assessing RS in association with a religious tradition and that which is independent from it.

Alternatives to Self-Report

Up until this point, only paper-and-pencil self-report measures of RS have been reviewed. In addition to the use of such measures as standard fare in much social scientific research, the extensive reliance on self-report measures in RS research may be in part due to a Western Protestant paradigmatic belief that RS is personal and subjective (Cohen & Hill, 2007). Furthermore, self-reports are based on the assumption that (a) participants have the ability to self-assess accurately, and (b) participants are willing to disclose the results of their self-assessment to the investigator—two assumptions that may seriously limit the validity of scientific research. Psychologists, particularly social psychologists, have spoken to both issues extensively and have concluded that (a) self-assessment is biased by both intentional and unintentional distortions, and (b) honest disclosure is especially

vulnerable to such common impediments as evaluation apprehension, demand characteristics, and impression management. Self-report measures may be especially limited when studying RS due to the importance of RS beliefs and practices and the power of the RS social context (i.e., persons may feel a certain social pressure to affirm certain religious beliefs; Burris & Navara, 2002). Finally, self-report measures may require a reading and comprehension level beyond that of some targeted participants, and may sometimes fail to engage the interest of the respondent—thus making the measure more vulnerable to a response set (e.g., agreeing with every item, even when logically inconsistent). In light of this, alternatives to self-report measures are needed in order for RS research to progress and expand.

Implicit Measurement

Implicit measures attempt to use indirect measurement techniques to assess a given variable. RS researchers have just begun to use techniques from social and cognitive sciences. Researchers in social cognition (e.g., Fazio, Sanbonmatsu, Powell, & Kardes, 1986) proposed that an attitude's accessibility is representative of underlying cognitive structures. In RS research, judgment speed has drawn strong interest, where participants are asked to identify an object as good or bad. Hill, as early as 1994, recommended that this technique of measuring attitude accessibility be extended to the psychology of religion. This recommendation was taken by Gibson (2006), whose findings indicated that reaction time is a good indicator of the accessibility of one's God schema. Cohen, Shariff, and Hill (2008) found that participants who held stronger religious opinions (i.e., clearly a religious or non-religious ideology) had more accessible attitudes as measured by response times, again offering support for the use of implicit measures of RS attitudes. The Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) is one such cognitive timing measure, but is still in its early stages of use with RS research.

Another form of implicit assessment involves memory recall. Symons and Johnson (1997) demonstrated that people recall a higher number of adjectives when describing a target if the target is intimate (as opposed to familiar, but not intimate). In applying this notion to RS experience, Gibson (2006) found that evangelicals, whose image of God was more intimate (but not necessarily more familiar) than non-evangelicals and atheists, recalled adjectives that describe God at the same rate as self-reference adjectives, assumed to be both intimate and familiar. In contrast, non-evangelical and atheist participants recalled adjectives related to the self (again, assumed to be both familiar and intimate) with higher frequency than those related to God (familiar but not intimate). These findings tentatively suggest that memory recall can be used to assess certain qualities, such as intimacy and familiarity, in one's relationship to God. However, not all are in agreement that such measures are useful. Kinoshita and Peek-O'Leary (2005) raise doubt about what implicit and indirect measurements are actually assessing, and the lack of empirical research on RS variables using such measures suggests caution in using implicit and/or indirect measures for purposes other than research.

Other Alternative Forms of Measurement

RS research generally has not relied on other forms of measurement, but extending RS research into other, more applied fields may warrant reconsideration of alternative research methodologies. For example, qualitative research can be useful in fleshing out quantitative findings or for developing a theory, which can then be tested quantitatively. The complex nature of RS suggests that mixed-method designs may be useful in studies taking a more robust approach. Reports from others (e.g., friends, family members, and fellow members of a religious organization) are rarely used in RS research and may be beneficial to the study of religious practices and behaviors. Physiological indicators (e.g., fMRI and immunology) of RS experience are another method of measurement that would likely add significantly to the body of RS research. As the psychology of religion is applied in more diverse settings, one can expect the methods of measurement to expand as well.

Guidance in Choosing a Measure

There are several factors that must be considered with choosing a measure (Hill, Kopp, & Bollinger, 2007). First, one must choose a measure that serves the purpose of the research. For example, if one is conducting a study for experimental purposes only, a new or less validated measure, though less than desirable, may be used if nothing else is available. Again, however, one should thoroughly review the literature, since there is a vast array of measures now available. In contrast, if one is working in a more applied setting and hoping to use an RS measure to screen or identify participants with certain characteristics, then a more psychometrically sound and well-validated measure is likely necessary. Second, one must have a well-articulated notion of what RS construct they hope to study. Because RS is a robust and multidimensional construct, one must be sure to select a measure that coincides with the way one's hypotheses have defined the said construct. For instance, researchers who think that religiousness is manifested in religious behaviors (e.g., attendance at weekly religious services, prayer, and meditation) may choose a measure of religious behavior and draw conclusions about general religiousness. This would be a faulty conclusion, as their findings relate to only one dimension of RS—religious practices and behavior. Because RS is so broad and complex, it is wise to conceptualize it along various dimensions. However, in so doing, one must be sure to choose a measure that matches the said dimension. Third, the psychometric properties of the scale are important. If a scale has not demonstrated at least two types of validity beyond face validity, it is probably unwise to select it for use in other than experimental research.

Fourth, researchers should select measures which are appropriate for their given sample and/or population. As discussed throughout this chapter, there are relatively few RS measures that have been cross-culturally validated, or are applicable outside of one or two religious traditions. This will likely change in the years ahead, not only as many cultures become increasingly religiously pluralistic, but as RS research itself continues to grow and is conducted in different cultures. RS exists within a

social and cultural context, and researchers would be wise to consider the context of their sample as compared to the context in which the measure was created in judging the appropriateness of the measures they intend to use. Lastly, researchers are admonished to be flexible. Although there has been a proliferation of measures in psychology of religion, it is still not guaranteed that one will find a scale that was created for the exact purpose of one's own research. Therefore, it is imperative that researchers have a strong conceptual understanding of both their own research and the measures they consider. Pilot studies may be necessary to confirm the applicability of the measure on one's sample or population of interest. If a scale is assessing a construct of interest, it may be worth the added effort to test ways of altering the measure to make it applicable to one's targeted population.

Conclusion

Colonel Jessep, the fictional character played by Jack Nicholson in the movie *A Few Good Men*, will long be identified by his statement "You want answers? You can't handle the truth!" RS researchers not only want answers, but are firmly convinced they can handle the truth about the complex and sometimes paradoxical nature of religion and spirituality. Frequently, that research has important implications for education and wellbeing. The quality of such empirical research is only as good as the quality of the measurement instruments that it utilizes. Though not breathtakingly exciting with widespread appeal, good measurement is absolutely necessary not only to move the field forward, but also to help understand and handle the truth.

Note

1. It should be noted, however, that such normative data are usually not necessary for research purposes and since most scales are used for research, it is unlikely that norms for most instruments will ever be established.

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Chapter 3
Examining Religious and Spiritual Development During Childhood and Adolescence

Chris J. Boyatzis

Abstract What does "spirituality" look like in a child? Does religion make a genuine difference in the lives of children and youth? How do we measure spiritual and religious development in children and adolescents? How can we characterize religious and spiritual development in its processes, sequences, and stages? These are a few daunting challenges facing our field, and I will address them here (to varying degrees of thoroughness). I first examine the historical neglect and recent attention regarding spirituality and religion and childhood and adolescence. Second, I explore definitional challenges inherent in this field. I then offer a selective review of very recent research literature that illuminates key issues in three emphases in the field: children's religious concepts, social dynamics that influence religiosity and spirituality, and religion's role in adolescent wellbeing and thriving. In addition, I problematize some assumptions about religious and spiritual development by challenging their implicit foundations derived from developmental theory.

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A New Day for Religious and Spiritual Development

Of the mountainous research conducted on children's development, a conspicuously small portion addresses religion and spirituality. A recent PsycINFO search revealed that less than half of 1% of research on children addressed religion, and an even smaller proportion addressed spirituality (see also Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude, 2003; Boyatzis, 2003a).

Fortunately, scholars are now heeding the call to "honor spiritual development as a core developmental process that deserves equal standing in the pantheon of universal developmental processes" (Benson, 2004, p. 50). For example, there were more dissertations on children and religion from 2000–2005 than in the 1990s, and more in the 1990s than the previous two decades combined. Dissertations on children and spirituality have surged, as more than half of the dissertations ever done on this topic have appeared since 2000. At the other end of the scholarly pipeline, many volumes have appeared in a brief interval. I highlight one seminal work that is "must reading"—*The Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence* (Roehlkepartain, King, Wagener, & Benson, 2006)—but also recommend other recent edited volumes (e.g., Allen, 2008; Dowling & Scarlett, 2006; Ratcliff, 2004; Rosengren, Johnson, & Harris, 2000; Yust, Johnson, Sasso, & Roehlkepartain, 2006). In addition, a journal (*International Journal on Children's Spirituality*) and a spate of special issues have examined child and adolescent spirituality in various journals: *Review of Religious Research* (Boyatzis, 2003b), *Applied Developmental Science* (King & Boyatzis, 2004), *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* (Boyatzis, 2006), *New Directions for Youth Development* (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Hong, 2008), and *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion* (Boyatzis & Hambrick-Dixon, 2008). Finally, the most recent edition of the prestigious *Handbook of child psychology*, long viewed as the "bible" of child development scholarship, has an entire chapter on religious and spiritual development (by Oser, Scarlett, & Bucher, 2006); in contrast, the preceding edition in 1998 had, among its thousands of pages, a skimpy three references in the subject index to religion and spirituality. Therefore, it is clear that religious and spiritual development is working toward the mainstream like never before.

Defining Spiritual Development is Difficult

A fundamental task for our field is to generate valid definitions of our constructs, but this is easier said than done. First, there are stubborn historical and semantic tensions between "spirituality" and "religion"; there are many treatments of these debates (e.g., Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005) so they will not be repeated here. Here I tentatively define religious development as the growth of understanding of and engagement in an organized religious tradition's beliefs, creeds, values, and practices (see also Reich, Oser, & Scarlett, 1999). This definition is inclusive for children in myriad religions and generates questions about children's relationships with the tradition's divine entity (God, Allah, etc.), how the children understand

the religion's formal creeds and doctrines and participate in its formal events (e.g., religious worship or milestone events such as a Christian's first communion, a Jew's bar mitzvah, and a Muslim's first participation in the hajj).

In contrast, it is more difficult to define spirituality, especially "spiritual development." If children develop spiritually, *what* develops? There has been more effort to define "spirituality" than "spiritual development" (Roehlkepartain, Benson, King, & Wagener, 2006). The organizers of the landmark *Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence* wisely conclude that "there is no consensus about what 'this domain' (of children's spirituality) really is" (Roehlkepartain, Benson, et al., 2006) and went further to say it is "premature—and potentially dangerous—to propose that a single definition could capture the richness, complexity, and multidimensional nature of spiritual development" (Roehlkepartain, Benson, et al., 2006, p. 4).

To build an empirically based definition of spirituality, scholars at The Center for Spiritual Development, situated within the Search Institute in Minnesota, USA, and funded by the John Templeton Foundation, have collected data on more than 5,000 young people between the ages of 12 and 25 (Search Institute, 2008). These data arise from surveys and focus groups around the world: Australia, Cameroon, Canada, India, Thailand, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Center is analyzing this data goldmine. Previously, Search Institute scholars offered this definition: spiritual development is growth in "the intrinsic capacity for self-transcendence, in which the self is embedded in something greater than the self, including the sacred . . .. It is shaped both within and outside of religious traditions, beliefs, and practices" (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude, 2003, pp. 205–206). This definition seems fruitful because it recognizes spirituality (a) as a natural propensity (a view consistent with what some have named the "biological argument," Hay, Reich, & Utsch, 2006), (b) as socialized and shaped by multiple experiences within and outside organized religion, and (c) characterized by connection and relationality to what is beyond the self. On this last point, this definition is not restricted to a particular religious doctrine or sacred entity and also accommodates the "biological argument" claim (Hay & Nye, 1998) that children's relational consciousness emerges prior to religious socialization and beliefs: children are spiritual beings first and then are acculturated (or not) into a religious tradition that narrows intuitive spiritual dispositions, practices, and experiences. This view suggests, for example, that God (or some theistic version thereof) is not a priori the only transcendent entity with which a child experiences a relationship. I find this definition's inclusiveness helpful, especially at this embryonic point in the field, and it engenders many questions: What are the developmental trajectories of a spiritual relationality to whatever one perceives to transcend the self? What forces and entities beyond the self engage or attract the child in meaningful (or dysfunctional or dangerous) relationality? What experiences inside and outside religion foster, and which impede, this self-transcendent growth? As the study of children's spiritual development evolves, it will be crucial to examine how development in this domain is related to and/or distinct from development in other domains (religion, cognition, emotion, neurology, etc.). Finally, in our pre-consensus era, scholars should interrogate their own

work (and others') by asking: what are the implications of my (your) definition of spirituality? What might be systematically excluded by a particular definition? This kind of intellectual honesty and humility will help the field advance.

I believe one major reason for our current difficulty in defining children's spirituality is the long-standing dominance of cognitive-developmental models of growth that posited an invariant march toward logical, rational thought, and away from other modes of thought. The post-Enlightenment Piagetian emphasis on rational thought brought a dismissive attitude toward other forms of knowing. Of course, many scholars have argued for a more inclusive approach and a richer understanding of children's spirituality. In his classic, *Will Our Children Have Faith?*, John Westerhoff (2000) argued that "two modes of consciousness are possible . . . . One is intellectual . . . . The other is intuitional . . . experiential, and is characterized by nonverbal, creative, nonlinear, relational activities. The development and integration of both modes of consciousness is essential to the spiritual life" (p. 70). Robinson (1983) also makes this point in his collection of children's spiritual experience, *The Original Vision*: "What I have called the original vision of childhood is no mere imaginative fancy, but a form of knowledge and one that is essential to the development of any mature understanding" (p. 16).

These more inclusive views are consistent with claims, described below, by many contemporary cognitive-developmentalists who no longer embrace a Piagetian model (see Johnson & Boyatzis, 2006). The decline of Piagetian assumptions and the ascent of more inclusive, flexible models will engender a better understanding of children's spirituality.

Cognitive Approaches to Spiritual Development

Cognitive-developmental theories launched two waves of research on the development of religious concepts. In the 1960s, scholars applied Piagetian theory to children's concepts of God and prayer (e.g., Elkind, 1970; Goldman, 1964; Long, Elkind, & Spilka, 1967). A second wave, beginning in the 1990s, was sparked by new theories of cognitive development that emphasized the intuitive, domain-specific nature of thinking (Boyer, 1994). Both waves concluded that children's religious concepts operate under the same principles and tendencies of nonreligious cognition.

Recently, Johnson and Boyatzis (2006) suggested that spiritual development proceeds from intuitive understanding to increasingly reflective thought. Young children possess powerful inference mechanisms for intuitively sorting out reality and the supernatural, and this intuition is integrated with increasing reflection. These maturations are scaffolded by increasing cultural practices that orient the child to cultural modes of spiritual knowing and being. Thus, spiritual development arises not from mere acquisition of knowledge about the transcendent but from increasingly meaningful and organized connections of the self to the "something more" (see also Johnson, 2000; Roehlkepartain, Benson, et al., 2006).

The most studied topic in spiritual and religious cognition is children's concepts of God (e.g., Hyde, 1990), so this review will focus on more recent cognitive approaches in this research. In contrast to the older view that children possess solely anthropomorphic notions of God—a big person in the sky—recent research suggests that children and adults are not so different. Even adults tend to anthropomorphize, using a "fundamental cognitive bias" (Barrett & Keil, 1996, p. 223) that extends an intuitive folk psychology to supernatural figures (Boyer, 1994, 2001). In addition, children and adults hold God concepts featuring both natural and supernatural properties. Work by Barrett challenges the view that children are unaware of God's distinctly supernatural powers (Barrett & Keil, 1996; Barrett & Richert, 2003). His studies demonstrate that pre-schoolers view God as a special kind of agent who, unlike other agents, is not constrained by natural laws. In one study (Barrett, Newman, & Richert, 2003) 5-year-olds believed that their mothers would not immediately understand ambiguous drawings but God would; Woolley and Phelps (2001) similarly found that most children 5 years and older felt that God "just knows" what people are praying without needing to hear them. Barrett has posited that children are prepared conceptually at early ages to view God as *unique*, not humanlike, which helps explain why children easily distinguish God's special status.

These studies fit with broader accounts (see Boyer & Walker, 2000; Johnson & Boyatzis, 2006, for elaboration) explaining that children (and adults) are drawn to supernatural agents such as God or angels due to their "counterintuitive" nature (i.e., they violate ordinary expectations, as in the case of spiritual entities who are immortal, omniscient, or can pass through physical objects). These counterintuitive religious beliefs operate within an implicit backdrop of theory of mind, which provides children or adults with a prepared set of agentic qualities to extend to religious agents (e.g., "My supernatural God has wishes and thoughts and worries [just like all beings with minds do]"). The agents' counterintuitiveness, combined with the individual's belief that the agents are *real*, makes the beliefs all the more *salient* and memorable and potent. This salience increases the likelihood of religious beliefs being transmitted and shared with others.

There are additional perspectives from current cognitive-developmentalists that challenge the Piaget-inspired account of the march away from immature irrational, magical thinking to mature rational, abstract, scientific thinking. Children's (and adults') mental processes are believed to include multiple thought processes that co-exist and often compete (e.g., Subbotsky, 1993; Woolley, 1997). As Woolley (2000) asserted, "Children's minds are not inherently one way or another—not inherently magical nor inherently rational" (pp. 126–127). As Callanan (2005) noted, in the minds of children and many adults the ontological boundaries between "empirical" entities (those with an objective evidential basis) and "nonempirical" entities—say, the differences between animals and angels—are probably much fuzzier and fluid than scholars who study such things seem to presume.

Researchers have documented cognitive propensities underlying ideas of immaterial spirit and life after death, which are widespread across cultures (Bering & Bjorklund, 2004). Children's beliefs about the afterlife are connected with an early distinction between minds and bodies (Bering & Bjorklund, 2004). Children

know that death stops physical/biological functions but have difficulty imagining that death similarly ceases all mental and emotional functions. In other words, a mind–body distinction appears in children's afterlife beliefs. Such thinking is easily assimilated with religious beliefs, evident in most traditions, that at death a spirit or soul exists separately from the body and continues to live. If children possess early intuitions about the afterlife, or God, or the efficacy of prayer, there are also surrounding familial and cultural practices that provide ample testimony, dialogue, and rituals to reify, scaffold, and elaborate them.

Social influences have been shown in numerous studies. For example, Heller (1986) found that Hindu children, more than Jewish, Baptist, or Roman Catholic children, described a multifaceted God that feels close and like a person in some ways yet is also an abstract and intangible form of energy. These Hindu beliefs reflect their doctrine about different God with different natures and functions. Taken together, these studies suggest that children extend a folk psychology and theory of mind to their God images but are influenced by their surrounding cultural and religious influences.

In an important study, Evans (2000) analyzed children's beliefs about the origins of species and of the world in two kinds of families: secular or Christian fundamentalist; in the latter group children also attended religious schools or were home-schooled. A striking finding was that young children aged 7–9 in both types of families—fundamentalist *and* secular—espoused creationist views of the origin of species and the world. In secular homes, not until the children reached adolescence did they begin consistently to espouse their families' evolutionist cosmologies. These findings suggest that children are intuitive theists (and challenge the antiquated view of children as blank-slate recipients of parental input) who may revise their implicit theories when exposed to conflicting evidence in parental testimony or experiences (e.g., trips to science museums) that supports secular scientific accounts (Harris & Koenig, 2006).

Corroborating evidence comes from studies of children's and parents' beliefs about mythical figures (e.g., Santa Claus, Tooth Fairy). Although these figures are invoked in very specific circumstances in contrast to the more common yet also profound uses of religious deities or spirits, mythical figures are like God concepts in that they include supernatural features and have widespread cultural endorsement. Parents' endorsement of mythical characters such as Santa, the Easter Bunny, and the Tooth Fairy was positively related to their children's belief in them (Prentice, Manosevitz, & Hubbs, 1978). However, the correspondence between parents' and children's beliefs was not so strong as to suggest children think what their parents want them to think. In Prentice et al. (1978), of the parents who encouraged their children to believe in the Easter Bunny, 23% of their children did *not* believe, and of the parents who discouraged the belief 47% of children *did* believe in the Easter Bunny. In interviews with fundamentalist Christian families, Clark (1995) also found that many children believed that Santa was real even though their parents discouraged such belief. Collectively, the data indicate that children are influenced by cultural norms and parental input but also possess ample independence of thought. To speak in terms of two venerable ideas, the child is raised by a village, but the child comes with conceptual propensities and is *not* a tabula rasa.

A Social-Ecology Approach to Children's Spirituality

A social-ecology model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) illuminates the many influences on children's spiritual development by analyzing diverse contexts of growth. Scholars should not only assess different systems that have immediate and proximal impact (e.g., family, church, peer group, school) but the interactions between them. Although there are many social contexts in which children develop, length limits preclude discussion of them, so here the discussion will be on the family and peer contexts. Although social-ecology models posit that it takes a village to raise a child, the family is "the first village" of RSD. Readers are referred to other sources on the family (e.g., Boyatzis, Dollahite, & Marks, 2006) and the focus here will be on some theories and mechanisms of family influence on religious and spiritual development.

One theoretical framework is a sociocultural model that emphasizes the influence of knowledgeable adults who use scaffolding and guided participation in culturally meaningful practices to help the child move to higher understandings (Vygotsky, 1978). In this view, parents, clergy, and other adults can be seen as mentors who guide apprentices—children—to more advanced levels of understanding and engagement in religious practices, creeds, and modes of expression. A second framework is a transactional model of development that posits that children and parents influence each other (P $\longleftrightarrow$ C) in recurrent reciprocal exchanges (Kuczynski, 2003). This characterization of bi-directional family interaction contrasts sharply with traditional views that presume parents influence children in a unilateral P $\rightarrow$ C fashion; unfortunately this "transmission" model has dominated socialization research for decades, but scholars now endorse a more dynamic conceptualization of the family as having bi-directional and multidirectional flows of influence. In transactional models it is difficult to determine when parent influence ends and child influence begins (in Yeats' apropos phrase, it is impossible to separate the dancer from the dance). In the family, whatever input children receive from their parents not only must be processed through the child's inherent cognitive structures but may also be mediated through external factors such as sibling relationships. In this view, children's beliefs may undergo initial revision due to parent testimony (Harris & Koenig, 2006) but also may show ongoing revisions due to "secondary adjustments" through "third-party discussions" that are common in family life (Kuczynski, 2003, p. 10). Our field knows far too little about these complex and crucial bi- and multidirectional dynamics in which parents and children influence *each other's* spiritual growth. When these dynamics are examined, it is likely (see Boyatzis, 2004) that some families reveal a distinct "parent-as-mentor, child-as-apprentice" role structure; in other families, there may be more fluidity between these roles. In some families the child may be viewed as something of a "spiritual savant." The typical family may display all of these interactional configurations at different times in a child's (and parent's) maturation and in response to specific topics under discussion. For example, we might expect that parents and children would use very different communication styles and roles when discussing, at one time, a worship ritual at church or temple but, at another time, ruminating on exactly what happens to us when we die. The prevalence and psychological functions of these various communication styles must be studied.

Within these dynamics, it is likely that parents influence their children as in other realms, through induction of beliefs, disciplinary tactics, rewards and punishments, and behavioral modeling. Recent work on parent–child communication confirms that parents do not typically try explicitly to teach specific beliefs but instead offer more subtly piecemeal fragments of knowledge (Boyatzis & Janicki, 2003; Callanan, 2005; Harris & Koenig, 2006). Other processes that have been recently proposed are parents' spiritual modeling and children's spiritual observational learning (Bandura, 2003; Silberman, 2003). For example, work from England has underscored the power of parental modeling as a key influence on the prayer behavior of children (Francis & Brown, 1990) and adolescents (Francis & Brown, 1991). Retrospective reports from religious adults confirm that "embedded routines"—regular family rituals such as mealtime prayer—were frequent in their childhoods and helped form the narrative structure of religious meaning in family life (Wuthnow, 1999). Scholars must attend more to how children influence their parents in these activities. This child→parent dynamic is a dark void in our literature.

Ongoing conversation about religion may also be an important mechanism through which parents and children influence each other and co-construct religious and spiritual meanings (see Boyatzis, 2004). One study of Christian families with children ages 3–12 used surveys and diaries of parent–child conversations about religious topics and found that children are active participants—they initiate and terminate about half of conversations, they speak as much as parents do, and they ask questions and offer their own views (Boyatzis & Janicki, 2003). The data challenge the view that children are passive recipients who merely consume parental input and instead show the family to have reciprocal influence; these findings also support the claim that children ask questions to actively seek adult input, especially on issues that children find puzzling (Harris & Koenig, 2005). Adults' retrospective reports also suggest that conversations about religion in childhood were important family interactions (Dudley & Wisbey, 2000; Wuthnow, 1999). Recent qualitative work (Dollahite & Thatcher, 2008) on highly religious Jewish, Christian, and Muslim families shows that when family conversations about religious issues are youth-centered (vs. parent-centered), the experience for both children and parents is more positive.

A social-ecology approach allows the scientist to assess various social contexts in which children's religion and spirituality develops; this approach also often entails the use of multiple measures of multiple religious and spiritual constructs. This is sorely needed in the field, as one review of research found that more than 80% of studies on religion and family used only one- or two-item measures of religiosity (Mahoney, Pargament, Swank, & Tarakeshwar, 2001). Let me illustrate the value of multiple measures of related constructs.

Parents with conservative Christian affiliations approve of spanking and use it more often with their children, but research has shown that a stronger predictor of spanking (than religious affiliation per se) is the parents' theological conservatism (e.g., Biblical literalism, thinking that children possess original sin) (Gershoff, Miller, & Holden, 1999). Of course, it should not surprise us that continuous

psychological variables would be more informative than nominal/categorical ones. This religiosity-spanking link has been further elucidated by a superb recent study. Murray-Swank, Mahoney, and Pargament (2006) measured several indices of religious belief in mothers including their theological conservatism (vs. liberalism) and their sanctification of their roles as parents. Sanctification refers to how much mothers imbued their roles with sacred and holy qualities and saw themselves as doing "God's work." The results illuminated the value of using multiple measures. Neither conservatism nor sanctification was related independently to the mothers' use of spanking. However, regressions showed that spanking was predicted by the *interaction* between mothers' conservatism and sanctification scores. Specifically, mothers who were theologically conservative were *more* likely than other conservative mothers to spank their children if they also viewed their parent role as sacred and holy; in contrast, mothers who were theologically liberal were *less* likely than other liberal mothers to spank their children if they also viewed their role as sacred and holy. Thus, "the link between sanctifying one's role as a parent and using corporal punishment . . . was moderated by how conservative or liberal a mother was in her interpretation of the Bible" (p. 283).

Thus, our scientific understanding of religious and spiritual development will be enriched by multiple measures of multiple relevant religious constructs. This work will be especially helpful to measure the *interactions* between variables.

A social-ecology approach also examines interactions between different social contexts in children's lives. Schwartz (2006) measured adolescent spirituality in relation to parent and peer religiosity. Data were collected at a large international Christian youth conference in Canada; campers were 16 years old on average and provided data on religious belief and commitment and "perceived faith support" from parents and friends, with items such as "my parents (friends) and I talk about how we are doing as Christians" and "my parents (friends) show me what it means to be an authentic Christian." Not surprisingly, the teenagers' own religiosity was predicted by their parents' and friends' religiosity; teens with stronger faith had parents and peers with stronger faith. But the interesting finding was that parents' influence was mediated by friends' religiosity: After controlling for friends' faith support, parents' faith support predicted teens' religiosity less strongly. Thus, our understanding of adolescent spirituality is enriched by measuring the interplay of different contexts in which youth develop. This conclusion emerges from a national study of US youth by Gunnoe and Moore (2002) on childhood and adolescent predictors of religiosity in early adulthood. Mothers' religiosity and religious training in childhood were predictors of young adult religiosity, but one of the most potent predictors was the frequency of worship attendance by one's peers during adolescence.

In a similar study, Regnerus, C. Smith, and B. Smith (2004) analyzed data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, a database of youth from grades 7 to 12. The surveys included two religiosity outcomes for youth: worship attendance and importance of religion. Relative influences were computed of the religiosity of parents, peers, the youths' schools, and the local county norms (of worship attendance). As expected, teens' worship attendance was related most strongly to their parents' attendance but peers' religiosity and local county worship norms

also had strong relations to youth attendance. Also, the importance of religion in the youths' schools turned out to be the strongest predictor of the importance that the adolescent subjects themselves placed on religion. Together, these studies confirm the value of a social-ecology approach that analyzes links between multiple influences on youth religiosity.

Nevertheless, let us remember that "the map is not the territory." Large-scale survey studies are invaluable for charting structural relations between variables, but truly knowing *how* and *why* these variables affect each other is another matter. Deeper work—in-depth qualitative work with multiple informants within multiple social contexts—is needed to understand the dynamics between individuals' religious and spiritual development and their social and interpersonal contexts. I concur with the proposal for the "need for qualitative and quantitative studies that go both deep and wide" (Roehlkepartain & Patel, 2006, p. 333). In my view, truly to understand the richness of children's and adolescents' religiosity and spirituality, our field requires time-intensive, qualitative work (see Boyatzis & Newman, 2004; Coles, 1990; Hay & Nye, 1998).

Adolescent Wellbeing

A major research area is adolescent wellbeing and positive development. Here I describe recent studies that help us further understand religion's role in adolescent wellbeing and begin to address why religion might matter in teenagers' lives.

In a study that illustrates the value of studying multiple social contexts in teenagers' lives, Regnerus and Elder (2003) found that youth who live in high-poverty areas were more likely to stay on track academically if they were also high in church attendance. In contrast, those youth living in the same high-poverty areas and who were low in church attendance were more likely to fall behind academically. Thus, religious involvement can ameliorate broader risk factors such as community poverty.

Although longitudinal design is unfortunately rare in our field, Kerestes, Youniss, and Metz (2004) studied American youth from grades 10–12 (roughly 15–16 and 17–18 years of age). Changes in youth religiosity across that interval were linked to changes in risk behaviors (e.g., drug use) and civic involvement (e.g., desire to perform volunteer service). The most positive behavioral profile (high civic involvement, low drug use) occurred in the youth who scored as highly religious at both grade levels. The more telling finding from the longitudinal design was that youth who went from high to low religiosity over that 2-year interval also sharply increased in use of marijuana and alcohol, whereas going from low to high religiosity was linked to higher desire for civic involvement.

While the above study echoes the common findings that religion is linked in healthy ways to adolescent wellbeing, some studies are revealing why. For example, Furrow, King, and White (2004) assessed identity, meaning, and prosocial concerns in a diverse sample of 800 American public high school students. Structural equation analyses supported a model in which religious identity was

significantly linked to stronger and more positive "personal meaning," which in turn predicted higher prosocial concern. This concern was manifested in higher scores for personal responsibility, empathy, and helpfulness toward others. In a national survey of 20,000 American adolescents, Wagener, Furrow, King, Leffert, and Benson (2003) found that teenagers' religious involvement made a positive impact on their wellbeing through the mediating mechanism of giving the youth exposure to increased social capital and developmental assets within the religious community. Social engagements with youth and adults in religious communities, in turn, reduced youth's risk behaviors and increased their psychosocial thriving and wellbeing.

In conclusion, it seems that involvement with religion can promote many aspects of adolescent wellbeing and identity and enhance one's sense of purpose and meaning in life and thus service toward others. This is a clear example of a strong connection between "religion" and "spirituality," in that engagement with organized religious tradition (and all that entails in beliefs, rituals, community, etc.) seems to promote a greater sense of personal connectedness with what is beyond the self and a deeper understanding of the self. Thus, youth who are engaged in a value-laden and moral context that religion can provide will emerge with an enhanced spiritual sensibility that promotes attitudes and actions to contribute to the greater good (Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003).

Moving Beyond Stage Theory

The paradigm of cognitive-developmentalism and its focus on age-related cognitive processing has dominated the study of children's religious and spiritual development and still underlies many scholars' thinking (Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 2003). I assert that this cognitive-developmental hegemony has impeded our understanding of religious and spiritual development (see Boyatzis, 2005). As developmental psychology has substantially outgrown stage theory (see Overton, 1998), the study of children's spiritual and religious development should as well. An "obsession with stages" impedes our understanding of both the gradualness and the "complexity and uniqueness of individual religious development" (Spilka et al., 2003, p. 85).

Another problem with cognitive-developmental stage theory is that its narrow focus on the "typical kid at a given age" fails to account for the substantial variability between and within individuals at any given age. Individuals—children and adolescents—enjoy sudden spiritual gains and spurts (due to dramatic experiences or revelatory insights) as well as regressions (due to trauma or despair); for many people, including children and teens, there are long seasons of stillness. Different individuals experience a different mix of these different experiences—growth, loss, stasis—at different times, in different ways, due to different causes, and with different consequences. An egregious flaw of stage theories is their failure to account for these varieties of religious and spiritual experiences within and between individuals at any age.

For some empirical meat in this critique, consider one of our most famous theories: James Fowler's stages of faith (Fowler, 1981). While this emphasizes modal stages characteristic of each age, Fowler's own data prove that *variability* commonly occurs within a single age. Drawing from Fowler's data (1981, Table B.3), while 72% of children in middle childhood possessed the "age-appropriate" mythic-literal faith, in that age group children scored in *four* different stages or combined adjacent stages. In the subsequent stage of synthetic-conventional faith (allegedly typical of teenagers), only 50% of adolescents sampled scored in this stage, and teens in this sample scored in *five* different stages or substages. (The variability is even greater at older ages.) I find it disappointing that Fowler, a truly great theorist whose book is a monumental achievement, has yet to recognize this empirical problem in his stage theory (see, e.g., Fowler & Dell, 2006). Let us question our veneration of stage theories that lump into tidy ages the myriad messy diversities of religiosity and spirituality.

Stage theory has constrained our understanding of children's spirituality and thus our work with children. I assume that religious educators and youth ministers have ample experiences with children who were considerably more mature spiritually than some (or many) older individuals, who, in contrast to standard theorizing, seemed less mature then they "should" have been. (Fowler has now recognized these possibilities; Fowler & Dell, 2006.) Consequently, our grasp of young children's spirituality and our modes of religious education and faith formation have been impeded due to mistaken assumptions of stage theory.

Let me note that it is indeed likely that *specific domains* of religion or spirituality reflect stage-like change (e.g., in God concepts, feelings about and understanding of prayer). However, these changes are not yoked so tightly to specific age ranges to justify calling them developmental stages. Stage models often have assumptions of wide-sweeping changes in the holistic cognitive structures children use. Most research supports an alternative view that cognitive changes are not so far-reaching and holistic as they are more narrow, specific, and local, or domain specific (Overton, 1998). Therefore, my hope is that scholars will spend more time exploring developmental *sequences* in different domains. I assume that individual domains show sequential growth that is at times incremental and orderly and other times more random with growth punctuated by stasis or regression. Looking across domains, there may be little uniform change (as predicted by older stage theories) but instead variation in trajectories of domains due to factors such as children's own cognitive propensities, family influences, local cultural support, and so on.

A theoretical framework that would enhance our field is Siegler's (e.g., 1994, 1996) overlapping waves model. Siegler analyzes children's "on-line" cognitive processes to solve individual mathematical problems. Based on years of research, Siegler argues that at any moment children have available to themselves several ways of thinking. These are strategies that compete with each other, and over time and experience (as some yield more parsimonious or palatable answers), some ways of thinking will become more common while others less common, and some will oscillate frequently. This model seems more consonant with children's actual thinking than do theories that posit children growing dramatically in sweeping change

from one global stage to another. Siegler's claim that "cognitive change is better thought of in terms of changing distributions of ways of thinking than in terms of sudden shifts from one way of thinking to another" (Siegler, 1994, p. 3) seems to describe how children (and adults) often vacillate in their religious views and beliefs and spiritual connectedness to what is beyond them, perhaps never totally jettisoning one way of thinking but prioritizing some ways more than others at various times. In some circumstances, one form of thinking can become dominant that might not show up in other circumstances (e.g., a parent using prayer to plead for God to "help me out just this one time" in, say, the case of a sick child). In sum, the complexities of thought and behavior require us to move beyond stage theory. As leading theorists in developmental psychology have said, "the inability of stage theory to account for . . . variability has led to a virtual abandonment of stage theory as a framework for research and interpretation" (Fischer & Bidell, 1998, p. 470).

Conclusion

Children's religious and spiritual development is receiving attention from scholars like never before. While much work has revealed valuable lessons about religious and spiritual development, we have a lot to learn, and I have attempted here to identify recent areas of growth, empirical works that are yielding valuable information and pointing us in good directions, and theoretical contentions that call us to replace some long-standing but erroneous ways of thinking. We will need more sophisticated theories and measures than used in the past to move forward to a deeper understanding of a dimension of life that, though challenging to understand, is central to child development and our humanity.

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Chapter 4
Understanding and Assessing Spiritual Health

John W. Fisher

Abstract This chapter explores awareness and compassion as essential elements in spiritual cultivation. Of the education of awareness, it describes the ideas of Aldous Huxley and J. Krishnamurthi as well as the Buddha's teachings on mindfulness. The practice of awareness would reveal a holistic experience and multiple dimensions of reality. This chapter briefly describes the author's view of "the five dimensions of reality" that include dimensions from the surface to the deepest, infinite reality. Drawing on Eastern perspectives, it explains that "pure awareness" is identical with infinite reality and that "great compassion" emerges as a manifestation of pure awareness. In addition, as for cultivating compassion, this chapter explores such concepts as the Four Immeasurable Minds, *bodhichitta, bodhisattva,* and also the mind training called *lojong* in Tibetan Buddhism. Finally, it suggests a vision of "the education of enlightenment," in which both awareness and compassion are of central importance.

Brief Introduction

There is a growing consensus that human spirituality is a real phenomenon, not just a figment of the imagination (Seaward, 2001; Moberg, 2002). Accurate assessment is needed to extend knowledge about spiritual wellness, and to help diagnose spiritual ailments, so that appropriate spiritual care might be provided to restore spiritual health (Moberg, 2002). This action is needed not only for individuals, but for the whole world, and also for the survival of the human race (Seaward, 2001).

Attempts at defining spirituality vacillate between the human and the divine. Many people claim that "spirituality" and "wellbeing" are both multifaceted constructs that are elusive in nature (e.g. de Chavez, Backett-Milburn, Parry, & Platt, 2005; Buck, 2006; McSherry & Cash, 2004). This has not prevented people from trying to define spirituality and wellbeing and their interrelationship in the form of spiritual wellbeing (SWB).

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This chapter provides a brief look at the nature of spirituality and health, then a definition and model of spiritual health and wellbeing. A presentation follows of a number of instruments for measuring aspects of spiritual health and wellbeing that have been developed from this model, with comment on other recent research on spirituality of youth. The last section provides some reflections on this research in spiritual health and wellbeing for pastoral care in schools.

Nature of Spirituality

The nature of spirituality has been debated for centuries. The literature reveals the difficulty writers have in defining the concept (Chiu, Emblen, Van Hofwegen, Sawatzky, & Meyerhoff, 2004; Diaz, 1993; Goodloe & Arreola, 1992; Seaward, 2001). Muldoon and King claim:

> Spirituality can mean many things in popular usage, and is often understood differently by different people. While retaining a certain ambiguity, its current range of application extends from traditional institutional religion to occult practices. In general, the term appears to denote approaches to discovering, experiencing, and living out the implications of an authentic human life (1995, p. 330).

There are 24 separate meanings for the word "spirit" listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Brown, 1993). The general meaning underlying all the uses is that of an animating or vital principle which gives life, transcending the material and mechanical. It refers to the essential nature of human beings, strength of purpose, perception, mental powers and frame of mind. "'Spiritual' may refer to higher moral qualities, with some religious connotations and higher faculties of mind" (Hill, 1989, p. 170). An extensive survey of the literature reveals several points of agreement, as well as divergent opinions, that are worth noting.

Spirituality Is Innate

There is considerable support for spirituality being posited at the heart of human experience (McCarroll, O'Connor, & Meakes, 2005), and being experienced by everyone (Nolan & Crawford, 1997). Oldnall (1996) not only believes that "each individual has spiritual needs" (p. 139), he goes a step further, claiming that "human spirituality in a very real sense . . . unifies the whole person" (p. 140). This view is supported by Leetun (1996), in whose opinion spirituality "is the dimension that permeates, deepens, shapes, and unifies all of life" (p. 60). Spirituality can be seen as a vital component of human functioning.

Spirituality Is Emotive

The notion of spirituality is emotive (Jose & Taylor, 1986). It touches people's hearts because it deals with the very essence of being. It is important for people in positions of influence to remember that they cannot be neutral or value free, but must try to be

objective in examining the concepts of spirituality and spiritual health, especially as they relate to young people (Warren, 1988).

Spirituality and Religion

Opinions vary on the nature of any relationship between spirituality and religion. Some people equate spirituality with religious activity, or use the words interchangeably (Piedmont, 2001; Gorsuch & Walker, 2006), whereas others believe this assumption is not valid (Banks, Poehler, & Russell, 1984; Scott, 2006). Hill et al. (2000) discuss commonalities between spirituality and religion as well as differences (2000). Scott reports three polarisations between views held by behavioural scientists, differentiating spirituality and religion (Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999). Hill et al. (2000) argue that spirituality is subsumed by religion, but some see religion as one dimension of spirituality (Nolan & Crawford, 1997). Rather simplistically speaking, religion focuses on ideology and rules (of faith and belief systems) (Horsburgh, 1997), whereas spirituality focuses on experience and relationships which go beyond religion (Lukoff, Lu, & Turner, 1992).

Koenig, McCullough, and Larson (2001) include "a relationship to the sacred *or* transcendent" [my italics] (p.18) in their definition of spirituality. Taking this broader view, Seaward (2001) asserts that spirituality involves "connection to a divine source whatever we call it" (p. 77). But, spirituality does not have to include "God-talk" according to Jose and Taylor (1986).

Abraham Maslow, reputed by many to be the father of humanistic psychology, and John Dewey, a founder of the philosophical school of Pragmatism, both consider spirituality to be part of a person's being, therefore, prior to and different from religiosity (Fahlberg & Fahlberg, 1991). A number of authors have followed this humanistic line of thinking bringing attempts at defining secular spirituality as a spirituality without any need for a religious or God component (Harvey, 1996; Newby, 1996). Smith (2000) and Wright (2000) are among many Christian writers who raise arguments against removing religion and God from discussions of spirituality.

This kaleidoscope of viewpoints illustrates how people's worldviews and beliefs can influence their understanding of spirituality, a key feature in the model of spiritual health presented later in this chapter.

Spirituality Is Subjective

Spirituality has been seen as personal, or subjective, lacking much of the objective nature considered necessary for its investigation via the scientific method (Chapman, 1987). But, science can neither affirm nor deny metaphysical issues, such as spirituality, any more than it can aesthetics. Diaz (1993, p. 325) is concerned that proponents of *scientism*, those who exalt the scientific method to the unholy status of "science = truth", tend to dismiss spirituality, because it cannot be

studied through current scientific methodology. "If we can accept concepts such as self-worth, self-esteem, and self-actualization, then it should be legitimate to explore . . . spirituality, for these concepts are equally as intangible as spirituality" (Jose & Taylor, 1986, p. 18).

If one says that the use of the five physical senses and the empirical way of knowing is the only true science, then much of logic, mathematics, reason and psychology have no place in science. To focus too much on the sensory realm, and, from a spiritual perspective, to reduce a person to mere matter is a classic example of mistaking substance for essence (Fahlberg & Fahlberg, 1991). To balance an over-emphasis on the subjectivity of spirituality, Thatcher (1991, p. 23) argues that there is a "crippling price to pay for misidentification of spirituality as inwardness", and we need to go beyond the inner search to fully understand spirituality.

Spirituality Is Dynamic

According to Priestley (1985, p. 114), "The spirit is dynamic. It must be felt before it can be conceptualised". Terms like "spiritual growth" and "development" are used to express the vibrant nature of spirituality (Chapman, 1987). A person's spiritual health can be perceived to be high or low. If it is static, there is neither growth or development, nor spiritual life. The spiritual quest is like being on a journey: If you think you have arrived, you have not yet begun, or you are dead.

Understanding Spirituality

Koenig et al. (2001, p. 19) describe five types of spirituality in the United States, although these could just as easily be grouped into the three categories described by Spilka as "God-oriented, worldly oriented with an idolatrous stress on ecology or nature, or humanistic, stressing human potential or achievement" (cited in Moberg, 2002, p. 49).

Palmer (1999) attempts an integration of the above divergent views, by describing spiritually as "the ancient and abiding human quest for connectedness with something larger and more trustworthy than our egos—with our own souls, with one another, with the worlds of history and nature, with the invisible winds of the spirit, with the mystery of being alive" (p. 6). Palmer's definition has many similarities to my functional definition:

> Spirituality is concerned with a person's awareness of the existence and experience of inner feelings and beliefs, that give purpose, meaning and value to life. Spirituality helps individuals to live at peace with themselves, to love (God and)* their neighbour, and to live in harmony with the environment. For some, spirituality involves an encounter with God, or transcendent reality, which can occur in or out of the context of organised religion, whereas for others, it involves no experience or belief in the supernatural. (NB: *These words were placed in parentheses as they will be meaningless to those people who do not relate with God) (Fisher, 1998, p. 190).

Dimensions of Health

A comment on the nature of health is warranted before investigating the relationship between spirituality and health. Even in Greek times, educators considered the total health of each individual as having a sound spiritual base (Brown, 1978). Thus, "for Hippocrates, it is nature which heals, that is to say the vital force – *pneuma* (or spirit) – which God gives to man" (from Adams, 1939); while "healing" may be defined as "a sense of wellbeing that is derived from an intensified awareness of wholeness and integration among all dimensions of one's being" (Coward & Reed, 1996, p. 278), which includes the spiritual elements of life.

Writers suggest that there are six separate, but interrelated, dimensions that comprise human health (Hawks, 2004; Seaward, 2001). Health involves much more than *physical* fitness and absence of disease; it includes the *mental* and *emotional* aspects of knowing and feeling; the *social* dimension that comes through human interaction; the *vocational* domain; and, at the heart, or, very essence of being, the *spiritual* dimension. To Eberst, it is the spiritual dimension which seems to have greatest impact on overall personal health (1984).

Spiritual Health and Wellbeing

Ellison (1983, p. 332) suggests that spiritual wellbeing "arises from an underlying state of spiritual health and is an expression of it, much like the color of one's complexion and pulse rate are expressions of good [physical] health". Fehring, Miller, and Shaw (1997, p. 664) support this view by adding, "spiritual wellbeing is an indication of individuals' quality of life in the spiritual dimension or simply an indication of their spiritual health".

Four main themes appear in the framework definition proposed by the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging (NICA), in Washington, D.C., that spiritual wellbeing is "the affirmation of life in a relationship with *God*, *self*, *community* and *environment* that nurtures and celebrates wholeness" (NICA, 1975, italics added). An extensive review of literature reveals these four sets of relationships are variously mentioned when discussing spiritual wellbeing (references across the last three decades include Benson, 2004; Burkhardt, 1989; Como, 2007; Ellison, 1983; Martsolf & Mickley, 1998; Ross, 2006). These relationships can be developed into four corresponding domains of human existence, for the enhancement of spiritual health:

> relation with self, in the *Personal* domain;
> relation with others, in the *Communal* domain;
> relation with the environment, in the *Environmental* domain;
> relation with Transcendent Other, in the *Transcendental* domain.

Fisher (1998) developed detailed descriptions of these four domains of spiritual health from interviews with 98 educators from 22 secondary schools (State, Catholic and Independent) in Victoria, Australia. Up to five senior staff were interviewed in

each school to elicit their views on the nature of spiritual health and its place in the school curriculum. Surveys were also collected from 23 Australian experts. The following definition was derived, in which spiritual health is described as:

> a, if not *the*, fundamental dimension of people's overall health and well-being, permeating and integrating all the other dimensions of health (i.e., physical, mental, emotional, social and vocational). Spiritual health is a dynamic state of being, shown by the extent to which people live in harmony within relationships in the following domains of spiritual well-being:
>
> *Personal* domain – wherein one intra-relates with oneself with regards to meaning, purpose and values in life. Self-awareness is the driving force or transcendent aspect of the human spirit in its search for identity and self-worth.
>
> *Communal* domain – as shown in the quality and depth of interpersonal relationships, between self and others, relating to morality, culture and religion. These are expressed in love, forgiveness, trust, hope and faith in humanity.
>
> *Environmental* domain – beyond care and nurture for the physical and biological, to a sense of awe and wonder; for some, the notion of unity with the environment.
>
> *Transcendental* domain – relationship of self with some-thing or some-One beyond the human level (i.e. ultimate concern, cosmic force, transcendent reality or God). This involves faith towards, adoration and worship of, the source of Mystery of the universe (1998, p. 191).

This definition outlines the inter-connective and dynamic nature of spiritual health, in which internal harmony depends on intentional self-development, coming from congruence between expressed and experienced meaning, purpose and values in life at the personal level. This often eventuates from personal challenges, which go beyond contemplative meditation, leading to a state of bliss, perceived by some as internal harmony.

Morality, culture and religion are included in the Communal domain of spiritual health, in accord with Tillich's (1967) view that the three interpenetrate one another, constituting a unity of the spirit, but "while each element is distinguishable, they are not separable" (p. 95). Tillich adds that separation of religion from morality and culture yields what is generally called "secular" (p. 97). In this work, religion (with small "r") is construed as essentially a human, social activity with a focus on ideology and rules (of faith and belief systems), as distinct from a relationship with a Transcendent Other, such as that envisioned in the Transcendental domain of spiritual health.

A Model of Spiritual Health

Figure 4.1 depicts the dynamic interrelationships between the component parts of the definition of spiritual health given above. Here, each DOMAIN of spiritual health is comprised of two aspects – knowledge and inspiration. **Knowledge** (written in **bold** type under the heading for each DOMAIN) provides the cognitive framework that helps interpret the *inspirational* or transcendent aspect (in *italics* in the centre of each domain), which is the essence and motivation of each domain of SH. Here we see the metaphorical "head" and "heart" working together, striving for harmony. Once achieved, this harmony is reflected in the expressions of wellbeing, written in Arial type at the bottom of each cell.
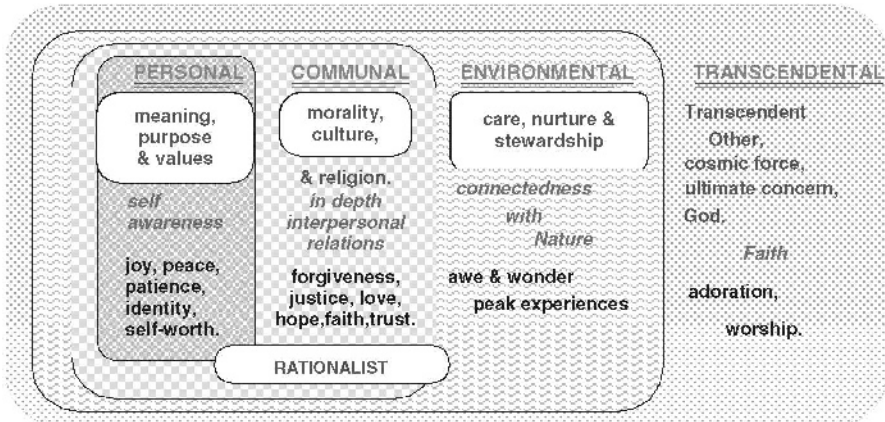
Fig. 4.1 Four domains model of spiritual health and wellbeing

In this model, people's worldviews are seen to filter the knowledge aspects, while their beliefs filter the inspirational aspects. A key feature of this model is the partially distinct nature of, yet interrelation between, the "knowledge" and "inspirational" aspects of each of the four domains of spiritual wellbeing.

The quality, or rightness of relationship, in each of the four domains constitutes a person's *spiritual wellbeing* in that domain. An individual's *spiritual health* is indicated by the combined effect of spiritual wellbeing in each of the domains embraced by the individual. Spiritual health is thus enhanced by developing positive relationships in each domain, and can be increased by embracing more domains.

The notion of *progressive synergism* is proposed here to help explain the inter-relationship between the domains of spiritual wellbeing. As the levels of spiritual wellbeing in the domains are combined, the result is more than the sum of the quality of relationships in the individual domains. Progressive synergism implies that the more embracing domains of spiritual wellbeing not only build on, but also build up, the ones they include. The figure depicts the progressive synergistic relationship between the four domains of spiritual wellbeing.

When relationships are not right, or are absent, we lack wholeness or health; spiritual disease can grip our hearts. The quality of relationships in each of the domains will vary over time, or even be non-existent, depending on circumstances, effort, the personal worldview and beliefs of the person. Not many people hold the view that they are sole contributors to their own spiritual health (relationship in the Personal domain only); most at least include relationships with others in their worldview of spiritual wellbeing. The notion of progressive synergism states that development of the personal relationships (related to meaning, purpose and values for life) is precursor to, but also enhanced by, the development of the communal relationships (of morality, culture and religion).

Ideally, unity with the environment builds on, and builds up, the personal and communal relationships. Cultural differences apply here: Many people from western societies do not hold the same view of environment as other people groups,

for example, Australian Aboriginals and New Zealand Maoris. Westerners are more likely to have some awareness of environmental concerns rather than the deep connection or a sense of wonder and oneness that is evidenced in some non-Western cultures.

The figure also shows the relationship of a person with a Transcendent Other as embracing relationships in the other three domains. For example, a strong faith in God should enhance all the other relationships for SWB. "As persons go out from or beyond themselves, the spiritual dimension of their lives is deepened, they become more truly themselves and they grow in likeness to God" (Macquarrie, cited in Best, 1996, p. 126).

In this figure, the so-called rationalists are willing to embrace the knowledge aspects of "spiritual" wellbeing, but not the inspirational aspects (shown in balloon boxes). These people would be atheistic or agnostic.

As spiritual health is a dynamic entity, it is through the challenges of life that the veracity and viability of a person's worldview and beliefs will be tested, together with the quality of relationships in the domains of spiritual health and wellbeing considered important. Spiritual health will flourish or flail. If we had a way of assessing the current state of spiritual health, as friend, counselor, parent or teacher, we would have a basis from which to help nurture relationships appropriately, to enhance our own, and others', spiritual wellbeing.

Assessing Spiritual Health and Wellbeing

Many attempts at assessing spirituality and SH/WB are reported in the literature (e.g. Egbert, Mickley, & Coeling, 2004; Hill & Pargament, 2003; King & Crowther, 2004; Koenig et al., 2001; MacDonald & Friedman, 2002; Moberg, 2002). A major difficulty in trying to make sense of this plethora of research is that the conceptual bases upon which the research is founded vary markedly between studies (Berry, 2005). Much of the research confounds spirituality and religion. Although there are commonalities between these two constructs, they are not synonymous (see arguments above).

All measurement devices are built on a values base (generally the researcher's), and most instruments present norms for populations studied. Norms vary so much between groups that what appears to be positive for SWB in one group might have negative implications in another (Moberg, 2002). That is not all. Each group believes that its own criteria for "true" spirituality is better than everyone else's and should possibly be the normative base for all humanity. Moberg does not agree that, because all people are spiritual, it is possible to use identical procedures to evaluate SWB of diverse populations, especially religious and minority groups. He adds that investigating spirituality is complicated because any measure cannot be perfect, and it only reflects the phenomenon or its consequences, because it cannot be measured directly.

Most measures are self-reports, but they might not reflect reality, because "*feeling well* is not necessarily *being well*" (Moberg, 2002, p. 55). It is essential to check

the validity of any instrument used. Does it "genuinely measure spirituality or its components?" (p. 56). The power of a questionnaire depends on its theoretical base and the rigour with which it is developed and tested (Gray, 2006).

Nearly all available religiosity/spirituality measures ask people for a single response about "lived experience" on a series of questions (Ross, 2006). In the best instruments, these questions are built on theoretical frameworks of relationships between spirituality and health that are considered important by the developers of the scales. The "scores" thus obtained are arbitrary indicators of spiritual health or wellbeing, especially if they only have a handful of items (Boero et al., 2005). The notion of a group norm of spiritual health is also problematic. People's spiritual health depends on their worldview and beliefs as well as lived experience (Fisher, 1999; Hill et al., 2000), so development of a single measure, which purports to be an objective standard by which to compare people, challenges the multifaceted nature of spiritual health.

Up to 1998, some qualitative studies had been undertaken with school-age children (Coles, 1990; Hay & Nye, 1998), but I could not find any record of quantitative studies of spirituality and/or SWB with school children. Subsequent to my work described here, at least two other studies have used my model of SH to critique their surveys of adolescents (Francis & Robbins, 2005; Hughes, 2007) but neither of these reported on validity to show if their items cohered in the factors presented in my model. None of the other recent studies of youth spirituality have included the balance across the four domains of SH in my model.

Dowling et al. (2004) employed seven items that would fit in Communal SWB, as well as 11 others in a religiosity scale. Engebretson (2006) used nearly equal numbers of questions that would fit Personal, Communal and mixed Transcendental/religiosity domains, but no formal statistics. The studies by Harris et al. (2007) and the Australian, Generation Y Study (Mason, Singleton, & Webber, 2007) almost exclusively used questions about religion and relation with God, conflating spirituality with religion. Tirri, Nokelainen, and Ubani (2006) reported validity analyses, which rated as "fair" for the Spiritual Sensitivity Scale, with its 11 items in four sub-scales. Very few SH/WB measures include many items on the environment, with the exception of Hood's Mysticism Scale (1975), which was developed using university students.

Two recent studies with adolescents in the United States (reported in Wong, Rew & Slaikeu, 2006) used the Spiritual Wellbeing Survey (Ellison, 1983). The SWBS is a commonly used instrument in the United States, comprising two 10-item measures, one for Existential Wellbeing and the other for Religious Wellbeing. This scale was considered too God-oriented for use with increasingly secular Australians, although it was used to validate SHALOM during its development (see next section).

Overall, I found nearly 190 quantitative measures of spirituality and/or Spiritual Health/Wellbeing (SH/WB) in available literature published between 1967 and early 2009. Many more religiosity measures have been reported (Hill & Hood, 1999; Koenig et al., 2001). Application of my model of SH led to the following measures related to SH/WB, which add to this growing collection.

Instruments for Assessing SH/WB

Spiritual Health in Four Domains Index (SH4DI)

The Spiritual Health in Four Domains Index (SH4DI) was developed by overlaying my model on a selection from 150 items used to study spirituality among 311 primary teachers in the United Kingdom (Fisher, Francis, & Johnson, 2000). Exploratory factor analyses were used to establish four factors in the SH4DI, each comprised of six items, with response sets on a 5-point Likert scale. Another study of mainly pastoral carers (in 1998) in a variety of Victorian schools led to a refinement of the SH4DI, by introducing two levels of response for each item (Fisher, 2001). This study contained eight items representing each of the four domains with 5-point Likert scales (ranging from "very high" to "very low").

Spiritual Health and Life-Orientation Measure (SHALOM)

The title SHALOM was chosen to represent the very essence of SWB. The Hebrew word *Shalom* means "completeness, wholeness, health, peace, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, prosperity, fullness, rest, harmony, the absence of agitation or discord" (Strong's Concordance—Ref. 7965, 1979). The acronym SHALOM reveals its two components – Spiritual Health measure (SHM) And Life-Orientation Measure (LOM). The LOM elicits the "ideals" people have for SH in four sets of relationships with self, others, environment and/or God. The SHM asks people to reflect on "lived experience/how they feel each item reflects their personal experience most of the time".

SHALOM was developed in the belief that an instrument based on input from 850 secondary school students with diverse cultural and religious backgrounds should have appropriate language and conceptual clarity for studies of SWB within general populations and individuals, from teens to the twilight years (Fisher, 1999). An initial selection of 60 items derived from my model of spiritual health was reduced to the 20-item SHALOM using exploratory factor analysis. The five items in each of four *domains* of SH were scored using Likert scale responses from 1 = very low to 5 = very high (Fig. 4.2):

Subsequent confirmatory factor analyses were performed on SHALOM using data from 4462 nurses and carers, university students and staff, school students and teachers, employees in a manufacturing plant and church-attendees. SHALOM showed good reliability (Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and variance extracted) as well as (construct, concurrent, discriminant, predictive) validity (Gomez & Fisher, 2003). Factorial independence from personality shown by SHALOM indicates that it does more than just "religify" existing personality constructs (see Piedmont, 2001, p. 4). The stringent process applied to the development of SHALOM yielded salient features of each of the domains to make the overall instrument a balanced, sensitive, flexible tool for assessing spiritual health of individuals and groups.

Fig. 4.2 Twenty items comprising the four domains of SHALOM

Personal	*Communal*
sense of identity	love of other people
self-awareness	forgiveness toward others
joy in life	trust between individuals
inner peace	respect for others
meaning in life	kindness toward other people

Environmental	*Transcendental*
connection with nature	personal relationship with the Divine/God
awe at a breathtaking view	worship of the Creator
oneness with nature	oneness with God
harmony with the environment	peace with God
sense of 'magic' in the environment	prayer life

With only 20 items, SHALOM cannot be considered an exhaustive measure of SH. If carers and clients had time, as well as a confidential relationship, it would be possible to use suitable qualitative procedures to mine the depths of people's SH (e.g. Burkhardt & Nagai-Jacobson, 1994). Rather than taking hours, in 5–10 min plus 5 min scoring time, SHALOM provides an effective means of indicating key aspects of these four domains of SH.

Each person's beliefs and worldview impact their understanding and commitment to the importance of each of these four domains for spiritual health. It is, therefore, important to gain some idea of a person's worldview before attempting to "measure" their SH. In SHALOM, each person is compared with themselves as their standard. No arbitrary group norms are employed to compare or rank people. The difference between their "ideals" and how they feel/"lived experience" gives an indication of their SH in each of the four domains. For example, if people do not think relating with the environment is important for SH, when they score "low" on the "lived experience" category, this is in harmony with their "ideals" in this domain of SH, thus not an immediate cause for concern.

Some people believe that a wholesome relationship with oneself is all that is necessary for SH (MacLaren, 2004). Other people believe that you can only truly be yourself in relation with others (Thatcher, 1991). People are beginning to note the importance of relating with the environment for sustenance and the wellbeing of humanity. Relating with a Transcendent Other/God is not restricted to religious practice. Some studies have introduced terms such as "higher power" to replace "God" in attempts to be more politically correct and/or less offensive to non-theists (Hungelmann, Kenkel-Rossi, Klassen, & Stollenwerk, 1985). In the development of SHALOM, terms such as "godlike force" and "supernatural power" were trialed but found wanting as they were not meaningful to teenagers (and therefore a range

of adults?). Whether theistic or not, nearly all people have a concept of "God." As they compare their ideals with their lived experience, it is up to each person to define their own meaning for each notion under investigation. For example, many different religions and denominations exist because of people's differing views. A brief question about religion is asked in the demographic section of my surveys, along with gender and age, but religion per se is not included in SHALOM.

Feeling Good, Living Life

Following the success of SHALOM with secondary school students, in 2000, I developed Feeling Good, Living Life (FG/LL), by surveying 1,080 primary school students (aged 5–12) in State, Catholic, other Christian and Independent schools in Victoria and Western Australia (Fisher, 2004). This 16-item measure elicits students' ideals (Feeling Good) and lived experiences (Living Life) in four domains of SWB, reflecting relationships with self, family (their most significant "others"), the environment, and God. A 5-point Likert scale is used to answer questions about how good each of the following makes pupils feel (Fig. 4.3):

Self	*Family*
feel happy	know family love you
hear people say you are good	love your family
think life is fun	know you belong to a family
know people like you	spend time with family

Environment	*God*
look at stars & moon	know your God is a friend
go for walk in park	talk with your God
spend time in garden	know your God cares for you
watch sunset or sunrise	think about your God

Fig. 4.3 Sixteen items comprising the four domains of feeling good, living life

Quality of Life Influences Survey

In 2002–2003, the Quality Of Life Influences Survey (QOLIS) was developed by considering how much each of the following helped students relate with self, others, nature and God, four areas which reflect their SWB. Responses on a 4-point Likert scale (0 = never, 1 = sometimes, 2 = often, 3 = always) were gathered

from 372 upper primary (aged 10–12) and 1,002 secondary school students (aged 12–18) in Catholic, other Christian and Independent schools in Victoria, Australia. Twenty-two influencers were nominated from four *groups*, based on my pastoral involvement with young people over several decades (Fisher, 2006) (Fig. 4.4):

Home	*School*	*Community*	*Church*
mother	teacher	female friend	Sunday/Sabbath school teacher
father	RE teacher	male friend	youth leader
sister	principal	sport coach	religious leader (pastor/priest/rabbi)
brother	counselor	doctor	God
self	welfare staff	counselor	
grand-parent	office staff	musician	

Fig. 4.4 Twenty-two influencers in four groups of the Quality Of Life Influences Survey (QOLIS)

Reflections on Research in SWB for Pastoral Care in Schools

Assessing a person's state of spiritual health is one matter; using the information to help improve quality of life is another. In schools, hospices and hospitals, most staff do not have time for in-depth communication with individuals to ascertain their deepest needs, which impact their spiritual wellbeing. So, how can people be encouraged to share of themselves in a way in which concerned carers can obtain and use the information to help enhance quality of life in the spiritual dimension?

With over 20 students in a class or many hundred in a school, how can a teacher or counselor effectively and efficiently identify students who may be experiencing spiritual dis-ease or distress? It would take hours, if not months or years to interview each student individually. Education policy documents indicate that staff are responsible to care for the whole child, so after some time, we could expect that they might have an inkling about the SWB of each student, as well as their physical, mental, social, emotional (and vocational) wellbeing; see, for example, *The Melbourne Declaration* from MCEETYA (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008). How much time this would take depends on the degree of student–teacher contact in class, extra-curricular activities and in the school yard, as well as the staff members' affinity for relating with students.

Deeply disturbed students are often visible through attention-seeking behaviour. However, some can and do withdraw behind a mask of introversion or quietness. SHALOM and other measures presented here can and have been used to identify students of concern with regards to SWB.

Vignettes from Development of Instruments

Whilst developing SHALOM, I undertook consultancies with selected classes of students in a variety of schools to help test the validity of this instrument. I wanted to know how the findings compared with views of experienced school staff. I had a gut feeling, call it intuition, that the difference between stated ideals and lived experiences in four domains of SWB would relate to behaviour. I could not find anyone else who had reported this type of survey method. As I was doing a consultancy with principals, students were asked to record a code on their surveys, which could be identified by principals. After analysis, detailed reports were written on approximately 10% of participants in each school. In two schools, principals and welfare staff thought the findings from SHALOM added weight to concerns they had about all students identified.

Year 9 Surrogate Mum – Improved Maths and General Wellbeing

During the development of SHALOM, a teacher in a secondary school was drawn to the results from a year 9 girl, who was having trouble keeping up with maths in class as well as homework. Let us call her Jan. Jan was one of three girls in a lower ability class, with a cohort of boisterous boys. Jan showed low scores on her ideal states and even lower scores on how she felt (lived experience) for the Personal and Communal domains of SWB. Through my work with university students it has since been shown that these results correlate with depression (Gomez & Fisher, 2003).

The teacher did not reveal that the principal had told him of her results on SHALOM. He approached Jan quietly and asked, "How are things going?" Her response was to break into tears and inform the teacher that her mum was in hospital, dad was working night shift and she was responsible for looking after her two little brothers, and the housekeeping, cooking, etc. Jan had not told anyone at school about her situation. The teacher immediately offered lunchtime classes for Jan and any other interested students who wished to attend. A small group responded to this offer. Within 2 weeks, Jan's demeanour had improved as had her maths. She was happier now that she had support from school, which was also coming from her pastoral carer, who had been informed with Jan's permission.

Hollow Leader – Family Façade

A year 9 girl in another school scored highly on ideals for Personal and Communal SWB, but considerably lower on how she felt. In my written report to the principal, I expressed concern about this girl (let us call her Cathy) and others. The results suggested to me that Cathy was an outgoing person, who was feeling very empty inside. To me, she was calling out for help. Cathy had not scored very highly on

either the Environmental or Transcendental domains (both ideal and lived experience categories), so she did not have either of these two aspects of life to support her spiritual wellbeing.

During a meeting with this school's Principal to discuss results, he questioned the accuracy of my interpretation of data for Cathy, but not other students "of concern". From his point of view, Cathy was fine. She was one of the school leaders. The Principal knew the family, who appeared to be supportive of her, so, "No worries." I had suggested the possibility of a simple, subtle approach such as the one used with Jan. But, no follow-up action was taken with Cathy because the Principal thought he knew the family.

When I had coffee with this Principal a couple of years after this event, he recalled Cathy and my comments. Her family had broken up less than 6 months after she had completed SHALOM and she was quite distraught at that time. What appeared on the surface to be "Happy families" was in fact a façade. SHALOM had the sensitivity to pick up Cathy's inner state of being, her potential hurt in the heart, without apparently causing any emotional distress, as completing SHALOM did not precipitate any adverse reaction in Cathy. Cathy had this state of being, but we do not know how effectively concerned counseling might have brought it to the fore, to help her prepare for the family breakup.

These examples show how SHALOM can be used to provide insight into over-compensating extraverts as well as those who are very quiet.

Whole School Environmental Education Program

Teachers in a Christian school were not happy that their students had scored "low" on the Environmental domain of SHALOM. They instigated an environmental awareness program, based on texts such as, "The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (Psalm 24:1). The course went beyond stewardship for nature to an appreciation of Creation by the Creator and man's [*sic*] place in it. A post-test 6 months later using SHALOM, showed high levels of correlation with pre-test results, indicating stability of students' views, on the Personal, Communal and Transcendental domains, but significant "improvement" on the Environmental domain scores – the desired result.

General Comments on My SWB Research

Four Domains

My recent studies have shown that nearly all people are prepared to accept that relating with themselves and others has the capacity to influence spiritual wellbeing. These relationships can be positive or negative and quite often it is in dark times that people are thrown onto their inner strength to find answers to meaning, purpose, etc. in life, i.e. personal and communal spiritual pursuits (often referred to as existential

(Ellison, 1983), humanistic (Spilka, in Moberg, 2002) or non-theistic (Haber, Jacob, & Spangler, 2007)).

Fewer people think about how relating with the environment can enhance spiritual wellbeing. To some, even suggesting this sounds "New Age", and some practices are. But, many have "peak experiences" in special places or events that transcend emotional enjoyment and enhance spiritual wellbeing.

A marked divergence of views emerges when looking at relating with a Transcendent Other, often referred to as God, for spiritual wellbeing. Some people blame God for the hurt they experience from other people, many of whom are religious. So, in an attempt to minimise this hurt by removing the cause, they deny God's existence even though attributing blame in that quarter. Others believe that humans have the power to understand and solve all challenges by exercising power of the mind, so eliminating the necessity to introduce the notion of a Transcendent Other. We are still waiting to define clearly what the "mind" is, as well as "transcendent realities."

The 1990s were labelled the "Decade of the Brain" by US Congress. Some hypotheses, conjecture and cautious interpretations of empirical studies suggest that regions of the brain might hold keys to understanding how our spirits relate with self-transcendence and how the brain might have evolved to locate a God-factor. None of this work is definitive and it is all highly influenced by the researchers' worldviews. But, it is fascinating reading (e.g. *The God Gene* by Dean Hamer, 2004 and *The Spiritual Brain* by M. Beauregard & D. O'Leary, 2007).

Spiritual Dissonance

Spiritual dissonance is described in my work as a significant difference between the ideal and lived experiences in any of the four domains of spiritual wellbeing. In my studies, the level of dissonance for secondary school students is close to 8% in the Personal, Communal and Environmental domains and over 20% in the Transcendental domain, with significant variation among school types (Fisher, 2006). Of at least equal or, maybe, greater concern is the finding that similar percentages of teachers show dissonance between their ideals and lived experiences (12% Personal, 10% Communal, 5% Environmental, 17% Transcendental) (Fisher, 2008). Teachers' lived experiences are major predictors of how much help they provide to students in schools for SWB (Fisher, 2007) and so this finding has implications for the workplace.

Conclusion

Young people need help to guide them in their search for meaning, purpose and values in life from a personal perspective. From a communal perspective, their quest for in-depth relationships with others will build on their personal search, by clarifying and embracing aspects of morality, culture (and religion, among those for whom it is important). This human journey is set in an environment that is teetering on the

brink of regression, facing major physical challenges, in terms of energy, finance, global warming, pollution and water shortage, apart from the threat of terrorism and tension between religious groups threatening world peace in hot spots around the globe. How much time they take to embrace the mystical aspects of environmental wellbeing may well be a moot point. On top of all this is the perennial question about the existence, or otherwise, of a Divine Creator/Transcendent Other/God or Ultimate Concern who/that has the potential for an over-arching influence on the quality of relationships and development in the other three (Personal, Communal and Environmental) domains of spiritual health.

These quests never end. They are an integral part of life, of being human. Very few people stand alone in life's quest. Parents, educators, youth workers and counselors have the immense privilege of spending quality time with young people as they develop and grow.

This chapter has shown ways in which we can reach into the heart of young people (and ourselves) to catch a glimpse of ideals and reported lived experiences, which reflect spiritual health. As we stand with each other, in and through education, beyond the confines of subject matter and religious persuasion, and are prepared to spend time and be sensitive, we will hopefully nurture our own and each other's spirits in ways that will sustain us in, and for, life.

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Chapter 5
The Contribution of Religiousness and Spirituality to Subjective Wellbeing and Satisfaction with Life

Ralph L. Piedmont

Abstract This chapter examines the numinous constructs of religiousness and spirituality relative to one another and to the five-factor model of personality (FFM). An empirical approach to defining numinous measures that involves the FFM will be outlined. The value of this approach will be highlighted through an examination of spirituality and religiousness' relations to subjective wellbeing. A review of the literature demonstrates that spirituality and religiousness have an unmediated impact on levels of life satisfaction. Two important conclusions will be developed from these findings. First, the numinous constructs represent universal human motivations that are not redundant with extant models of personality. Thus, any model of human functioning needs to include these constructs, if it is to be comprehensive. Second, because numinous constructs have the potential for impacting psychological functioning, the potential exists for the identification of a new class of intervention techniques that can promote durable psychological change.

Introduction

National surveys continue to show that large numbers of Americans profess a belief in God and consider themselves to be religious (e.g., Gallup, 1995). The salience of spirituality and religious involvement make these constructs of significant interest to researchers and clinicians in the social and medical sciences. A burgeoning research literature is empirically documenting the value of numinous constructs (i.e., psychological measures that capture aspects of one's sense of awe, hallowedness, and transcendence) for positively impacting a wide range of psychosocially relevant outcomes, such as treatment response to mental and physical interventions, recovery from illness, quality of life, and coping ability (e.g., Koenig, 1997; Koenig et al., 2001; Larson & Larson, 2008; Miller & Thoresen, 2003; Sawatzky, Ratner, & Chiu, 2005; Thoresen, 1999). This interest is truly interdisciplinary in nature and generates a vast empirical literature (Dy-Liacco, Piedmont, Leach, & Nelson, 2003). Because

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numerous reviews already exist in this area (e.g., Koenig et al., 2001; Sawatzky et al., 2005), this chapter will focus on distilling key conceptual and empirical findings rather than merely recounting all the results from this very large literature.

On the surface, the research literature shows the facilitative effect that religion and spirituality have on physical and mental health. Individuals with high levels of these constructs frequently are seen as experiencing less physical illness (or recovering quicker from disease) than those who score lower on these dimensions. Pargament and colleagues have shown how religious coping adds significantly to individuals' attempts to manage personal stress, burnout, and mortality (Pargament, 1997; Pargament, Koenig, Tarakeshwar, & Hahn, 2001; Pargament, Smith, Koenig, & Perez, 1998). However, these findings do not go unchallenged. Sloan and colleagues have criticized this research in this area on the basis of numerous methodological and statistical shortcomings (Sloan & Bagiella, 2002; Sloan, Bagiella, & Powell, 2001).

There are three particular issues that are most relevant to this chapter. The first major issue concerns how to operationalize the basic constructs of spirituality and religiosity. There is little consensus within the field as to how these constructs be defined. As a consequence, a plethora of instruments have been developed that capture a wide array of qualities, not all of which may be tapping into the same underlying dimension. Such diversity makes it difficult to compare results across studies and instruments (see Gorsuch, 1984, 1990). It also impairs the field's ability to develop a cumulative body of knowledge. As Hill et al. (2000, p. 65) noted:

> Without a clearer conception of what these terms mean, it may be difficult to know with any precision or reliability what researchers attribute to them. Also, communication within the social scientific study of these constructs and across other disciplines may be impaired by a lack of common understanding and clinical agreement. Finally, without common definitions within psychological as well as sociological research, it becomes difficult to draw general conclusions from various studies. Therefore, these definitions are in dire need of empirical grounding and improved operationalization.

The need for clarity in our constructs both conceptually and empirically perhaps ranks as the single most important effort for researchers in this area. It is hard to develop a field if you cannot agree on what your basic constructs are. Koenig (2008) provided an overview of some of these issues and asserted that if the field cannot create a unique, clear construct, it should be eliminated from research altogether.

Second, the majority of research in this area relies on simple, univariate paradigms. These studies merely correlate a measure of spirituality or religiosity with some set of outcome variables. The results of such studies are limited because they do not control for experiment-wise alpha levels; there is no control for spurious findings. When such studies employ multiple spiritual measures, they often fail to control for predictive overlap among these scales, resulting in the possibly erroneous conclusion that each of these measures has unique associations with the outcomes.

Third, research with numinous constructs rarely controls for the influence of other relevant predictors, such as social support or personality. As such, it is not clear whether spiritual constructs have any incremental predictive power over these other variables. This leads some to argue that spiritual constructs are merely stand-in

variables for other, already established psychological constructs. Buss (2002, p. 203) has flatly stated, "A 'religious' phenomena may [be considered to] simply parasitize existing evolved mechanisms or represent byproducts of them." From this perspective, religious and spiritual constructs do not provide any insights into people that have not already been identified by current psychological measures. Consequently, numinous constructs add unwanted terminology and redundancy to a field already crowded with variables.

These criticisms are legitimate and raise important conceptual and empirical issues that the field needs to address. Consumers of research need to be aware of the limitations and potential confounds that exist in the current database. If these critics are correct, then the current body of knowledge which shows the predictive power of religious constructs can be explained away as merely Type I error and empirical redundancy. Researchers need to avail themselves of new methodologies and constructs so that a better evaluation of the effects of the numinous can be undertaken. Some new approaches for building a more rigorous database will be showcased below.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the literature that addresses these specific criticisms. Three questions will be considered: (a) are spiritual and religious constructs sufficiently robust as to be measurable? (b) do numinous variables correlate with measures of life satisfaction? and (c) are these relationships maintained even after the predictive effects of personality are removed? Despite the potential problems noted by critics, it is hoped that this chapter will give readers renewed confidence in the empirical and conceptual value of numinous constructs. As will be seen, they do have something unique to contribute to our understanding of people. Some speculation as to why spiritual variables are so relevant to these psychosocial outcomes will be given. But before beginning, it is necessary to define the core variables of this chapter: religiosity and spirituality. A conceptual paradigm will be presented and its related measurement instrument will be introduced.

Defining and Measuring Spirituality and Religiousness

Because spirituality and religiousness are seen by many as being conceptually overlapping, in that both involve a search for the sacred (e.g., Hill & Pargament, 2003), some researchers prefer to interpret these two dimensions as being redundant (e.g., Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999). Musick, Traphagan, Koenig, and Larson (2000) have noted that in samples of adults, these two terms are highly related to one another. They question whether there is a meaningful distinction between these two constructs or if any disparities are ". . . simply an artifact of the wishes of researchers hoping to find such differences" (p. 80). Nonetheless, there are those who emphasize the distinctiveness between these two constructs (e.g., Piedmont, 2001; Piedmont & Leach, 2002). Here, spirituality is viewed as an attribute of an individual (much like a personality trait) while religiosity is understood as encompassing more of the beliefs, rituals, and practices associated with an institution (Miller & Thoresen,

1999, p. 6). Religiosity is concerned with how one's experience of a transcendent being is shaped by, and expressed through, a community or social organization. Spirituality, on the other hand, is most concerned with one's personal relationships to larger, transcendent realities, such as God or the Universe.

In an effort to operationalize these two constructs in a manner that would solidly ground them in mainstream psychological theory and measurement, the *Assessment of Spirituality and Religious Sentiments* (ASPIRES; Piedmont, 2005) scale was created. In this measure, spirituality was defined as an intrinsic motivation of individuals to create a broad sense of personal meaning within an eschatological context. In other words, knowing that we are going to die, spirituality represents our efforts to create meaning and purpose for our lives. This need for meaning is seen as an intrinsic, universal human capacity (see Piedmont & Leach, 2002). Assessing spirituality is the *Spiritual Transcendence Scale* (STS). The STS was developed to capture those aspects of spirituality that cuts across all religious traditions (see Piedmont, 2005, for how this scale was developed). This unidimensional scale contains three correlated facets: *Universality*, a belief in the unity and purpose of life; *Prayer fulfillment*, an experienced feeling of joy and contentment that results from prayer and/or meditation; and *Connectedness*, a sense of personal responsibility and connection to others.

Religiousness is not considered to be an intrinsic, motivational construct like spirituality. Rather, it is considered to represent a *sentiment*. Sentiment is an old term in psychology and reflects emotional tendencies that develop out of social traditions and educational experiences (Ruckmick, 1920). Sentiments can exert a powerful influence over thoughts and behaviors, but they do not represent innate, genotypic qualities like spirituality. That is why the expression of sentiments (e.g., religious practices) can and do vary over time and across cultures. There are two measures of religious sentiments on the ASPIRES. The first is the *Religiosity Index* (RI). The RI examines the frequency of involvement in religious rituals and practices (e.g., How often does one pray, How often does one attend religious services). It also queries the extent to which religious practices and involvements are important. *Religious Crisis* (RC) is the second measure and examines the extent to which an individual feels alienated, punished, or abandoned by God (e.g., I feel that God is punishing me). What is of interest about these items is that they address the negative side of religiousness, when faith and belief becomes sources of personal and social distress. This scale enables an examination of the extent to which disturbances in one's relationship to God can impact one's broader sense of psychological stability.

The five ASPIRES scales provide a relatively comprehensive assessment of the numinous dimension. Compared to most measures in this field, the ASPIRES has a rather large and comprehensive body of validity evidence. The increasing popularity of the ASPIRES can be attributed to its ability to address critical empirical questions about the utility of any measure of spirituality or religiousness. The next section will take a data-based approach that emphasizes the empirical value of numinous constructs for predicting satisfaction with life. For the purposes of this report, the Religious Crisis scale will not be included in these analyses. This measure captures aspects of distressed spiritual functioning and interested readers can obtain

information on this scale elsewhere (e.g., Piedmont et al., 2007; Piedmont, 2009). The focus of this chapter will be on those positive aspects of spiritual and religious functioning that stress engagement in, and involvement with, transcendent realities. Three key empirical issues surrounding the spiritual assessment of these scales will be addressed in an effort to demonstrate the value of numinous variables for understanding life satisfaction.

Key Issues in Demonstrating Spirituality and Religiosity as Robust Predictors of Life Satisfaction

Issue 1: Spirituality and Religiosity as Robust Constructs

Spirituality has many definitions, in fact Scott (cited in Hill et al., 2000) identified 31 different definitions of religiousness and 40 for spirituality, which she classified into nine different content areas (e.g., experiences of connectedness, systems of thought or beliefs, and capacities for transcendence). Many of these definitions stress the unique, personal relationship one has with a transcendent reality. Given that spirituality is often conceptualized as a very personal and individualized relationship, a question that emerges is whether spirituality is merely a solipsistic characteristic of the person, a quality that only reflects idiosyncratic aspects of functioning that have limited interpretive and predictive value. In short, spirituality is often viewed as a private, personal reality that is uniquely defined by each person. Seen in this manner, spirituality would have limited scientific value because it would lack any consistent definition. If it cannot be defined, it would be impossible to discuss it or identify evidence of its influence.

   It is surprising that very little effort has gone into addressing this fundamental issue. In some ways, the plethora of extant instruments supports this idiographic understanding of spirituality (see Hill & Hood, 1999). In order to demonstrate that spirituality and religiosity have substantive value as individual-difference qualities, it needs to be shown that there exists some level of consensual understanding among people of what "spiritual" means and the behaviors and goals that characterize such individuals. Such agreement provides support for the contention that spirituality does represent a generalized, substantive aspect of human function that has important implications for understanding human behavior. One way to show that spirituality is *not* "in the eye of the beholder" is to test for cross-observer convergence in ratings of spirituality and religiosity. Demonstrating that what individuals say about their own numinous qualities and motivations agrees with how knowledgeable others rate them on these qualities provides powerful evidence of just how overt and pervasive these qualities are.

   The data to be presented in this chapter are a subset of the normative data on the ASPIRES found in Piedmont (2005). The information presented here is based on a sample of 416 individuals (289 women and 120 men, 7 indicated no gender), aged 17–62 (mean = 21.32). The majority (86%) were Caucasian, with 6% African-American, 3% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 1% Arabic. In this sample, 391 obtained

Table 5.1 Correlations between self- and observer ratings on the ASPIRES dimensions

Observer scales	Self-report scales ($N = 387$)				Observer, α
	PF	UN	CN	Rel	
Prayer Fulfillment (PF)	**0.64****	0..23***	0.21***	0.70***	0.95
Universality (UN)	0.38***	**0.32****	0.11*	0.41***	0.80
Connectedness (CN)	0.21***	0.20***	**0.25****	0.20**	0.61
Religiosity (Rel)	0.61***	0.41***	0.20***	**0.81****	0.92
Self-report, α	0.94	0.78	0.47	0.89	

$^*p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$, two-tailed.

at least one observer rating on the ASPIRES. Raters knew subjects on average 8.3 years (SD = 7 years). Correlations between the self- and observer ratings are presented in Table 5.1. As can be seen, scores on the self-report ASPIRES correlated significantly with their corresponding observer ratings. Those correlations on the diagonal, which are in bold, provide evidence of the consensual validity for these spiritual constructs. The magnitude of these correlations (mean $r = 0.40$) compares favorably to peer-self convergence found with various measures of the five-factor model (FFM) of personality, a comprehensive taxonomy of personality traits (e.g., Goldberg, 1993), where average r's range from 0.30 to 0.48 (Funder, Kolar, & Blackman, 1995; McCrae & Costa, 1987; Piedmont, 1994). These data also provide evidence of discriminant validity as well: With the exception of Universality, each of the diagonal correlations is the highest in its respective row and column. This demonstrates that individuals have a clear, well-differentiated understanding of what spirituality is and its related aspects. Thus, despite whatever subjective nature spirituality may hold, it is clear that as a construct it represents a generalized quality that is consensually understood.

There are two important points to these data. First, the constructs contained in the ASPIRES represent constructs well understood by individuals in the general population. Spirituality is not solipsistic or completely subjective. Rather, spirituality represents a pervasive aspect of human psychological functioning, sufficiently overt and distinct that it can be recognized in one's behavior by others (see also Piedmont, 2001, 2007). Spirituality and religiosity represent robust, universal qualities of the individual (see Piedmont, 2007; Piedmont & Leach, 2002). Second, the use of observer data has an important role to play in research in this area that needs to be stressed. The singular reliance on self-report data found in current research creates potential problems concerning the interpretive and predictive value of numinous constructs.

One problem, addressed above, centers on the subjective nature of spiritual constructs. Do they represent a universal human motivation or merely reflect idiosyncratic aspects of individual functioning? The cross-observer paradigm directly addresses this issue and, as shown above, demonstrates the robustness of these constructs. A second problem associated with the use of only self-report data centers on correlated method error. When two self-report instruments correlate, it is not known to what extent that association is driven, or inflated, by the fact that the same

person is completing both measures. We cannot be sure if that association reflects a truly substantive overlap between two constructs or if it reflects the individual associations (e.g., response styles, implicit theories) of the respondent being present in both sets of responses. The only way to disentangle response styles from substantive overlap is to employ multiple information sources (i.e., there are four sources: self-report, observer rating, life outcome, objective test data).

Although no information source is infallible and all have their unique weaknesses, the value in using multiple sources is that the weaknesses of one method are offset by the strengths of another. For example, in a particular context an individual may be motivated by a desire to appear in a certain light and will manipulate his/her responses accordingly. Raters do not share the same motivation to "look good" as the individual himself or herself. Therefore, their ratings will not contain this source of error. However, raters may have other natural biases in their ratings (e.g., halo effects), but these are not shared by the target of the rating, who can give more nuanced responses. Because the confounds found in each method are different, any correlation *across* two methods will not be spuriously inflated by a common source of error. As a result, correlations between a self-report and observer rating are frequently found to be smaller than the association between two comparable self-report measures. The magnitudes of these relations provide a more accurate estimate of the true association between two constructs.

Moving beyond a reliance on self-report data is critical to the field, because it will help develop the generalizability of our constructs. Also, it will help to encourage the application of spiritual and religious constructs into areas where self-report data are questioned (e.g., clinical assessment, medical/heath applications). In order to address this issue, observer ratings on the ASPIRES will also be included in all analyses. Replicating findings based on self-rated scores on the ASPIRES with observer ratings will refute criticisms that the predictive validity of spirituality is mostly based on common method error.

Issue 2: The Relational Fertility of Spiritual and Religious Constructs

Allport (1950) asserted that numinous qualities were central, organizing aspects of an individual's psychological world; spirituality and religiosity represented the core of the individual. One's spirituality reflected the fundamental manner in which a person positioned himself/herself adaptively to the world at large. As such, spirituality should be related to a wide range of psychosocially salient constructs. There is a growing research literature documenting the predictive validity of spiritual and religious constructs for understanding a wide array of mental and physical health outcomes (see Koenig et al., 2001; Paloutzian & Park, 2005).

Given the focus of this chapter on life satisfaction, data presented will demonstrate the construct validity of the ASPIRES scales with these types of constructs. Individuals in our data set completed a number of measures that together

comprehensively sample what may be labeled "satisfaction with life." Six measures were selected for presentation: *The Hope Scale* (Snyder et al., 1996), which assesses the extent to which an individual feels that life is unfolding in a positive, encouraging manner; *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), a measure of the cognitive aspects of life contentment; *Affect Balance Scale* (Bradburn, 1969), a measure of the affective aspects of life satisfaction; it comprises two scales, Positive Affect and Negative Affect; *Delighted-Terrible Scale* (Andrews & Withey, 1976), a single overall rating of one's experience of life from *terrible* to *delighted*; and finally the *Self-Esteem Scale* (Rosenberg, 1979), the well-used index of personal self-comfort and belief in self. A factor analysis of these scales resulted in the emergence of a single dimension that explained 60% of the common variance. All the scales loaded significantly (i.e., > 0.58) on this dimension, suggesting that these different measures are capturing a single dimension of emotional stability and satisfaction.

Taken as a whole, these instruments provide a relatively broad operationalization of life satisfaction; including the cognitive and affective components of wellbeing, belief and comfort in oneself, and a positive, upbeat anticipatory outlook for the future. Correlations between these outcome indices and self- and observer ratings on the ASPIRES are presented in Table 5.2. As can be seen, there are numerous, significant associations across all the ASPIRES scales and all the outcome measures. Both the spiritual and religiosity scales are associated. In examining the self-report data, 21 of the 24 correlations (88%) are significant. The last row in this section provides the multiple R^2 between the four ASPIRES scales and each outcome. As can be seen, these measures explain from 3 to 9% of the variance in life satisfaction. When examining the results employing the rater scores from the ASPIRES, a very

Table 5.2 Correlations between self- and observer ratings on the ASPIRES scales and emotional satisfaction outcomes

ASPIRES scales	Hope	SWLS	POS	NEG	Delight	Esteem
Self-reports ($N = 407$)						
Prayer Fulfillment	0.18***	0.26***	0.19***	−0.16***	0.24***	0.21***
Universality	0.19***	0.22***	0.16***	−0.15**	0.21***	0.16***
Connectedness	0.11*	0.11*	0.16***	0.03	0.07	0.07
Religiosity	0.16***	0.23***	0.19***	−0.16***	0.27***	0.16**
R^2	0.05***	0.09***	0.02***	0.02***	0.05***	0.05***
Observer ratings ($N = 383$)						
Prayer Fulfillment	0.19***	0.27***	0.22***	−0.13**	0.23***	0.20***
Universality	0.20***	0.25***	0.17***	−0.17***	0.25***	0.20***
Connectedness	0.07	0.10*	0.14**	0.04	0.08	0.05
Religiosity	0.12*	0.20***	0.17***	0.14***	0.22***	0.11*
R^2	0.05***	0.06***	0.09***	0.03*	0.06***	0.05***

$*p < 0.05$; $**p < 0.01$; $***p < 0.001$, two-tailed.
Note. Hope, Hope Scale; SWLS, Satisfaction with Life Scale; POS, Positive Affect Scale; NEG, Negative Affect Scale; Delight, Delighted-Terrible Scale; Esteem, Self-Esteem Scale.

similar pattern of findings emerges. Again, there are numerous, significant associations (20 of 24 correlations, 83%), and the pattern of findings replicates that found with the self-reports. Overall R^2 values are of similar magnitude. These data indicate that spirituality and religiosity have substantive associations with measures of life satisfaction and wellbeing.

Two issues emerge from these findings. First, it is clear that despite the prolific number of associations, their magnitude is only of low to moderate strength. The correlations in Table 5.2 do not show the ASPIRES scales to be overwhelmingly powerful predictors. Such modest correlations suggest limits on our ability to make predictions using current spiritual assessment tools. Thus, we need to avoid perceiving spirituality as the "answer" to all our questions about people. As I have noted previously (Piedmont, 2001), numinous variables should not be considered "Rosetta stones" that can unlock our understanding of human psychological functioning. Human behavior is much too complex to be explained by any single construct. Instead, numinous variables need to be used as part of a multidimensional assessment approach to understanding people. We need to construct multivariable models that link together in meaningful ways constellations of constructs that will maximize our understanding of any psychological outcome. Although single variables will only explain, on average, 5–10% of the variance in the outcome, linking together a set of such variables that are non-overlapping can drastically improve predictive accuracy.

Second, although these findings are an exemplar of a larger literature, it must be noted that the key criticism of these findings centers on the lack of evidence documenting the predictive power of religious and spiritual variables over and above other established constructs, like social support and personality. This failure to demonstrate *incremental predictive validity* for numinous constructs raises important concerns about their construct validity (see Joiner, Perez, & Walker, 2002). The question is, "To what degree are spiritual constructs merely the 'religification' of already existing personality constructs?" (Van Wicklin, 1990). To be of ultimate value, numinous constructs need to demonstrate that they possess predictive power even after the influences of other established constructs are controlled. Incremental validity studies will enable researchers to identify those individual-difference qualities unique to religious and spiritual constructs that are predictive of salient psychosocial outcomes. Such analyses will also help to stop interpretations of religious constructs as being "nothing more than..." (see Pargament, 2002). Because this question stands at the heart of research in spirituality, we turn our attention to it now.

Issue 3: Incremental Validity of Spirituality and Religiosity

It has been argued (Piedmont, 1999) that religious and spiritual constructs need to demonstrate that they carry significant predictive power over and above that of established personality constructs, like the dimensions of the five-factor model of personality (FFM; Goldberg, 1993; McCrae & John, 1992; Piedmont, 1998). This

model has been well developed empirically and contains the dimensions of Neuroticism (a measure of negative affect), Extraversion (a measure of positive affect), Openness (a measure of permeability versus rigidity), Agreeableness (a measure of social interest), and Conscientiousness (a measure of personal reliability) (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Because much of the variance of these dimensions has been found to be heritable (Heath, Neale, Kessler, Eavers, & Kendler, 1992), these five dimensions are not mere summary descriptions of behavior, but genotypic tendencies of individuals to think, act, and feel in consistent ways (McCrae & Costa, 1995). These personality dimensions have been shown to be quite stable among normal adults, and predict a wide range of relevant life outcomes, including wellbeing and coping ability (see Piedmont, 1998, for a review).

Because the FFM represents a comprehensive taxonomy of personality constructs, the FFM is an ideal medium for managing information about religious and spiritual scales that will enable researchers to efficiently identify areas of content redundancy and uniqueness between numinous constructs and other personality variables. As Ozer and Reise (1994) noted, "[those] who continue to employ their preferred measure without locating it within the FFM can only be likened to geographers who issue reports of new lands but refuse to locate them on a map for others to find" (p. 361). In his meta-analytic review, Saroglou (2002) noted that various measures of religiosity and spirituality demonstrated significant associations with all five of the personality domains of the FFM, although the effect sizes were small. Current measures of spirituality and religiosity do contain, to varying degrees, qualities that are overlapping with established personality dimensions. To be scientifically useful, numinous constructs need to show that they represent something new about individuals.

One way to evaluate the incremental validity of measures of spirituality and religiosity is to conduct hierarchical multiple regression analyses. Once a suitable outcome criterion is identified (e.g., satisfaction with life), the FFM personality domains would be entered as a single block on the first step of the regression analysis. The resulting R^2 would represent the amount of variance in the criterion that is explained by constructs representing what is traditionally defined as "personality." On the second step of the analysis, the spirituality and religiosity variables can then be entered, using a forward entry method. This will identify those aspects of the numinous variables that are *independent* of personality that are related to the outcome. A partial F-test determines whether the amount of additional variance captured on the second step is significant. If a significant effect is found, then it can be demonstrated that the religious and spiritual constructs have incremental validity over personality.

Such an analysis was conducted with the current data set. A series of hierarchical regressions were conducted using each of the six satisfaction with life variables as the outcome criteria. On the first step of the analyses, individuals' scores on the FFM personality domains were entered. On the second step, the ASPIRES scales were entered. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 5.3. As can be seen, the FFM domains explained a significant amount of variance in each of the outcome

Table 5.3 Incremental validity of the ASPIRES scales in predicting emotional satisfaction outcomes over and above the FFM personality domains

Outcome	FFM, R^2	ASPIRES, ΔR^2	ASPIRES predictor
Self-report ASPIRES ($N = 405$)			
Hope	0.31***	0.02**	UN
Satisfaction with Life	0.31***	0.04**	UN, PF
Positive Affect	0.10***	0.01*	PF
Negative Affect	0.16***	0.01**	UN
Delighted-Terrible Scale	0.29***	0.01**	REL
Self-Esteem	0.38***	0.01**	UN
Observer ratings ASPIRES ($N = 381$)			
Hope	0.35***	0.01*	UN
Satisfaction with Life	0.34***	0.02**	PF
Positive Affect	0.15***	0.04***	PF
Negative Affect	0.25***	–	–
Delighted-Terrible Scale	0.31***	0.03***	REL
Self-Esteem	0.40***	0.01*	UN

Note. UN, Universality; PF, Prayer Fulfillment; REL, Religiosity.

measures (R^2s ranged from 0.10 to 0.38 with the self-report ASPIRES scales and from 0.15 to 0.40 with the observer ratings). These are moderate to strong effect sizes. Clearly personality has something significant to contribute to our understanding of life satisfaction. However, the third column presents the amount of variance that the ASPIRES scales contributed *over and above* the FFM domains. In all but one instance, the ASPIRES scales evidenced significant amounts of additional predictive variance.

Three points of interest are worth noting from these data. First, it should be noted that similar findings are obtained regardless of whether the self-report or observer-rating version of the ASPIRES was used. As noted earlier, such comparability provides confidence that the observed findings using self-reported scores on the ASPIRES are not an artifact of any type of correlated measurement error. The spirituality and religiosity scales do have reliable, substantive associations with life satisfaction that are not mediated by either personality or information source.

Second, it appears that Universality and Prayer Fulfillment are most relevant for understanding life satisfaction. Universality reflects the belief that there is a higher level of existence through which all of life is interconnected. Items reflect the idea that individuals are part of a larger social reality, a community of "oneness" that transcends the many differences we experience in this life. Higher scores on this scale have been shown to predict better treatment outcomes for substance abusers (Piedmont, 2004a). Prayer Fulfillment examines the extent to which one is able to create personal space that enables one to develop and maintain a relationship to the Transcendent that provides personal joy and contentment. Among clergy, high scores on this scale have been shown to reduce the likelihood of job-related burnout (Golden, Piedmont, Ciarrocchi, & Rodgerson, 2004). The former scale enables one to find a secure attachment within larger social networks, while scores

on the latter scale reflect an ability to find emotional fulfillment within some larger, transcendent reality. Interestingly, Religiosity was only uniquely relevant in predicting the overall rating of feeling terrible or delighted with one's life. Perhaps religious involvement provides a structure for understanding life and an order for living it that enhances one's feelings of predictability, which in turn reduces anxiety and fear. Future research will need to plumb for conceptual explanations supporting why these relations hold.

Finally, the unique predictive contribution of the numinous constructs to life satisfaction was small. In one way, this was expected given the rather modest correlations noted in Table 5.2. Nonetheless, given that the average incremental R^2 noted in Table 5.3 is 0.03, concerns over practical significance are justified. Is it worth adding these two variables only to gain an addition 3% of the variance? The answer is, I believe, "yes." It should be kept in mind that the ΔR^2's are partial coefficients; they represent what each construct has to offer once the predictive effects of the *five* personality variables have been removed. Thus these values are low because there is little reliable variance left to explain in the criteria. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) have observed that increases in R^2 are generally very small by the time a third substantive predictor is added to a regression equation. As more predictors are added, their incremental contributions will be increasingly smaller. Hunsley and Meyer (2003) suggested that an R^2 increase of between 0.02 and 0.04 would indicate a reasonable contribution for a variable entered on the third step. Given that the numinous variables in the present study are being added into the regression equations on the *sixth* and *seventh steps* (the five personality dimensions represent steps 1–5), the 3% additional variance appears to represent a quite robust contribution.

Theoretical Yield

These data should provide strong support for the value of spiritual and religious constructs as robust predictors of life satisfaction. The ASPIRES scales have been developed to reflect aspects of the individual that are non-redundant with established personality traits (Piedmont, 2005), and these data continue to support the empirical value of these measures. Because of its independence from the FFM, spirituality may well be considered a *sixth* factor of personality.

There is a growing literature that shows the psychometric and predictive value of the ASPIRES, evidencing both cross-denominational and cross-cultural generalizability (e.g., Goodman, 2002; Piedmont & Leach, 2002; Piedmont, 2007; Wilson, 2004). Such findings argue that the numinous represents a universal aspect of human functioning. Other research has shown its clinical utility across a wide range of groups, from predicting clergy burnout (Golden et al., 2004), to predicting outcome in a substance abuse treatment program (Piedmont, 2004a), to general wellbeing and health status among chronic arthritis sufferers (Bartlett, Piedmont, Bilderback, Matsumoto, & Bathon, 2003). As an aspect of the individual not contained in current personality models, numinous constructs provide new insights into who people

are and the goals they are pursuing. Because religious and spiritual constructs play a significant role in adaptation and personal satisfaction, they offer the potential for the identification of entirely new therapeutic strategies and paradigms that are based on these types of motivations (e.g., Murray-Swank, 2003; Piedmont, 2004a). At a minimum, these data argue that any model of human behavior *must* include numinous constructs if that model were to be comprehensive.

The Psychological Value of Numinous Constructs

Why does spirituality and religiosity have relevance for levels of wellbeing and satisfaction with life? There are certainly many answers to this question ranging from a belief in the transforming power of God's grace to the perspective that spirituality represents a "master motive" that organizes the personality and brings coherence to its strivings. The position taken here is that spirituality is valuable because it serves as an antidote to narcissism. A materialistic, self-centered approach to life, where one is always concerned with obtaining gratification of personal needs and wishes, leads to an impulsive style that can be easily frustrated by the demands of life. Here, life goals are usually oriented to the short term and relationships are usually manipulative and emotionally superficial. Spirituality, on the other hand, represents a lifestyle that is transpersonal in nature, where one recognizes a transcendent reality that calls individuals to set personal goals along an eternal continuum. A spiritual perspective recognizes that birth and death are only developmental signposts along a much longer ontological process. Recognition of one's connections to all life, embracing one's responsibilities to care for others creates relationships that are emotionally deep, generative, and mutually satisfying.

Being able to step outside of the immediacy of one's life and to put it into a larger interpretive context can be emotionally healing and liberating. Committing to this larger vision allows individuals to find personal stability and coherence, even during times of fluidity and disjuncture. For individuals locked into their own narrow worlds of emotional pain, personal ineptitude, and interpersonal inadequacy, this broader meaning may provide ways of coping with stressful events or creating buffers against negative feelings. It may also represent a higher level of personality maturity. It is up to future research to examine these issues in more depth (see Piedmont, 2004b). Finding ways to promote spiritual growth may enable individuals to find more emotional security in life and to develop an enhanced capacity to find joy and emotional fulfillment through the many ups and downs of life.

Conclusion

Finding contentment, peace, and personal satisfaction with life are core goals that individuals strive to attain. We look to find fulfillment and completion in this life and pursue many paths to obtain it. Psychology has been successful in identifying many motivations and traits that are associated with wellbeing. Hopefully, this chapter has demonstrated that spiritual and religious variables represent *additional* constructs

that contribute to one's sense of contentment. The data presented in this chapter have shown that well-conceived measures of the numinous can be developed and empirically demonstrated to represent unique aspects of the individual. Spirituality represents qualities of the person not represented in traditional individual-difference measures.

It is certain that the large literature documenting the predictive utility of spiritual and religious variables does indeed, despite potential methodological issues, represent a substantive effect. Studying the role of the numinous offers the exciting possibility of unlocking new perspectives on psychological functioning, including the identification of new motivations and personal goals. The opportunity now exists for the identification of new therapeutic interventions that capitalize on these dynamics. Helping individuals create a new sense of personal meaning that stresses relationships and connections created within an eternal framework may be useful for inducing durable personal change.

It is up to future research to identify these methods and to isolate the psychological mechanisms by which the numinous influences our sense of wellbeing.

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Chapter 6
Culture, Religion and Spirituality in Relation to Psychiatric Illness

Kate M. Loewenthal

Abstract Religious and spiritual factors can affect mental health (Pargament, 1997; Koenig, McCullough & Larson, 2001; Loewenthal, 2007). There are many routes by which these effects operate. However, most of the work on these effects has been done in western, Christian cultures. Does work from other religions and cultures suggest new perspectives on the problems and conclusions? Using evidence from other cultural-religious contexts, some ideas are examined about the links between culture, religion, spirituality and mental health. This chapter will look at four issues in particular: somatisation, schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder and depression. There are hypotheses relating to each of these disorders and their links with religion or cultural factors. We look to see whether these hypotheses are supported by evidence from non-western and/or non-Christian cultures. Implications for education and wellbeing are considered.

Definitions

First, some definitions need to be offered.

Spirituality: This has been defined as the search for and experience of the sacred (Pargament, 1997, 2007). Spirituality is understood to be broader than any single formal religion and is reflected in the search for meaning, a sense of transcendence, and the practice of spiritual or mystical disciplines (Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999). Zinnbauer et al. (1997) have indicated that, at least for the North American adults they studied, all those who identify themselves as religious also see themselves as spiritual. Additionally there are people who identify themselves as spiritual but not religious and people who identify themselves as neither. Thus we can suggest that for this chapter, the term spiritual will apply to those who see themselves as engaged in spirituality—as for instance in the search for meaning and for the sacred—and will include those active in the formal religious sense. Popular

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measures of spirituality include Ellison (1983) and King, Speck, and Thomas (1995). Measurement will be discussed elsewhere in this book.

Religiosity: There have been many attempts at definition and measurement of religiosity, with some scholars claiming that there will never be a satisfactory definition (Wulff, 1997; Hill & Hood, 1999; Loewenthal, 2007). However, there is some agreement about the basics. For instance, English and English (1958) suggested that religion is "a system of attitudes, practices, rites, ceremonies and beliefs by means of which individuals or a community put themselves in relation to G-d or to a supernatural world, often to each other, and derive a set of values by which to judge events in the natural world". Loewenthal (2000) suggested that the major religious traditions have a number of features of belief in common: the existence of a non-material (i.e. spiritual) reality, the purpose of life is to increase harmony in the world by doing good and avoiding evil, the monotheistic religions hold that the source of existence (i.e. G-d) is also the source of moral directives, all religions involve and depend on social organisation for communicating these ideas. We can see common themes underlying the beliefs and behaviours in all religious traditions. These are *spiritual reality, morality, purpose*, and finally the *communication* of these. A more basic definition of religiosity might involve identification with a religious group—and inherent in this would be the beliefs and behaviours outlined above. Elsewhere in this book are authoritative and more detailed accounts of the definition and assessment of religiosity. For our present purposes, we have said enough to indicate where spirituality and religiosity overlap.

Mental health: Mental health has been viewed as the absence of mental illness (or absence of symptoms). It can also be viewed as involving the features said to be characteristic of mental health. The former view has been more popular in studies of religion/spirituality and mental health, and particularly widespread has been the use of measures of depression and/or anxiety as indices of general mental health. However, measures of positive wellbeing are not simply in inverse relationship to measures of psychopathology. Their use in the study of religion, spirituality and mental health is on the increase. This has been alongside the rise of positive psychology, which is thought to be intimately and intricately connected with religion and spirituality (Seligman, 2002; Joseph, Linley, & Maltby, 2006).

How do cultural factors affect the relationships between religious and spiritual factors, and mental health? Are religious people better-off than others in terms of mental health? It is well established that there is a general overall weak but consistent relationship between measures of religiosity and measures of spirituality. This overall effect is the result of a plethora of effects, not all working in the same direction (Pargament, 1997; Koenig et al., 2001; Loewenthal, 2007). This chapter unpacks some of these effects, looking particularly at how the relationships are affected by culture. The addition of "culture" as variable involves difficulties, since religion and culture are intertwined.

Culture: Tylor's (1871) definition has remained popular and useful. He saw culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". Although there has been some concern over its vagueness and over-inclusiveness,

for general social-scientific purposes, it remains in widespread use. In studies of culture in relation to psychological factors, the commonly used label for a particular social-cultural group is normally adopted, for example "Chinese" and "British".

We now turn to some examples of how cultural factors impact on the relations between religion, spirituality and mental health.

The Somatisation Hypothesis

This hypothesis arose from a suggestion that the expression of psychological distress is not always possible or understood in some cultures. Instead, distress is translated into bodily symptoms.

Early expressions of this hypothesis were frankly racist, implying that it was somehow more sophisticated to feel depressed than to have a backache. In *Aliens and Alienists*, Littlewood and Lipsedge (1997) review these suggestions, dismissing the claim that non-western people suffer from somatic disorders because their languages lack psychological categories in which to frame their misery. But racist descendants of the hypothesis can be seen for instance in the then-current South African opinion that "subjective depression" is rare among black people, though there may be observed a form of "primitive depression" with features of agitation and paranoia (p. 72). What is the current evidence?

The hypothesis would suggest that the expression of distress by bodily (somatic) symptoms is less common in countries which are privileged, i.e. wealthier, more technologically advanced, with higher levels of literacy and general education. There is little evidence to support this suggestion. There are great variations between cultures in the amount and types of organically unexplained somatic symptoms, and indeed some syndromes are completely culture-specific. Medical anthropologists and others have referred to these as *cultural idioms of distress* (Kirmayer & Young, 1998). Examples include "wind overload" (Hinton, Um, & Ba, 2001), common among Khmer refugees from Cambodia to the United States. The symptoms include rapid breathing, palpitations and fainting. The disorder appears to be a culture-specific form of panic attack, common among Khmer people with a history of severe trauma, and precipitated by stress. Cambodians have specific treatments for this disorder, particularly "coining": a coin is dipped in "wind oil" and rubbed along the arm or leg to displace the wind. Trollope-Kumar (2001) has described leukorrhea, a common condition in the Indian sub-continent, involving vaginal discharge in women and semen loss in men, together with other somatic complaints—headaches, backaches, weakness, dizziness. The condition is often preceded by social stress. Conventional Western treatment (antibiotics, tubectomy) is said to be less successful than Ayurvedic dietary or herbal treatments, based on the spiritual significance of the loss of genital secretions, purified *dhatu*. Loewenthal (2007) concluded that unexplained somatic symptoms are widely reported in the United Kingdom. The Western syndrome ME (Myalgic Encephalopathy), or CFS (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome), repeated bouts of fever and weakness, has so far defied attempts to identify organic causation, and is thought to be stress-related (Baumer, 2005).

There are some studies of culturally universal somatic symptoms, and these show no sign of being more common in less technologically advanced countries. Lack of ready access to health care does not seem to be an explanatory factor. For instance, in a recent World Health Organisation (WHO) study of medically unexplained pain (Gureje, Von Korff, Simon, & Gater, 1998), 25,000 primary care attenders were screened at 15 centres in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. The eight centres in which unexplained pain was reported most frequently included five of the seven western centres. The seven centres in which unexplained pain was reported least frequently included all three of the Asian centres and the sole African centre in the study. In this and in many other studies (see Cohen, Pine, Must, Kasen, & Brook, 1998) somatic symptoms and psychological distress co-varied, ruling out the possibility that somatic symptoms are an *alternative* to psychological suffering as a way of expressing distress.

One form of the somatisation hypothesis suggests that some languages lack categories for psychological distress. This crude form of the hypothesis is not supported, but the study of culture-specific idioms of distress does indicate how language and religion play their roles. An example is described by Hollan (2004), of an Indonesian man suffering from chronic stomach pains and breathlessness. There was speculation that these symptoms were the result of guilt over youthful misdemeanours, which displeased his parents. But, says Hollan,

> He does not have a word for guilt. . .he would say that he has been in error . . . (which) does not imply sinfulness or inherent badness. But it does imply that one has done something worthy of punishment if one is caught. Other humans may discover your misbehaviour, but so might the spirits or ancestors, who may then punish you or your family or descendants with countless forms of misfortune. . .many Toraja risk waiting to see whether their behaviour *has* been noticed and punished before changing their ways and making compensatory offerings.

Another factor which might account for the presentation of somatic symptoms is stigmatisation. Somatic symptoms are usually less stigmatised than are psychological symptoms. In small, tightly knit social groups—religious communities are outstanding examples—people are very reluctant to acknowledge psychological problems. For example,

> Our people do not go to the doctor (when depressed), in fact they hide it, because they think that if people know about it they will not accept them and they'll be laughed at and would be completely shut off because there is this prejudice (Muslim, in Cinnirella & Loewenthal, 1999).
>
> The one thing Black people hate is for anybody to find out there is any form of mental illness in their families . . . what they try to do is shut that person away and deal with it by themselves as opposed to going through all the networks and being exposed (Black Christian, in Cinnirella & Loewenthal, 1999).
>
> I wonder what type of families need this (kind of help)? Is it just those who can't cope? I might feel ashamed to ask for such help (Orthodox Jewish, in Loewenthal & Rogers, 2004).

Apart from stigma, somatic symptoms may be simpler to deal with than psychological distress. Medical practitioners are much more accessible than psychologists

and psychiatrists, they have quick-fix solutions (medication) for any psychological problems that may be apparent, and somatic symptoms may are less blameworthy and more intelligible than psychological problems. Perkins and Moodley (1993) reported that over half the psychiatric in-patients they studied reported only somatic symptoms. Among whites in particular, it was found that denial tended to take the form of somatisation, or the construction of problems in terms of social difficulties.

On the evidence reviewed so far, we cannot dismiss the idea that distress may be expressed somatically, but the factors influencing the form of expression are varied. Somatic complaints are not an alternative to psychological distress. Indeed there is much evidence that there are causal relationships in both distress – psychological distress, particularly depression, may affect immune system functioning with resultant effects on physical health, and physical illness may cause psychological distress (Loewenthal, 2007; Cohen et al., 1998).

Do religion and spirituality play any role in somatic symptoms and illnesses? Beliefs in spiritual forces as causing somatic distress have already appeared in some of the examples considered.

A correlational study among North American university students (Houran, Kumar, Thalbourne, & Lavertue, 2002) showed that malign spiritual experiences—poltergeists, hauntings, spirit infestations and other paranormal experiences—were related to hypochondriacal and somatic tendencies. We cannot be sure about causality here.

There is some ethnographic work which suggests that beliefs in spiritual forces may be heavily involved in shaping somatic disorders, for example, in the case described by Hollan (2004) above. Margolin and Witztum (1989) treated an Iranian father of three children:

> He had become impotent several days after the death of his father. He refused psychotherapy and asked for a medicine that would bring back his potency. However conventional pharmacological and behaviour therapy did not help and he left treatment because he did not believe anything could help him. Later the patient reported having improved following a dream whose content he would not reveal. The therapists consulted an Iranian colleague who suggested that the patient might believe that he had been "bound" by his vengeful deceased father as a punishment for failing to observe the religious laws of mourning properly, and who then unbound him in the dream, one year after his (the father's) death (when the prescribed mourning period was finished). Binding is a practice known to Christians, Muslims and Jews in Iran, involving witchcraft or sorcery, whose effect is to prevent male fertility. The therapist discussed this possibility tactfully with the patient, who said that now he felt the therapist understood him (based on the account by Margolin & Witztum).

Beliefs of this kind are clearly important in somatisation, even though causality is complicated. Some clinicians find it helpful to take these spiritual beliefs into account in developing their treatment plans. It can be helpful to consult and involve a religious leader or other spiritual advisor from the sufferer's own faith tradition. An example of a pragmatic and eclectic approach to somatic complaints is offered in MacLachlan's (1997) description of a treatment plan for "Mr Lin" who felt that his stomach complaints were the work of the spirit of his displeased, deceased father, concerned about Mr Lin's marital infidelities, and eating "foreign"

food, among other factors. The treatment plan deals with these causes in ways that are acceptable to Mr Lin, for example, prayer and sacrifice to appease his father's spirit, recommitting himself to his wife and changing his diet to exclude "foreign" food.

We have seen that somatic complaints are often or always exacerbated by stress. They are not alternatives to psychological distress. Their patterning is the result of cultural and individual factors and has been usefully described as *cultural idioms of distress*. Beliefs in the involvement of spiritual forces are common, and many clinicians have found it helpful to take these beliefs into account, sometimes involving expert advice or other help from the sufferer's own faith tradition.

Afro-Caribbean Schizophrenia?

A problem which has caused some concern is the following: in the UK and North America, Afro-Caribbeans are more likely to be referred and diagnosed with schizophrenia than are members of other cultural groups (Davis, 1975; Littlewood & Lipsedge, 1981a; Ineichen, 1991; C. Thomas, Stone, Osborn, & P. F. Thomas, 1993; Comer, 1999). However, in Africa and in the Caribbean, schizophrenia is no more likely than it is in other countries. Why should Afro-Caribbeans be so much at risk when living in western countries? Are there effects of religion and spirituality?

There are two broad sets of explanations: first, differences in stress and other social factors and, second, misdiagnosis. There is some evidence to support the first possibility: in general, Afro-Caribbeans are more deprived and stressed than other social groups; some forms of stress have been shown to precipitate or exacerbate episodes of schizophrenia (McGovern & Cope, 1991; Sugarman & Crauford, 1994). What about misdiagnosis? Might approved or normative (religious) beliefs and behaviours, or a culture-specific syndrome, be mistaken for schizophrenia?

An Afro-Caribbean is defined as a West Indian person, a descendant of some of the approximately 10 million people of West African origin, forcibly shipped to the West Indies and North America as slave labourers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to replace the indigenous populations largely eliminated by desettlement, genocide and European-imported illnesses (Curtin, 1969) in plantations owned by European settlers. West Indians arriving in the United Kingdom as economic migrants expected a welcome in the Christian churches, but this was not forthcoming. Black churches—involving a blend of Christian and surviving African practices—evolved in the United Kingdom, the United States and the West Indies (Chatfield, 1989; Griffith & Bility, 1996; Howard, 1987). The proportion of Afro-Caribbeans in black-led religious groups is said to be high, and these groups often involve lively, charismatic forms of worship (Cochrane & Howell, 1995). Black-led religious groups are important sources of solidarity, identity and spirituality, and an enthusiastic style of religiosity is normative, but may be misconstrued as a sign of disturbance by outsiders.

Littlewood and Lipsedge's (1981a, 1981b, 1989, 1997) material is consistent with the idea that the high incidence of schizophrenia among Afro-Caribbeans in the United Kingdom could (at least partly) be accounted for by a normal prevalence of "true" schizophrenia, plus a number of further cases of culture-specific disorder. Among Afro-Caribbeans, a high proportion of cases diagnosed as schizophrenic have a "religious flavour", are of short duration with a relatively good prognosis, and are often preceded by a clear precipitating factor before admission. For example,

> M was descended from victims of the African slave trade. She lived in the United States, and employed in domestic work. She became unwell and could not afford professional medical attention. She went to a herbalist, who sexually abused her. Feeling defiled, she tried to purify herself by intensive prayer and bible study. She was too ill to work, and was sent to a psychiatric hospital, where her pious practices continued. She was diagnosed with schizophrenia (dementia praecox) (Evarts, 1914).

In Evarts' report, it appears that M's sole "symptom" was her fervent religious behaviour, with its understandable aim of self-purification. This example of (mis)diagnosis is a good example of the situation highlighted by the work of Siddle, Haddock, Tarrier, and Faragher (2002), and Bhugra (2002) whereby religious attempts to cope with stress are construed as symptoms of psychiatric illness. The following example from Fulford (1999) highlights the same point:

> A 40-year-old black American professional man, "Simon", a lawyer, from a Baptist background, had experienced occasional psychic experiences, which he used to discuss with his religious adviser, a man he consulted about major life events and decisions. More recently, Simon has been extremely troubled since a group of colleagues have brought a lawsuit against him. The complaint is unfounded, but it would be extremely expensive and risky to fight this. Simon took to praying at an altar set up in his living room at home. He discovered that the candles he lit to accompany his prayers dripped wax onto his bible, and he felt that the words marked by the wax had a special significance. Most people he showed this bible to, were not impressed, but Simon persisted in saying that the marked words had special symbolism, and that he was chosen and marked out for special responsibility by G-d. He also felt that often his thoughts were interrupted by sudden "thought insertion" from a higher source.

Fulford says that most medical students are likely to suggest a diagnosis of schizophrenia. In reality, Simon functioned well throughout his lawsuit, with no symptoms of disturbance other than these religious coping attempts. Once the lawsuit was resolved, his unusual religious practices declined, his career developed well and he became very successful.

Given that religious affiliation among Afro-Caribbeans is higher than that in whites, and religious behaviour is often more enthusiastic, could religious coping account for some misdiagnosis of schizophrenia?

The incidence of schizophrenia among Afro-Caribbeans in the United Kingdom is said to be rising. Black-led religious movements continue to flourish, providing social support, identity and cultural activity. Although there is evidence for other causal factors in schizophrenia among Afro-Caribbeans in western countries, particularly stress (McGovern & Cope, 1991; Sugarman & Crauford, 1994), there is still a

strong cultural framework for the perpetuation of the kind of culture-specific disorder suggested by Littlewood and Lipsedge (Castillo, 2003; Loewenthal & Cinnirella, 2003). Further, as DSM-IV indicates, there is a risk of over-diagnosis in some ethnic groups. It would be premature to rule out the possibility that religious behaviour—particularly in the ecstatic or enthusiastic style favoured in black (and a few white) charismatic churches—may be misconstrued as symptomatic of schizophrenia, and this may help to account for the high rate of schizophrenia referral rate among Afro-Caribbeans in western countries.

Jewish OCD (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder): Do Religions Which Encourage Scrupulosity as a Feature of Spirituality Foster OCD?

Obsessive-compulsive disorder involves uncontrollable, persistent and distressing repetitive thoughts and/or actions, to the extent that these interfere with everyday activities, work and relationships. Examples of unwanted thoughts and behaviours include fears and compulsions about dirt and cleanliness, for example, repeated hand-washing. Of course, scrupulousness is on a continuum from reasonable care and caution, to uncontrolled obsessionality. Does religion encourage perfectionism as a defence against anxiety? Can religion cause obsessive-compulsive disorder?

In 1907, Freud wrote a paper on the similarities between religion and obsessional neurosis. He described a woman who was obsessed with feeling dirty and compulsively washed her hands. The paper is interesting for two reasons. First, it argues very compellingly that the dynamics underlying religious ritual are similar to those underlying obsessional neurosis—those persons feel guilty if they do not carry out the prescribed action, and anxiety and guilt are relieved when the action is carried out. For a while! Then guilt surfaces once more and the action must be repeated. For both religion and neurosis, the deeper meaning or significance of the action is not usually apparent to the person carrying out the action.

The second point of interest in this paper that it does not suggest *anywhere* that religion *causes* (obsessional) neurosis. The paper merely makes the claim that the dynamics are similar. Still, Freud is credited with —or blamed for, depending on your perspective—the idea that religion causes neurosis, by engendering guilt, anxiety and scrupulosity. The idea has remained very popular.

Like schizophrenic symptoms, obsessive-compulsive symptoms often have a "religious flavour". For example,

> Ahmed, a pious Muslim, spends half an hour or more washing and checking himself before each of the five daily prayers. He recognises that this is excessive, but fears to go to a doctor or psychiatrist for help, since they may not recognise the spiritual importance of cleanliness before prayer (based on Al Soleim, 2005).
>
> Miriam, a strictly orthodox Jew, is very careful to avoid the mixing of foods containing meat with foods containing milk. The prohibition is an important aspect of Jewish dietary law, and it is a normal part of religious practice to have separate plates for milk and meat, and to wash these separately from each other. But Miriam has carried things to a degree

further than normal rabbinically recommended practice. Her family find her practices excessive and very difficult to live with. For example, most families use only one dustbin and one set of cooking spices, but Miriam insists on separate milk and meat dustbins, ketchup bottles, spices used in cooking, and she has insisted on a wall diving the kitchen into milk and meat areas, with family members washing hands and putting on designated overalls before moving from one to the other. Miriam believes she is carrying out the law with commendable strictness and her husband is having difficulty in persuading her to accept their rabbi's recommendation that her practices are excessive and inappropriate (based on Greenberg, Witztum, & Pisante, 1987, and the author's observations).

Both clinical observation and quantitative data indicate that religious and religiously derived themes (such as some forms of cleanliness) are common themes for obsessions (Greenberg & Witztum, 2001; Abramowitz, Huppert, Cohen, Tolin, & Cahill, 2002). Figure 6.1 gives some quantitative substance to these observations (based on Tek & Ulug, 2001).

We can see that contamination is a fairly constant theme, whereas other themes vary quite widely from country to country. Religious themes are most common in Israel, Saudi Arabia and Turkey—both Israel and Turkey are said to have a dominant "secular" culture. Concerns about cleanliness, aggression and sexuality may have a spiritual basis, but we can't tell in what proportion. Although the data in Fig. 6.1 indicate variation between the countries studied in the popularity of different themes in OCD, we do not know enough about levels and styles of religiosity in the different countries to discern any obvious patterns.

We must turn to other information to detect relations between religion and OCD. The most systematic analysis was reported by Lewis (1998) in a paper appropriately entitled "Is cleanliness next to G-dliness?" Lewis concluded that measures of religiosity related fairly consistently to measures of scrupulous or obsessional *personality*, but did not relate to obsessional *illness*. Thus, religion may make us careful and scrupulous, but does not apparently make us ill. To take a specific study, Sica, Novara, and Sanavio (2002) found that Italians who were more religiously active scored more highly on measures of obsessionality, overimportance of thoughts, control of thoughts, perfectionism and responsibility—but were not more likely to suffer from clinical OCD.
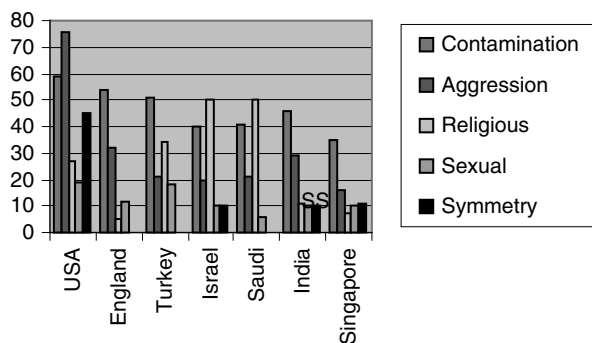
Fig. 6.1 Common themes of obsessions in different cultures (% frequency) based on Tek and Ulug (2001)

Tek and Ulug (2001) analysed OCD patients in Turkey. Religious symptoms were common across the whole sample (42% of symptoms)—but religious activity was not associated with a higher frequency of religious symptoms or with higher levels of disturbance. Tek and Ulug believe that religion is an arena in which OCD can express itself, but is not a determinant of OCD.

What about Jewish OCD? Jewish law is certainly scrupulous in its distinctions between what is religiously permitted and what is not. For example, more than one-sixtieth part of meat in milk food makes the food religiously unfit for consumption, and a person may not pray until he or she has washed their hands in a prescribed order, before walking more than four paces after waking. Leaves which are to be eaten must be carefully inspected to ensure that they harbour no wildlife—insects may not be eaten, and they can normally only be detected by holding each leaf up to a strong light.

Greenberg and Witztum (2001) offer compelling examples of cases in which OCD sufferers are aware that their compulsions have gone way over the boundaries of what is religiously required. Greenberg and Witztum believe that religion provides a means of expression for OCD, but does not cause or exacerbate it. Greenberg and Shefler (2002) studied 28 strictly religious Jewish patients suffering from OCD. They had many more (three times) religious symptoms than non-religious symptoms. They viewed their religious symptoms as their main difficulty. However their experiences of religious and non-religious symptoms were similar, with no differences in age of onset, length of time before seeking help, amount of distress caused, time spent on the symptom and other factors. This study indicated that religious OCD symptoms are no more (or less) entrenched or protected than other symptoms.

It is not clear that Jews—even strictly orthodox Jews—are more prone to OCD than other people. Religious teachings may indeed affect scrupulosity and other ways of thinking, but it is not clear that religion leads to obsessional pathology. Informed opinion suggests that obsessional pathology may be framed religiously, but not caused religiously.

Gender Differences in the Prevalence of Depression

Depressive illness is about twice as prevalent among women as it is among men. Is this always the case? How do religious and spiritual factors play a role?

In the mid-1990s we were analysing data on depression in community samples of Jews in the United Kingdom. To our surprise and alarm, our preliminary analysis indicated that major depressive disorder was about as prevalent among the men in our sample, as among women. We asked ourselves whether there was anything wrong with our methodology—we would have expected prevalence among women to be about double that among men (see for example Cochrane, 1993). Eventually we concluded that the findings were genuine. When we wrote up the work (Loewenthal et al., 1995) we suggested that the fact that there was no evidence of alcohol abuse, or even recreational alcohol use (other than for religious purposes)

might bear some relationship to the relatively high prevalence of depression in Jewish men. We discovered that similar findings on prevalence of depression were being independently reported in Jewish samples in the United States and Israel (Levav et al., 1993; Levav, Kohn, Golding, & Weismann, 1997), and again it was suspected that low recreational alcohol use by Jewish men may be a factor in the raised prevalence of depression.

The alcohol-depression hypothesis—that depression varies inversely with alcohol use—has been explored with some success. Observant Jews drink limited amounts of alcohol on religious and festive occasions, and we confirmed that culturally carried beliefs do not support recreational drinking and drunkenness among Jews (Loewenthal, MacLeod, Cook, Lee, & Goldblatt, 2003a). For example, Jewish people envisaged catastrophic scenes consequent to loss of control—which they saw as a likely consequence of drinking:

> It can lead to immorality – getting into trouble with the police – getting into fights for no reason.
> It can lead to abuse or to violence . . . it can cause husbands hitting wives. . .destroying furniture, things like this . . . attacking wives and children.
> If you do go to the pub, you expect that there will be a lot of drunk people around and beer flying (from Loewenthal et al.).

British people of Protestant background, by contrast, saw (social) drinking as an aid to relaxation, and forgetting ones stresses and troubles:

> Fine, people need a chance to let their hair down.
> I find a drink might relax me.
> It drowns your problems.
> You lose your inhibitions so you might be able to socialise more (from Loewenthal et al.).

Indeed, there is some evidence that alcohol use up to a certain limit may be an effective way of coping with stress, resulting in a lowered prevalence of depression (Lipton, 2005), though of course beyond a certain limit, alcohol use generates a spiral of alcohol abuse and poor mental health.

We discovered that Jews do have a somewhat higher tolerance for depression than a comparison group of Protestant Christian background, and lower tolerance for suicide—both these factors may contribute to raised prevalence of depression among Jews (Loewenthal, MacLeod, Cook, Lee, & Goldblatt, 2003b; Loewenthal, MacLeod, Cook, Lee, & Goldblatt, 2002).

Alcohol use is religiously regulated, but alcohol use is only one of a number of factors—some of them religiously related—which may have an impact on depression. We know that alcohol use is generally frowned upon in Muslim countries, but the epidemiological evidence is that in most Muslim countries (for which evidence is available) women are generally more likely to be depressed than are men. Here, the alcohol-depression hypothesis does not seem to be supported. The patterns of depression by gender may be due to cultural factors, some of them religiously endorsed and supported, which place women in relatively powerless social, economic and political roles, and therefore vulnerable to depression-inducing losses such as widowhood. Employment opportunities for women may be very restricted,

health and welfare provision limited, leaving widows with children to support, or with health problems, in a helpless situation (e.g. Dwyer, Bruce, & Cain, 1988; Mirza & Jenkins, 2004). A feature of life in many South Asian communities is upholding *izzat*—family honour. Women feel obliged to do this by being good wives, not complaining of any abuse and having reservations about seeking help for any mental health difficulties (P. Gilbert, J. Gilbert, & Sanghera, 2004):

> Izzat is the biggest issue in the Asian woman's life. It is not about yourself, it's about your family, it involves your relatives and the people you know. So it's you don't think about yourself, you've got to think about what other people are going to think.
>
> You have to be a good mother and a good wife and I think if you are not a good mother and not a good wife then you're not a good woman. And if you're not a good woman that's going to bring shame on your family.
>
> (if in an abusive relationship) "...one day it will get too much and...some women think it's better to commit suicide than to leave...I think from your point of view personally you would rather just die.
>
> (if in an abusive relationship)... if she goes away, she will be found again and brought back...shame does come into it if you are going to leave...it's because of izzat she's been taking the beatings (from Gilbert et al.).

As described in the opening phases of this chapter, religion is generally associated with lower levels of depressive illness, and of depression. The association is the result of several effects, some of which have working in opposite directions. There are more extensive discussions of many of these effects elsewhere in this volume. We have considered two effects of religion which may have differential impact on men's and women's mental health (alcohol use and gender role prescriptions). Other effects include religious coping—beliefs in a supportive, benevolent G-d predicts good mental health outcomes. Reports of gender differences in religious beliefs and religious coping styles are limited. Loewenthal, MacLeod, Goldblatt, Lubitsh, and Valentine (2000) found no differences between men and women (Protestants and Jews in the United Kingdom) in their religious coping beliefs. There have been very limited reports of gender differences in religious coping (Koenig et al., 2001), though Ferraro and Kelley-Moore (2000) reported an analysis of a national study in the United States which indicated that women were more likely than men to seek religious consolation when ill. Women, especially in Christian cultures, are generally more religiously active than men (Francis, 1993; Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997; Loewenthal, MacLeod, & Cinnirella, 2001), and even if there are no striking gender differences in religious coping style, the limited evidence suggests that women may be more likely than men to engage in religious activity such as prayer when ill or under stress. This may lead to better mental health outcomes among women.

There are other pathways by which religious factors may have a differential impact on women and men, and hence on depression—such as social support, caring and helping. These have been associated with lowered depression (Brown & Harris, 1978; Seligman, 2002), but the links with religion and gender remain to be systematically explored.

In this section we have seen that religious factors can impact differently on women and men, and some of these impacts may reflect on mood, particularly perhaps depression. The effects are mixed, and overall we must question the biological inevitability of women's depression-proneness. Sometimes the effects of religiously related factors may be strong enough to reduce or eliminate gender imbalance in depression.

Conclusions and Implications for Education and Wellbeing

This chapter has examined some common beliefs and questions about mental health, religion and culture. We have seen that somatisation is a culturally shaped and meaningful expression or idiom of distress, rather than a failure or inability to express distress in language. Schizophrenia can be affected by social and cultural factors, and we cannot dismiss the further concern that its diagnosis may be influenced by inadequately understood religious behaviour. The expression of obsessive-compulsive disorder can be in terms of religious behaviour and spiritual feelings, but there are strong reasons to suppose that religion does not cause obsessive illness. Finally, we have seen that religious and spiritual factors can have a strong influence on depression—even to the extent that the normal gender imbalance in depression prevalence disappears.

For those concerned with the education of children and adolescents, it is helpful to be aware that the conditions we have discussed can make their appearance in childhood. Very young children can suffer somatic complaints (Cohen et al., 1998), though the cultural shaping of these complaints during development has not been studied. Schizophrenia can be recognised in very early adolescence (Rapaport, 2000), and very young children have been diagnosed with OCD (Rutter & Taylor, 2002) and depression (Gotlib & Hammen, 2002). These psychiatric illnesses may not always be apparent to educators, to parents or even to mental health professionals. The commonest features of OCD in childhood may differ from those in adulthood—symmetry is common theme in childhood OCD for example. More problematic is that children may recognise that their obsession is abnormal, and they may be very furtive about it. The condition may go unrecognised until further symptoms develop and become uncontrollable. Childhood depression, while very common, may be unrecognised. Very quiet children may not draw enough attention to themselves to cause concern. Depressed mood may be masked by irritability (Butcher, Mineka, & Hooley, 2007). While teachers and others concerned with child and adolescent care and protection must be vigilant and concerned, it is appropriate to discuss concerns with other responsible and experienced professionals and to take respectful account of the child's social, cultural and religious background.

It is hoped that this chapter will have encouraged the reader to question some common assumptions and conclusions about religion and culture in relation to mental health. Religion is neither a universal destroyer of wellbeing nor a universal panacea. The effects of religion and spirituality on wellbeing are many and varied and, as we have seen, can definitely be modulated by culture.

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Chapter 7
Psychological Type Theory and Religious and Spiritual Experiences

Leslie J. Francis

Abstract Psychological type theory, originally proposed by Carl Jung and developed by instruments like the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator, the Keirsey Temperament Sorter, and the Francis Psychological Type Scales, provides a rich theoretical framework and a useful practical guide within which to understand and to promote religious and spiritual learning. This chapter defines and critiques psychological type theory, describes and evaluates measures of psychological type, reviews the growing body of research evidence linking psychological type with individual differences in religious and spiritual learning, and evaluates the relevance of the research literature for practice and application.

An Individual Differences Approach

The association between personality and religious experience has been a topic of long-standing interest both within psychology and within theology. The intention of this chapter is to engage with that debate, to extend the debate to embrace the emerging notion of spirituality, and to propose psychological type theory as a fruitful source for generating theoretical insight and empirical knowledge relevant to the debate.

For theologians, the debate concerning the association between personality and religious experience is classically established by appeal to teaching about the nature of God and by drawing on sources of divine revelation (say scripture) to explore the transforming impact of God on individual lives. On this account, the religious experience becomes the independent variable and human personality becomes the dependent variable.

For psychologists, the debate concerning the association between personality and religious experience is classically established by appeal to the psychological understanding of personality (variously conceived) and by drawing on psychological

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theory regarding ways in which given variation in personality may influence a range of other individual differences, including religious and spiritual experiences. On this account, human personality becomes the independent variable and religious experience becomes the dependent variable.

At this point an already complex debate becomes more complex by recognition of the variety of ways in which the term "personality" may be used both by theologians and by psychologists. In much of my own recent writings I have tried to cut through this complexity by distinguishing between three different constructs which I have wanted to define as character, as personality and as psychological type (see, for example, Francis, 2005). All three constructs are of central importance both to theologians and to psychologists, but I want to argue that it is the notion of psychological type theory that can provide the most efficient and effective starting point for a debate in which both psychologists and (Christian) theologians can engage.

The term "character" I take to be concerned with qualities that carry a moral valency. We can talk meaningfully about individuals who display a "good character" and about individuals who display a "bad character". Both theologians and psychologists may be properly concerned with distinguishing between such morally laden qualities. Within the Christian tradition, for example, Galatians 5 is often cited as contrasting the moral qualities of the good character (the so-called fruits of the Spirit) with the moral qualities of the bad character (the so-called works of the flesh). According to this tradition, the fruits of the Spirit include love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The works of the flesh, by way of contrast, include lewdness, hatred, jealousy, outburst of anger, selfish ambitions, envy and drunkenness. It is a matter of proper empirical enquiry to test the extent to which religious and spiritual experiences may help to differentiate between individual differences in such qualities of character.

The term "personality" I take to be concerned with those aspects of the human psyche that psychologists review when they attempt to provide all-embracing and inclusive accounts and measurement of human personality. The problem with such a broad definition is that there is no consensus among personality psychologists regarding what should and what should not be included within such a definition. In fact the term "personality" is currently used among personality psychologists to include at least three areas: deep-seated value-free descriptions of normal personality, fundamental descriptions of abnormal personality and psycho-pathologies, and more surface and value-laden descriptions of individual differences. It is because of this wide range of usage that I prefer to draw on the notion of psychological type in order to generate dialogue between psychology and theology.

The term "psychological type" has been defined from within both a theological and a psychological framework. From a theological perspective, psychological type has been defined by reference to a doctrine of creation according to which human beings are created to reflect a divine image that embraces and models individual differences. According to Genesis 1:27 both male and female are created in the image of God. By extension other fundamental human differences, like ethnicity, must reflect the richness and diversity of the divine image. According to this principle, as a theologian, I define psychological type as embracing a small set of key individual

differences which are largely immutable and go right to the heart of who an individual is (like sex and ethnicity). Such differences, it is argued theologically, reflect the intention and the diversity of the divine creator and are in effect non-negotiable. From a psychological perspective, psychological type has been defined by reference to the pioneering work of Carl Jung in his classic book *Psychological types* (Jung, 1971). It is to this body of work that attention will now be drawn.

Introducing Psychological Type

The model of psychological type, originally proposed by Carl Jung (1971), has been developed through a series of psychometric indices, including the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI: Myers & McCaulley, 1985), the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (KTS: Keirsey and Bates, 1978) and the Francis Psychological Type Scales (FPTS: Francis, 2005). The choice to adopt the Jungian model of psychological type as the platform on which to construct a dialogue between psychology and theology may itself be controversial both among psychologists and among theologians. On the one hand, personality psychologists have been relatively slow to accord the same kind of esteem to the Jungian model of psychological type as accorded, say, to Raymond Cattell's notion of the 16 factor model of personality (R. B. Cattell, A. K. S. Cattell, & H. E. P. Cattell, 1993), or to Hans Eysenck's notion of the three-dimensional model of personality (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1991), or to the more recent Big Five factor model of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1985). The problem has been, in part, exacerbated by the comparative insularity and distinctive methodological procedures developed by pioneering researchers in the field of psychological type (including perhaps overreliance on the *Journal of Psychological Type* which both concentrates research in this area and keeps it apart from wider debate). In recent years, however, some real attempts have been made to mainstream research in psychological type theory, and such attempts are being largely successful (as evidenced by the symposia on psychological type convened by Section 36 of the American Psychological Association). On the other hand, theologians have either ignored or tended to be critical of the way in which psychological type theory has begun to penetrate the Christian community, as evidenced by the (somewhat superficial) collection of essays edited by Kenneth Leech under the title, *Myers–Briggs: Some critical reflections* (Leech, 1996). In recent years, however, some real attempts have been made to address such criticisms and to clarify some of the misunderstandings on which they have been based (Lloyd, 2007).

However, the choice to adopt the Jungian model of psychological type as the psychological platform on which to construct a psychological perspective on practical and pastoral theology is explicable in terms of the ways in which this particular psychological model of personality and individual differences has already been well established in church-related circles in Australasia (Dwyer, 1995), North America (Baab, 2000) and the United Kingdom (Duncan, 1993). In particular, in many places clergy are introduced to this way of thinking in initial ministerial training and in continuing professional development.

As popularised through books like *Gifts differing* (Myers & Myers, 1980) and *Please understand me: 2* (Keirsey, 1998), psychological type theory distinguishes between four bipolar psychological perspectives: two orientations (introversion and extraversion), two perceiving functions (sensing and intuition), two judging functions (thinking and feeling), and two attitudes towards the outer world (judging and perceiving). According to this model, the two orientations (introversion and extraversion) and the two attitudes (judging and perceiving) define the kind of context within which the individual human psyche functions. The two perceiving functions (sensing and intuition) and the two judging functions (thinking and feeling) define the mental processes involved in interpreting and making sense of the world.

The two orientations are concerned with where energy is drawn from and focused. On the one hand, extraverts (E) are orientated towards the outer world; they are energised by the events and people around them. They enjoy communicating and thrive in stimulating and exciting environments. They tend to focus their attention upon what is happening outside themselves. They are usually open people, easy to get to know, and enjoy having many friends. On the other hand, introverts (I) are orientated towards their inner world; they are energised by their inner ideas and concepts. They enjoy solitude, silence and contemplation, as they tend to focus their attention on what is happening in their inner life. They may prefer to have a small circle of intimate friends rather than many acquaintances.

The two perceiving functions are concerned with the way in which people perceive information. On the one hand, sensing types (S) focus on the realities of a situation as perceived by the senses. They tend to focus on specific details, rather than the overall picture. They are concerned with the actual, the real and the practical and tend to be down to earth and matter of fact. On the other hand, intuitive types (N) focus on the possibilities of a situation, perceiving meanings and relationships. They may feel that perception by the senses is not as valuable as information gained as indirect associations and concepts impact on their perception. They focus on the overall picture, rather than on specific facts and data.

The two judging functions are concerned with the criteria which people employ to make decisions and judgements. On the one hand, thinking types (T) make decisions and judgements based on objective, impersonal logic. They value integrity and justice. They are known for their truthfulness and for their desire for fairness. They consider conforming to principles to be of more importance than cultivating harmony. On the other hand, feeling types (F) make decisions and judgements based on subjective, personal values. They value compassion and mercy. They are known for their tactfulness and for their desire for peace. They are more concerned to promote harmony than to adhere to abstract principles.

The two attitudes towards the outer world are determined by which of the two sets of functions (that is, perceiving S/N or judging T/F) is preferred in dealings with the outer world. On the one hand, judging types (J) seek to order, rationalise and structure their outer world, as they actively judge external stimuli. They enjoy routine and established patterns. They prefer to follow schedules in order to reach an established goal and may make use of lists, timetables or diaries. They tend to

be punctual, organised and tidy. They prefer to make decisions quickly and to stick to their conclusions once made. On the other hand, perceiving types (P) do not seek to impose order on the outer world but are more reflective, perceptive and open, as they passively perceive external stimuli. They have a flexible, open-ended approach to life. They enjoy change and spontaneity. They prefer to leave projects open in order to adapt and improve them. Their behaviour may often seem impulsive and unplanned.

According to Jungian theory, each individual needs access to all four functions (sensing, intuition, thinking and feeling) for normal and healthy living. The two perceiving functions (sensing and intuition) are needed to gather information about the inner and outer worlds inhabited by the individual. These are the irrational functions concerned with collecting information, with seeing reality and possibility. The two judging functions (thinking and feeling) are needed to organise and evaluate information. These are the rational functions concerned with making decisions and determining courses of action. Although each individual needs access to all four functions, Jungian theory posits the view that the relative strengths of these four functions vary from one individual to another. The analogy is drawn with handedness. Although equipped with two hands, the majority of individuals prefer one and tend to develop skills with that hand to the neglect of the other hand. Similarly, empirical evidence suggests that individuals will develop preference for one of the perceiving functions (sensing or intuition) and neglect the other and that they will develop preference for one of the judging functions (thinking or feeling) and neglect the other.

Moreover, according to Jungian theory, for each individual either the preferred perceiving function (sensing or intuition) or the preferred judging function (thinking or feeling) takes preference over the other, leading to the emergence of one dominant function which shapes the individual's dominant approach to life. Dominant sensing shapes the practical person; dominant intuition shapes the imaginative person; dominant feeling shapes the humane person and dominant thinking shapes the analytic person. According to Jungian theory, it is the function opposite to the dominant function which is least well developed in the individual (the inferior function). Thus, the dominant senser experiences most difficulty with the intuitive function; the dominant intuitive experiences most difficulty with the sensing function; the dominant thinker experiences most difficulty with the feeling function and the dominant feeler experiences most difficulty with the thinking function.

Measuring Psychological Type

Evaluation of the empirical evidence regarding the association between psychological type and religious and spiritual experiences must begin with an evaluation of the tools available for assessing psychological type. This includes consideration of the key psychometric properties of reliability and validity. Reliability concerns the extent to which a psychological tool produces a consistent reading of whatever it is

that the tool measures. Validity concerns the extent to which a psychological tool actually measures what it sets out to measure. A highly reliable instrument may not, however, necessarily be a valid instrument.

The best known tool designed to assess psychological type is the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985). In an initial study, Francis and Jones (1999a) reviewed the extant research literature on the reliability and validity of the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator and concluded that there was good evidence for the internal consistency reliability and construct validity of the continuous scale scores, but that the use of the instrument to distinguish between discrete type categories remained considerably more problematic.

Recognising that no previous study had specifically explored the psychometric properties of the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator among a highly religious sample and acknowledging that some scale items may function differently among highly religious individuals, Francis and Jones (1999a) proceeded to test the scale properties of the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator Form G (Anglicised) among a sample of 429 adult churchgoers. Their data supported the general reliability of the eight scales intended to quantify preferences for introversion, extraversion, sensing, intuition, thinking, feeling, judging and perceiving. At the same time, the data highlighted ways in which all the scales, apart from sensing, contained some items which detracted from, rather than contributed towards, the homogeneity of the indices. They argued that some further refinement of the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator, giving particular attention to reassessing or reviewing those items which failed to achieve a corrected item total correlation of at least $+0.30$, would enhance the psychometric properties of the instrument.

As a second step in examining the psychometric properties of the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator, Francis and Jones (2000) and Francis, Craig, and Robbins (2007a) conducted two studies examining psychological type alongside the three-dimensional model of personality proposed by Hans Eysenck. The first of these two studies was conducted among 377 adult churchgoers who also completed the 90-item Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975); the second was conducted among 554 undergraduate students who also completed the 48-item short-form Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (S. B. G. Eysenck, H. J. Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985). The purpose of these two studies was to assess the extent to which dialogue could be established between research in the psychology of religion drawing on the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator and the growing family of studies in the psychology of religion drawing on Eysenck's model of personality, especially in light of the way in which both systems used the terms introversion and extraversion. The data demonstrated a number of statistically significant relationships between the two models of personality and drew attention to two substantively significant relationships. In Eysenckian terms, the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator constructs of introversion and extraversion translate as "neurotic introversion" and as "stable extraversion". In Eysenckian terms, the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator constructs of judging and perceiving translate as "low psychoticism" and as "high psychoticism".

There remain serious disadvantages in using the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator as a research tool. Properly developed as a refined and sensitive instrument for use in one-on-one situations, the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator is a cumbersome instrument in many research contexts, takes too long to complete, is inappropriate for postal surveys and remains expensive to purchase. Although not claiming to mimic the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator, the Keirsey Temperament Sorter, first published by Keirsey and Bates (1978) and revised by Keirsey (1998), offers a different operationalisation of the original Jungian constructs. The Keirsey Temperament Sorter provides an alternative, shorter and cheaper instrument which has been employed in a number of empirical studies. Francis, Craig, and Robbins (2007b) reviewed the research literature comparing these two instruments and were able to identify only three studies which had used the two instruments side-by-side (Quinn, Lewis, & Fischer, 1992; Tucker & Gillespie, 1993; Kelly & Jugovic, 2001). Building on these three studies, Francis et al. (2007b) invited their sample of 554 undergraduate students to complete both the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator (Form G Anglicised) and the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (1978 edition).

The data published by Francis, Craig, and Robbins (2007b) demonstrated that the underlying continuous scale scores generated by the two instruments are highly correlated and appear to be assessing similar psychological constructs. However, the methods proposed by the two instruments for assigning individuals to discrete psychological types are dissimilar and result in the generation of significantly different type profiles. When compared with each other, the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator tends to generate a significantly higher representation of sensing, thinking and perceiving, while the Keirsey Temperament Sorter tends to generate a significantly higher representation of intuition, feeling and judging. The current study points to the relative unreliability of the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator and the Keirsey Temperament Sorter as comparable type indicators but also to the relatively strong relationship between the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator and the Keirsey Temperament Sorter as indicators of continuous personality traits. Comparisons of type categorisations generated by the two instruments may need, therefore, to be treated with caution.

Although the Keirsey Temperament Sorter is more appropriate for self-completion survey work than the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator, there remain two major problems with using this instrument. First, the Keirsey Temperament Sorter is designed primarily as a self-assessment tool rather than as a research instrument. Moreover, the copyright holders are reluctant to allow researchers to reproduce the items separately from the published scoring mechanism. Second, reliability studies show some problems with a few of the Keirsey Temperament Sorter items. For this reason Francis (2005) published a new attempt to operationalise Jungian psychological type theory, claiming to mimic neither the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator nor the Keirsey Temperament Sorter. This instrument, the Francis Psychological Type Scales, was designed specifically for research purposes. A small but growing body of literature is now reporting on the psychometric properties of this new instrument.

Profiling Religious Professionals

One established way of examining the association between psychological type and religious and spiritual experiences has been through profiling religious professionals. In the mid-1980s, Macdaid, McCaulley, and Kainz (1986) published the following picture. In a sample of 2,002 sisters in Roman Catholic religious orders, the predominant types were ISFJ (27%) and ESFJ (16%). In a sample of 114 brothers in Roman Catholic religious orders, a similar pattern emerged, with ISFJ (23%) and ESFJ (14%) again predominating. This pattern continued in a sample of 1,298 Roman Catholic priests, with ISFJ (18%) and ESFJ (14%) followed by ENFJ (11%) and ENFP (11%). A slightly different pattern emerged for a sample of 102 Roman Catholic deacons, with ESFJ (23%), ENFJ (19%), ESTJ (14%) and ISFJ (13%). In a sample of 1,554 Protestant ministers, the predominant types were ENFJ (16%), ENFP (14%) and ESFJ (13%). A similar pattern emerged from a sample of 633 Protestant seminarians, with ESFJ (16%), ENFJ (14%) and ENFP (12%).

Other studies profiling religious professionals in the United States were published during the 1980s by Cabral (1984), Harbaugh (1984), Holsworth (1984) and Bigelow, Fitzgerald, Busk, Girault, and Avis (1988). The major point of consistency from all these studies concerns the clear preference among religious professionals for feeling over thinking. Preferences for intuition and sensing seem to be related to denominational allegiance, with a greater tendency towards sensing among Catholics and a greater tendency towards intuition among Anglicans and liberal Protestants. The majority of religious professionals prefer judging over perceiving. Introverts are more strongly represented among Catholic priests and among members of religious orders than among Protestant clergy.

Building on this research tradition initiated in the United States, a series of more recent studies have profiled the psychological type characteristics of religious professionals in the United Kingdom. The first study in this series was reported by Francis, Payne, and Jones (2001) drawing on data provided by 427 male Anglican clergy in Wales. The data demonstrated clear preferences for introversion over extraversion, for sensing over intuition, for feeling over thinking and for judging over perceiving. The two predominant types were ISFJ (20%) and ESFJ (13%). Commenting on the implications of these findings for ministry in the Church in Wales, Francis, Payne, and Jones (2001) made the following four points.

First, 59% of the clergy preferred introversion, compared with 42% who preferred extraversion. Introverts may bring many strengths to ministry, including the ability to work by themselves on tasks, to invest time in reading and in preparation, to welcome one-to-one encounters in counselling and in spiritual direction, to develop an inward life of prayer and spirituality. On the other hand, introverts may be drained by many of the social expectations of ministry: working with large groups of people, remembering names, visiting strangers and assuming a high profile in the local congregation and the wider local community.

Second, 57% of the clergy preferred sensing, compared with 43% who preferred intuition. Sensers may bring many strengths to ministry, including a fine awareness of the environment in which they serve and of the church in which they lead

worship, a concern for the detail within the services they conduct and for the facts on which judgements and choices are made. On the other hand, sensers may find it more difficult to formulate a vision for their church's future, to welcome change and experimentation in liturgy, or to see new and imaginative solutions to old problems.

Third, 69% of the clergy preferred feeling, compared with 31% who preferred thinking. Feelers may bring many strengths to ministry, including the desire to affiliate with others, the gifts of empathy and sympathy, a commitment to harmony, a deep understanding of people and a respect for interpersonal values. On the other hand, feelers may find it more difficult to take tough decisions which affect other people's lives, to chair troublesome meetings, to be assertive on points of truth and justice, and to put other people in their place.

Fourth, 68% of the clergy preferred judging, compared with 32% who preferred perceiving. Judgers may bring many strengths to ministry, including the ability to organise their own lives, to organise the life of their parishes, to arrange services and events well in advance, to keep on top of administration and to manage local affairs. On the other hand, judgers may become too inflexible and restricted by their own strategies, plans and routines, too unwilling or unable to abandon their plans in order to respond to unexpected crises, emergencies or opportunities and too bound to the present structure to embrace new ideas and possibilities.

The Church in Wales is separated from the Church of England by a very porous boundary, although the policies and ethos of the two Churches are set in very different contexts. Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater (2007) drew on data provided by 626 male Anglican clergy in England. In three ways these data reflected the same preferences as those found among male Anglican clergy in Wales: preferences for introversion over extraversion, for feeling over thinking and for judging over perceiving. In one crucial way, however, the profiles of the two groups of clergymen differed. In Wales 57% preferred sensing and 43% preferred intuition; in England, the balance was reversed with 62% preferring intuition and 38% preferring sensing. Francis, Craig, Whinney, et al. (2007) suggested that these differences in psychological type reflect a crucial difference in leadership styles between the two Churches and in the character of the two Churches. The Church in Wales tends to be more conservative than the Church of England and therefore a place in which leaders who prefer sensing may feel more comfortable. They suggested that clergymen who prefer intuition may become restless and impatient in the Church in Wales and cross the border to England, while clergymen who prefer sensing may become restless in the Church of England and cross the border into the Anglophone parts of Wales.

The two studies by Francis, Payne, et al. (2001) and Francis, Craig, Whinney, et al. (2007) both drew attention to the high proportions of feelers among male clergy: 69% in Wales and 54% in England, compared with 35% of men in the general population as reported by Kendall (1998). This finding is consistent with the view that the churches in the United Kingdom have become highly feminised communities (Brown, 2001) and that feeling characterises a feminised approach to life. According to Kendall (1998) 70% of women in the United Kingdom population prefer feeling. Such an analysis provides an important clue regarding why the

churches may experience such difficulty in attracting individuals with a preference for thinking in general and in attracting men in particular.

A further study among 79 Roman Catholic priests reported by Craig, Duncan, and Francis (2006a) also found a clear preference for feeling (79%) over thinking (22%). However, a series of studies conducted among evangelical church leaders, in comparison with Anglican and Catholic church leaders, found a higher proportion of thinkers. For example, preference for thinking was found among 56% of the 81 male evangelical seminarians studied by Francis, Craig, and Butler (2007), by 54% of the 164 male church leaders studied by Craig, Francis, and Robbins (2004) at the evangelical Spring Harvest, by 50% of the 278 male Bible College students studied by Francis, Penson, and Jones (2001), by 56% of the 190 male Assemblies of God Bible College students studied by Kay, Francis, and Craig (2008), by 52% of the 130 male evangelical lay church leaders studied by Francis, Craig, Horsfall, and Ross (2005), by 62% of 42 male vergers studied by Craig, Duncan, and Francis (2006b) and by 70% of the 92 male evangelical missionary personnel studied by Craig, Horsfall, and Francis (2005). Taken together, these findings suggest that there may be more opportunities for men who prefer thinking within leadership roles in evangelical churches, although this conclusion is qualified by Francis and Robbins' (2002) study of 57 male evangelical leaders, of whom just 44% preferred thinking.

When compared with the population norms provided by Kendall (1998), there is a second way in which men engaged in Christian ministry differ from the profile of men in general. According to Kendall (1998), in the population as a whole just 27% of men prefer intuition. Although the proportions of intuitives found in studies among men concerned with Christian ministry vary considerably from one group to another, in most groups they exceed the proportion within the general population. The highest proportion of intuitives is found in the study by Francis, Craig, Whinney, et al. (2007) among 626 Church of England clergymen (62%). Then, in descending order, intuitives accounted for 49% in the study by Craig et al. (2006a) among 79 Roman Catholic priests, 43% in the study by Francis, Payne, et al. (2001) among 427 Anglican clergymen in Wales, 34% in the study by Francis, Penson, et al. (2001) among 278 male students in an Evangelical Bible College and 26% in the study by Kay et al. (2008) among 190 male students in a Pentecostal Bible College.

Three studies in this series also provided data on the psychological type profile of women engaged in or training for Christian ministry. The main conclusion from these three studies is that, like male church leaders, female church leaders are more likely to prefer intuition than is the case among women in the general population. According to Kendall (1998) in the general population just 21% of women prefer intuition. In a study of 237 Anglican clergywomen in England, 65% preferred intuition (Francis, Craig, Whinney, et al., 2007); in a study of 213 female students in an Evangelical Bible College, 34% preferred intuition (Francis, Penson, et al., 2001); and in a study of 122 female students in a Pentecostal Bible College, 38% preferred intuition (Kay & Francis, 2008). These data are considerably more limited in terms of quantity compared with the data available on male church leaders, simply because the full recognition of women into ordained ministry has

only occurred quite recently in some denominations (for example, Anglicanism) and remains excluded by some other denominations (for example, Roman Catholicism).

The finding that the vocation to Christian ministry, among both women and men, attracts higher proportions of intuitives than are in the population as a whole deserves considered reflection. On the one hand, there is the practical gospel of pastoral care which may be attractive to the pragmatic concerns of individuals with a preference for sensing. Here are the people responding to the call to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to visit the sick, and to tend the dying. On the other hand, there is much more to the Christian gospel than the practice of good works in the here and now. The Christian gospel holds out a vision for the future, and faith in the future proclaims the unseen and the intangible. Here is a vision which may be grasped more easily by intuitives than by sensers. The Christian gospel continually challenges its adherents to work for change, to build a better future and to transform existing structures. Here are challenges which may be welcomed more easily by intuitives than by sensers.

In another study in this series, Francis, P. Nash, S. Nash, and Craig (2007) examined the psychological type profile of 155 male and 134 female professional Christian youth ministers. This group emerged as significantly more extraverted than ministers in general and significantly less judging than ministers in general. These findings are interpreted to illuminate some of the tensions between Christian youth ministers and other members of the ministry team.

While the majority of studies concerned with the psychological type profiling of religious professionals have been able to report only on the profile itself, a few innovative studies have also linked these profile data to other measures. For example, Francis and Payne (2002) examined the relationship between psychological type and ministry styles among a sample of 191 Church in Wales clergymen, using the Payne Index of Ministry Styles (PIMS). These data demonstrated both that there is an association between psychological type and ministry styles and that this association is in some ways complex. For example, the extraversion ministry style is correlated positively with a preference for extraversion and negatively with a preference for introversion. Extraverted clergy are energised by the public aspects of ministry, while introverted clergy are drained by these aspects of ministry. On the other hand, the introversion ministry style is not significantly correlated with preferences for introversion or for extraversion. Contrary to prediction, introverted clergy are not more likely than extraverted clergy to claim to be energised by the inward aspects of ministry. This finding may reflect two constraints placed on clergy by the public expectations of ministry. Such constraints may mean that ministry styles tend to be shaped as much by external influences as by individual personality predispositions. First, since Christian spirituality has been largely shaped by an introverted perspective, extraverted clergy may feel constrained to overemphasise the benefit they derive from such introverted activities as spending time alone in prayer. Second, since Christian ministry has been largely shaped by an extraverted perspective, introverted clergy may feel guilty about emphasising their preference for the inner world.

Two recent studies have examined the relationship between psychological type and work-related psychological health among religious professionals using the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI). The first study, reported by Francis, Robbins, Kaldor, and Castle (in press), was conducted among a sample of 3,715 clergy from Australia, England and New Zealand; the second study, reported by Francis, Wulff, and Robbins (2008) was conducted among a sample of 748 clergy serving within The Presbyterian Church (USA). The data from both studies confirmed that the main association between work-related psychological health and psychological type among religious professionals is a function of the orientations (the source of psychological energy). Compared with clergy who prefer introversion, clergy who prefer extraversion display both higher levels of satisfaction in ministry and lower levels of emotional exhaustion in ministry. These findings are consistent with the theory that the extraverted nature of ministry requires introverted clergy to operate for considerable periods of time outside their preferred orientations, with the consequent loss of energy and the consequent erosion of psychological rewards.

Profiling Church Congregations

Another established way of examining the association between psychological type and religious and spiritual experiences has been through profiling church congregations, although this is a much less well-documented field than the study of religious professionals. Some pioneering studies in this field were reported in North America by Gerhardt (1983), Rehak (1998), Delis-Bulhoes (1990) and Ross (1993, 1995). Within the United Kingdom three exploratory studies of church congregations were reported by Craig, Francis, Bailey, and Robbins (2003), Francis, Duncan, Craig, and Luffman (2004) and Francis, Robbins, A. Williams, and R. Williams (2007) drawing on samples of 101, 327 and 185 churchgoers, respectively. The third of these studies specifically compared the profile of male and female churchgoers with the population norms provided by Kendall (1998). The main finding from this comparison concerned the undue weighting towards sensing, feeling and judging in church congregations. Among women ISFJ accounts for 32% of churchgoers, compared with 18% of the general population ($P < 0.001$), and ESFJ accounts for 28% of churchgoers, compared with 19% of the general population ($P < 0.01$). Among men ISFJ accounts for 19% of churchgoers, compared with 7% of the general population ($P < 0.001$), and ESFJ accounts for 27% of churchgoers, compared with 6% of the general population ($P < 0.001$). Over-representation of ISFJ and ESFJ among churchgoers leads to under-representation of other types.

Commenting on these findings, Francis, Robbins, et al. (2007) argued that analysis of the more visible demographic characteristics of rural Anglican churchgoers (in terms of sex and age) suggests that, although the invitation of welcome may be issued indiscriminately to both sexes and to all ages, women are more likely to respond than men and the post-retired are more likely to respond than the pre-retired. Analysis of the less visible psychological characteristics of churchgoers (in terms of the 16 discrete types) has also suggested that, although the invitation of welcome

may be issued to all psychological types, individuals with a type preference for SFJ are more likely to respond than individuals with other type preferences.

In her booklet, *Introduction to Type* (Myers, 1998, p. 7) provides insightful profiles of the two SFJ types: ISFJ and ESFJ. The ISFJ profile is as follows:

> Quiet, friendly, responsible and conscientious. Work devotedly to meet their obligations. Lend stability to any project or group. Thorough, pains-taking, accurate. Their interests are usually not technical. Can be patient with necessary details. Loyal considerate, perceptive, concerned with how other people feel.

The ESFJ profile is as follows:

> Warm-hearted, talkative, popular, conscientious, born co-operators, active committee members. Need harmony and may be good at creating it. Always doing something nice for someone. Work best with encouragement and praise. Main interest is in things that directly and visibly affect people's lives.

There are important ways in which these two profiles describe the kind of people we might expect to have responded to the call of welcome to join the church congregation. The SFJ congregation possess a number of recognisable Christian strengths. The preference for feeling (F) characterises a community concerned with human values, interpersonal relationships and with a loving and caring God. Here is a community concerned with peace and with harmony. The population norms show that feeling is a feminine preference *par excellence* (reported by 70% of women and by 35% of men). A community shaped by such a dominant preference for feeling may, however, be quite alien to individuals who view the world through the lens of thinking (including the majority of men).

The preference for sensing (S) characterises a community concerned with continuity, tradition, stability, and with a God grounded in divine changelessness. Here is a community concerned with guarding what has been handed down by previous generations. The population norms show that sensing is the preferred mode of the British population (reported by 79% of women and by 73% of men). In this sense, the church congregation is in step with wider society. A community shaped by such a dominant preference for sensing may, however, be quite alien to individuals who view the world through the lens of intuition.

The preference for judging (J) characterises a community concerned with organisation, discipline, structure and with a God who welcomes a regular pattern to worship (whatever that pattern may be). Here is a community concerned with valuing regular commitment, advanced planning and respect for the guidelines (implicit as well as explicit). The population norms show that judging is the preferred mode of the British population (reported by 62% of women and by 55% of men). In this sense, the church congregation is once again in step with wider society. A community shaped by such a dominant preference for judging may, however, be quite alien to individuals who view the world through the lens of perceiving.

Building on this tradition, Village, Francis, and Craig (in press) in a study of 290 churchgoers found significant differences in type profiles between individuals attending evangelical Anglican churches and individuals attending Anglo-Catholic churches. There was a significantly higher proportion of intuitives in

the Anglo-Catholic congregations. In a study of 2,658 churchgoers, Craig (2005) found significant differences in type profiles between individuals attending rural and urban churches. There was a significantly higher proportion of sensers in rural congregations.

Other studies in this tradition have reported on the psychological type profiles of 93 female and 65 male active members of the Anglican Church (Francis, Butler, Jones, & Craig, 2007), 246 male and 380 female participants in Christian programmes (Craig, Francis, & Barwick, in press), 74 female and 40 male members of Anglican church councils (Francis, Butler, & Craig, 2005), 104 student members of a university-based Christian Union (Craig, Bigio, Robbins, & Francis, 2005), 79 female churchgoers (Craig, Williams, Francis, & Robbins, 2006) and 30 volunteer workers in a rural Christian charity shop (Francis & Pegg, 2007). These studies generally confirm the strong SFJ preference in Christian communities. The study of the volunteer workers in the Christian charity shop showed a strong preference for extraversion, in contrast with the general preference for introversion among churchgoers. Francis and Pegg (2007) concluded from this finding that activities like the Christian charity shop may provide a focus of interest for those extraverted members of the community who may feel less at home in the normal introverted church congregation.

Different Expressions of Religious and Spiritual Experiences

The two research traditions concerned with the psychological type profile of religious professionals and with the psychological type profile of church congregations are clearly focused on a traditional "religious" understanding of spirituality. Within this definition, these studies have demonstrated that some psychological types are more likely than others to be attracted to church membership and to leadership roles within churches and that there are some significant variations between different church groupings. A third research tradition has explored in greater detail the association between psychological type preferences and individual differences in religious and spiritual experiences and expressions. Five different strands of research have been initiated within this context.

The first strand has examined the connection between psychological type and attitude towards Christianity, building on the well-established research tradition which had documented a stable link between attitude towards Christianity and the three-dimensional model of personality proposed by Hans Eysenck (Francis, Lewis, Brown, Philipchalk, & Lester, 1995), using the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity (Francis, Lewis, Philipchalk, Brown, & Lester, 1995). The four studies in this series have been based on samples of 82 students (Jones & Francis, 1999), 367 students (Fearn, Francis, & Wilcox, 2001), 149 students (Francis et al., 2003), and 552 students (Francis, Jones, & Craig, 2004). The findings from these four studies are inconclusive and suggest that all types may develop a positive attitude towards religion, but in somewhat different ways.

The second strand has examined the connection between psychological type and mystical orientation, drawing on the conceptualisation and measurement proposed by Francis and Louden (2000a) in the Mystical Orientation Scale. The three studies in this series have been based on samples of 100 students and adult churchgoers (Francis & Louden, 2000b), 543 participants attending workshops concerned with personality and spirituality (Francis, 2002), and 318 individuals who frequented the retreat house associated with Ampleforth Abbey (Francis, Village, Robbins, & Ineson, 2007). The most secure conclusion to emerge from these studies is that mystical orientation is associated with the perceiving process: intuitives are more open than sensers to mystical orientation. This finding is consistent with the earlier finding of Francis and Ross (1997) among 379 participants attending spirituality courses that sensers record higher scores than intuitives on an index of traditional Christian spirituality, while intuitives record higher scores than sensers on an index of experiential spirituality. Francis and Ross (1997) argued that the recognition of different preferences between sensers and intuitives may help to explain some conflicting experiences between clergy and congregations. For example, worship leaders who have a clear preference for intuition may find it difficult to understand why their attempts to provide more creative or experientially based forms of worship are so strongly resisted by congregations which have a clear preference for sensing.

The third strand has examined the connection between psychological type and charismatic experience, building on an earlier set of studies concerned with locating charismatic experience within Eysenck's three-dimensional model of personality (Francis & Thomas, 1997; Robbins, Hair, & Francis, 1999; Louden & Francis, 2001; Francis & Robbins, 2003). These earlier studies tended to show that charismatic experience was associated with high extraversion scores and with low neuroticism scores. The two studies examining the connection between psychological type and charismatic experience were based on samples of 368 committed Christian adults (Francis & Jones, 1997) and 925 Christian adults attending workshops on personality and spirituality (Jones, Francis, & Craig, 2005). The data demonstrate that, compared with non-charismatics, the charismatic sample contains significantly higher proportions of extraverts, thinkers and perceivers. Compared with the non-charismatic sample, there is a significantly higher proportion of dominant thinkers among the charismatic sample. Among the charismatic sample there is a significant over-representation of ESTJ and a significant under-representation of ISFJ.

The fourth strand has examined the connection between psychological type and different styles of religious believing. The first study in this series examined the relationship between scores recorded on an index of conservative Christian belief and psychological type preferences among a sample of 315 adult churchgoers (Francis & Jones, 1998). The data demonstrated that Christians who preferred sensing and thinking were more likely to hold traditional beliefs than Christians who preferred intuition and feeling. In a second study drawing on the same database, Francis and Jones (1999b) examined the relationship between psychological type and tolerance for religious uncertainty. These data demonstrated that Christians who preferred intuition rather than sensing were more tolerant of religious uncertainty. Taking this question one step further, Francis and Ross (2000) examined the relationship

between psychological type and the Batson and Ventis 6-item measure of quest orientation of religiosity (Batson & Ventis, 1982) among a sample of 64 active Catholic churchgoers. These data provided inconclusive results. The next study in the series, however, by Francis and Ross (in press) employed the quest measure proposed by the New Indices of Religious Orientation (Francis, 2007) among a sample of 481 weekly churchgoing Christians. These data confirmed a positive association between intuition and the quest orientation of religiosity.

The fifth strand has begun to examine the empirical evidence for some of the theoretical underpinning of the SIFT method of biblical hermeneutics and liturgical preaching (Francis, 2003, 2006). Drawing on a sample of 404 lay adult Anglicans from 11 different churches, Village and Francis (2005) invited the participants to read a healing story from Mark's Gospel and then to choose between interpretative statements designed to appeal to particular psychological type preferences. The data confirmed a match between preferred biblical interpretation and personality preferences in both the perceiving (sensing versus intuition) and the judging (feeling versus thinking) processes.

Other recent studies have examined the relationship between dogmatism, religion and psychological type among a sample of 422 female undergraduate students (Ross, Francis, & Craig, 2005); the relationship between psychological type and religious affiliation among a sample of 425 female undergraduate students (Ross & Francis, 2006); the relationship between psychological type and Christian belief about the bible and the Holy Spirit among 404 churchgoers (Village, 2005); the relationship between psychological type and attitude towards Celtic Christianity among 248 committed churchgoers (Francis, Craig, & Hall, 2008); and the relationship between psychological type and individual differences in experience and appreciation among 381 cathedral visitors (Francis, Williams, Annis, & Robbins, 2008).

This third research tradition has established the power of psychological type theory to predict and to account for certain key individual differences in religious and spiritual experiences and expressions. By so doing, the foundations have been laid on which future research can build to extend empirically based knowledge regarding individual differences in broad fields of religious and spiritual experiences and expressions.

Applications

One of the recurrent dangers within religious and spiritual traditions is the tendency to assume that one form of religious expression or one form of spiritual practice should be regarded as appropriate for everyone. What this chapter should have achieved, if nothing else, is the demonstration that any such monolithic view of religious and spiritual experiences ignores the rich diversity within human beings themselves. The Jungian notion of psychological type provides a theoretical framework against which diverse expressions of religion and spirituality may be tested.

Individuals shaped by the two orientations of introversion and extraversion may properly choose different paths of spirituality, reflecting their respective sources of energy. For example, long periods of solitary silent meditation may well enrich and energise the introvert, but exhaust and drain the extravert. Conversely, long periods of deeply meaningful spiritual group activities may well enrich and energise the extravert, but exhaust and drain the introvert.

Individuals shaped by the two perceiving processes of sensing and intuition may properly express their spirituality in different ways. For example, the careful study of sacred narrative (from whatever source) may satisfy the sensing person's thirst for detail, for facts, and for conformity, but quickly lose the interest of intuitives. Conversely, opportunities to speculate about the future and to build visions of a deeply transformed world may satisfy the intuitive person's quest for novelty and transformation, but quickly lose the interest of sensers.

Individuals shaped by the two judging processes of thinking and feeling may properly develop their spirituality in different ways. For example, the feeling person may come alive with a spirituality of the heart that would leave the thinker unmoved. Conversely, the thinking person may come alive with a spirituality of the head that would leave the feeler unmoved.

Individuals shaped by the two attitudes towards the outer world of judging and perceiving may properly long for very different characteristics in their preferred form of spirituality. For example, the judging person may need the structure that is provided by a disciplined spiritual practice in order to remain committed to or to sense benefit from a spiritual path. Conversely, the perceiving person may need to be given permission to follow spiritual practices in a relaxed and flexible manner so as not to feel overwhelmed or constrained by external structures.

Taking psychological type seriously could, therefore, challenge and transform our understanding of the very notion of spirituality itself.

Note

1. At an earlier stage of my thinking I attempted to make do with two terms (character and personality), but my fellow personality psychologists rebelled at the way in which I needed to restrict the term personality.

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Chapter 8
Understanding the Attitudinal Dimensions of Religion and Spirituality

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Abstract The social scientific study of religion appreciates the multidimensional nature of religion and spirituality and distinguishes between a number of well-defined dimensions, including affiliation (say Methodist, Catholic, Muslim), practice (say, personal prayer, public attendance), belief (say, life after death, hell), orientation (say, intrinsic, extrinsic), and attitude. This chapter concentrates on the body of research which has refined concern with the attitudinal dimension of religion and spirituality. The argument proceeds in five steps: defining and critiquing the concept of attitude; describing and assessing methods of assessing and measuring attitude; assembling and integrating the research evidence concerned with the correlates of the attitudinal dimension of religion and spirituality; antecedents and consequences of individual differences in the attitudinal dimension of religion and spirituality; and applying the research evidence to practice.

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to profile an established research tradition concerned with understanding the attitudinal dimensions of religion and to suggest that this tradition may provide a fruitful model for examining broader understandings of spirituality. The research tradition discussed in this chapter has been informed by and influenced by an individual differences approach within empirically based psychology.

The individual differences approach in psychology is grounded on certain core assumptions including: the view that human behaviour is not entirely random, but patterned in discernable ways; the view that there are certain readily discernable factors that are core to organising and predicting individual differences (say, for example, the sex differences of being male or female); the view that deeper, more covert factors, can be accessed and measured by appropriately tailored psychometric

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instruments (say, for example, the personality differences of being introvert or extravert).

Within this individual differences approach, empirical research within the psychology of religion has made significant advances by recognising that religion is a multidimensional phenomenon and that effective research needs not only to distinguish between the different dimensions of religion but also to propose different methods for measuring the different dimensions.

Dimensions of Religion

One powerful model for distinguishing between different dimensions of religion well established in the social sciences discusses the dimensions of affiliation, belief, practice and attitudes. Each of these dimensions is of theological significance and of social significance and may be treated somewhat differently by empirical theologians and by social scientists of religion.

Religious affiliation is a measure of belonging and of self-identification with a religious tradition. This is the level of information which it is acceptable to assemble as part of a public census. For social scientists, religious affiliation is conceptualised as an aspect of individual identity, alongside, say, factors like sex and ethnicity. Religious affiliation does not function as a secure predictor of other dimensions like religious belief and religious practice, but nonetheless it remains of key interest to empirical theologians and to social scientists. For empirical theologians it is important to consider the theological significance of claiming affiliation without adopting the practice or belief systems of a religious tradition. For social scientists it is important to recognise the empirical evidence for the enduring power of religious affiliation (in the absence of practice and belief) to predict individual differences of considerable social significance. While social scientists may find it acceptable to group broad faith traditions (as demonstrated by inclusion of the broad category "Christian" within the 2001 census in England and Wales), empirical theologians may be much more aware of the implications of theological differences within the Christian tradition.

Religious belief is a measure of the cognitive component of religion. The ways in which religious belief is conceptualised and measured may vary considerably between theological and social scientific traditions. Individual differences in religious belief may be expressed very differently by the theologically naïve and the theologically trained and sophisticated. Early attempts by social scientists to conceptualise and to measure Christian belief tended to imagine that conservative belief defined the recognised norm. Such conceptualisation worked well to characterise those who scored high on such instruments as conservative Christian believers. It remained more problematic, however, to characterise low scorers on such instruments, where potential confusion exists between atheists, agnostics and liberal believers. A further confusion arises when the content of belief is confused with the manner in which belief is held. Conservative belief does not equate with dogmatic belief. Empirical theologians may be much more aware of

the theological complexity involved in defining and calibrating the dimensions of Christian belief.

Religious practice is a measure of the behavioural component of religion. Again the ways in which religious practice is conceptualised and measured may vary considerably between theological and social scientific traditions. Distinctions, too, need to be made between the observance of public practice (say, church attendance) and the observance of private practice (say, personal prayer). Early attempts by social scientists to assess the psychological correlates of prayer concentrated primarily on assessing the frequency of prayer without differentiation among the different types or forms of prayers. Empirical theologians may be much more aware of the complexity and theological differences of prayer within religious traditions.

Attitude towards religion is a measure of the affective component of religion. A very long tradition in social psychology has developed considerable conceptual and methodological sophistication in defining and operationalising the attitudinal dimension of religion. This domain is concerned with how individuals feel (negatively and positively) towards religion. Early attempts by social scientists to provide measures of attitude towards religion may have been distracted by overemphasis on the outward and more visible aspects of religious traditions. Empirical theologians may be more aware of the inward and more spiritually salient aspects of religious traditions. The following sections argue why it is that this attitudinal dimension provides the strongest foundation for empirical research in religion and spirituality.

The Attitudinal Dimension

Reflecting on these four dimensions of religion in the early 1970s, I recognised that the attitudinal dimension was able to get closer to the heart of religion within individual lives and also that the measurement of attitude carried a number of important advantages over the measurement of affiliation, belief or practice.

First, although affiliation has been shown to be of conceptual and empirical value within both theology and social sciences, there are significant limitations for this construct within the individual differences approach. On the one hand, the level of measurement achieved is only that of discrete categories. Individuals are located either within one category or another. On the other hand, affiliation categories take on significantly different meanings within different denominational groups. While nominalism is high, say, among Anglicans; in another group, say among Baptists, nominalism is low.

Second, although practice may be easy to conceptualise and to measure on ordinal or (possibly) interval scales, the actual meaning of practice may vary according to a range of constraints. For example, an irreligious young person may attend church because of family pressures, while a highly religious elderly person may stay away from church because of health-related problems. Moreover, practice may convey different significances within different denominational environments.

Third, although belief may be open to clear conceptualisation and (in some senses) refined measurement on (probably) interval scales, the formulation of indices of religious belief is conceptually complex (both theologically and psychologically). It is this formulation of measures of belief which may distinguish one denominational group from another, the theologically educated from the theologically naïve, and so on. While such issues are of central importance to certain fields of theological enquiry, they may simply provide distraction to the broader individual differences approach concerned with comparative research dealing with the personal and social correlates of religion.

As a deep-seated underlying construct concerned with affective response (favourably towards or negatively against) religion, a well-developed attitude scale is able to calibrate individual differences in religiosity across age groups and across denominational divides. It is for this reason that in the 1970s I developed an instrument which has become known as the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity and invited colleagues to join with me in building up a secure basis of empirical information regarding the correlates, consequences and antecedents of a positive attitude towards Christianity. By agreeing on the use of the same measure, colleagues could be clear that their independent studies fitted together to build an integrated tapestry of research concerning the contributions being made to individual lives of the form of spirituality being accessed by the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity.

The Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity comprised 24 items concerned with affective responses to five aspects of the Christian tradition that transcend denominational divisions, namely God, Jesus, bible, church and prayer. The scientific basis for confidence in the assertion that studies conducted in different contexts could be joined together rested on the demonstration that the instrument functioned with comparable degrees of reliability and validity among different age groups, among different denominational groups and in different countries. This programme of establishing the reliability and validity of the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity began in English-speaking contexts.

Research Across Linguistic Divides

Initially the tapestry of research constructed by means of studies agreeing on the use of the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity was restricted by the English-speaking world. The second generation of studies conducted within this tradition began to explore the performance of the instrument in translation. In this way it becomes possible to test whether the correlates, antecedents and consequences of individual differences in attitude towards Christianity established in an English-speaking context remain consistent within other linguistic communities.

The advantages and difficulties of translating psychometric instruments across languages are now well discussed in the literature. It is recognised, for example,

how the change of a single word within a psychometric instrument in one language may change the pattern of responding to that one item and consequently disturb the pattern of correlations between the items. Translation of a whole instrument may prove to be so much more disruptive. The first general principle in translating psychometric instruments is the conceptual task of ensuring that the concepts expressed in one language are adequately expressed in another language. This is much more complex than simply offering a word-for-word translation, although it may be relatively straightforward if the original instrument is itself expressed simply and in a clear manner. The process of translation is then followed by back translation into the original language. Discrepancies between the original wording and the back translation draw attention to potential problems with the translation.

The second general principle in translating psychometric instruments is the empirical task of examining whether the instrument displays comparable psychometric properties in the translated form to those established in the original form. Factor analyses and reliability analyses are able to examine whether the individual items perform in similar ways in translation. A family of studies has now reported on the satisfactory psychometric properties of the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity translated into, for example, Arabic (Munayer, 2000), Chinese (Francis Lewis, & Ng, 2002), Dutch (Francis & Hermans, 2000), French (Lewis & Francis, 2003), German (Francis, Ziebertz, & Lewis, 2002), Greek (Youtika, Joseph, & Diduca, 1999), Norwegian (Francis & Enger, 2002), Portuguese (Ferreira & Neto, 2002), Romanian (Francis, Ispas, Robbins, Ilie, & Iliescu, 2009), Slovenian (Flere, Klanjsek, Francis, & Robbins, 2008), Spanish (Campo-Arias, Oviedo, Dtaz, & Cogollo, 2006), Swedish (Eek, 2001) and Welsh (Evans & Francis, 1996).

As a consequence of these studies, the horizons for comparative research in religion and spirituality have been enlarged against the background of a common religious heritage and an instrument that has the capability of operationalising the construct of attitude towards Christianity in a variety of languages.

Research Across Religious Traditions

Initially the tapestry of research constructed by means of studies agreeing on the use of the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity was restricted, by very definition, to the Christian tradition. The third generation of studies conducted within this tradition began to explore how the basic attitudinal construct accessed by the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity could be translated within other religious traditions. In this way it becomes possible to test whether the correlates, antecedents and consequences of individual differences in attitude towards Christianity remain consistent within other religious traditions. Thus, having established the usefulness of the attitudinal dimension within the individual differences approach to investigating the personal and social correlates of religiosity

within a Christian context, an international group of scholars have begun to examine the potential for developing parallel instruments shaped within other religious contexts, namely (in chronological order of development), Islam, Judaism and Hinduism.

The core characteristics of the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity are that it focuses on the affective response to the Christian tradition, that it identifies five key visible aspects of this tradition equally intelligible to children, adolescents and adults (God, Jesus, Bible, prayer and church) and that the construct is operationalised through 24 Likert-type items arranged for scoring on a five-point scale: agree strongly, agree, not certain, disagree and disagree strongly. The translation of this construct into other religious traditions involved proper theological awareness of the subtlety, complexity and diversity within these traditions.

The first of these instruments to be published was the Sahin–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam (Sahin & Francis, 2002). The items of the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity were carefully scrutinised and debated by several Muslim scholars of Islam until agreement was reached on 23 Islam-related items which mapped closely onto the area assessed by the parent instrument. The psychometric properties of the instrument were assessed on 381 Muslim adolescents in England (Sahin & Francis, 2002) and later confirmed among 1,199 Muslim adolescents in Kuwait (Francis, Sahin, & Al-Failakawi, 2008).

The second of these instruments was the Katz–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Judaism (Francis & Katz, 2007). A similar process involving Jewish scholars of Judaism reached agreement on 24 Judaism-related items which mapped closely onto the area assessed by the parent instrument. The psychometric properties of the instrument were assessed on 618 Hebrew-speaking undergraduate students attending Bar-Ilan University.

The third of these instruments was the Santosh–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Hinduism (Francis, Santosh, Robbins, & Vij, 2008). A similar process involving Hindu scholars of Hinduism reached agreement on 19 Hinduism-related items which mapped closely onto the area assessed by the parent instrument. The psychometric properties of the instrument were assessed on 330 young Hindus in England (Francis et al., 2008) and 100 Hindus in India (Tiliopoulos & Francis, in press).

As a consequence of these studies, the horizons for comparative research in religion and spirituality have been enlarged against the background of a common understanding of the affective dimension of religion now operationalised within the framework of four major religious traditions: Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.

Since I first invited colleagues to join with me in the late 1970s to develop a tapestry of studies specifically focusing on establishing the correlates, antecedents and consequences of individual differences within the attitudinal dimension of religion, over 300 studies have been published in what remains a developing programme of research. The scope of this research can be illustrated by two specific examples, concerned with the relationship between the attitudinal dimension of religion and mental health and concerned with the relationship between the attitudinal dimension of religion and wellbeing (positive psychology).

Religion and Mental Health

On a broader front, the psychology of religion has advanced two very different theoretical positions regarding the relationship between religion and mental health. One position has taken the negative view that religion is associated with lower levels of mental health, while the other position has taken the positive view that religion is associated with higher levels of mental health (see, for example, Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993). The negative view is exemplified, for example, in the classic writings of Freud, who sees the Judaic-Christian tradition as capturing the human psyche in a state of infantile immaturity, leading to psychological vulnerability and neuroses (Freud, 1950; Vine, 1978). The opposite psychological view is exemplified, for example, in the classical writings of Gordon Allport, who sees the religious images of the Judaic-Christian tradition as providing powerful developmental tools promoting and leading to psychological health (Jung, 1938; Allport, 1950).

The empirical literature on the relationship between religion and mental health is also divided between some studies which report a positive association, some studies which report a negative association and some studies which fail to find association in either direction (Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001). Such disparate findings suggest that the two constructs of religion and of mental health need careful definition before the problem concerning their relationship can be properly defined and operationalised.

One particularly attractive way of defining and operationalising the construct of mental health is provided by Eysenck's dimensional model of personality (H. J. Eysenck & M. W. Eysenck, 1985). Eysenck's dimensional model of personality, as operationalised through the Eysenck Personality Scales (H. J. Eysenck & S. B. G. Eysenck, 1991), maintains that abnormal personality is not discrete from but continuous with normal personality. Accordingly neurotic disorders lie at one extreme of a dimension of normal personality, ranging from emotional stability, through emotional lability, to neurotic disorder. Similarly, psychotic disorders lie at one extreme of another dimension of normal personality, ranging from tendermindedness, through toughmindedness, to psychotic disorder. Therefore, it is possible to define and operationalise the dimensions of neuroticism and psychoticism so that they appear to be orthogonal and independent of each other. Eysenck's dimensional model of personality adds a third orthogonal dimension which is not in itself concerned with psychological disorder. The third dimension ranges from introversion, through ambiversion, to extraversion.

A series of studies conducted in England over the past 25 years have mapped the relationship between attitude towards Christianity (as assessed by the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity) and mental health (as assessed by the Eysenckian personality measures). Two main conclusions emerged from this series of studies.

The first conclusion concerns the relationship between attitude towards Christianity and neuroticism scores. H. J. Eysenck and S. B. G. Eysenck (1975) defined high scorers on the neuroticism scale as being anxious, worrying, moody and frequently depressed individuals who are likely to sleep badly and to suffer from

various psychosomatic disorders. They are seen as overly emotional, reacting too strongly to all sorts of stimuli and finding it difficult to get back on an even keel after emotionally arousing experiences. Strong reactions interfere with their proper adjustment, making them react in irrational, sometimes rigid ways. Highly neurotic individuals are worriers whose main characteristic is a constant preoccupation with things that might go wrong and a strong anxiety reaction to these thoughts. After controlling for the expected sex differences, according to which females score more highly than males on both indices of religiosity (Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi, 1975) and neuroticism (Jorm, 1987), repeated analyses demonstrate no significant relationship between neuroticism scores and a positive attitude towards Christianity (Francis, Pearson, Carter, & Kay, 1981a; Francis, Pearson, & Kay, 1983a; Francis & Pearson, 1991).

The second conclusion concerns the relationship between attitude towards Christianity and psychoticism scores. H. J. Eysenck and S. B. G. Eysenck (1976) define high scorers on the psychoticism scale as being cold, impersonal, hostile, lacking in sympathy, unfriendly, untrustful, odd, unemotional, unhelpful, lacking in insight and strange, with paranoid ideas that people are against them. H. J. Eysenck and S. B. G. Eysenck (1976) also use the following descriptors: egocentric, self-centred, impersonal, lacking in empathy, solitary, troublesome, cruel, glacial, inhumane, insensitive, sensation-seeking, aggressive, foolhardy, making fools of others and liking odd and unusual things. H. J. Eysenck and S. B. G. Eysenck (1975) maintained that emotions such as empathy and guilt are characteristically absent in people who score high on measures of psychoticism. Repeated analyses demonstrate a significant negative relationship between psychoticism scores and a positive attitude towards Christianity (Kay, 1981a; Francis & Pearson, 1985a; Francis, 1992a). This finding lends support to the theory that Christianity is associated with higher levels of mental health and contradicts the theory that Christianity is associated with lower levels of mental health.

A subsidiary conclusion also emerged from this series of studies, but this conclusion provides no further indication of the relationship between Christianity and psychological health. The subsidiary conclusion concerns extraversion. Originally Eysenck defined high scorers on the extraversion scale as sociable, outgoing, impulsive, carefree and optimistic. This definition clearly combines the two notions of sociability and impulsivity (S. B. G. Eysenck & H. J. Eysenck, 1963). While both of these two components appear to have been well represented in the earlier editions of the extraversion scale, the more recent editions have been largely purified of impulsivity, which now relates more closely to psychoticism (Rocklin & Revelle, 1981). While according to the earlier operationalisations of extraversion, introverts emerge as holding a more positive attitude towards Christianity, according to the later operationalisations repeated analyses demonstrate no significant relationship between extraversion scores and attitude towards Christianity (Francis, Pearson, Carter, & Kay, 1981b; Francis, Pearson, & Kay, 1983b; Francis & Pearson, 1985b; Williams, Robbins, & Francis, 2005).

The consensus of these focused analyses is given further support by studies conducted among other samples of school pupils in the United Kingdom, using the

Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity, including 8–11-year-olds (Robbins, Francis, & Gibbs, 1995), 11-year-olds (Francis, Lankshear, & Pearson, 1989), 12–16-year-olds (Francis & Montgomery, 1992), 15–16-year-olds (Francis & Pearson, 1988) and 16–18-year-olds (Wilcox & Francis, 1997; Francis & Fearn, 1999). The findings have also been replicated among secondary school pupils in Germany (Francis & Kwiran, 1999).

Another set of studies have employed the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity alongside the Eysenck measures of personality among students and adults, including studies in the United Kingdom (Francis, 1991, 1993, 1999; Francis & Bennett, 1992; Carter, Kay, & Francis, 1996; Bourke & Francis, 2000; Shuter-Dyson, 2000), Australia and Canada (Francis, Lewis, Brown, Philipchalk, & Lester, 1995), Northern Ireland (Lewis & Joseph, 1994; Lewis, 1999, 2000), Republic of Ireland (Maltby, 1997a; Maltby & Lewis, 1997), the USA (Lewis & Maltby, 1995a; Roman & Lester, 1999), France (Lewis & Francis, 2000), Greece (Youtika et al., 1999), Hong Kong (Francis, Lewis, & Ng, 2003) and South Africa (Francis & Kerr, 2003). Once again, the basic pattern was confirmed that attitude towards Christianity was negatively correlated with psychoticism, but unrelated to either extraversion or neuroticism. Moreover, more recent studies have reported similar results using the Katz–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Judaism (Francis, Katz, Yablon, & Robbins, 2004) and the Santosh–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Hinduism (Francis, Robbins, Santosh, & Bhanot, 2008).

Being purely cross-sectional correlational studies, the data currently available are not able to adjudicate on the direction of causality in the relationship reported. Eysenck's psychologically driven theory would argue for the priority of personality in shaping these relationships, seeing individual differences in personality to be biologically based. According to this account, individuals who record low scores on the psychoticism scale would be more drawn to the Christian tradition. Such a view is consistent with Eysenck's notion regarding the relationship between low psychoticism and greater conditioning into tenderminded social attitudes and the general location of religiosity within the domain of tenderminded social attitudes (Eysenck, 1975, 1976). On the other hand, such a psychologically driven theory may be hard-pressed to explain the lack of relationship between neuroticism scores and religion, since the psychological mechanism posited here suggests that religion provides an attractive escape for neurotic anxieties.

An alternative theologically driven theory would argue for the priority of religious experience in shaping the relationship between personality, mental health and religion, seeing religion as essentially transformative of individual differences. According to this account, individuals who record high scores on the scale of attitude towards Christianity would be challenged by their faith to transform and reject those qualities listed by Eysenck as characterising the high scorer on the psychoticism scale: egocentric, self-centred, impersonal, lacking in empathy, solitary, troublesome, cruel, glacial, inhumane, insensitive, sensation-seeking, aggressive and foolhardy (H. J. Eysenck & S. B. G. Eysenck, 1976). On the other hand, such theologically driven theory may be more hard-pressed to account for the lack of association between attitude towards Christianity and neuroticism. Throughout

the Gospel tradition the Christian faith consistently proclaims the twin messages of "Fear not" and "Peace be with you" from the angelic annunciation preceding the Lucan birth narrative to the Johannine post-resurrection appearances. According to such theory the Christian disciple should be less troubled by those qualities listed by Eysenck as characterising the high scorer on the neuroticism scale: anxious, worrying, moody, frequently depressed, poor sleepers, suffering from various psychosomatic disorders and overly emotional (H. J. Eysenck and S. B. G. Eysenck, 1975).

Religion and Wellbeing

Once again, the empirical literature on the relationship between religion and positive psychology is divided between some studies which report a positive association, some studies which report a negative association and some studies which fail to find association in either direction. Taking the notion of happiness as a key indicator within positive psychology, Francis, Jones, and Wilcox (2000) undertook a thorough review of the available literature and concluded that a major problem with integrating and interpreting the findings was posed by the wide variety of ways in which the construct of happiness was defined and assessed.

Evaluating these empirical studies, Francis et al. (2000) argue that future studies need to agree on a more robust form of measurement. One particularly attractive way of defining and operationalising the construct of happiness is provided by the Oxford Happiness Inventory developed by Argyle, Martin, and Crossland (1989) on the basis of a thorough theoretical discussion of the nature of happiness. Drawing on earlier analysis, Argyle and Crossland (1987) suggest that happiness can be measured by taking into account three empirical indicators: the frequency and degree of positive affect or joy; the average level of satisfaction over a period; and the absence of negative feelings, such as depression and anxiety. The test constructors report for this 29-item scale an internal reliability of 0.90 and a 7-week test–retest reliability of 0.78. Validity was established against happiness ratings by friends and by correlations with measures of positive affect, negative affect and life satisfaction. A series of studies employing the Oxford Happiness Inventory in a range of different ways have confirmed the basic reliability and validity of the instrument and begun to map the correlates of this operational definition of happiness. For example, Hills and Argyle (1998a) found that happiness was positively correlated with intensity of musical experience. Hills and Argyle (1998b) found that happiness was positively correlated with participation in sports. Chan and Joseph (2000) found that happiness was correlated positively with self-actualisation, self-esteem, likelihood of affiliation, community feeling and self-acceptance.

The Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity has now been employed in a series of studies alongside the Oxford Happiness Inventory. The first study, reported by Robbins and Francis (1996), was conducted among 360 undergraduates in the United Kingdom. The second study, reported by Francis and Lester (1997), replicated the original study in a different cultural context among 212

undergraduates in the United States. The third study, reported by French and Joseph (1999), was conducted among 101 undergraduate students in the United Kingdom. The fourth study, reported by Francis et al. (2000), employed three separate samples drawn from the United Kingdom: 994 secondary school pupils during the final year of compulsory schooling; 456 first-year undergraduate students; and 496 members of a branch of the University of the Third Age, a relatively informal education network for senior citizens. The fifth study, reported by Francis and Robbins (2000), was conducted among 295 participants attending a variety of workshops and courses on the psychology of religion, ranging in age from late teens to late seventies. The sixth study, reported by Francis, Robbins, and White (2003), was conducted among 89 students in Wales. All eight samples employed in these six studies demonstrated a significant positive correlation between happiness and attitude towards Christianity, after controlling for the possible contaminating influence of personality. On the other hand, no significant relationship was found between attitude towards Christianity and happiness among a sample of 331 students in Germany reported by Francis, Ziebertz, and Lewis (2003).

In order to establish the extent to which the correlates of the attitudinal dimensions of religiosity established within a Christian or post-Christian context by means of the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity held true within a context shaped by Judaism, Francis and Katz (2002) administered the Katz–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Judaism, alongside the Hebrew translation of the Oxford Happiness Inventory and the Hebrew translation of the short form of the Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, to a sample of 298 female Hebrew-speaking undergraduate students. In a second study, Francis et al. (2004) administered the same set of instruments to a sample of 203 male Hebrew-speaking undergraduate students. The data from both studies confirmed a small but statistically significant positive association between attitude towards Judaism and happiness.

Broader Research Field

The two sets of studies reviewed in the previous sections, concerned with mental health and wellbeing, have provided good examples of how the tapestry of research-based knowledge has been developed regarding the correlates, consequences and antecedents of individual differences in attitude towards religion. Other research within this tradition can be best introduced within four main themes.

The first main theme has explored the relationship between the attitudinal dimension of religion and other key major personality-related constructs. These constructs include abortion-related attitudes (Fawcett, Andrews, & Lester, 2000), adjustment (Schludermann, Schludermann, Needham, & Mulenga, 2001), alcohol-related attitudes (Francis, Fearn, & Lewis, 2005), altruism (Eckert & Lester, 1997), Cattell's personality model (Francis & Bourke, 2003; Bourke, Francis, & Robbins, 2007), dissociation (Dorahy & Lewis, 2001), conservatism (Lewis & Maltby, 2000), dogmatism (Francis, 2001; Francis & Robbins, 2003), empathy (Francis & Pearson, 1987), gender orientation (Francis & Wilcox, 1996, 1998; Francis, 2005), general

health (Francis, Robbins, Lewis, Quigley, & Wheeler, 2004), impulsivity (Pearson, Francis, & Lightbown, 1986), intelligence (Francis, 1998), intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity (Joseph & Lewis, 1997; Maltby & Day, 1998), just world beliefs (Crozier & Joseph, 1997), life satisfaction (Lewis, Joseph, & Noble, 1996; Lewis, 1998), mental health values (Tjeltveit, Fiordalist, & Smith, 1996), moral values (Francis & Greer, 1990), obsessionality (Lewis, 1994, 1996; Lewis & Joseph, 1994; Lewis & Maltby, 1994, 1995b; Maltby, 1997b; Maltby, McCollam, & Millar, 1994), openness to members of other religious traditions (Greer, 1985), operational thinking (Kay, Francis, & Gibson, 1996), paranormal belief (Williams, Francis, & Robbins, 2006), premarital sex (Francis, 2006), preoedipal fixation (Lewis & Maltby, 1992), Jungian personality type (Jones & Francis, 1999; Fearn, Francis, & Wilcox, 2001), prosocial values (Schludermann, Schludermann, & Huynh, 2000), psychological wellbeing (Francis, Jones, & Wilcox, 1997), religious orientation (Maltby & Lewis, 1996; Jones, 1997), schizotypal traits (White, Joseph & Neil, 1995; Diduca & Joseph, 1997; Joseph & Diduca, 2001), self-esteem (Jones & Francis, 1996), social desirability (Gillings & Joseph, 1996) and suicidal ideation (Lester & Francis, 1993).

The second main theme has explored the relationship between the attitudinal dimension of religion, attitude towards science, scientism and creationism among young people in Kenya (Fulljames & Francis, 1987; Fulljames & Francis, 2003), Scotland (Gibson, 1989; Francis, Gibson, & Fulljames, 1990; Fulljames, Gibson, & Francis, 1991; Francis Fulljames, & Gibson, 1992), England (Fulljames, 1996) and Northern Ireland (Francis & Greer, 2001). These studies highlight the ways in which both scientism and creationism can inhibit the development of positive attitudes towards *both* science *and* Christianity.

The third main theme has explored the social and contextual factors associated with the development of a positive attitude towards religion. Separate studies have focused on such factors as the possible influences associated with age (Francis, 1989a), church schools (Boyle & Francis, 1986; Francis, 1986a, 1986b, 1987; Francis & Carter, 1980; Rhymer & Francis, 1985; Francis & Gibson, 2001), conversion experiences (Kay, 1981b), denominational identity (Francis, 1990; Greer & Francis, 1990; Maltby, 1995; Francis & Greer, 1999), generational changes (Francis, 1989b, 1989c, 1992b; Kay & Francis, 1996), parental church attendance (Francis & Gibson, 1993b), parental marital happiness (Kay, 1981c), religious education syllabuses (Kay, 1981d), religious experience (Greer & Francis, 1992; Francis & Greer, 1993; Francis, ap Siôn, Lewis, Robbins, & Barnes, 2006), social class (Francis, Pearson, & Lankshear, 1990; Gibson, Francis, & Pearson, 1990), Sunday school attendance (Francis, Gibson, & Lankshear, 1991) and television (Francis & Gibson, 1992, 1993a).

The fourth main theme has employed the attitude scales to monitor changes in attitude towards religion or to describe attitude towards religion in specific situations. For example, Bennett and Rigby (1991) explored change during residence in a rehabilitation centre for female drug users. Greer (1981, 1982) profiled the religious attitudes of young people growing up in Northern Ireland. Kay (1981e) explored the

relationship between attitude towards Christianity and subject preference among secondary school pupils. O'Keeffe (1992, 1996) explored the religious attitudes of pupils attending independent conservative Christian schools.

Conclusion

In my early paper entitled "Measurement reapplied" (Francis, 1978), I outlined an ambition of what could be achieved if a number of researchers agreed on employing a common attitudinal measure of religiosity across a wide range of studies. Thirty years later this chapter has demonstrated how the research programme has been broadened with a second generation of studies to embrace linguistic diversity and broadened further with a third generation of studies to embrace four different religious traditions. The potential contribution to knowledge made by this research programme has been illustrated by two detailed examples, concerning the associations between the attitudinal dimension of religion and mental health, and between the attitudinal dimension of religion and wellbeing, and by a more general overview of the research field.

The fruitfulness of this research tradition suggests that it would now be appropriate for a fourth generation of studies to face the challenge of developing a new family of measures capable of operationalising the attitudinal dimension of spirituality. Such measures would be able to help establish the extent to which the correlates, antecedents and consequences of individual differences in the attitudinal dimension of spirituality mirrored or contradicted the consensus of findings concerning the correlates, antecedents and consequences of individual differences in the attitudinal dimension of religion. Such research would also carry the additional bonus of helping to clarify the areas of continuity and discontinuity between religion as traditionally conceived and spirituality as conceived in the contemporary world.

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Chapter 9
Social, Religious and Spiritual Capitals: A Psychological Perspective

Chris Baker

Abstract This article locates the concept of social capital and its faith-based correlates—religious and spiritual capital—within a psychological framework. Up to now, these correlates have been deployed primarily within a social policy and political science discourse. Having located these concepts, the article develops a hypothesis, based on qualitative case study material, that religiously based motivation (spiritual capital) and religiously based participation (religious capital) work in mutually reinforcing ways to produce a virtuous cycle (or feedback loop) of capitals (including bridging and linking forms of capital—as well as bonding).

The psychological dimensions of spiritual capital are typologised and then linked to a series of theological motifs and words that appear to trigger these psychological states. These psycho-theological motifs are then further examined for their potential contribution to what Donal Dorr refers to as a "balanced spirituality", which sees the possibility of change and transformation at a number of levels (including the social/political) and which also corresponds to classic understandings of the beneficial impact of social capital at micro, meso and macro levels (see Halpen and Putnam). The article concludes by linking this typologising to existing models of psychology of religion and measurement systems (e.g. Fisher, Allport and Ross) before raising some critical questions about the dominance of the capital paradigm as a sufficiently nuanced tool by which to evaluate the nature and psychological impact of faith-based engagement in civil society.

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to locate the growing interest in the concept of social capital, and its "faith"-based correlates—religious capital and spiritual capital—within a specifically psychological framework. This is an underdeveloped use of capital theory, since the predominant deployment of social, spiritual and religious capital

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has been in the political science and social policy fields. For example, within a UK context, notions of capital have been used to position the usefulness of "faith" in respect to a number of pressing political issues, including social cohesion, poverty and other multiple forms of exclusion. A "remoralising" Britain agenda is also emerging whereby faith groups are being encouraged by government to take a lead in promoting a set of common values to which all sections of an increasingly diverse and post-secular society can subscribe (see, for example, Lowndes & Chapman, 2005). This approach has been critiqued as a "functionalist" or "instrumentalist" approach to religion which tends to see faith groups as "repositories" of values and resources to be given freely (or at least more cheaply) to wider civil society (see Dinham, Furbey, & Lowndes, 2009).

Having outlined the current debate regarding definitions and applications of the concepts of social religious and spiritual capitals, I will then focus on qualitative research undertaken by the William Temple Foundation (WTF) in partnership with the Church Urban Fund with nine contrasting church groups (in terms of size and theological identity) engaging with civil renewal and urban regeneration in key redevelopment sites in the Northern English city of Manchester.[1] The main purpose of this approach is to highlight the new perspectives being brought to bear on the connection between spiritual/religious motivation and engagement in wider civil society by focusing on the relationship between theological tropes and psychological "triggers". This relationship appears to set up a virtuous cycle of "capital" production whereby theological motivations are interpreted by church members as provoking certain types of public engagement, the experience of which reinforces in turn feelings of happiness, belonging, usefulness, etc. The mechanisms for this virtuous feedback loop between "faith" and "action" will be explicated in terms of the link between religious and spiritual capital.

I will then attempt to theorise further on these Manchester case studies with reference to some psychology of religion, economic and spiritual growth literatures before offering a critical evaluation of the effectiveness of "capital" language to describe some of the psychological dimensions associated with spiritual and religious motivation and practice.

Mapping the "Capitals" Theoretical Terrain

Social, Religious and Spiritual Capitals—An Increased Foregrounding Social Capital

Academic and policy-based research into the nature and impact of social capital has mushroomed exponentially since the late 1980s. The chief exponents associated with its re-emergence in the last 20 years or so are Loury (1987), Coleman (1988), Woolcock (1988) and Bourdieu (1992). However, it is the work of political scientist Robert Putnam (2000) which has given the concept of social capital its most recent pre-eminence because of his thesis outlining the decline of social capital that is

coinciding with the era of the neo-liberal globalisation. Although he traces the initial decline of social capital to the 1960s and the acquisition of a consumerist mentality by the "baby boomers" generation, he also implicates the growth of home-based entertainment systems and the pressure of wider patterns of mobility and longer working hours consistent with neo-liberal globalisation in the decline of American associations such as bowling clubs, trades unions, the family, Parent Teacher Associations. US churches are also declining albeit at a slower rate and within a more complex scenario (i.e. some dimensions of church life are in decline; some are on the increase). His thesis, therefore, backed up by a formidable battery of empirical social indicators, plays well into the overall social policy agenda of many European states who are also fearful of the erosion of public life and the decline of civil society (including common values) under the onslaught of large social upheavals generated by globalised capitalism.

In terms of definition of key terms therefore, and using Putnam as an authoritative source, social capital refers to "Features of social life—networks, norms and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives . . .. Social capital, in short, refers to social connections and the attendant norms and trust." (Putnam, 2000, p. 22)

Emerging from this broad definition of social capital, Putnam identifies two different types of capital. *Bonding* social capital is a dense layering of norms and trust that is found in homogenous groups and tends to reinforce exclusivity and homogeneity. This type of capital "undergirds reciprocity and mobilises solidarity" and acts as a "kind of sociological superglue" in maintaining strong in-group loyalty and promoting robust identity (Putnam, 2000, p. 25). *Bridging* social capital occurs when individuals or groups manage to form linkages with groups different to themselves (i.e. more heterogeneous relationships), thus creating new spaces where power, information and communication can be shared. Putnam suggests that societies need this form of social capital to enhance productivity, creativity, new learning and diversity within society which would otherwise remain in fragmented and distinctive groupings. Thus he refers to bridging social capital as a form of "sociological WD 40" (Putnam, 2000, p. 25).

Putnam's original distinctions were later expanded by Michael Woolcock (2001) who added a third type of capital—*linking* capital which specifically addresses the power differentials within society and allows more marginal groups to link with the resources of more powerful groups (i.e. capital, information, knowledge, secondments) as a way of beginning to address the asymmetrical nature of power and influence in civil society.

Putnam's thesis of the decline of social capital in the United States, his typologies and his statistical methodology have had a profound impact on UK government social policy, amplified by other themes and dynamics specific to the UK. These include: the serious rioting apparently based on ethnic and religious lines in the Northern English cities and towns in 2000; the impact of both 9/11 and 7/7 on UK relations between government, secular and religious groups and especially the rise in Islamophobia; and the rise of the far-right British National Party (BNP) in local communities and the increased influx of both EU and non-EU workers into the

UK economy. These factors have combined to make the theme of social cohesion a key political and social policy priority, together with the search for a common set of British values to which both secular-based and faith/ethnic-based sectors can subscribe.

The increasingly complex and pressing socio-political agenda also largely explains the parallel growth in interest in concepts of religious and spiritual capitals, which has grown significantly within the last 5 years in both UK and US contexts. As I have already inferred, faith groups are increasingly seen by government as repositories of values and resources (for example, buildings, volunteers, paid sector workers, embedded community presences) to be used in the development of locally strong civil societies, a development which requires partnership working with other agencies, and therefore the need for religious literacy to help non-faith-based partners understand the distinctive aims and methods that faith groups bring to civil society. Thus the discourse of religious and spiritual capitals (as part of the ongoing debate about the nature and importance of social capital in general) has also arisen to meet this need.

We Now Move to Some Key Definitions of the Terms in Question

Spiritual Capital

This part of the social capital field is potentially the most widely theorised, not least because of the amount of money invested in researching it—for example, the $3 million Templeton Foundation research programme delivered by the Metanexus Institute entitled *The Spiritual Capital Research Network*. Current working definitions of spiritual capital range from the generic to the more culturally specific. An example of the former would be, "construed to refer to that aspect of social capital linked with religion and/or spirituality ... spiritual capital might be a subset of social capital [and is therefore] the effects of spiritual and religious practices, beliefs, networks and institutions that have a measurable impact on individuals, communities and societies". The breadth of this definition, whilst inclusive, is also imprecise, a feature that Iannaccone and Klick (2003) acknowledge is symptomatic of the concept of spirituality itself. The notion of spirituality, they assert, sidesteps negative images frequently associated with institutional religion, but is also elastic and popular enough to apply to existing traditional religions as well as new religions and a range of non-religious activities deemed virtuous or therapeutic. Meanwhile, an example of a more specific definition devised by Berger and Hefner as part of the Metanexus programme in a paper entitled *Social, Human and Spiritual Capital in Economic Development* describes spiritual capital as "referring to the power, influence, knowledge and dispositions created by participation in a particular religious tradition" (Berger & Hefner, 2003, p. 3).

Religious Capital (Including Religious Spiritual Capital)

A key exponent of the concept of religious capital is Pierre Bourdieu who sees it as functioning in a similar way to cultural capital, i.e. institutionalised specialists guard and maintain a "deliberately organised corpus of secret knowledge" whose knowledge of the religious field is translated into power as measured by the ability "to modify, in a deep and lasting fashion the practice and worldview of lay people" (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 127). Bourdieu's notion of religious capital is also closely linked to his idea of the habitus—the field of human religious and cultural activity that stands in between the theoretical structures and the every day action of life or the history of a community. Thus for Bourdieu, religious capital is the amount of knowledge and practice pertaining to the religious *cultus* one can bring to bear, and this knowledge and practice determine one's hierarchical status in the religious field.

Building somewhat on Bourdieu's understandings of religious capital other theorists have also added dimension of the human capital debate (initiated by the American economist Gary Becker (1964)) to suggest that religious capital is comprised of patterns of belief and behaviour repeated over the life cycle and between generations that influence current beliefs and behaviour. Iannaccone (1990), for example, formulates religious capital as a by-product of religious activity. He does not extrapolate how these personal or familial dimensions of religious capital can be transferred to a social or political dimension, but Starke and Finke (2000) and Smidt (2004) have attempted to do this more recently. Smidt, for example, in an edited collection of essays under the same title, uses the concept of "religious social capital" to describe the multifarious ways in which churches contribute to American civil society and political processes. He writes, "This volume [focuses] on a particular kind of social capital—social capital that is tied to religious life—and the kind of consequences that flow from its presence … and our understanding of the complexity and richness of the interplay among religion, social capital and democratic life" (Smidt, 2004, p. 211).

Definitions of Spiritual and Religious Capitals (as Used in This Chapter)

For the purposes of this chapter we shall be using the definitions emerging from UK-based research which will feature later in this chapter. The William Temple Foundation, aware of previous working definitions but also having conducted in-depth qualitative research with a wide variety of Christian faith communities engaged in civil renewal and urban regeneration in Manchester, suggested the following as related but also distinctive concepts. Religious capital is "the practical contribution to local and national life made by faith groups" (Baker & Skinner, 2006, p. 9). Spiritual capital on the other hand, "energises religious capital by providing a theological identity and worshipping tradition, but also a value system, moral vision and a basis for faith" (Baker & Skinner, 2006, p. 9). Spiritual capital

is often embedded locally within faith groups but also expressed in the lives of individuals.[2] In other words, what is being suggested here is that a virtual cycle of capital production can occur when values and theological motivation are connected to practical action.

WTF's definition of spiritual capital also stresses the "why" of spiritual or religious-based participation, not simply the "how". This emphasis on the why (i.e. the values, ethics and ethos that drive the praxis of a community or organisation) not only helps deepen the somewhat functionalist discourse on the engagement of faith groups within civil and secular society, but also emphasises the psychological dimensions to participation which all too often get ignored within official public policy. With the concern for motivations and the "why" factor firmly to the fore, I now move onto a consideration of the psychological perspectives of social, religious and spiritual capitals.

Psychological Perspectives on Social, Religious and Spiritual Capitals

Close linguistic examination of the qualitative data generated by the WTF research project shows a broad typology of different levels of psychological response. Within this broad, threefold structure a number of what I call trigger motifs can be identified, which appear to "trigger" sets of ever-deepening and more complex psychological response. These motifs not only correspond to affective words such as "love", "care", "acceptance", but are also linked to theological themes (which will be examined following this section).

A Threefold Structure of Psychological Response

Psychological features of responses from members belonging to church communities engaged in civil and urban regeneration in Manchester could be collated broadly under three types of heading:

- the security and support associated with belonging to a cohesive, close-knit faith community including the power of communal narrative and memory;
- the security and motivational belief in a personal pattern or meaning for life with reference to a transcendent source of love/authority; and
- the motivational and inspirational belief that wider change and/or transformation is possible and that one is somehow part of that process of transformation.

Case studies from WTF's research to exemplify each type could include the following. Under the first category (i.e. belonging to a cohesive faith community):

> . . . this church aims to reflect that Jesus receives everyone – regardless of what they have done, regardless of where they are, and the church is an open door that whenever they come they should feel *received and accepted*, and this is their *home*, they *belong* here and

whenever they're in need as a family, we'd like to extend an open door that when they come in they *feel comfortable* (Baker & Skinner, 2005, p. 77 – emphasis mine).

. . . the thing I talked about, the supporting of people who have times in their life that are very hard . . . [the church] is such an *accepting* place to be, you know, *they will grieve with you*, but here's not much condemnation . . . I don't want to come over like it's a utopian vision . . . we have as much church politics as anywhere else, but there is a sense in which *people listen to each other* (Baker & Skinner, 2005, p. 55 – emphasis mine).

A further aspect of psychological impact associated with belonging to a faith community includes the sense of being incorporated into a wider narrative of community history, identity and belonging. For example:

And, I was talking to people at church saying. . . we have got to get across to people our beginnings – how we started, where we came from and hopefully where we are going (Baker & Skinner, 2005, p. 39).

What I've heard is that the Church started in one of the member's cellars and that's the place that they used to worship. One day one of the members saw a local church [building] being advertised [for sale] in the newspaper and the rest is history (Baker & Skinner, 2005, p. 39).

Under the second category (personal pattern or meaning from life with reference to a transcendent source), a number of interesting case studies emerge.

. . . last night my daughter rang me up and we ended up talking about God and the church and how things that happened to her didn't just happen like that, it must be God who is working through her . . . during that discussion I said to her "Don't forget there's a Guardian Angel" . . . according to the Psalm 90 there is a spirit of God within each and every human being . . . each of us have a spirit of God keeping us . . . whatever I do I like it to be known that I do something for God (Baker & Skinner, 2005, p. 73).

I always think he [God] is working with people . . . my daughter's mother in law came for the first time a couple of weeks ago. I don't think she's ever set foot in a church in her life, and why she came I don't know . . . And she came again on Sunday . . . we're obviously doing something right. God's obviously working in her to make her want to come back. I mean he's sort of, he's obviously working in people; working in us as well as working in these newcomers for them to come and stay (Baker & Skinner, 2005, p. 73).

The next quotation comes from a priest whose church had decided to enter into a lifelong learning partnership with the local council as part of a national government initiative (Learn Direct) to provide high-quality post-16 learning for those with few skills and qualifications and therefore unlikely to participate in traditional forms of learning. The church hall was repeatedly burgled and church members even carjacked as local gangs stole computers and other equipments associated with the scheme. The church council made the decision to persist with the scheme despite the high levels of crime and abuse. The vicar of the church reflects:

you accept the suffering that you are involved with because there is something more important and better . . . reality is what that means . . . to take up our cross, but that that was what we as a Christian community were called to do. And I was very proud of them [the church council] because we did think about it and we did talk about it. But they were absolutely agreed that we had to do it again . . . despite what the cost would be (Baker & Skinner, 2005, p. 47).

The wider point to be made concerning this range of quotations is that despite contrasting psychological moods of joy or despair, the notion that there is a pattern or meaning behind the events or experiences which trigger these moods is seen as a source of comfort and reassurance. Within a typology of congregational narratives devised by Hopewell some of these case studies (especially the last one) would fit into a *tragic* typology of story which is closely linked with the narrative of Christ's own passion. "When portrayed as tragic hero, Christ accepts the cross . . .. Those who follow the way of Christ live their lives tragically in the shadow of the cross. They suffer; they die to self and gain justification, only beyond, and through, Christ's death and their own" (Hopewell, 1987, p. 60). In other words, faith in the ultimate goodness of God not only makes sense (or justifies) life's suffering, but locates the present pain within a promise of ultimate reward (or in psychological terms perhaps, a form of delayed gratification).

Under the third category, a number of case studies emerge to show the direct motivational power of belief in the possibility of change and transformation that begins at a personal level, but also occurs at a transpersonal level, reaching into social and political structures at local, national and even international levels.

> I think it's a case of, I think, God's been stirring us, you know, individually and collectively . . . we'll look around the community and these are the needs and that we need to do something about it. We can no longer stay within the four walls of the church (Baker & Skinner, 2005, p. 73)
>
> . . . it's not just about what we can do for the community, but also recognising that all of the members of the congregation are members of this community, and the more that they feel empowered and validated by their membership of the church, the more they can take that home and live that everywhere else in this community and that's what it means to be salt or yeast or light. . . what I think I'm doing on a Sunday, is actually giving them a place to bring the brokenness that is so much part of this community, but also refreshing and renewing them and enabling them to take something of the might and glory of God out with them, and be able to share that with their neighbours (Baker & Skinner, 2005, p. 41).

However, to put some of these quotations into a more meaningful psychological context, it is important to locate them alongside key theological themes that were simultaneously expressed as underpinning the feelings and motives for the engagement expressed. I would like to extrapolate four theological themes which I think are important indicators into the psychological motives associated with spiritual and religious capitals.

Service, Hospitality, Self-Emptying

This cluster of themes is associated with the persistent allusion in WTF's interviews and focus groups of traditional biblical images such as the "beacon" (set upon the hill) and an "open door", "salt" and "yeast"—which themselves are symbolic shorthand for an unconditional hospitality verging on unconditional love in response to what is perceived as the foundational role model established by Christ in his own ministry, culminating in the ultimate act of reconciliation—namely his self-sacrifice on the Cross. In more modern academic parlance, the concept of unconditional

hospitality is also reflected in terms of the importance of encountering the stranger or the Other (for example, Derrida, 1996; Levinas, 1969) who comes in the guise of the poor and the marginalised. This approach was particularly exemplified by a small and elderly congregation whose increasingly dilapidated building is at the epicentre of a regeneration area and whose premises had a compulsory purchase order placed on it. One church member describes the activities and ethos of the church community and its building thus:

> On Sunday we have a luncheon club, but that's for people who have a psychiatric illness, and that's once every month they come and have a meal, they cook it themselves in the church premises . . . and we now have a club for the people who live alone or are lonely . . . and they can meet on a Tuesday afternoon . . . and they run the club themselves (Baker & Skinner, 2005, p. 54).

In addition to these opportunities, the church has received a small health grant to provide an open aromatherapy and reflexology session with a qualified practice nurse who sets her massage table up in the church's sanctuary. What appears to lie at the heart of this simple DIY philosophy is the principle of self-empowerment and simply producing an open space for local groups to use, without condition or a sense of the need to control. Amongst the "client group" who are drawn to these so-called "services" are the frail elderly, those suffering poor mental health, asylum seekers and refugees. What is offered in a remarkably effective way (because of its inclusive and non-threatening ambience) springs from a psychological motivation to seek a sense of pleasure and meaning through a form of altruism (or what in Christian terminology is often referred to as a self-emptying love) which appears to go to a deeper level of openness and access than that associated with more traditional community development projects.

Vocation

The theme of vocation as a psychological driver is also expressed in a variety of different ways. One is closely linked to the Parable of the Talents located in the New Testament (Matthew 25: 14–30) and the sayings of Jesus about the good tree bearing good fruit (e.g. Matthew 12: 33–37). Particularly within the black-majority churches (BMCs) who participated in the WTF research considerable psychological motivation for getting engaged with the wider community was generated by a sense of duty. This sense of duty was partly derived by the need, as quasi-independent churches, to be self-sufficient. But there was also a strong sense of pride that this sense of obligation with regard to how one deployed the resources of time and money was creating a surplus that could be "ploughed back" into the wider community for the benefit of the common good. One interviewee from a BMC, a second generation church member who had recently qualified as a lawyer, places this psychological motivation within its socio-economic context:

> A couple of decades ago, our area was made up of a majority of semi-skilled blue collar workers who struggled to make ends meet. Those same families now have children who

are white-collar professional workers like solicitors, lawyers, local government officials . . . all of whom are able to volunteer their services and sort of plough back into the wider community in terms of advising [people] with regards to maximising benefit entitlements, filling in forms, holding health and well-being workshops, counselling and so on (Baker & Skinner, 2005, p. 71).

Choosing the Narrower Road

This category is linked to vocation in the sense that as well as being called to serve others by a higher moral authority, one can also be called to exercise one's conscience in respect of prevailing cultural norms and expectations. The psychological gains associated with this strategy can be explained in terms of deriving a sense of identity and significance through being different, as well as a sense of wellbeing and satisfaction derived from the congruence between action and core belief—one is not in a position of having to deal with emotional or cognitive dissonance. Two examples from WTF's case studies show how a partial and negotiated withdrawal from social norms can lead to a successful reintegration of core beliefs and public identity. One case study involves a young member of a BMC who has volunteered to become a Street Pastor in Manchester, a scheme which seeks to engage with young people involved in gangs or other forms of violent street crime. The main purpose is "to be a listening ear and someone who can offer wise counsel and advice" and is predicated on the assumption that BMCs (from which most Street Pastors are drawn) are still sufficiently respected and engaged with disaffected black youth to have a positive influence. The opportunity for personal evangelism and prayer is not discounted, although "that is not the predominant underlying motive behind why Street Pastors is around". A serious dilemma for this black church member is the way the Street Pastors scheme has been seized upon by Greater Manchester Police and Manchester City Council, who see it as an effective way to reduce crime and "solve a lot of their crime-related problems". He continues, "My concern is . . . 'whose agenda is it?' How am I going to be perceived by people who are in gangs or whatever . . . is this person (i.e. himself) an informer?" The BMC member concludes, "There's a fine line between the social agenda and a pressing need that needs to be spoken out against and the agenda of the church which is preaching the gospel and making disciples of men" (Baker & Skinner, 2005, p. 58).

What is significant in this quote is the degree of discomfort experienced by this church member brought about by what he sees as the moral and political compromises being asked of him by engaging with secular authorities such as the police and local authorities. However, this psychological sense of discomfort does lead to withdrawal from the complexity of engagement in the public realm but paradoxically is a spur to a continuing but honest and critical assessment of the contradictory nature of faith-based capital in a secular, multi-disciplinary context.

This scenario is complemented by an analysis of engagement carried out by another Christian faith group, albeit one with a more liberal theology influenced by

liberation theology and its neo-Marxist social critique. This particular faith-based organisation (FBO) runs a series of community-empowerment networks within marginalised communities in Manchester. The main purpose of these networks is to create a space for those local communities most affected by the trauma of rapid regeneration, whereby plans and documents can be properly understood and scrutinised, and strategies for engagement devised. This has led the FBO to develop a sustained critique of colonialisation which assesses the methods and impacts associated with swift and aggressive urban regeneration. Referring to the attitude of local residents towards a major regeneration figure, one member of the FBO wryly remarks:

> I describe it [i.e. regeneration] as a colonial process and I imply, within that, a kind of missionary dimension … I don't mean this nastily, personally, but look at Mr X at the New Deal for Communities programme … as a missionary kind of figure, you know, in all kinds of terms. The man has come to save this part of Manchester and the way the residents relate to him is like a priest in some respects, they defer to his wisdom. And he comes and resides at meetings, there's loads of imagery like that (Baker & Skinner, 2005, p. 76).

This development of this political critique reflects the appeal of the prophetic—the psychological pleasure derived from consciously going against the flow of perceived wisdom for the sake of a purer or at least more spiritually authentic tradition which sets itself against the wisdom of this world. One FBO member summarises this dynamic thus by deploying the common image attributed to Jesus in the Gospels (e.g. Mathew 7.8)—that of making the choice between the narrow and thus more challenging road or path that leads to salvation, over the broad and easy road chosen by the majority that leads to perdition. She says, "lest we go down the road that has been made for us, [which] appeared like a collusion or compromise" (Baker & Skinner, 2005, p. 74). Whilst not necessarily explicitly referring to the notions of judgement or salvation contained within the original text, the quotation nevertheless reflects the idea that the road of spiritual and moral integrity is the harder road to choose. The temptation for this FBO to collude with the regeneration sector's agenda (often based on the principles of bidding and competition) is reflected perhaps in the biblical allusion to walking the wide path of ease, comfort and status. This path, however, does not lead to true happiness or transformation. Thus related to the image of the "road less travelled" is that of the "martyr"—literally one who bears witness to the coming of the way of the Lord (e.g. Isaiah 40: 1–5). The FBO leader acknowledges wryly that when applied to his team, the concept has a double edge—being a "martyr to the cause" of working too hard and occasionally too obsessively on the issue of community empowerment, but also in the sense of being "about a witness, you know, if you go back to the origins of the word" (Baker & Skinner, 2005, p. 75). The concept of martyrdom is therefore another theological driver to explain the psychological motivation of religious capital—making a sacrifice (in this case, time, effort and nervous energy rather than actual death) for the sake of a noble cause, but also seeking (and possibly enjoying) the public attention that such a sacrifice can bring.

Being Channels of Grace

Several church members we researched alongside referred to the notion of the unconditional nature of God's love (found within various strands of the Judeo-Christian tradition) as a motivational factor behind their various activities aimed at reaching out into the wider community. Although some churches referred to the proselytising potential of some of these wider engagements, all were quite clear that the offering of more "bridging" forms of capital was offered for its own sake—an end in itself rather than a means to an end. The word or concept that emerged across the theological spectrum in relation to this kind of activity was that of grace. Creating "spaces" of grace was an opportunity to express compassion—a form of non-judgemental action based on ideas of solidarity, especially with those suffering most at the hands of poverty and multiple forms of exclusion:

> . . . it's the God of love . . . unconditional love . . . and by having that approach then there's more room for grace as well. Because it's all about the grace of God, and because the fact that I'm in church doesn't make me any different, it's just that I'm a forgiven sinner. And it's only through the grace of God. So through love you're also expressing the grace (Baker & Skinner, 2005. p. 77).

This idea of grace removing the "barriers" associated with past mistakes is one which is profoundly liberative at a psychological level—especially if perceived as a "gift" from a transcendent force (i.e. God). Within Christian and other faith traditions, one simply needs to accept the gift of grace in a spirit of genuine repentance for new growth (i.e. transformative change) to begin at a personal level. The feeling of being released from past patterns of behaviour, or the power of past events, and the opportunity to take up a new identity (as one who is now "saved", chosen or simply loved) is immensely powerful and can be life changing. However, members of the church groups WTF engaged with were also clear that the operation of grace had a role to play at the neighbourhood and community level as well—especially for those communities negatively impacted by previous waves of regeneration. "I feel strongly as faith-based communities we already hold within our grasp this language of transformation. Within repentance there is that joyful point where things can be changed and there is no longer a need to continue down a road that's leading to destruction . . .so much baggage and there's so much maybe unforgiven". This interviewee envisages that repentance could form some sort of public community event containing a liturgical or ritualised element; ". . . a sort of dedication service or ceremony or prayers or just something that would help the process . . . otherwise the hurts and resentments and the unforgiveness goes with us into the future" (Baker & Skinner, 2005, p. 24).

Theology, Psychology and Languages of Capital

We now connect some of the ideas concerning social, religious and spiritual capitals which we outlined in the first section with the psychological/theological typologies outlined in section *Psychological Perspectives on Social, Religious and Spiritual Capitals*.

The first connection one can make is to link ideas of spiritual and religious capitals to those of bonding, bridging and linking capitals. One can interpret ideas of bonding, bridging and linking capitals as representing expanding radii of trust and action. The social cohesiveness of society and the strengthening of civil society are predicated on the ability of citizens and community groups to move from the security of the bonded type of social capital (based on familiarity and homogeneity) to the unfamiliarity of the bridging type of capital. This involves a potentially risky journey as one chooses or finds oneself in a situation of forming bridges with individuals or groups unfamiliar to yourself. The idea of taking the risk and journeying out to increase the number of different experiences and people one knows is also related to the idea of linking capital, as a more strategic and politically motivated move to engage in partnership working or knowledge sharing between unequal sectors of civil society. Nevertheless, the risks to individual identity are high, and the intended outcomes are often either not met or changed radically which can carry high possibility of resentment and mistrust.

When ideas of religious and spiritual capitals are overlaid on these categories of bonding, bridging and linking we see the possibility of developing a theory which sees spiritual capital in particular as pivotal in the development of these widening radii of trust and risk. If we work with the theory that spiritual capital (i.e. values, visions, worshipping traditions but also theological ideas and identities) provides the psychological motivation which energises religious capital (i.e. the public contribution of faith groups to wider civil society including the use of buildings, and the deployment of volunteers and paid members in leadership and service provision roles) then clearly the psychological impact of spiritual capital in developing further radii of trust and deeper levels of relationships across different groups is crucial. Equally, an opposite effect could be created if one's spiritual capital was developed more in the service of bonding rather than bridging capital.

Those case studies analysed in section *Psychological Perspectives on Social, Religious and Spiritual Capitals* were clearly examples of a positive correlation (or virtuous cycle) between spiritual and religious capital which produced further enhancement of other capitals. The spiritual capital dimension of this virtuous cycle was reflected primarily in theological categories—namely how certain key theological ideas and images or symbols associated with the biblical and Christian tradition were portrayed as providing the motivation and justification (or trigger points) for social engagement beyond the bonded relationships and activities of the faith group. The motivation and justification generated by spiritual capital led to sometimes risky but creative engagement with the wider community for the common good. Thus ideas and images associated with Christian theological motifs such as grace, martyrdom, hospitality, self-emptying love (or dying to self), vocation, talents, open doors, salt, yeast, a beacon on a hill, repentance and forgiveness, future reward (or salvation) generated psychological symptoms associated with a variety of feelings and activities: security and affirmation, support and recognition, risk-taking within a sense of overall purpose, cognitive resonance (rather than dissonance), public recognition, delayed gratification. We observed that these feelings and activities produced a psychological outlook based on wellbeing, satisfaction, moral superiority (but less pronounced than might be expected), emotional stability and hope

in the future (despite or especially when events might conspire to create adversity or tragedy).

Another way of analysing the psychological dimension of spiritual and religious capitals is to see life as a series of concentric or overlapping circles of activity incorporating three levels of psychological integration which when taken together, rather than in isolation, reflect an holistic or all-encompassing definition of wholeness and wellbeing. These levels I will call the micro, meso and macro levels of psychological integration, categories which are themselves borrowed from theoretical models of social capital which refer to its impact at micro (i.e. individual level), meso (i.e. group and neighbourhood level) and macro (i.e. national and global level)—see Halpern (2005, p. 25). I shall link these ideas to the threefold structure of psychological response identified earlier (see pp. 9–13).

I am also indebted to the ideas of educator and researcher Donal Dorr who also discerns three areas of psycho-spiritual "conversion" based on categories derived from his reading of the Hebrew prophet Micah (Micah 6; 8). These categories are the personal ("walk humbly"), the interpersonal ("love tenderly") and the structural ("act justly"). These three areas he contends need to be present for a balanced spirituality, which we might read as shorthand for the different elements that need to be present in a person's life for a well-integrated personal psychology that contributes significantly to that person's sense of wellbeing and happiness.

I now create a theoretical model, drawn from the sources identified above, to show (albeit in a stylised fashion) a set of connections whereby spiritual capital could, under favourable circumstances, energise religious capital to create impacts at ever wider more complex levels of civil society and partnership working.

The Micro, Bonding, Personal Level of Psychological Integration

This level of psychological integration is linked to what we have already identified as the personal security and support associated with belonging to a cohesive and close-knit group such as a faith community. This micro level has close links with what has already been defined as bonding capital—namely ties and relationships that relate to common identities—i.e. people who are similar to each other. These ties are usually strong, can reinforce exclusive identities and tend to revolve around the performing of common and shared purposes within civil society. These understandings of the micro coincide with the first circle of Dorr's first level of psychological conversion—namely at the level of personal, whereby traditional notions of God's providence cease to become an abstract theological theory and instead become "a living experience. God is acting in my life to carry out his will for me; and what God wills is my salvation" (Dorr, 1984, p. 9). Dorr further reflects on some of the psychological effects associated with this level of conversion—a sense of "peace and tranquillity", a "sense of forgiveness", "the awareness of being loved and accepted in spite of, and even in a sense because of, my weakness, my faithlessness . . ." (Dorr, 1984, p. 10).

The Meso, Bridging, Interpersonal Level of Psychological Integration

This level of psychological integration I am calling the meso level because it is the level of response that begins to move out from the personal to the interpersonal. Within the Christian tradition, for example, it is that point in the spiritual journey when one begins to engage in the world by following the steps of Jesus, or emulating aspects of his ministry—a journey that carries with it the possibility of a pattern and meaning to one's life and a set of commands or ethical principles that begin to shape one's behaviour towards notions of service and obedience. We saw these dynamics emerging from some of the earlier case study quotations—"doing something for God", "God working in us" and "taking up one's cross". Many of the church groups in our survey saw themselves as carrying out principles and ethics of love, hospitality, etc., within their local communities—at the local neighbourhood level.

The concept of the meso is also picked up in social capital theory within its ideas of bridging social capital. As we saw, bridging social capital occurs when an individual or group take the risk in investing in social capital with individuals or groups different to themselves and creating bridges of relationships based on heterogeneity rather than homogeneity. Instead of loving one's neighbour who is broadly the same as you, one now moves beyond bonding capital to love (or at least acknowledge) the neighbour who is different to you—who is the Other is a vital task which government and local authorities assume faith groups have a distinctive contribution to make.

The concept of a meso (or intermediate) level of psychological integration also resonates with Dorr's second level of psychological conversion—namely Micah's command to "love tenderly". Dorr suggests that this interpersonal level of psychological conversion carries within it strong moral dimensions (rather than simply religious). Psychologically it encourages the attitude of openness to others, which of itself also implies a willingness to take risks—of being vulnerable to "rejection or hurt" (Dorr, 1984, p. 13). This level also presupposes a deepening of response whereby initial openness to the Other will be followed by the enactment of he calls "fidelity". "Moral conversion involves not merely the power to reach out to others, but the power to 'stay with' them, to be loyal even in the difficult times" (Dorr, 1984, p. 14). This ability is based on an acceptance of one's own weakness and inadequacy which religious conversion (or the personal level of psychological conversion) brings.

The Macro, Linking, Structural Level of Psychological Integration

This level of integration I suggest is associated with the third level of psychological response explored earlier—namely the belief in the possibility of wider change or transformation, and that one is somehow part of that process of transformation. We

could refer to this as "macro" level in the sense that the scope of the radius of transformation extends from the personal and the neighbourhood levels to embrace the national, international or even cosmic impacts of change and transformation wrought by divine initiative embedded in human action. In social capital terms there is an implicit comparison between belief in the possibility of macro change, with the notion of linking capital, whereby one as an individual or group moves beyond bonding and bridging capitals deliberately to engage with networks that transcend your place in the social and cultural capital hierarchy. As already discussed, this form of capital acknowledges the inbuilt asymmetrical access to power that exists within society and between societies and is thus concerned to bring into being the possibility of a more just and equitable transformation at a deeper and wider level than simply the personal or the local.

The concept of a macro dimension of engagement with the world links closely with Dorr's notion of "acting justly"—of working for change at a structural level "in public life, the political sphere", and thus to attempt "to build a society that is intrinsically just" (Dorr, 1984, p. 15). It also involves making "an option for the poor" and resisting the escapist elements of a personalist religion that promises only restitutions of justice and equality before God in heaven (Dorr, 1984, p. 15). This structural form of psychological conversion, involving "the challenge to change my priorities (especially concerning notions of success), my hopes, concerns and. . .my lifestyle", engages feelings of empathy and solidarity, which is, in Dorr's opinion, only possible in the light of the other two levels of conversion—namely the religious and the moral, especially if the level of political conversion is to successfully avoid what he calls "the frenzy of quasi-political activity" (Dorr, 1984, p. 17).

Drawing Together the Threads

This stylised schema is perhaps inevitably somewhat crude and in places inconsistent in terms of exact fit.

However, there are some alternative theories that focus on the positive contributions of spiritual and religious beliefs to psychological wellbeing that could also be drawn in to this structure. For example, there might be some overlaps between understandings of spiritual capital and Fisher's Spiritual Health in Four Domains Index and based on the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging definition of spiritual health as "the affirmation of life in a relationship with God, self, community and environment that nurtures and celebrates wholeness" (quoted Francis & Robbins, 2005, p. 33). Then there is a connection to the work of Allport and Ross on extrinsic and intrinsic religious orientation, a typology later supplemented by Batson and Ventis (1982) and their notion of a questing orientation. Within current definitions of these three typologies, the cluster of interpretations reflecting *intrinsic* orientation is perhaps the most salient in seeking to posit the idea of a close psychological connection between spiritual and religious capital with its emphasis on "integration or

the close relationship between religion and the rest of life" (quoted by Francis, 2007, p. 590), or as Allport stated in his original case for intrinsic orientation "a religious sentiment of this sort floods the whole life with motivations and meanings—religion is no longer limited to single segments of self-interest" (Allport, 1966, p. 455).

Finally the economist Richard Layard, in seeking to move mainstream economics from the "gospel" of neo-liberalism, identifies a growing sense of dissatisfaction with contemporary life, which he traces to the collapse of a sense of a common good and a normative set of boundaries, in the face of the relentless quest for self-realisation. His central finding is that despite five decades of sustained economic growth, society is no happier than it was 50 years ago. He also claims that beyond a modest level of income that guarantees our subsistence needs, our happiness does not increase in proportion to our salary rise (Layard, 2005, p. 49). In seeking to move mainstream economics to more ethical and moral ends, Layard invokes seven sources of happiness towards which economic activity could take a more active role in promoting, including family life, financial security, work, etc. Personal values are also a key element in human happiness, by which he means a "philosophy of life" that could include anything from cognitive therapy, Buddhist mindfulness, the 12 steps of alcoholics anonymous through to the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius (Layard, 2005, p. 72). He summarises thus, "...one of the most robust findings of happiness research: [is] that people who believe in God are happier" (Layard, 2005, p. 72).

Conclusion

What this psychological framing of the categories of social, religious and spiritual capitals has done highlights the importance of seeing a virtuous link (or loop) between spiritual/religious motivation and engagement within both the community of faith and the wider community. Thus the ideas of social capital (i.e. the notion of investing in relationships and expecting to receive something by return) are enhanced by understandings of spiritual and religious capitals which suggest the possibility of transcending rational choice theory (see Coleman et al.) by offering the alternative notion of investing in social connections in the expectation that one might get nothing back in return. In other words this is a form of "unconditional capital"—i.e. a self-emptying, self-giving openness to the world (but which in some traditions nevertheless believes in an ultimate "payback" on some future, transcendent horizon). The notion of spiritual capital (in particular) also allows key theological themes to enter the discourse in a relatively neutral and scientific way as a means of understanding further the psychological triggers or mechanisms which motivate faith-based engagement in bonding and bridging contexts. These theological themes could expand the number of indices available for measuring the impact of psychological motivation on civil engagement than are currently available (see, for example, Schwadel for current debate, 2005, p. 168).

The relative weakness of this capital-based approach is that although it advances some further understanding of the complex nature of the motivational link between "faith" and "action", the hegemonic nature of its discourse (i.e. the language of capital) and its tendency to simplify mundane, everyday encounters into neat sociological and policy categories can be distorting. In what I have already noted as an overdependence on functionalist interpretations and discourses, the language of capitals is thus unlikely to uncover alternative paradigms by which to describe the nature and scope of psychological motivation for faith-based engagement in civil society. Neither is it likely to drill down in sufficient depth into the highly dialectical nature of spirituality and religion within the current post-Christian but also increasingly post-secular context of Western European and similar societies.

Notes

1. The research programme was entitled *Regenerating Communities—a theological and strategic critique* (2002–2005) and produced three annual reports: *Mapping the boundaries* (2003), *Telling the stories—how churches are contributing to social capital* (2005), *Faith in action—the dynamic connections between religious and spiritual capital* (2006). All are available to download on www.wtf.org.uk
2. This research has since appeared in a number of other UK discourses and policy documents including CULF (2006); Lowndes and Smith (2006); Farnell, Hopkinson, Jarvis, Martineau, and Hein (2005); Miller (2007); Finneron, Dinham, Chapman, and Miller (2008); and Baker (2009).

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Chapter 10
Mystical, Religious, and Spiritual Experiences

Ralph W. Hood, Jr.

Abstract The study of experience has long been a dominant theme in the psychology of religion. Whether or not there is a form of experience that is uniquely religious is a contested theme within the field. Part of this is captured by whether individuals identify themselves as religious, spiritual, neither, or both. Spirituality has come to be identified with a largely private, individualized focus on transcendent experiences, while religion has largely been focused on institutional expression and explicit belief statements regarding such experiences. The entry into religion (conversion) and the exit from religion (deconversion) are often largely experientially based. Both conversion and deconversion have differing psychological consequences depending on whether or not they are sudden or gradual. The nature of the cultural context in which conversion and deconversion occur is an important factor. The importance of religion varies greatly between cultures. Almost any experience can be identified as religious if it is framed within a system of religious beliefs. Among the most commonly studied religiously framed experiences are glossolalia (tongues speaking) and varieties of prayer. Meditation is analogous to prayer in many ways, but more likely to be associated with persons who identify themselves as spiritual but not religious. Among the claims to a specifically unique form of religious experience, mysticism is most commonly cited. This experience of self-loss and of a sense of ultimate unity is found both within the major faith traditions where it is given a specific religious interpretation and outside of institutional religion where it is associated with spirituality.

The study of mystical, religious, and spiritual experiences has been a major theme in the psychology of religion since the publication of the one assured classic in the field, *The varieties of religious experience* (James, 1902/1985). It is useful to remind readers that the subtitle of this classic text is "a study in human nature" suggesting that religious experiencing is a fundamental aspect of what it means to be human. However, the current study of religious experience, especially in the United States, compels us to distinguish between religion and spirituality.

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Religion and Spirituality

It has become customary in the study of religious experience to allow participants to identify themselves as "religious," "spiritual," "both," or "neither." There are variations in precisely how this is done that produce minor variations in the percent of persons who classify themselves in one of the forced-choice options. For instance, some allow a choice "religious but not spiritual" while others use "more religious than spiritual" (see Hood, 2003; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005; Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009). However, the general outcome of this research is summarized fairly easily. Most people who are religious see themselves as also spiritual. For these persons, religion is the conceptual system within which they are able to find meaning and give expression to their spiritual experiences. These persons tend also to score high on indicators of spiritual wellbeing and on measures congruent with conventional views of mental health (Hood, Hill, & Spilka, 2009). Few persons identify themselves as neither spiritual nor religious, or religious but not spiritual. However, of strong interest is that persistent finding that an emerging large minority of persons in the United States, and in Europe, identify themselves as spiritual but not religious. Furthermore, they are not simply "not religious," but stand in opposition to religion (Hood, 2003). These persons also score high on a wide variety of measures of openness to experience, fantasy proneness, or absorption. They also tend to have characteristics congruent with mental health professionals' own spirituality that have implications for the assessment of wellbeing.

Shafranske (1996) has reviewed the empirical research on the religious beliefs, associations, and practices of mental health professionals. His findings are congruent with those of Zinnbauer et al. (1997). Shafranske focused primarily on samples of clinical and counseling psychologists who are members of the American Psychological Association, Shafranske notes that psychologists are less likely to believe in a personal God, or to affiliate with religious groups, than other professionals or the general population. In addition, while the *majority* of psychologists report that spirituality is important to them, a *minority* report that religion is important to them (Shafranske, 1996, p. 153). Shafranske summarizes his own data and the work of others to emphasize that psychologists are more like the general population than was previously assumed. However, Shafranske (1996, p. 154) lumps together various indices as the "religious dimension," and this is very misleading. In fact, psychologists neither believe, practice, nor associate with the institutional aspects of faith ("religion") as much as they endorse what Shafranske properly notes are "noninstitutional forms of spirituality" (1996, p. 154). One could predict that in forced-choice contexts they would be most likely to be "spiritual" but not "religious." Empirically, three facts about religious and spiritual self-identification ought to be kept quite clear.

The implications of Shafranske's findings for education and wellbeing in the United States are important. We will list four major ones.

First, as noted above, most persons who are *not* mental health professionals identify themselves as *both* religious and spiritual. These are largely persons sampled from within faith traditions, for which it is reasonable to assume that spirituality

is at least one expression of and motivation for their religion (e.g., institutional participation). Hence many measures of spirituality simply operate like measures of religion and tend to correlate with positive indices of mental health (Gorsuch & Miller, 1999; Hood et al., 2009).

Second, significant minorities of individuals use spirituality as a means of opposing religion, especially the authority of religious beliefs and normative demands. Many of these persons seek to move away from religion in order to become more developed spiritually. The move is from belief to experience, as Day (1994) perceptively notes. Streib et al. (2008) found these persons to be more open to experience in both Germany and the United States.

Third, religiousness and spirituality overlap considerably, at least in North American populations. The majority of the US population in particular is religious *and* spiritual, in terms of both self-identification and self-representations. Exceptions are easy to identify, but one ought not to lose sight of the fact that they are *exceptions*. Significantly, they include not only scientists in general, but psychologists in particular (Beit-Hallahmi, 1977; Shafranske, 1996). Among these people, a hostility to religion as thwarting or even falsifying spirituality is evident. This hostility is readily revealed in qualitative studies in which there is some degree of rapport between interviewer and respondents (Day, 1991, 1994; Roof, 1993, 1999).

Fourth, further clarification of the three points above has come from a major study done by Streib and his colleagues (2008) comparing individuals who left new religious tradition from their counterparts who remained. He and his colleagues have also introduced a new field of research they refer to as deconversion.

Deconversion

Strieb and his colleagues compared individuals in two cultures (Germany and the United States) who either stayed in or left the same religious tradition. The study is important as it also used mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) which Kohls, Hack, and Walach (2008) have recommended for the psychology of religion and spirituality. However, for purposes of this chapter we will focus only on their quantitative data that have direct implication for wellbeing.

In both the United States and Germany, those who deconvert identify themselves as more spiritual than religious and are characterized by lower scores on measures of religious fundamentalism and higher scores on measures of *openness to experience*, a subscale of the Big 5 measure of personality (McCrae, 1992). However, most important for our present purposes is that Streib and his colleagues also found that there were variations in the mental health implications of deconverts in Germany and the United States. This was most evident when within each culture the deconverts were contrasted with those who stayed within the tradition: in other words, those who tended to identify themselves as both religious and spiritual.

In the German sample, deconverts differed from in-tradition members on all five subscales of the Big 5. Of particular significance is the finding that German deconverts scored significantly higher on *openness to experien*ce than in-tradition

members, but lower on the remaining four subscales of the Big 5 (*agreeableness*, *emotional stability*, *conscientiousness*, and *extraversion*).

On a widely used measure of psychological wellbeing, which we will refer to as the Ryff scale (Ryff & Singer, 1996), the German deconverts scored lower on four subscales (*environmental mastery*, *personal relations with others*, *purpose in life*, and *self-acceptance*). However, they did not differ from in-tradition members in *autonomy* or *personal growth*. Finally, on independent measures of religious fundamentalism, German deconverts scored lower than their in-tradition counterparts. We will discuss the implications of these differences for wellbeing more fully below when we consider how German deconverts differ between the United States and Germany in Strieb et al.'s study of deconversion.

If we focus upon the similarities between the United States and Germany in Strieb's study of deconversion two measures are identical. In both Germany and the United States deconverts are (l) lower on measures of religious fundamentalism and (2) higher on *openness to experience* than their in-tradition counterparts.

The results with the Ryff scale also revealed differences between deconverts and in-tradition members for Germany and the United Sates. US deconverts scored higher on the total Ryff scale in contrast to German deconverts who scored lower. Furthermore, in the US sample this is accounted for largely by two of the subscales, *autonomy* and *personal growth*. Thus deconverts in Germany and the United Sates show significantly different patterns from their in-tradition counterparts, something that has strong implications for psychological wellbeing which we will now address.

Cultural Implications for Religion, Spirituality, and Psychological Wellbeing

Streib's study of deconversion has advanced the study of religion and spirituality by confirming that the meaning of psychological measures must be placed within the cultural context of those assessed. For instance, in the United States religious fundamentalism is strongly negatively correlated with openness to experience on the Big 5 and with autonomy and personal growth on the Ryff measure of wellbeing. Assuming that much of the variance on measures of the Big 5 is due to genetics (DeYoung, Peterson, & Higgins, 2002), it is reasonable to conclude that members of religious groups who are high on this measure tend to explore the limits of their faith tradition and become likely deconverts seeking autonomy and personal growth outside a faith tradition and thus identifying themselves as spiritual but not religious, even anti-religious as noted by qualitative studies done by both psychologists (Day, 1991, 1994) and sociologists (Roof, 1993, 1999). Note, however, there is a gain/loss factor in deconversion. It is those who stay within their faith tradition that maintain a sense of meaning and purpose and thus we can note what has been established in the empirical literature, religion and spirituality differentially relate to measures of wellbeing, each with its pros and cons. Deconversion presents little in the way of psychological risk to Americans as they inhabit a culture where religious freedom

provides a "free market" of options, including a spiritual questing outside of the established faith traditions (Roof, 1993, 1999).

In Germany Streib and his colleagues argue that there is a significant difference with strong implications for wellbeing. On the Big 5 measures, German deconverts scored lower on *emotional stability* often identified when reversed scored as *neuroticism*. Thus, German deconverts had higher scores in *neuroticism* than their in-tradition counterparts who are perhaps inoculated from neuroticism by their faith. German deconverts also have lower scores on *extraversion* suggesting lack of social support as noted above. Correspondingly, on the Ryff scale, German deconverts had lower scores on *positive relations with others*, *environmental mastery*, *self-acceptance*, and *purpose in life*. Streib and his colleagues conclude that deconversion is associated with a crisis for Germans unlike that for deconverts in the United States. The crisis for German deconverts is with regard to self (meaning, emotion, self-acceptance), others (positive relations, extraversion), and mastery of everyday life. Further longitudinal research is needed to see whether this crisis situation is worked through or simply results in a permanent reduction in psychological wellbeing.

The possibility of a crisis situation for deconverts in Germany must be balanced by its mirror image for in-tradition members. Analyses of the Big 5 subscales and the Ryff subscales suggest that for those who remain in-tradition, their faith provides them with a satisfactory meaning system in which *emotional stability*, *agreeableness*, *conscientious*, and *extraversion* work in opposition to openness to provide a stable meaning system. German in-tradition members must be judged psychologically stable in terms of Big 5 traits of *agreeableness*, *emotional stability*, *consciousness*, *and extraversion*. Recalling that in-tradition members score higher on measures of religious fundamentalism, a consistent picture is beginning to emerge that suggests fundamentalism is a meaningful form of life for many persons. Likewise, in terms of psychological wellbeing, the relevant differences of the Ryff subscales indicate that in-tradition members have *purpose in life*, *positive relations with others*, and a sense of *environmental mastery*.

Three conclusions derive from the study by Streib and his colleagues. First, the implications for the various possibilities of self-identification as religious/spiritual must be understood in terms of the larger culture in which these terms carry and provide various meaning options. Being religious/spiritual has trade offs with respect to which aspects of wellbeing are being assessed and how they are evaluated. They also differ in whether the culture is open to religious and spiritual options as in the United States or more linked to official government supported religions as in Germany.

Second, longitudinal research is needed to explore how even a crisis resulting from abandoning a faith tradition may be worked through to provide other sources of meaning than those framed by a particular faith tradition. In this sense, higher order factor solutions to the Big 5 are relevant. In the two-factor solution agreeableness, emotional stability, and conscientious provide one factor, and openness and extraversion the other factor. These two factors are related to distinct neurophysiological systems (DeYoung et al., 2002) and have been identified with stability

and plasticity. Peterson (1999) has written masterfully on the balance that is needed between tradition (religion) and change that is likely in our view to be associated with spiritual questing. The tension between tradition and change is the mirror in which the data on religious/spiritual self-identification is best viewed as are the consequences for various patterns of psychological wellbeing.

Third, Streib and his colleague have created a new area of study, that of deconversion. The various trajectories that deconverts follow are crucial to determine, including identification with a new faith tradition, the move to a purely secular world view, as well as the development of a private eclectic spirituality where psychological constructs of self-realization function as a spiritual ladder of growth outside the faith traditions are only some options necessary to explore. Here deconversion mirrors earlier research on conversion.

Conversion

Research on conversion has found that crises may or may not be involved in conversion. Crisis tends to be associated with the more purely psychological driven paradigm. The "Pauline" paradigm of a crisis producing a conversion to a faith tradition may parallel the German example by Streib and his colleagues as deconversion precipitating a crisis (Hood et al., 2009). On the other hand, the movement to what Hood et al. (2009) call the contemporary paradigm of conversion emphasizes the active role of the convert and the influence of interpersonal relations on a continual quest for new patterns of personal growth and meaning. This is consistent with the study by Streib and his colleagues of deconverts in the United Sates. It is important to note that the classic paradigm acknowledged a series of contrasts between sudden and gradual conversion, although empirical research was focused on the more dramatic case of sudden religious conversion. Perhaps it was this narrowed focus in the empirical literature that allowed the contemporary paradigm to emerge. In addition, the emergence of new religious movements and their obvious appeal to converts altered that typical pattern of research, almost by definition. Thus intensification experiences within traditions that focused on intrapsychological processes (studied by psychologists) gave way to conversion to new religious movements focused on interpersonal processes (studied by sociologists and social psychologists). Long and Hadden (1983) have argued for a "dual-reality" approach, in which conversion may involve either sudden, emotional processes (associated with intrapsychological processes, which can be denigrated in terms of a "brainwashing" metaphor) or more gradual processes (associated with interpsychological processes). However, we need not assume conversion to be an either–or process, based upon dichotomies such as sudden–gradual or passive–active. The distinction primarily reflects differing psychological and sociological interests. Investigators would best profit from studying actual processes of conversion in particular cases, and the degree to which characteristics typically assumed to operate in what we have termed the classical and contemporary paradigms could be empirically identified. One may assume, as Rambo (1993) does, that there are no fundamental differences among the processes

of conversion to various religions. However, we must be careful to identify the various factors that actually do operate in conversion before we can take such an assumption as proven.

Finally although admittedly some change must occur in conversion, the nature of that change must be carefully delineated. Psychologists frequently focus on personality change. Paloutzian, Richardson, and Rambo (1999) argue that the two distinct literatures on conversion and personality change ought to be related. Adopting contemporary views of personality that recognize levels or domains to personality (Emmons, 1995) suggests that one can organize the empirical literature on conversion by the extent to which it produces changes in particular domains or levels of personality. For instance, research at the basic personality level, using such indicators as the five-factor model of personality (McCrae, 1992), has produced little, if any, evidence that conversion changes basic personality. However, at other levels of personality functioning, changes resulting from conversion can clearly be identified. Paloutzian et al. (1999) have summarized this literature according to three levels of personality assessment. Level 1 refers to basic function (such as measured by the Big 5), here conversion and deconversion reveal little personality change as might be expected in measures referring to basic inheritable traits. However, at level 2, referring to attitudes, emotions, and behavior, both conversion and deconversion reveal significant change. Finally, at level 3, referring to purpose in life, meaning, and psychological wellbeing, one finds rather profound changes. All of this is embedded in our discussion of the relationship between self-ascribed religious and spiritual identities. However, psychologists have also studied religious and spiritual experiences by imposing definitions of their own which identify phenomena to be investigated that cover the widest possible range in the Jamesean sense of human natures.

Religious Experience and Human Nature

James's (1902/1985) classic work, *The varieties of religious experience*, has continued to influence psychologists since it was initially delivered as the Gifford Lectures at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although one can speculate as to the varying reasons why this book has remained in print since its first publication, the simple fact remains that James set the tone for contemporary empirical work in the psychology of religious *experience* that is nonreductive (Hood, 2000).

James's definition of religious experience for the purposes of the Gifford Lectures clearly revealed his sympathy for the extreme forms of religious experience. James defined religion as "*the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men, in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine*" (James, 1902/1985, p. 34; emphasis in original). The presence of something divine within all religious traditions can be debated. Buddhism is often cited as an example of a faith tradition without a god (Hong, 1995). However, one need not equate something divine with belief in God or in supernatural beings. James' clarification of what he meant by "divine" makes the

case for the near-universal application of this concept. As he saw it, the divine is "such a primal reality as the individual feels compelled to respond to solemnly and gravely, and neither by a curse nor a jest" (James, 1902/1985, p. 39). Thus, influenced by James' notion of divinity, religious experience—ultimately, the experience of the solitary individual—is placed at the forefront of the psychology of religion.

Religious experience distinctively separates, from the vast domain of experience, that which is perceived to be *religious*. Thus we psychologists are free to identify religious experience as experience that is identified within faith traditions as religious. This tautology need not disturb us. Religious traditions define the distinctively religious for the faithful. What is religious within one tradition may not be so within another. With the possible exception of mystical experiences discussed below, it is probably not fruitful to define religious experiences by their inherent characteristics. Whether an experience is religious or not depends on the interpretation of the experience. It is in this sense that even if what is experienced is both immediately present and unquestionable to the experiencing subject, the epistemological value of the experience is dependent on discursive meanings that entail public interpretations (Sharf, 2000). Interpretations provide meanings not inherently obvious to those who stand outside the tradition that provides the context for meaningfully identifying any particular episode as a religious experience. Given the wide range of religious experiences, we will focus on three that have been extensively studied: glossolalia, prayer, and apparitions.

Glossolalia

Samarin (1972) claim that glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, is merely meaningless, phonologically structured human sound. However, Hutch (1980) claims that glossolalia aims to amalgamate the sounds of laughing and crying—signs of both the joy and pain of life supporting the view of Lafal, Monahan, and Richman (1974) that glossolalia is meaningless. Early psychologists attributed glossolalia to mental illness, but modern researchers have made a strong conceptual case for distinguishing glossolalia from what are only superficial clinical parallels (Kelsey, 1964; Kildahl, 1972). Empirically, glossolalia is normative within many religious traditions, including some Pentecostal and Holiness groups where it is widely accepted as the most crucial criterion of baptism of the Holy Ghost.

The real focus of research has been on whether or not glossolalia occurs only in a trance or altered state of consciousness. Goodman (1969) has documented the cross-cultural similarity of glossolalic utterances. She attributes this similarity to the fact that glossolalia results from an induced trance. The trance state itself, for neurophysiological reasons, accounts for the cross-cultural similarity of glossolalia (Goodman, 1972). She argues for induction techniques generated by religious rituals in believers (Goodman, 1988, 1990).

Samarin (1972) has challenged Goodman's cross-cultural data on the grounds that all her samples were from similar Pentecostal settings, even though the data

were collected within different cultures. Samarin also points out that patterns identified in typical Appalachian Mountain setting are similar to those found in glossolalia. This is the case, even though such preaching does not occur in a trance state; hence there is no reason to infer that glossolalia can only be elicited in trance states. Extensive field research on Christian serpent handlers of Appalachia support Samarin's claim (Hood & Williamson, 2008). This view is also supported by Hine (1969). More recently, however, Philipchalk and Mueller (2000) demonstrated increased activation of the right hemisphere relative to the left in a small sample of participants who allowed infrared photography before and after speaking in tongues. The opposite was found before and after reading aloud. These data suggest the activation of the right hemisphere in glossolalia, and not necessarily the existence of a trance state.

Wacker (2001) has argued for a compromise view, that glossolalia is produced in a trance state that Pentecostals have learned to enter and exit based on social cues produced in the appropriate religious context. Among Pentecostals worldwide, the experience of glossolalia is both meaningful and contributes to their psychological wellbeing. However, it may be that outside Pentecostalism glossolalia per se may not be particularly useful in fostering personality integration. This is the conclusion supported by Lovekin and Malony (1977) in their study of participants in a Catholic charismatic program of spiritual renewal. Empirical studies comparing glossolalic with nonglossolalic controls have consistently failed to find any reliable psychological differences, including indices of psychopathology, between the two groups (Goodman, 1972; Hine, 1969; Malony & Lovekin, 1985).

Prayer and Meditation

Poloma and her colleagues have made significant contributions to the contemporary empirical study of prayer (Poloma & Gallup, 1991; Poloma & Pendleton, 1989). Not only have they reliably measured several types of prayer (colloquial, meditative, petitionary, and ritualistic), but they have focused on the more psychologically meaningful measures of (1) experiences during prayer and (2) subjective consequences of prayer. Thus much of Poloma et al.'s work is in the quality-of-life tradition, which meaningfully assesses the subjective aspects of human experience (Poloma & Pendleton, 1991).Like most of the studies of prayer, Poloma has focused on Christian prayer. Reviews of the empirical literature on Christian prayer are readily available (Francis & Evans, 2001; Hood et al., 2009). Here we simply emphasize that prayer is multidimensional, and that different types of prayer relate to different aspects of wellbeing. For instance, meditative prayer is most closely related to religious satisfaction and existential wellbeing. On the other hand, only colloquial prayer predicts the absence of negative affect, whereas ritual prayer alone predicts negative affect (Poloma & Pendleton, 1989). Thus not simply frequency of prayer, but the nature and type of prayer, determine the experiential consequences of prayer.

The multidimensionality of prayer has resulted in remarkably similar factors by independent research teams. For instance both Poloma and her colleagues, and Hood and his, have derived remarkably similar factors in their multidimensional approach to the measurement of prayer. Both Poloma's and Hood's groups have noted that "contemplative" (Hood's term) or "meditative" (Poloma's term) praying—a non-petitionary attempt merely to become aware of God. We will focus on meditative prayer as it is the one area in the contemporary psychology of religion where empirical research has been done on subjects from both Western and Eastern meditative traditions.

Among religious persons in the West devout individuals find a meaningful confrontation with a "deeper" or "higher" reality that is meaningfully framed within the beliefs of their faith tradition. Eastern traditions may simply assert that meditation provides a full appreciation of reality as it is. For instance, Preston (1988) has shown how converts to Zen are socialized into an interpretation of reality that is based on nonconceptual meditative techniques, which demand attentiveness to reality presumably as it is, in and of itself.

Naranjo and Ornstein (1971) distinguish between "ideational" and "nonideational" meditation. The former encourages and utilizes imagery that is common within a tradition; the latter seeks an imageless state and avoids attention to unwanted imagery that may occur during meditation. The fact that much imageless meditation is widely recognized as a spiritual practice has contributed to the psychophysiological study of meditation. Rather than assessing either verbal reports or behavior, investigators have focused on physiological measures, particularly of brain activity as measured by a wide variety of new technologies (Azari, 2006). However, seeking a precise physiology of either prayer or meditation may be one of those chimerical tasks that serve to satisfy those who will accept the reality of spiritual things only if they can identify their bodily correlates.

To cite but one example of a bodily correlate of meditative states we can note the relationship between brain wave patterns and modes of consciousness. For instance waking attentive states are associated with brain wave cycles ≥ 13 cps (beta). However, it is also obvious that despite this physiological correlate of attentive consciousness, this fact does not tell us much about what is being experienced. Reading a book, playing baseball, and watching a great movie would all probably register as "beta" states; yet this equates them only in a trivial sense with all activities a person engages in when awake and attending to something external.

Alpha states ranging from 8 to 12 cps are of particular interest as they are strongly correlated with nondiscursive experiences during prayer or meditation. While prayer and meditation states can be associated with either alpha or beta states, depending on whether or not one is consciously attending to images or thoughts. Imageless states are more likely to be associated with alpha; image with alpha or beta, depending upon the degree of focused awareness on specific imagery.

Many studies of meditative traditions have focused on the less-expensive technique of identifying brain wave correlates of prayer and meditation. For instance, Kasamatsu and Hirai (1969) compared those learning to meditate and those adept at meditation in terms of four stages that occur as participants advance in *zazen*.

They found that Zen masters' independent ratings of those most adept at *zazen* were clearly associated with brain wave patterns assumed to be indicative of the higher stages of *zazen*. It is also worth noting that these objective electrophysiological correlates of the quality of meditative stages support the claims within the Zen tradition that advancement in *zazen* can be identified appropriately by Zen masters. They also support earlier research by Maupin (1965), who found that those most adept at *zazen* had higher tolerances for anomalistic experiences and were able to take advantage of what, in psychoanalytic terms, were regressive experiences. Maupin noted that, if meditation is considered to foster such regression, each stage of meditation, successfully mastered, permits further adaptive regression. A sophisticated and comprehensive effort to develop a neurophysiology of meditative states within the Zen tradition has been provided by Austin (1998).

Associated with efforts to meditate or pray is the difficulty of attending to one's prayerful or meditative activity without not being disrupted by external stimuli. Research with yogis suggests that those with well-marked alpha activity in their normal resting states show a greater aptitude and enthusiasm for practicing *samadhi* (yoga meditation) (Anand, Chhina, & Singh, 1961). In laboratory studies, external stimuli can be introduced while persons meditate, and the effects of these on their alpha activity can be examined. In terms of brain wave patterns, external stimuli force attention so that alpha states are disrupted or blocked (alpha blocking), and beta waves are noted. Meditators must then attempt to return to their inward states, characterized by alpha waves. It has been postulated that those adept at meditation are less likely to exhibit alpha blocking when external stimuli are introduced. Investigators have confirmed this prediction, both with Zen meditators (Kasamatsu & Hirai, 1969) and with those who practice yoga (Bagchi & Wenger, 1957). Likewise, in their now-classic study, Anand et al. (1961) documented the ability of yogis in a laboratory setting to exhibit high-amplitude blocking during *samadhi*, as well as the ability to show no response to pain.

Although brain wave correlates of meditative states present a fairly consistent gross pattern, they can be misleadingly interpreted to carry more weight than they should in terms of documenting religious experiences. Experience is no more "real" because one can identify its physiological correlates than it is the case that identical physiological correlates of meditative states mean that the experiences are necessarily the "same." For instance, numerous differences exist between *samadhi* and *zazen*, not to mention varieties of prayer. These differences are not necessarily reflected in brain wave patterns (though they may be). A person's exhibiting alpha activity may not tell us whether they practice *zazen*, *samadhi*, or Christian contemplative prayer. The experience of meditation and prayer is more than its physiology.

Sundén thought that his role theory was particularly useful in addressing the question "How are religious experience at all psychologically possible?" (Wikstrom, 1987, p. 390). Jan van der Lans (1985, 1987) utilized Sundén's theory in a study of students selected to participate in a 4-week training course in Zen meditation. They were told simply to concentrate on their breathing for the first 14 sessions. Then they were told to concentrate without a focus on any object—a method called *shikan-taza* in Zen. Participants were divided into those with ($n = 14$) and those without

($n = 21$) a religious frame of reference, based on intake interviews. Instructions varied for each group: The religious group was told to anticipate experiences common in meditation within religious traditions, and the control group was told to anticipate experiences common in meditation used for therapeutic purposes.

Dependent measures included writing down every unusual experiences after each daily session, and by filling out a questionnaire on the last day of training that asked subjects specifically whether they had had a religious experience during meditation. The daily experiences were content-analyzed according to a list of 54 experiences categorized into five types: bodily sensations; fantasies, illusions, and imagery (hallucinations); changes in self-image; new insights; and negative feelings. Responses per category were too low for any meaningful statistical analyses. However, the number of persons reporting a religious experience during their Zen meditation varied as a function of presence or absence of a premeditative religious frame. Half of the religious participants reported a religious experience during meditation, while none of the control group (those without a premeditative religious frame) did. In addition, all participants were asked a control question at the end of the study: Had their meditations made them feel more vital and energetic? The groups did not differ on this question.

The conclusion we may draw from this research is that the actual practice of meditation elicits a specifically religious experience only for those with a religious frame of reference. If we assume equivalent meditative states in both groups (e.g., achievement of alpha states), the meaningfulness of such a state is dependent upon the interpretative frame one brings to the experience. Of course, a paradox is that, within Zen, interpretative frames are minimized; hence this research employed a technique more compatible with prayer within the Christian tradition, in which interpretation plays a more significant role (Holmes, 1980). Still, it is clear that experience, meaningfully interpreted, is dependent on whatever framework for interpretation can be brought to or derived from the experience. Sundén's role theory simply argues that familiarity with a religious tradition is the basis from which religious experiences gain their meaningfulness—and without which *religious* experiences are not possible. While it is obvious that prayer provides meaning and solace to those who frame the experience in religious terms, it also may be a factor in facilitating what arguable is a unique state common to all faith traditions, mysticism. This aspect of prayer will be confronted when we discuss mysticism.

Mysticism

If there is the claim to an experience of universal concern to all faith traditions, it is mysticism. James (1902/1985, p. 301) referred to it as the "root and centre" of religion. Whether or not this claim is challenged partly depends on the empirical issue of how mysticism is measured. In the contemporary psychology of religion there are three measures of mysticism, each based upon a different conceptual model.

Barnard (1997, p. 63) has noted that ultimately James equates mystical experience with any submarginal or subliminal state which includes a wide variety of

experiences that defy easy classification. Including in these submarginal experiences are James' diabolical mysticism, a "sort of religious mysticism turned upside down" (James, 1902/1985, p. 337). In this sense, the measure of transliminality developed by Thalbourne (1998) is the most nearly Jamesian measure of mysticism we have. It is a single factor scale measuring essentially subliminal states of consciousness. Thalbourne and Delin (1999, p. 25) have coined the term transliminal to refer to a common underlying factor that is largely an involuntary susceptibility to inwardly generated psychological phenomena of an ideational and affective kind. However, transliminality is also related to a hypersensitivity to external stimulation (Thalbourne, 1998, p. 403) such that transliminality becomes a Jamesian measure of the submarginal region, as noted above where "seraph and snake" abide there side by side (James, 1902/1985, p. 338). Lange and Thalbourne (2007) have developed a single factor measure of mysticism that is more restricted than transliminal domain, but is similar to James' treatment of mysticism in the *Varieties* as it allows for interval scaling of intensity of experiences, as an empirical mystical ladder of sorts.

Francis and his colleagues have developed a measure of mysticism based on seven aspect of mysticism delineated by Happold (1963). These include ineffability, noesis, transiency, passivity, oneness, timelessness, and true ego. There is both a 21-item (Francis & Louden, 2000a) and a 9-item short index of mystical orientation (Francis & Louden, 2004). Given Francis' established interest in Eysenck's personality theory, he and his colleagues have used these measures to demonstrate that mysticism is most related to extraversion but unrelated to neuroticism and psychoticism in a large sample of Roman Catholic priests (Francis & Louden, 2000a). This replicates earlier research with a sample of over 200 male clergy that found the same results (Francis & Thomas, 1996). In a study relevant to our discussion of Eastern and Western forms of meditation, Kaldor and his colleagues found a difference between a sample of Eastern meditators and a sample of Christians who prayed: Christian prayer was associated with low psychoticism scores, but Eastern meditation was associated with high psychoticism scores, as measured by the Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Kaldor, Francis, & Fisher, 2002).

In two earlier studies, Francis and his colleague attempted to test Ross' hypothesis that, in terms of Jungian theory as operationalized in the Myers-Briggs scale, the perceiving function is crucial for individual differences in religious expression (Ross, Weiss, & Jackson, 1996). Using the short index of mystical orientation both Francis (2002) and Francis and Louden (2000b) failed to find support for Ross' hypothesis. However, in a sample of over 300 individuals who stayed at a retreat house associated with Ampleforth Abbey, Francis, Village, Robbins, and Ineson (2007) found clear support for Ross' hypothesis using the long (21-item) form of the Index of Mystical Orientation.

However, by far the most empirical research on mysticism has been done using a measure of mysticism derived from Stace's (1961) common core hypothesis. Hood's Mysticism scale is an empirical approach that Seigfried (1990, p. 12) has identified as the empirical validation of phenomenologically derived classifications. For our present purposes, it is sufficient to note that introvertive mysticism emerges as a distinct factor, not only in exploratory factor analytic studies (Hood & Williamson,

2000) but also in confirmatory factor analyses in such diverse cultures as the United States and Iran (Hood et al., 2001).

Hood's mysticism scale narrows the measurement of mysticism to an experience of oneness or unity that can be either introvertive (an experience of pure consciousness) or extrovertive (an experience of unity in diversity) and an interpretative factor. However, for our purposes in this chapter, we will focus only upon the introvertive factor and confront the possibility that there is a common mystical core to both faith traditions and to those whose mystical experiences are not embedded in religious discourse.

Our approach assumes that Stace has correctly identified three issues relevant to the empirical study of mysticism. First, one can distinguish between experience and the interpretation of experience such that differently described experiences may have underlying commonalties that escape linguistic structuring (Hood, 1995a,b). Second, important to Stace's treatment of introvertive mysticism is that it is a phenomenologically distinct experience of pure consciousness that is necessarily atemporal, aspatial, and ineffable (Hood et al., 2009). Recently Forman (1990) has coined the term *pure consciousness experience* (PCE) for Stace's introvertive mysticism. Barnard (1997, p. 63) has noted that ultimately James equates mystical experience with any submarginal or subliminal state none of which are clearly pure consciousness experiences. Thus, Hood's mysticism measure is unique in that it focuses only on unity states of consciousness, regardless of how interpreted (Hood, 1995b).

The empirical issue that we wish to address now is the possibility that there is at least one experience that is neither linguistically structured nor culturally determined. Namely introvertive mysticism. We can address this by three areas in which the empirical research suggests that, in Almond's words,

> Now in the mystical case, and taking a theistic mystical experience as our example, what remains as the basic datum of mystical experience if the content of the experience, the experience of the self in union with God, is abstracted? The residue is a contentless experience, one in which there is neither awareness of the self (of normal consciousness) nor of "anything" standing over against the self – a state in which, unlike the waking and the dream-state, there is no subject-object polarity. It is, furthermore, a state in which there is neither incoporated paradigmatic beliefs or symbols, nor, *ergo* reflexive interpretation, for there are no beliefs, thoughts, symbols, dual awareness therein. In other words, it is a state in which the distinctions between the knower, the act of knowing, and what is known are obliterated (Almond, 1982, p. 174).

Almond's thesis is shared by Stace and informs the operationalization of the introvertive factor of the M-scale. Three pieces of evidence can be offered that this experience exists and is a candidate for a universal, something social constructionists and cultural psychologists, especially with a post-modern orientation deny as a form of essentialism. However, our claim is empirical and must be addressed.

As noted above, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses reveal similar structure to the M scale in various cultures, some as distinct as Iran and the United States (Hood et al., 2001).

   Second, as noted above, among the confessional scholars who incorporate their own introvertive experiences into critical discussion of the unity thesis, interviews with mystics in other traditions about the nature of the introvertive mystical experience reveal that despite difference in the linguistic and cultural expression of these experiences, they are, mutually recognized to be essentially the same experience. Forman, who has practiced a Neo-Advaitan form of meditation twice a day since 1969 noted that his experience of PCE was acknowledged as identical to a Zen abbot's account of the same experience and to a Siddha Yoga novice's account of her experience (Forman, 1999, pp. 20–30).

   Third, independent scholars who have sought a common phenomenology between various traditions have been able to find it. This includes scholars whose work had not been cross-referenced and hence reached their conclusions independently. For instance, Brainard (2000) found this commonality in the mystical traditions as cultural diverse as Advaita-Vedānta Hinduism, Mādhyamika Buddhism, and Nicene Christianity, supporting a previous finding of Loy (1988) with respect to Advaita-Vedānta Hinduism and Mādhyamika Buddhism.

   Fourth, there is a large body of empirical research on the quasi-experimental elicitation of introvertive mysticism in both field and laboratory conditions (Hood, 1995a). These studies indicate that regardless of the conditions that facilitate the mystical experience, the experiences are identical. This has been established for mystical experiences facilitated by set and setting stress incongruities in nature settings (Hood, 1977, 1978), mystical experience facilitated in laboratory-based isolation tank studies (Hood, Morris, & Watson, 1990), and in studies employed entheogens in both religious (Pahnke, 1966) and nonreligious settings (Griffiths, Richards, McCann, & Jesse, 2006).

Conclusion

Religious, spiritual, and mystical experiences are integral to any psychology of religion. We have suggested that almost any experience can be framed such that it is religiously meaningful. Both conversion and deconversion reveal how experiences can be differentially framed. Experiences without interpretation lack the meaningfulness that religious framing can provide (Hood, Hill, & Williamson, 2005). In most religions prayer remains one of the most powerful activities to foster such experiences. Glossolalia can be framed as a form of prayer that may, but need not, involve a trance state. Those who identify themselves as spiritual but not religious reveal that, for some, religious framing becomes too narrow and is abandoned for a personal, eclectic sense of transcendence outside the Church, Synagogue, or Mosque. Finally, mystical experience remains one of the experiences that, whether interpreted in religious or spiritual terms, has proven capable of facilitation by a variety of quasi-experimental means congruent with mystical experiences facilitated by prayer or that simply occur spontaneously.

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Chapter 11
The Spiritual Dimension of Coping: Theoretical and Practical Considerations

Kenneth I. Pargament

Abstract In this chapter, I suggest that religion is designed first and foremost to facilitate spirituality—that is, to help people achieve spiritual goals. Building on this premise, I maintain that attempts to understand religion in purely biological, psychological, or social terms can provide, at best, an incomplete picture and, at worst, a distorted view of religious life. In this chapter, I present a model for understanding spirituality as a natural and normal part of life. I then examine the spiritual dimension of coping with life stressors within the context of this larger model of spirituality. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the practical implications of spiritual coping.

Introduction

As with many maxims, the old saying that there are no atheists in foxholes is not particularly accurate. In fact, many people do not believe in God before a crisis, hold to their religious unbelief throughout their ordeal, and remain disbelievers after (Brenner, 1980). Yet, like many maxims, this old saying contains a grain of truth. Empirical studies do reveal a link between religion and major life crises. In some groups, religion is the first resource drawn on in stressful times (Conway, 1985–1986). Some experiences are so stressful that they elicit a religious response in a large majority of individuals. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, 90% of a sample of people in the United States reported that they turned to religion for solace and support (Schuster et al., 2001).

Theorists and practitioners have long tried to explain the "quickening" of religion in times of stress. Freud (1927/1961) viewed religion as a response to the child-like need for protection and security from the destructive forces in nature and within oneself. Other social scientists have attempted to explain religion in less pejorative psychological and social terms. Geertz (1966), for example, maintained that religion

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provides its adherents with a sense of meaning in life. "The effort is not to deny the undeniable," he wrote, "that there are unexplained events, that life hurts, or that rain falls upon the just – but to deny that there are inexplicable events, that life is unendurable, and that justice is a mirage" (pp. 23–24). Durkheim (1915) argued that religion is designed to unite its followers into a single moral community. More recently, Kirkpatrick (2005) has asserted that religion is a by-product of evolution.

Although these theories offer very different explanations for the connection between religion and life stress, they rest on a common assumption—that religion is best explained by a factor that is nonreligious in nature, be it anxiety reduction, meaning in life, community solidarity, or evolution. Certainly, we can find people who look to their faith for psychological or social purposes. Consider some examples drawn from our interviews with people from the community. One college student describes her images of God and Jesus in a manner consistent with the writings of Freud: "I view God as a loveable, protective, compassionate, generous father that loves to hold me in His arms and set me on His lap. Jesus I see as a shepherd and I envision myself as a little white lamb who is always following him around, who loves to be held by him and who sleeps next to him." A priest recounts the funeral of his mother and the feeling of community he experienced in a way reminiscent of Durkheim: "The funeral was astounding ... The whole church, everybody was there. Many, many friends were there. Students from here, and the liturgy was a real experience of the resurrection. It was terrific. My blind niece played the piano ... And my best friend David gave the homily ... So there were so many powerful religious expressions and family expressions. It is hard to separate one from the other." In yet another example, a quadriplegic accident victim talks about the meaning he has derived from his faith in language supportive of Geertz: "Well, I'm put in this situation to learn certain things, 'cause nobody else is in this situation.' It's a learning experience; I see God's trying to put me in situations, help me learn about Him and myself and also how I can help other people" (Bulman & Wortman, l977, p. 358).

These anecdotes illustrate the variety of psychological and social roles religion can play in stressful situations. But do they tell the full story? To frame the question in another way, is religion simply a means of attaining psychological, social, or physical ends?

The Meaning of Spirituality

The concept of spirituality, as used in this chapter, does not refer to a fixed set of beliefs or practices. It is, instead, a process; a part of life that develops, shifts, and changes over the course of the lifespan. Spirituality is defined as "a search for the sacred" (Pargament, 1999, p. 12). Two terms are key to this definition: sacred and search. By sacred, I am referring not only to concepts of God or higher powers but also to other aspects of life that take on divine character and significance by virtue of their association with, or representation of, divinity (Pargament

& Mahoney, 2002, 2005). Many life domains can be perceived as manifestations of God or as imbued with divine attributes, such as transcendence, boundlessness, and ultimacy. For example, love and the products of love—marriage, sexuality, and family—can be perceived as sacred. Human virtues such as forgiveness, gratitude, justice, compassion, and courage can be understood as "signals of transcendence," signs of a reality that goes beyond the immediate situation (Berger, 1969). Time too can be elevated to sacred status as we hear in the words of theologian Abraham Heschel (1986): "Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to holiness in time. It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world" (p. 304). By focusing on the sacred as the central phenomena of interest, we are able to expand the subject matter of spirituality beyond traditional religious concerns, such as church attendance, prayer, religious affiliation, and dogma, to a wider range of domains, for virtually any aspect of life can become a sacred matter. It is important to add that perceptions of sacredness are not unusual. In a recent survey of Americans, 78% agreed that they "see evidence of God in nature and creation"; 75% agreed that they "see God's presence in all of life"; and 68% agreed that they sense that their spirit "is part of God's spirit" (Doehring et al., 2009).

The second key term in the definition of spirituality is "search." By search, I am referring to what people do to discover the sacred, develop and sustain a relationship with the sacred, and when necessary, transform their relationship with the sacred (Pargament, 2007). The search for the sacred is perhaps best illuminated by a case example.

The Story of Cindy

Cindy is a 40-year-old married mother of four children who agreed to share her spiritual story in an interview (see Pargament, 2007, for complete story). Though she dressed like a young woman, she had more than her fair share of wrinkles and it was clear that she had seen some hard times. Nevertheless, she spoke with energy, honesty, and deep feeling. For almost as long as she can remember, Cindy said, she felt a hunger for God. At the age of four, she had a life-changing spiritual experience: "I was sitting in a field behind our house, and the sun was going down, and I just felt like God had His arms around me." Cindy believed that this experience was a gift from God: "I think he knew . . . that I would need that [gift] to carry me through some of the hard times." Important as it was, Cindy kept her spiritual experience to herself. Her father, a cold and distant man, had been embittered by what he felt was rejection from his church and would have little to do with religion. Her mother kept a bible at home but never broached the subject of religion and never encouraged Cindy to go to church. Cindy would occasionally accompany a friend to her small Protestant church, but there she learned about a divine figure quite different from the God she had encountered in the field. This was a God "sitting up on a throne

someplace, and all He ever really did was throw fire balls down on people." Cindy moved into adolescence believing that her relationship with God depended on her ability to live a sin-free life. The stage was set for failure. "The first time I screwed up, I thought, 'That's it,' I blew it, and had nobody to tell me any different. What happened after that was my life really took a downward spiral."

Feeling that she'd lost her "Christian God," Cindy began to search for the sacred elsewhere. Over the next 15 years, she experimented with astrology, tarot card reading, witchcraft, the occult, and Eastern mysticism. She also married four times, gave birth to four children, became addicted to cocaine, and moved out leaving her children behind with her mother.

A turning point in Cindy's life occurred when her mother died 10 years ago. Returning home for the funeral, Cindy discovered that a former "partying" friend had become Christian. Cindy's friend recounted her conversion with the story now popularized in the "footprints poster." The poster depicts two sets of footprints in the sand that then become a single set of footprints in difficult times. The individual in the poster complains: "Lord, I thought that when things are rough you would never leave me." And the Lord responds, "Those were the times that I carried you, and that's why you only saw one set of footprints." Cindy was powerfully affected by the story: "I felt like that was written for me. And when she told me that, I just thought, my God, He's been there with me this whole time. He never left. Jesus has been standing right by me."

Over the next 10 years, Cindy made significant changes in her life. She was treated for her chemical addiction, returned home, regained custody of her children, and developed a new, more compassionate understanding of God: "[He] accepts you just the way you are. You don't have to attain a level of perfection ever. He doesn't expect that from you." Cindy's view of the sacred also broadened. "Now I see [God] more in people and how He affects people's lives."

Currently, Cindy tries to deepen her relationship with God by daily prayer, active involvement in her church, and her new vocation—working with chemically dependent adolescent girls. Though she feels more rooted and stable, she does not believe that her spiritual journey is over. Cindy continues to have some spiritual questions and concerns: "I'd like to know why God let me fall down that shaft with the drugs and the occult and all that. I don't understand why he didn't send anybody into my life at that point. There was nobody, and I don't understand why." However, Cindy is now able to place these questions into a more benevolent spiritual perspective. "[Maybe] He thought I needed the experience to make me a more capable counselor now. It's hard to tell. I mean you're dealing with God. He's a big guy. He knows what He's doing." Asked about the legacy she would like to pass on to her children, Cindy responds in a way reminiscent of her own childhood spiritual experience: "I'd want them to realize that they're not alone . . . that we don't walk this walk ourselves. Once we reach out, Jesus grabs your hand. He's always right there with you."

Cindy's spiritual journey is filled with drama, highs and lows, and critical moments. It is not a one-act play, but rather a series of unfolding episodes. It is not a one-person play, but instead a narrative involving a cast of protagonists set against a larger cultural backdrop. And like any good tale, it contains a plot that

lends coherence to the story. It is not hard to discern the driving force in Cindy's story. From her first spiritual experience as a 4-year-old to the security in God's hand she hopes to pass on to her children, Cindy has been engaged in a search for the sacred. Of course, other motivating forces are at play in Cindy's journey. Her hunger for a warm, embracing God could have been a compensation for the coldness she felt in her father or an effort to find relief from the emptiness she felt in her mother. Yet, to reduce her spiritual quest to purely psychological or social factors would fail to explain fully her spiritual persistence in the face of numerous obstacles. It would also leave us with a story devoid of "soul," a story Cindy herself would find unrecognizable.

Cindy's story is only one of many. There is tremendous diversity in the pathways people take to the sacred as well as in the nature of their sacred destinations. How do we make sense of the diversity in the search for the sacred? We turn now to a theoretical model of spirituality (see Fig. 11.1 for a diagrammatic representation; Pargament, 2007).

We will briefly review the model as a whole, highlighting key terms, and then focus in greater detail on the role of spiritual coping in the context of this larger model.

A Theoretical Model for Understanding and Evaluating Spirituality

The search for the sacred begins with the process of *discovery*. People experience the discovery of the sacred in different ways. Cindy perceived that God came to her as young child. While some feel that they have been touched by the sacred, others reach out to something beyond themselves, as we hear in the words of one child's letter: "Dear God, how is it in heaven? How is it being the Big Cheese" (Heller, 1986, p. 31). These experiences are not rare. Moreover, they are consistent with recent work in cognitive-developmental psychology which suggests that children come into this world already equipped with a propensity to seek out, think about, and experience the sacred (Johnson & Boyatzis, 2006). However, the discovery of the sacred can also occur later in life, as Parker Palmer described:

> One night, in the middle of one of my depressions, I heard a voice I'd never heard before, and haven't heard since. The voice said, "I love you, Parker." This was not a psychological phenomenon, because my psyche was crushed. It was 'the numinous.' It was "mysterium tremendum". . . . That rare experience taught me that the sacred is everywhere, that there is nothing that is not sacred, therefore worthy of respect (Palmer, 1998, p. 26).

As Palmer's experience suggests, the discovery of the sacred has certain consequences. The encounter with the sacred elicits a wave of emotions—what Rudolf Otto (1928) described as the mysterium tremendum—made up of feelings of attraction, including emotions of gratitude, humility, and reverence, and feelings of repulsion, fear, and dread. Haidt (2003) demonstrated how emotions of elevation and awe can be induced spiritually. He exposed one group of participants to video
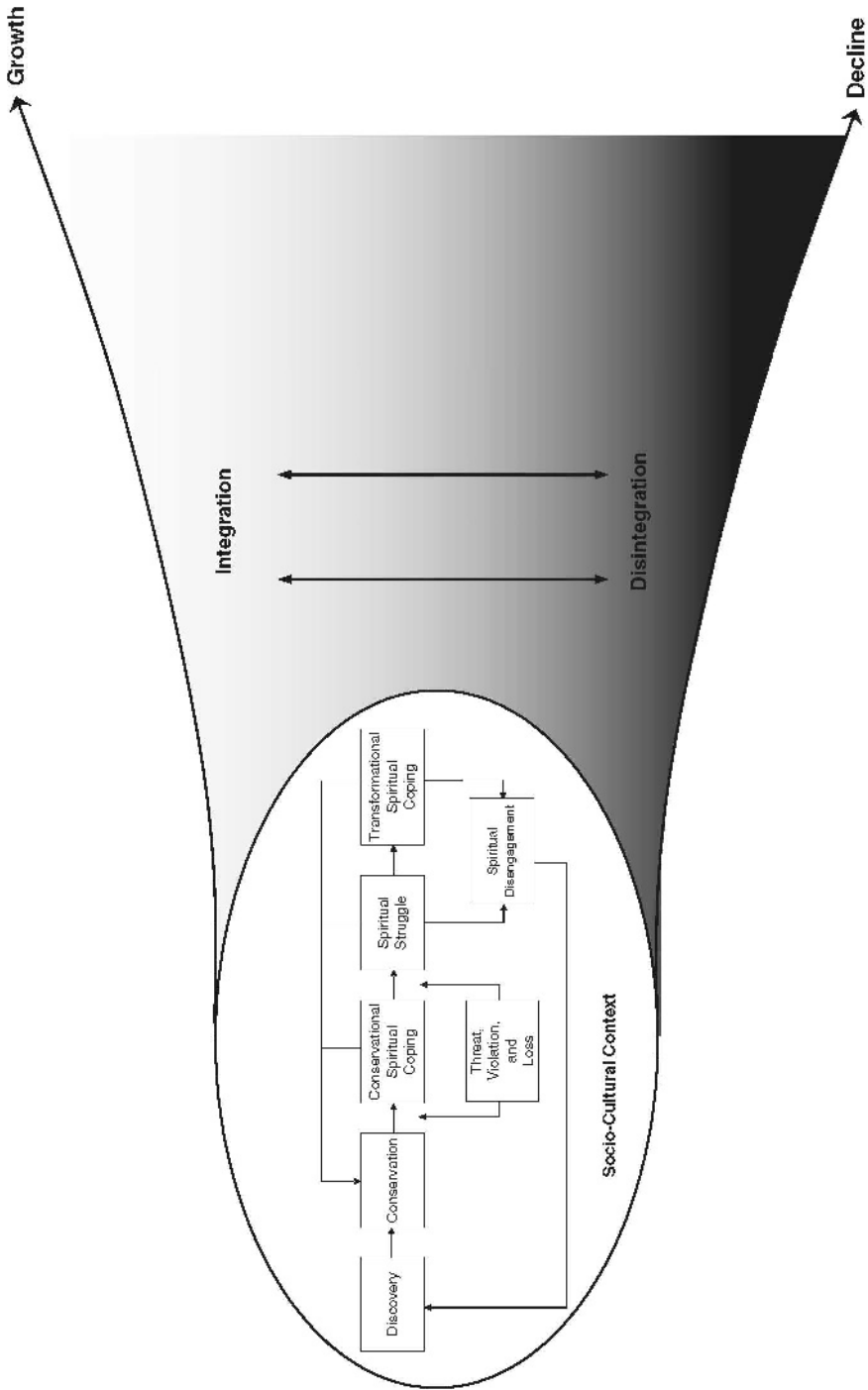
Fig. 11.1 The spiritual process

clips about the life of Mother Teresa. Other participants watched video clips from a neutral documentary and from a comedy sketch. People who watched the clips about Mother Teresa reported more warm, pleasant, and "tingling" feelings in their chests as well as a greater desire to help others and improve themselves. As the source of powerful emotions, the sacred becomes for many a passion and a priority, and as a result, they begin to invest more of themselves in sacred pursuits. For instance, in a study of a national sample of Presbyterians, we found that people who perceive the environment as sacred are more likely to invest their personal funds in environmental causes (Tarakeshwar, Swank, Pargament, & Mahoney, 2001).

Over time, the sacred becomes an organizing and directive force for many people, synthesizing their lives into a larger whole (Emmons, 1999). As Eliade (1957) noted, people want to remain in the sacred realm as long as possible. It is "the place to be." People take a number of pathways to develop and *conserve* their relationship with whatever they hold sacred. Bible study, religious rituals, relationships with clergy and church members, prayer, and meditation are a few of the diverse, traditionally religious ways people try to sustain and deepen their ties to the sacred. Yet, people can also form or follow nontraditional pathways to the sacred, including anything from scientific pursuits to quilting to volunteer services. Cindy, for example, experimented with astrology, witchcraft, and tarot card reading, in her effort to recapture a sense of God's presence in her life.

Empirical studies indicate that by and large people are quite successful in sustaining their relationship with the sacred over time. For instance, in a national survey in the United States, Gallup and Lindsay (1999) found that 97% of those who read the Bible stated that it helped them feel closer to God. Similarly, 95% of those who pray indicated that their prayers had been answered.

And yet, there are times when the search for the sacred may be put to test by trauma or transition. During these times of *threat*, *violation*, or *loss*, people may become spiritually "disoriented" and find it difficult to follow well-worn spiritual pathways. There are, however, a number of *conservational spiritual coping* methods that individuals can draw on to help them sustain their spirituality. These methods are quite effective in general, but not invariably so. Some life events throw the individual's spiritual world into turmoil and the individual then enters a period of *spiritual struggle*. For example, Cindy experienced an internal conflict between her desire to live a life of perfection and her natural adolescent impulses. Her sense of herself as a "child of God" was fundamentally shaken by her adolescent misdeeds that left her convinced that she was an "unforgiveable sinner." Spiritual struggles can be relatively short-lived experiences, followed by a return to established spiritual pathways. But they can also lead either to *spiritual disengagement* from the sacred quest, temporary or permanent, or fundamental *spiritual transformation* in the person's understanding and experience of the sacred. In Cindy's case, the death of her mother and exposure to the "footprint" poster, led to a profound transformation in her understanding of God. In essence, she re-discovered God. Once the sacred has been re-discovered, the task shifts once again to conservation and efforts to deepen a relationship with the sacred as it is now understood. Cindy, for one, is now involved in a variety of pathways, traditional and nontraditional, that help

her build an ongoing connection with the divine. The search for the sacred is not time-limited; it continues over the lifespan in the context of situational, cultural, and psychological forces that both shape and are shaped by the nature of the search.

Spirituality as it is defined here is a natural and normal part of life. It is neither inherently good nor inherently bad. In Cindy's story, we can hear spirituality at both its best and worst. How do we distinguish between the highest and lowest forms of spirituality? Elsewhere, I have proposed process-based criteria for evaluating spirituality (Pargament, 2007). From a process point of view, the value of spirituality does not lie in a single belief, practice, affiliation, trait, or experience. It is instead a quality of a person in interaction with situations and his/her larger context. An effective spirituality is a *well-integrated spirituality*:

> At its best, spirituality is defined by pathways that are broad and deep, responsive to life's situations, and oriented toward a sacred destination that is large enough to encompass the full range of human potential and luminous enough to provide the individual with a powerful guiding vision. At its worst, spirituality is dis-integrated, defined by pathways that lack scope and depth, fail to meet the challenges and demands of life events, clash and collide with the surrounding social system, change and shift too easily or not at all, and misdirect the individual in the pursuit of spiritual value (Pargament, 2007, p. 136).

For much of her life, Cindy's spirituality lacked integration in several respects. As a child, her family and larger community were unable to provide her with the support and nurturance she needed to sustain her feeling of connectedness with God. Thus, the pathways she was able to take to the sacred were neither broad nor deep. She was exposed to a limited representation of God, a God who insisted on perfection and rejected those who failed to live up to this impossible standard. This was what Phillips (1997) has described as a "small god." In response to the spiritual vacuum in her life, Cindy's life spiraled down into drug use, promiscuity, and dabbling with witchcraft and the occult. In some sense, it might be said that she sought out "false gods" to fill the emptiness in her core. Following her transformational experience, however, Cindy's spirituality became more integrated. She was able to re-connect with a larger, more compassionate God and a sense of sacredness that expanded to include other people in her world. She developed a broader and deeper set of spiritual pathways to support and nourish her spiritual connection. And she has a newfound flexible understanding of spirituality as a process that is likely to continue to evolve as she moves forward in her life. Cindy does not downplay the challenges she is encountering. But she is now able to cope with these challenges more effectively by framing them within a larger, more benevolent spiritual perspective.

The Spiritual Dimension of Coping

With this theoretical model for understanding and evaluating spirituality in mind, we can now turn our attention more specifically to the role of spiritual coping in the search for the sacred. This discussion will focus on four processes that are central to

this topic: spiritual trauma, conservational spiritual coping, spiritual struggles, and transformational spiritual struggle.

Spiritual Trauma

Major life stressors affect people on a number of levels. Empirical studies have documented robust links between stressors and physiological and psychological distress, disruptions in social relationships, shattered assumptions about the world, and questions about meaning and purpose in life (see Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Rabkin & Streuning, 1976). There is, however, another dimension to trauma.

Major life events can be understood spiritually as well as psychologically, socially, and physically. Consider the case of clergy sexual abuse. Certainly all forms of sexual abuse are traumatic. Clergy sexual abuse, however, adds another dimension to the abuse, for it is perpetrated by someone who is imbued with spiritual significance (Pargament, Murray-Swank, & Mahoney, 2008). Thus, clergy sexual abuse is likely to be perceived as a spiritual violation or a "desecration." First, it is a violation of the most sensitive parts of the individual's identity, the soul, or that which makes the person uniquely human. As one survivor of clergy sexual abuse wrote: "This guy had my soul in his hand. It was devastating to know that someone would step out of the powers of spiritual liberty to take over someone else's soul . . . I still have anger about a lot of that and I think more of the anger is about the spiritual loss than anything to do with the sexual abuse" (Fater & Mullaney, 2000, p. 290). Second, clergy sexual abuse is a violation of a sacred role and relationship, one that has been set apart from others. Perhaps for this reason, sexual abuse perpetrated by fathers and father figures has been linked to greater trauma than abuse committed by other perpetrators (e.g., Browne & Finkelhor, 1986). Third, it is a violation of a sacred institution that legitimated the cleric, possibly cloaking the acts of the perpetrator, and failing to come to the aide of the survivor. Fourth, clergy sexual abuse is a violation of a set of rituals and symbols that were intertwined with the offending clergy and institutions. One woman who had been abused by her minister at the age of 14 described her alienation from the rituals of her church: "I began to have dreams of communion wafers crawling with insects, of pearls oozing mucous, of the pastor blowing up the church just as I was about to serve communion for the first time" (Disch & Avery, 2001, p. 214). Finally, clergy sexual abuse can be perceived as a violation of the individual's understanding of God as a loving being who insures that bad things will not happen to good people.

The spiritual character of clergy sexual abuse is rather obvious. But other seemingly secular life events can also be perceived as threats to, violations, or losses of the sacred. For example, in one recent study of a community sample, my colleagues and I asked participants to describe a negative event they had experienced in the past 2 years, and then rate the event on the degree to which they perceived it as a desecration or a sacred loss (Pargament, Magyar, Benore, & Mahoney, 2005). The life events included personal illness, personal injury, death of a close family member, job loss, and divorce/separation. Approximately 25% of the sample perceived their

event as a desecration and 38% of the sample perceived it as a sacred loss. Similarly, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, we surveyed college students in New York and Ohio and found that 50% of the two samples agreed that the attacks were a desecration (e.g., "The event was both an offense against me and against God") (Mahoney et al., 2002).

Major life events that are perceived as spiritual threats, violations, or losses appear to have especially powerful implications for health and wellbeing. For example, perceptions of desecration have been tied to higher levels of anger, post-traumatic symptoms, and depression (Mahoney et al., 2002; Pargament, Magyar, et al., 2005). In the 9/11 study, students who perceived the attacks as a desecration were also more likely to endorse extremist reactions, such as the use of nuclear and biological weapons on countries harboring terrorists (Mahoney et al., 2002). Perceptions of sacred loss have also been associated with higher levels of depression and symptoms of post-traumatic stress (Pargament, Magyar, et al., 2005).

In addition, it is important to emphasizes that crises can affect the spiritual well-being of people. Cindy believed that she had "lost her Christian God." Similarly, we can find anecdotal accounts of the powerful negative spiritual effects of clergy sexual abuse on the individual's relationship with the church and God. As one survivor commented: "I don't think I'll ever step foot in a church again . . . I lost my religion, faith, and ability to trust adults and institutions" (Matchan, 1992, p. 8). Other studies have shown that women with a history of childhood sexual abuse are more likely to report negative characterizations of God (Doehring, 1993). College students who report physical and emotional abuse as children are also less likely to maintain the religious beliefs of their families (Webb & Whitmer, 2003). Thus, spiritual traumas impact people, not only psychologically, socially, and physically, but also spiritually.

Conservational Spiritual Coping

Not everyone is devastated by major life stressors. In fact, many people are able to maintain their equilibrium and even thrive in the face of the most challenging of life situations (e.g., Goertzel & Goertzel, 1962). Whether critical life events lead to serious problems appears to depend, at least in part, on the resources the individual is able to bring to bear to these crises. Empirical studies have identified a number of forms of coping that are tied to less vulnerability and greater resilience to major life events (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Spirituality is one potential resource to people grappling with their most difficult life situations. Pargament (1997, 2007) has identified and studied a variety of spiritual coping methods (see Table 11.1).

These methods of coping can help people sustain themselves psychologically and socially. For example, people can find meaning in negative events by reappraising them from a benevolent spiritual perspective, as we hear in the words of a woman who had been paralyzed in a car accident: "I know God doesn't screw up. He doesn't make mistakes. Something very beautiful is going to come out of this" (Baker

Table 11.1 Conservational methods of spiritual coping

Benevolent spiritual reappraisals:	Redefining a stressor through religion or spirituality as potentially beneficial
Seeking spiritual support:	Searching for love and care from the sacred
Seeking support from clergy/congregation members:	Seeking love and care from congregation members and clergy
Seeking spiritual connection:	Searching for a sense of connectedness with transcendent or immanent forces
Spiritual helping:	Attempting to provide spiritual support to others
Collaborative spiritual coping:	Seeking a partnership with the divine in problem solving
Spiritual purification:	Searching for spiritual cleansing through ritual

From Pargament (2007)

& Gorgas, 1990, p. 5A). Spiritual support can also be a source of psychological strength and empowerment. One older man with HIV/AIDS said: "I'm speaking to my higher power, my God. And I give thanks to that power. It has been a source of strength. You know, it's like tapping in to some sort of power source that I can recharge my batteries" (Siegel & Scrimshaw, 2002, p. 95).

These anecdotal accounts are not unusual. Moreover, they are supported by a number of empirical studies that tie spiritual coping methods to better psychosocial and physical health outcomes (see Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005). Consider a few recent examples. Murphy, Johnson, and Lohan (2007) reported that parents who made more use of religious coping methods following the violent death of their child were able to find greater meaning in the death five years later. Krause (2006) found that older church members who offered more spiritual support to fellow members were less vulnerable to the effects of financial strain on mortality. Working with a sample of patients undergoing major cardiac surgery, Ai, Peterson, Bolling, and Rodgers (2006) reported that pre-operative spiritual coping was associated with better post-operative, short-term, global functioning. These studies highlight the important role spiritual resources can play in sustaining people psychologically, socially, and physically when they are going through hard times.

Most importantly, however, these spiritual coping methods are designed to conserve spirituality itself. Many people in crisis speak to the vital spiritual function of these resources. For example, one Hindu woman disabled from birth with a neuromuscular disorder described how her benevolent spiritual perspective helped her not only psychologically but also spiritually: "I was told by the swamis early in my study of Vedanta that disability was present in my life so that I could grow in new ways and progress along the path to God consciousness. I have always had rebellious tendencies, and I am sure that, had I not had a disability, I would have easily succumbed to the temptations of the 60s. . . . This life is riddled with physical frustrations but wealthy with opportunities for spiritual growth" (Nosek, 1995, pp. 174–175).

Are spiritual methods of coping effective in conserving spirituality? A number of studies suggest that they are. For instance, in one investigation of medically ill, hospitalized elders, those who made more use of the conservational methods of

spiritual coping (e.g., benevolent religious reappraisals, seeking spiritual support, spiritual helping, spiritual purification) reported strong increases in their feelings of closeness to God, their sense of spirituality, and their closeness to their church over the following 2 years (Pargament, Koenig, Tarakeshwar, & Hahn, 2004). Other studies have shown that spirituality is generally quite resilient to the effects of major life crises. Brenner (1980) conducted a retrospective survey of Jewish Holocaust survivors and found that 61% reported no change in their religious behavior before the Holocaust, after the Holocaust, and at the time of the study.

Spiritual Struggles

Although spirituality is generally quite capable of withstanding the effects of major life events, there are times when an individual's spiritual resources are not capable of dealing effectively with the demands raised by internal transitions or external situations. During these times, the individual's system of spiritual beliefs, practices, relationships, experiences, and strivings may be shaken or shattered, and the individual undergoes a spiritual struggle—a period of spiritual uncertainty, tension and conflict.

We can distinguish among three types of spiritual struggle (Pargament, Murray-Swank, Magyar, & Ano, 2005). Interpersonal spiritual struggles involve conflicts among families, friends, tribes, and nations. For instance, in a study of older adults, Krause, Chatters, Meltzer, and Morgan (2000) identified several types of negative interactions among church members, including cliquishness, hypocrisy by clergy and members, and gossiping. One woman complained: "They get off in a corner and talk about you and you're the one that's there on Saturday working with their children and ironing the priest's vestments and doing all that kind of thing. . . . But they don't have the Christian spirit" (p. 519). These kinds of interpersonal conflicts are not uncommon. Nielsen (1998) reported that 65% of an adult sample voiced some sort of religious conflict in their lives, most of which were interpersonal in nature.

Intrapsychic spiritual struggles are defined by questions and doubts about matters of faith. These doubts may focus on one's own ultimate value or purpose in life, or on the claims of religious traditions, as we hear in the painful questions raised by one adolescent: "Is Christianity a big sham, a cult? If an organization were to evolve in society, it would have to excited people emotionally, it would have to be self-perpetuating, it would need to be a source of income, etc. Christianity fits all of these. How do I know that I haven't been sucked into a giant perpetual motion machine" (Kooistra, 1990, p. 95). In one study of a national sample of Presbyterians, only 35% indicated that they had never had any religious doubts (Krause, Ingersoll-Dayton, Ellison, & Wulff, 1999). Exline (2003) identified another intrapsychic spiritual struggle that deserves note—the tension between the desire to cultivate and pursue elevated ends and the temptations to satisfy more

basic human appetites. This is the kind of struggle that Cindy experienced as an adolescent.

Perhaps most painful of all are struggles with the divine. These struggles include emotional expressions of abandonment and punishment by God as well as anger and fear toward God. One articulate 14-year-old illustrates this kind of struggle:

> Many times I wonder how there can be a God – a loving God and where He is . . . I don't understand why He lets little children in Third World countries die of starvation . . . I believe in God and I love Him, but sometimes I just don't see the connection between a loving God and a suffering hurting world. Why doesn't He help us – if He truly loves us? It seems like He just doesn't care? Does He? (Kooistra, 1990, pp. 91–92).

Again, this type of struggle is not unusual. Survey research indicates that 10–50% of various samples report divine spiritual struggles (Exline & Rose, 2005; Fitchett, Rybarczyk, DeMarco, & Nicholas, 1999).

Spiritual struggles appear to be a fork in the road to decline or growth. A number of studies among a variety of samples have linked higher levels of spiritual struggles to declines in mental health, physical health, and even greater risk of mortality (e.g., Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005; Burker, Evon, Sedway, & Egan, 2005; Pargament, Koenig, Tarakeshwar, & Hahn, 2001; Trevino et al., in press). For example, working with a large national sample of college students, Bryant and Astin (2008) found that intrapsychic and divine spiritual struggles were associated with significant increases in psychological distress and declines in self-reported health from freshman to junior years. In addition to their psychological and physiological effects, spiritual struggles can lead to problems or disengagement in the spiritual dimension. A survivor of childhood sexual abuse describes the impact of spiritual struggles this way:

> The death of our God-images causes us pain because we enter a period which is void of any image. Before a new one emerges, we reside in darkness and emptiness. We find it very difficult to pray, and we sense little comfort. We struggle intellectually and emotionally; we yearn for some felt experience of God, yet god is silent. Finally, we begin to wonder if there even is a God because our felt experience seems to be part of the past (Flaherty, 1992, p. 126)

Although spiritual struggles are clearly a source of significant distress for many people, there is some evidence that they may also be a source of personal and spiritual growth. A few investigators have reported that higher levels of spiritual struggle are associated with higher levels of post-traumatic growth. For instance, in a study of people who lived near the site of the 1998 Oklahoma bombing, those who indicated more spiritual struggle also reported greater stress-related growth (Pargament, Smith, Koenig, & Perez, 1998). What determines whether spiritual struggles lead to decline or growth? Certainly, many factors contribute to the direction people take at this fork in the road. One crucial determinant may be whether the individual engages in transformational spiritual coping efforts.

Transformational Spiritual Coping

As Piaget (1954) noted, people generally resist fundamental change. Only after their tried-and-true methods have proven to be less-than-effective are most people willing to entertain the possibility of transformation. This general point holds true for the spiritual domain. Here too people generally prefer to remain with what is familiar than venture off into new paths. Yet, critical life events and the spiritual struggles that follow may insist on change by pointing to the limitations in the individual's understanding of or approach to the sacred.

People can transform their spirituality in a number of ways (see Pargament, 2007). For example, in response to major life transitions such as childbirth, coming of age, marriage, and death, the religions of the world provide their adherents with a variety of rites of passage to mark and facilitate the movement toward new roles and identities. Individuals can also re-vision the sacred following critical life events, as Cindy did in shifting her view from a harsh divine figure that demanded perfection, to a Christian God who had abandoned her after her transgression, to a loving Jesus who had been with her throughout her life. Other people experience a spiritual conversion; a shift in the place of the sacred from the periphery to the very center of an individual's identity. This was the kind of transformation Gandhi was trying to foster in his encounter with a Hindu who confesses, "I am going to Hell. I murdered two Muslim children after the Muslims murdered my family." Gandhi replies, "You may indeed go to Hell. But there may be a way out. Find two orphaned Hindu children and raise them as Muslims" (Decker, 1993, p. 43). As this example also suggests, many people look to their faith for help in the process of forgiveness in which they seek a transformation from a life centered around anger, bitterness, and resentment to one of compassion, peace, and wholeness.

In spite of the central place of spiritual transformation in the narratives of major religious figures across diverse traditions and in the works of the founding figures in psychology, there has been relatively little research on this topic. Recently, however, researchers have begun to take a more serious look at spiritual transformation, including accounts of profound spiritual change (e.g., Miller & C'de Baca, 2001), forgiveness, (Worthington, 2005), and conversion (e.g., Zinnbauer & Pargament, 1998). These findings, preliminary as they are, suggest that people are capable of dramatic and long-lasting change in their spiritual lives. For example, in their study of people who had experienced transformation, what they call "quantum change," Miller & C'de Baca (2001) reported men and women experienced fundamental changes in their most five highly valued personal characteristics. Men changed from "wealth, adventure, achievement, pleasure, and be respected" to "spirituality, personal peace, family, God's will, and honesty." Women shifted in their values from "family, independence, career, fitting in, and attractiveness" before their quantum change to "growth, self-esteem, spirituality, happiness, and generosity" after. Similarly, in a retrospective study of three groups of college students, those who labeled themselves converts, more religious, and religiously unchanged over the past 2 years, Zinnbauer and Pargament (1998) found that the groups of converts and more religious students reported significant improvements in self-esteem, self-confidence,

and personal identity, unlike the religiously unchanged students who reported no changes in their sense of themselves.

It is important to add that spiritual transformations are not necessarily positive. Recall that Cindy initially sought out drugs, the occult, and multiple sexual partners following her adolescent transgression and sense of divine abandonment. She herself saw these activities as negative transformations—attempts to replace her lost Christian God with other, admittedly flawed sacred objects. Cindy's personal story may be representative of a broader process at play here. Caprini-Feagin and Pargament (2008) tested the notion that spiritual struggles create a spiritual vacuum in the lives of individuals who then become more likely to engage in addictive behaviors to fill this inner void. Working with a sample of college students, they found that those who reported higher levels of intrapsychic, interpersonal, and divine spiritual struggles were more likely to develop greater addictiveness over 2 months in several domains, including food starving, gambling, prescription drugs, recreational drugs, sex, tobacco, and work. These findings point to the importance of carefully delineating what the individual holds sacred. Whether spiritual transformations are positive will depend in part on the character of the sacred the individual is moving toward the center of his/her life, and the degree to which the newfound spirituality is well-integrated.

The Practical Implications of Spiritual Coping

Building on the growing body of literature on spirituality and coping, practitioners have begun to attend more explicitly to the spiritual dimension in their efforts to promote change (see Pargament, 2007, for review). One direction they have taken has been to help people draw on their spiritual coping resources. Another direction has been to help people address spiritual struggles in their lives.

Helping People Access Spiritual Coping Resources

Practitioners have developed and evaluated a variety of psychospiritual interventions to assist people in the general population dealing with various critical problems. For example, several programs have been designed to foster forgiveness in response to interpersonal hurt, mistreatment, and victimization (e.g., Worthington, 2005). Even though they are still in their early stages of development, these programs have shown some promising results. Rye and his colleagues compared the effects of a religious forgiveness program with a secular forgiveness program for college students who had been hurt in romantic relationships (Rye & Pargament, 2002) and for ex-husbands and ex-wives struggling with anger toward their former spouses (Rye et al., 2005). The only difference between the two groups was that spiritual resources were explicitly interwoven into the religious forgiveness groups while the secular groups made no mention of religion or spirituality. Both groups proved to be helpful in promoting forgiveness. However, an interesting and important finding

emerged when group participants were asked afterward what resources helped them the most in the forgiveness process. Members of the secular group indicated that two of the three most common resources they used to forgive were spiritual in nature (e.g., "I asked God for help and/or support as I was trying to forgive"). This finding suggests that even presumably secular approaches to change may have an implicitly spiritual character.

Other programs have helped people dealing with medical illness to draw on their spiritual coping resources. For example, Cole (2005) created and evaluated the efficacy of a manualized, spiritually focused therapy program for people diagnosed with cancer. The program, *Recreating Your Life*, encouraged participants to draw on their relationship with the transcendent for support in addressing four existential issues that people with cancer commonly face: the loss of control, loss of identity, loss of meaning, and loss of relationships. Over the course of the 6-week intervention, participants in a nontreatment control condition experienced significant increases in pain severity and depression; in contrast, those in the spiritually focused condition remained relatively stable. Working with a sample of college students with vascular headaches, Wachholtz and Pargament (2008) compared the effects of a spiritual mantra-based meditation to a secular meditation and progressive muscle relaxation. Participants were randomly assigned to the meditation groups which were taught to meditate in exactly the same way, with the exception of their mantras. Those in the spiritual group meditated to an explicit spiritual mantra (e.g., "God is peace" and "God is good"); those in the secular meditation groups meditated to internal or external secular phrases (e.g., "I am good " and "Sunshine is warm"). Measures were collected before the training, 1 month after the training, and 1 month later. The results were quite striking. In comparison to the other meditation and relaxation groups, those in the spiritual meditation group reported more significant declines in the frequency of headaches, negative mood, and trait anxiety, and more significant increases in existential wellbeing, mystical experiences, and pain tolerance as measured by the ability to keep their hands in ice water for longer periods of time.

Another set of programs has encouraged people with significant mental health concerns to access their spiritual resources. For instance, Richards, Berrett, Hardman, and Eggett (2006) developed and evaluated a spiritual treatment program for 122 women with eating disorders in an inpatient setting. They compared three groups: a spirituality group that read and discussed a spiritual workbook containing a variety of spiritual resources, a cognitive group that read and discussed a cognitive-behavioral self-help workbook, and an emotional support group that discussed nonspiritually related topics. Over the course of treatment, all three groups demonstrated positive changes, but the spiritual groups showed greater improvements in eating attitudes and spiritual wellbeing, and greater declines in symptom distress, relationship distress, and social role conflict. Avants, Beitel, and Margolin (2005) developed a spiritually integrated treatment to facilitate fundamental transformation among drug-dependent and HIV-at-risk clients. Spiritual Self-Schema (3-S) Therapy draws on Buddhist teachings and practices (e.g., self-affirmation, prayer, meditation, noble truths) to encourage clients to make a shift from an "addict self-schema" to a "spiritual self-schema". Initial evaluations of 3-S have been quite

encouraging. In one study of treatment-resistant cocaine- and opiate-dependent clients, participants demonstrated a significant change in their self-schemas from the addict self to the spiritual self. In addition, they demonstrated significant declines in drug use and increases in the percentages of drug-free urines, spiritual experiences, spiritual coping, church attendance, and private religious practices.

Helping People Address Spiritual Struggles

A few practitioners have created innovative programs to assist people who are experiencing spiritual struggles in their lives. Although these programs are still in their infancy, they represent an important direction, given the significant implications spiritual struggles hold for health and wellbeing. *Solace for the Soul: A Journey towards Wholeness* (Murray-Swank, 2003) illustrates one such program targeted to the spiritual struggles of female survivors of sexual abuse. As noted earlier, sexual abuse often elicits perceptions of spiritual desecration and struggle. In this nondenominational program, a trained therapist implements a spiritually integrated intervention with a client for 8 weeks. *Solace for Soul* includes prayers to enhance a spiritual connection, focusing breathing to increase the sense of personal control, benevolent spiritual imagery (e.g., God's love as a waterfall within), two-way journaling to God (e.g., expression of feelings of anger and abandonment), spiritual rituals to reduce feelings of shame and self-loathing, and discussion. Using an interrupted time-series design with two survivors of sexual abuse, Murray-Swank and Pargament (2005) demonstrated significant changes in positive religious coping, spiritual wellbeing, and positive images of God over the course of the intervention. At the end of the program, one survivor commented: "This program has really helped me to come together with God a little more. I might go back to church and try praying and listening to God. Although I haven't let go of the anger completely, I am working towards God. Every day ... I notice the anger coming down. I see myself growing in that way. I know now that God is not the person to be angry at. I am angry at the person who's fault it is ... *my dad*" (p. 197).

Lighting the Way is another program that has been designed to address the spiritual struggles of women who have been diagnosed with HIV (Pargament, McCarthy, et al., 2004). As with survivors of sexual abuse, people infected with HIV often report feelings of negative feelings toward God, conflicts with church, feelings of shame, guilt, and punishment by God, and questions and doubts about religious matters. *Lighting the Way* is an eight-session group program that normalizes spiritual struggles, encourages their expression, and offers spiritual resources (e.g., gratitude, finding hope, forgiveness, religious support, spiritual surrender) for those interested in spiritual development. In an evaluation of a comparable program among HIV-infected men and women, Tarakeshwar, Pearce, and Sikkema (2005) found that participants reported significant declines in spiritual struggles and depression, and significant increases in positive religious coping over the 8 weeks of the program. Following one session, a woman in *Lighting the Way* commented, "I felt like something was missing in my life. All my life I was looking for something to fill

that space. And I never found it. Friends, good friends, didn't fill that space. Drugs didn't fill it. And finally, I met God, and I feel like my whole chest is full of flowers" (Pargament, McCarthy, et al., 2004, p. 1204).

Conclusions

Spirituality has a dual character in the coping process: it can facilitate the process of change and it can interfere with human growth. In either case, as these programs have illustrated, there is much to be gained by attending more explicitly to the spiritual dimension in our efforts to facilitate health and wellbeing. Of course, these programs represent only a beginning. Exciting opportunities abound for the integration of spirituality into work with other populations as well. For example, spiritual struggles are commonplace and problematic among college students (Bryant & Astin, 2008). These struggles could be addressed more explicitly within the campus curriculum and student support services. Similarly, religious institutions could integrate spiritual struggles more formally in their educational programs, particularly as children move into adolescence when religious questions and doubts become more prominent. All too often religious education ends when it should be beginning, when adolescents are developing the cognitive abilities to grapple with the richness and complexity of spirituality. Efforts to normalize rather than stigmatize spiritual struggles and help young adults anticipate and deal with struggles *before* they occur would be particularly valuable.

In moving from theory to practice, it is vital to recognize that spiritual interventions are just that, spiritual in nature. They are not designed to meet exclusively psychological, social, or physical goals, but are tailored to foster the individual's relationship with the sacred. There is danger then in treating spirituality as merely a convenient tool to reach nonspiritual goals. At the same time, we have to be careful of distinguishing too sharply between spirituality and other spheres of life. Generally, change in one dimension is accompanied by change in another. Nevertheless, programs are likely to be more effective when they are based on a deeper understanding of spirituality itself—what it is, its distinctive function, how it develops and changes over the lifespan, how it can be helpful, how it can be harmful, and how it relates to other dimensions of life. Progress in this area will rest on more explicit attention to spirituality as a focus for change and as an outcome of the change process. This work will be undoubtedly challenging, not because spirituality is removed from everyday life, but because it is so deeply interwoven into human experience.

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Chapter 12
The Psychology of Faith Development

Jeff Astley

Abstract James W. Fowler is a practical theologian whose main influence has been in shaping a theory of the development of faith in the context of a programme of empirical research. Although this theoretical framework and the research support for it have both been vigorously critiqued, many educators, pastors and counsellors have found their own thinking illuminated by Fowler's claims. This essay provides an overview of Fowler's theory. It begins by relating Fowler's broad account of human faith to a generic concept of "horizontal" spirituality. In describing Fowler's work in more detail, reference will then be made to its psychological and religious roots, its empirical support, and the critical literature that it has attracted. In its final part, the essay traces the relevance of Fowler's account of faith and its development for those concerned with pastoral care and spiritual counselling, as well as readers engaged in more educational contexts.

Introduction

Fowler's doctoral work was on H. Richard Niebuhr (Fowler, 1974), a theologian who remained an influence on his mature concept of faith (see Niebuhr, 1960, 1963) as did Paul Tillich and the religious scholar Wilfred Cantwell Smith. But it was his experiences of listening to people's spiritual stories that led Fowler to attempt an empirically founded developmental theory (Fowler, 1992a, 2004). Working with others at Harvard and later at Emory University, he built up a database of several hundred transcripts of semi-structured "faith development interviews", each lasting up to 3 hours. Heinz Streib, (2003a, pp. 23–24) estimates that approximately a thousand such interviews have now been undertaken by a variety of researchers. In them respondents answer questions about their relationships, experiences, significant commitments and beliefs; discuss what makes life meaningful and how they make important decisions; and give their views on the purpose of life and the meaning of death, as well as their religious views. The resulting transcripts have been

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analysed in the light of Fowler's preconceptions about the structure of faith and a developmental hypothesis framed in dialogue with these data about the manner in which faith might change over a person's life.

What Is Faith?

It is important to be clear at the outset that Fowler is using the term "faith" in a wide, generic sense. We may think of this as "human faith" (Nelson, 1992, pp. 63–64), as Fowler claims that faith is an almost universal element of the human condition in that everyone "believes in" something or someone. Religious faith is only one species of human faith; it is faith directed to religious things, in particular to a transcendent God or gods. But everyone has their "gods" in the wider sense of realities and ideas that they value highly and to which they are committed, including their health, wealth, security, family, ideologies and their own pleasure.

For Fowler, the opposite of faith is not doubt, but "nihilism . . . and despair about the possibility of even negative meaning" (Fowler, 1981, p. 31); he therefore writes that "anyone not about to kill himself lives by faith" (Fowler & Keen, 1978, p. 1). The human heart always rests *somewhere*.

Many critics have rejected this understanding of faith as theologically inadequate, contending that faith is fundamentally a religious (and for some, a specifically Christian) category. It has been argued that Fowler's view implies that even idolatry is a form of faith (Dykstra, 1986, p. 56) and that his concept is so broad as to be indistinguishable from knowing or "meaning making" in general. For many religious believers, faith is fundamentally a gift of God's grace rather than a human achievement and cannot be separated from the objects or content of faith (Avery, 1992, p. 127; Osmer, 1992, p. 141). But Fowler does allow that God may play a role, additional to the role of creating the natural laws of human development, in changing the content (and perhaps also the form?) of human faith by means of "extraordinary grace" (Fowler, 1981, pp. 302–303, 1984, pp. 73–75).

Despite the above criticisms, many accept that faith is an appropriate word for labelling a fundamental human category that is not restricted to religious people. Generic human faith may be regarded as a useful way of conceptualizing much of human spirituality, particularly when this is understood quite generally at what we may call a "human-horizontal" level as comprising those attitudes, values, beliefs and practices that "animate people's lives" (Wakefield, 1983, p. 549; see also Astley, 2003, pp. 141–144). Like spirituality, an individual's faith is understood here as having at its core a disposition or stance that informs his or her behaviour. It is "a way of moving into and giving form and coherence to life" (Fowler & Keen, 1978, p. 24), affecting how people lean into, meet and shape their experience of life. Faith is thus an activity, something that people do, rather than something that simply happens to them. Although grammatically a noun, faith has the logic of a verb; so that we may properly speak of human "faithing" (Fowler, 1981, p. 16).

Gordon Wakefield's definition also refers to a transcendent ("vertical") dimension or function of spirituality, which involves a person in "reaching out" to "super-sensible realities". Although some of the questions in the schedule for the

faith development interview are specifically religious, including references to the interviewee's beliefs about the effect of "a power or powers beyond our control", this dimension of faith is more consistently represented in the more neutral and widely applicable vocabulary of Fowler's category of a "big picture" or an "ultimate environment" (Fowler, 1981, pp. 29–30). This is Fowler's terminology for whatever set of highly valued, indeed ultimately significant, objects—within this world or beyond it—functions as the target for a particular individual's faith, alongside the people who share that faith and to whom she is also committed in faith. These are the things, people, causes, ideals and values that give our lives meaning.

For Fowler, therefore, faith is essentially about "the making, maintenance, and transformation of human meaning" (Fowler, 1986, p. 15). It is the "generic consequence of the universal human burden of finding and making meaning" (Fowler, 1981, p. 33). Because of his focus on psychology, Fowler often expresses this in constructivist terminology, in terms of human meaning *making*; but this should not be taken to imply that this meaning has no objective reference. On Fowler's account, we may say that everybody creates and finds meaning in their lives as they know, value and relate to that which they take to be ultimately meaningful, in commitment and trust. In summary, faith is to be understood as

> the composing or interpreting of an ultimate environment and as a way-of-being-in-relation to it. [It] must be seen as a central aspect of a person's life orientation . . .. It plays a central role in shaping the responses a person will make in and against the force-field of his or her life. Faith, then, is a core element in one's character or personality (Fowler & Keen, 1978, p. 25).

Although most of Fowler's writings are concerned with changes in the *form* or structure of this faith, he also recognizes that over a lifetime important changes in its *contents* frequently take place. He labels these changes in faith content as a "recentring of our passion" (Fowler, 1984, p. 140) and a "conversion" (1981, pp. 281–286). It is significant that, on Fowler's view, it is possible to change the content of our faith while retaining its structural form. We may therefore be converted to Islam, Mahayana Buddhism or atheism, by coming to believe in different things, and yet we might still understand and relate to these new values and ultimate realities *in the same way* as we did within our previous commitment (say to fundamentalist Christianity). This situation is the mirror image of Fowler's more familiar claim that while we may continue to believe in the same things as we grow older, we often come to believe in them in a very different manner. In this case our faith is said to "develop". "One who becomes Christian in childhood may indeed remain Christian all of his or her life. But one's *way* of being Christian will need to deepen, expand, and be reconstituted several times in the pilgrimage of faith" (Fowler, 1986, p. 37).

Any attempt to separate the form from the content of faith in this way is bound to be contentious. At the empirical level, Fowler's research is based on research interviews in which people mostly reveal the mode of their believing through talking about what they believe. At the theoretical level, form and content are two parts of a single phenomenon (faith) that can only be separated by conceptual abstraction. Fowler accepts that the task is difficult. He also allows that changes in the form of faith that are brought about through human development will subtly modify a

person's faith contents (ideas, stories, values, etc.), as these are "reworked" at the new stage of development (Fowler, 1981, pp. 275, 285–286, 288, 290–291), essentially by being thought about differently. Thus, while the child's faith may still be said to be "there" in the adult, in the sense that its contents are identifiably the same as before (provided that the adult believes in the same things that he believed in as a child), the faith of the child will have been "amended and adapted through the glass of later ways of faith" as it contributes to the adult's faith (Astley, 1991, p. 3). Similarly, a conversion that leads us to devote ourselves to different gods or causes—that is, different objects and contents of faith—may help trigger a developmental change in our way of being in faith. This usually leads to some sort of "recapitulation" of previous stages and a reorientation of the strengths and virtues of faith acquired at these earlier stages (Fowler, 1981, pp. 285, 287–291).

Fowler analyses the content (objects) of faith into three categories (1981, pp. 276–277). He writes that our images of our ultimate environment derive their unity and coherence from "a center (or centers) of value and power to which persons of faith are attracted with conviction" (Fowler, 1992c, p. 329). (Although Fowler often uses the rather different phrase, "centers of value and images of power", no real distinction is intended: cf. Fowler, 1981, p. 276.) The contents of a person's faith are what a person takes seriously, either because he or she honours and values them or because they are perceived as having power over that person.

The third category of faith content, "master stories" or "core stories", may be thought of in terms of one's personal mythology. This is an overarching narrative that functions as a metaphor for how one perceives and relates to life, particularly one's own life. Stories about God as the all seeing Judge may fulfil this specification, as may this more secular interpretation of life that was once told to Fowler:

> The way I see it, if we have any purpose on this earth, it is just to keep things going. We can stir the pot while we are here and try to keep things interesting. Beyond that everything runs down: your marriage runs down, your body runs down, your faith runs down. We can only try to make it interesting (Fowler & Keen, 1978, p. 23).

Aspects of Faith

How is the form of human faithing understood? Fowler's theory recognizes seven dimensions or *aspects of faith*, which he calls "windows or apertures into the structures underlying faith" (Fowler, 1976, p. 186). This is a useful analogy that allows us to claim that, like the windows of a house, each aspect gives only a restricted view of what lies within, and all of them together may not disclose everything about the house's furniture and occupants.

Although these seven aspects may lead us to focus on certain parts of faith at the expense of the whole, Fowler contends that faith is "an orientation of the total person" (1981, p. 14) and that both cognition and affection are "interwoven" in faith. He is frequently criticized for underplaying its social and affective components, but Fowler insists that he recognizes faith's role as a way of valuing and living in a committed way and that many of the aspects he identifies "represent psychosocial as

well as cognitive content" (Moseley, Jarvis, & Fowler, 1986, p. 55; cf. Fowler, 2004, pp. 30–31). Faith gives shape to how people both construe *and relate to* the world, other people and whatever they take to be of ultimate value. Thus "to 'have faith' is to be related to someone or something in such a way that the heart is invested, our caring is committed, our hope is focused on the other" (Fowler & Keen, 1978, p. 18). Nevertheless, Fowler's aspects do seem to reflect the bias of his theory towards construing faith primarily as a way of knowing, thinking and judging.

Aspect A: Form of Logic. This aspect describes the characteristic pattern of thought that a person employs in making sense of the world. Fowler's Faith Stages 1–4 follow Piaget's account of a developmental movement from chaotic thinking to abstract ordered logic by way of concrete inferential reasoning (see Piaget, 1967; Astley & Kay, 1998). Stage 5 thinking is more dialectical.

Aspect B: Social Perspective Taking. This aspect is concerned with how each of us constructs the inner life of another person, seen in relation to knowledge of one's own self. As people develop they slowly become better at taking the perspective of a wider range of increasingly different people.

Aspect C: Form of Moral Judgment. This aspect is concerned with how a person thinks about morality and how he or she makes moral decisions. Fowler's account broadly follows the stages postulated in the work of Lawrence Kohlberg (cf. Kohlberg, 1969, 1986).

Aspect D: Bounds of Social Awareness. Faith is usually a shared activity, and this aspect captures the way in which, and the extent to which, an individual recognizes others as belonging to his or her own "faith community". As faith develops, the boundaries of this "faith church" widen.

Aspect E: Locus of Authority. This aspect describes how authorities are selected and how the person in faith relates to them: in particular, the authorities for this person's meaning making.

Aspect F: Form of World Coherence. This aspect describes how a person constructs his or her world, especially their "ultimate environment". How do people hold together the different elements of their experience and the different things in which they believe, so as to form one coherent *world*view?

Aspect G: Symbolic Function. This aspect relates to how we understand and use symbols. According to Fowler, this develops from regarding—and delighting in—symbols as sources of magical power at Stage 1, through a literal interpretation at Stage 2, to a "demythologizing" of symbols into concepts that are subjected to criticism at Stage 4. A further development is possible to a post-critical "second naiveté" at Stage 5, in which symbols regain something of their earlier power.

When is Faith?

Although the word "development" is used quite widely in educational circles to denote changes in learning brought about by experience, and Christian educators sometimes describe the learning process they are concerned with as "faith development", Fowler says relatively little about the development of faith in this

sense. He is concerned, rather, with the psychologist's—and, more generally, the biologist's—notion of development as a change that is internally driven, rather than one dependent on external forces such as those that facilitate learning. Hence, faith development for Fowler is a progressive unfolding or maturation of faith.

Working within the theoretical paradigm of cognitive developmental psychology, Fowler postulated a sequence of discrete stages that progressively built on earlier stages. On this account of things a stage is an integrated system of mental operations ("structures") of thinking and valuing; in Fowler's case this is made up of the seven component aspects. These stages of relative stability or "equilibration" are said to alternate with periods of transition during which one or more of the faith aspects shifts in its form, until the whole structure (that is, all the aspects) changes and faith is restructured into a new, stable stage. This process may be thought of as losing (one way of being in) faith in order to gain (another way of) faith. Fowler writes that "to be 'in' a given stage of faith means to have a characteristic way of finding and giving meaning to everyday life". It is to have a worldview, "with a particular 'take' on things" (Fowler, 1996, p. 68).

While Fowler regards the sequence of stages as hierarchical (with each stage building on its predecessor) and invariant (one cannot "miss out" a stage), not everyone moves through all the stages. In fact very few interviewees have ever been designated at Stage 6; and in Fowler's original sample of 359 subjects of different ages, 65% were at Stages 3 or 4 or in transition between them. Seventy-two per cent of the 7–12 age group were at Stage 2; 50% of the 13– to 20-year-olds at Stage 3; and 56% of the 41– to 51-year-olds at Stage 4. Many may continue in Stage 3 for most of their adult lives, and a few will remain at Stage 2.

Pre-stage 0: Primal or Undifferentiated Faith (circa 0–4 years). The foundations of faith are laid down at this pre-stage, in which the child's ultimate environment is represented by her primary carer and immediate environment. In this context, faith begins with a disposition to trust, and our first "*pre-images* of God" are mediated through "recognizing eyes and confirming smiles" (Fowler, 1981, p. 121). (Clearly, this is not a stage that can be identified by formal interviews.)

Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective Faith (circa 3–7 years). This stage is characterized by the great influence of images and symbols, which are viewed magically and form a chaotic collage that makes up the child's ultimate environment. Thinking is intuitive, rather than discursive, and it is episodic—yielding an impressionistic scrapbook of thoughts, not an ordered pattern. The lack of control on the imagination makes faith at this stage very fertile, but sometimes dangerous.

Stage 2: Mythic-Literal Faith (circa 6–12). At this stage the child develops real skills of reasoning that enables him to order his experience so as to distinguish between true stories and fictions. Children at this stage thrive on stories and for them "the narrative structuring of experience . . . provides a central way of establishing identity", through learning the stories of one's own community (Fowler, 1987, p. 61). However, the child—who is here reasoning at a concrete level—can become trapped in a story and in his literal, one-dimensional view of symbols.

Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional Faith (circa 11–18, and many adults). The person at this stage (usually an adolescent) can now think abstractly and reflectively

and has a new capacity for perspective taking that leads her to conform to a group of significant others. It is out of the convictions and values of these other people that the person at Stage 3 "welds together" (synthesizes) a form of second-hand faith: that is, a heteronomous, conformist and conventional worldview. At this stage, however, the person is not yet aware that she *has* a worldview, or where it comes from. "In this stage one is *embedded* in his or her faith outlook" (Fowler & Osmer, 1985, p. 184).

Stage 4: Individuative-Reflective Faith (from circa 17 or 18 onwards, or from one's thirties or forties onwards). When the adult can no longer tolerate the diversity of views and roles that make up Stage 3 faithing, individuals may truly become individuals by detaching from the defining group and (metaphorically or literally) "leaving home", enabling them to decide for themselves what it is they believe. At this stage one's faith can really be said to be an *owned* faith, as heteronomy gives way to autonomy. The transition to Stage 4 is frequently marked by some form of struggle and a vertiginous recognition of the variety of possible worldviews (Sharon Parks distinguishes two distinct stages within Fowler's Stage 4, the first being a post-adolescent, young adult stage of wary and tentative "probing commitment" before adulthood is reached: Parks, 1986, p. 76). The new capacity and impulse to judge for one's self, and to justify one's own truth, may make some who are at this stage unwilling to recognize the value of other voices, and rather over-reliant on their own reasoning powers.

Stage 5: Conjunctive Faith. (This is rare before age 30—only 7% of Fowler's total sample are at this stage, although another 8% are in transition towards it.) What Stage 4 "struggled to bring under consciousness and control", Stage 5 "must allow to become porous and permeable" (Fowler, 1986, p. 30). There is now a new openness to the interpretations of others and a new willingness to live with truths in tension, including the paradoxes and ambiguities of the mature life of faith (Fowler, 1984, p. 65). This is not, however, the easy relativism that claims that "all voices are true" (which is more characteristic of Stage 3, cf. Astley, 2000b), but a confidence in their own viewpoint that allows some people humbly to recognize both the multidimensionality of truth and that reason cannot decide everything on its own.

Stage 6: Universalizing Faith. (This is a very rare stage, represented by only 0.3% of Fowler's sample; its characteristics are usually only shown by those who are advanced in years.) Essentially an extrapolation from Stage 5, this form of faith involves a relinquishing and transcending of the self and discovers a new simplicity at the other side of complexity. In Stage 6, "a person more and more becomes herself as she increasingly widens her circle of concern and truth-finding" (Astley, 1991, p. 35).
(For more detail about the stages, see Fowler, 1981, Pt. IV.)

Criticisms

Despite some unease in a number of areas—including the generality and abstraction of Fowler's constructs, the wide-ranging nature of his hypothesis and the large number of unproven assumptions it involves—Nelson and Aleshire's review of Fowler's research concluded on a fairly positive note (Nelson & Aleshire, 1986,

pp. 199–200), arguing that: (a) Fowler treats his data very tentatively; (b) the research is adequate "for the proposal of a theory", if not for its confirmation (although "to some extent this theory can be disconfirmed"); and (c) "his research methods are, by and large, quite consistent with his structuralist approach". John Snarey's statistical study, which used faith development analysis to study kibbutzim, very few of whom "considered themselves religious in any theistic sense" (Snarey, 1991, p. 289), supported several elements in Fowler's theory: (a) that there is indeed a general, unified dimension of faith development; (b) that variations in other relevant criteria (including moral and ego development) covary with faith development in a coherent manner; and (c) that the faith of non-Christians and non-theists is not undervalued by Fowler's model. Stephen Parker has recently concluded that the faith development interview "is clearly adequate for research purposes" (Parker, 2006).

Nevertheless, Fowler's claims have been widely criticized. Much of this criticism has focused on the difficulty of providing adequate empirical support for this "grand hypothesis" of faith development through his chosen methodology of analyzing transcriptions of semi-structured interviews. This process involves treating each interview response as expressing one of the seven aspects of faith and identifying the stage level of these aspects. The resulting scores are then "averaged out" for a given aspect and then again across all seven aspects to identify the interviewee's overall faith stage, which tends to flatten out scores. Interviews that span two, or even more, stages are taken to represent transition between stages.

It is also a weakness that very little longitudinal work has been done (although see Smith, 2003), leaving the pattern of faith development largely to be inferred from cross-sectional data. It has been further argued that scores on measures of religious judgment and faith reasoning lie too close to those of moral judgment for them to be treated as distinctive from them; and that there is such diversity in the "religious voice" that the idea of any underlying development of deep structures of meaning making seems implausible (Day, 2001, 2002).

Concern has also been expressed that Fowler's scheme fits male development better than that of females (see Slee, 1996, pp. 88–92), a view that parallels Carol Gilligan's critique of Kohlberg's stages of moral development (Gilligan, 1980, 1982). A number of studies of women's faith development argue that Fowler's account of Stage 4 is particularly inadequate. Karen DeNicola writes that "persons who fail to blend reason and feeling—specifically persons who rely solely on rational certainty—can too easily be scored at Stage 4" (Moseley, Jarvis, & Fowler, 1993, Appendix H). The work of Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986, chap. 6) distinguishes two ways in which females may move into what they call "procedural knowing" (which is akin to Stage 4): a "separate" style involving distancing and objective reasoning and a "connected" style that majors on reflection through participation and dialogue. Fowler admits (in Astley & Francis, 1992, pp. xii–xiii) that females—and some males—who tread this second path may be underscored in his analysis. Fowler also accepts that any claims to cultural *universality* for his faith development sequence, as opposed to his claim about the universality of human faith as such, would require the support of much more evidence from cross-cultural studies (see Slee, 1996, pp. 86–88).

A more theoretical critical question is often raised as to whether Fowler's developmental scheme is to be regarded merely as *descriptive* of how human faith does develop, or as representing an intentionally or unintentionally *normative* prescription of how faith—and therefore spirituality?—should develop. Certainly, Fowler's Stage 6, for which there is so little empirical support, must be regarded as a normative extrapolation from Stage 5. Fowler himself allows that his theory has

> established a normative thesis about the shape of human maturity and fulfillment. . . . [since] other things being equal, it is desirable for persons to continue the process of development, engaging in the often protracted struggles that lead to stage transition and the construction of new and more complex patterns of meaning making (Fowler, in Astley & Francis, 1992, pp. xi–xii).

Yet he also insists both that each stage has its own dignity and integrity and that each may be appropriate: that is, the right stage "at the right time" for a person's life (1981, p. 274). Certainly, people at later stages are not to be regarded as more valuable, nor as more "religious", "saintly" or "saved"—and, similarly, not as "more spiritual". Without doubt, however, people in these later stages reveal an increased capacity for understanding complex experiences and frequently a wider and more consistently human care for others.

Many scholars have insisted that Fowler is most vulnerable in his reliance on a framework of cognitive developmentalism based on Lawrence Kohlberg and Jean Piaget (see, e.g., Day, 2001; Heywood, 1992, 2008). Such theories, it is alleged, hardly do justice to the complex, multi-faceted nature and context of human development, or the influences that bear upon it. Fowler himself has recently admitted that "the most vulnerable feature" of formalist stage theories such as his own is "the tendency to overtrust the structuring power of the formally describable operations of knowing and construing", acknowledging that this can be "only half his story" of what shapes and maintains a person's worldview (Fowler, 2001, p. 169). The rest of the tale surely requires reference to a person's cultural environment and life history and perhaps to his or her personality as well. Fowler, with a nod to Heinz Streib (see below), even proposes his own theory of types (but of people rather than of faith—e.g. "rational critical", "diffuse"), which could "crosscut stages but not replace them".

It should be pointed out that, although Fowler's recent work has focused more on practical theology than on the psychology of religious development, there have been some shifts in his thinking on faith development. These include the integration of psychodynamic and psychosocial categories from the work of Robert Kegan (1982) in Fowler (1987) and of Daniel Stem (1985, 2000) and Ana-Maria Rizzuto (1991) in Fowler (1996). These modifications have begun to take the account of faith development beyond the narrow confines of pure structural developmentalism and the rather etiolated notion of faith that it generates.

Heinz Streib is another who criticizes faith development theory for its narrow point of view, resulting from its espousal of cognitive development as the motor of religious development (e.g. Streib, 2003b, pp. 124–126, 2003c, p. 7). He argues that

faith development theory needs to account not only for structural diversity, but also for diversity in the content (especially the narratives) of faith (Streib, 1991, 2003a, p. 36). Drawing on his own empirical studies, Streib has proposed a reformulation of faith development theory. He prefers a typology of religious *styles of faith* that places more emphasis on narratives about a person's life history and accounts of her "life world", as well as research evidence from the psychodynamics of a person's representation of God. These faith styles are modelled as a series of overlapping curves, which replace Fowler's sequence of non-overlapping stages understood as structural wholes connected by periods of transition. The curves that represent each faith style rise from a low level and "descend again after a culminating point" (Streib, 2001, p. 149); each then persists at a lower level while succeeding styles come into their own. Each of these styles may begin to show its effect rather earlier than Fowler's theory of stages would allow, and each continues to be relevant after it has reached its biological peak. At any one time, then, an individual may have access to a range of different faith styles. Unlike the sequential, invariant and hierarchical typology of stages as structural wholes that are restructured and *trans*formed during development, this revised perspective sees development largely as a matter of an individual's operating through and coping with his or her integration of a number of faith styles.

Streib's theory designates five religious styles, each of which show obvious parallels with Fowler's stages:

(1) the *subjective* religious style of the infant;
(2) the *instrumental-reciprocal* religious style of later childhood, which is dominated by story telling;
(3) the *mutual religious* style characteristic of adolescence;
(4) the *individuative-systemic* religious style, which focuses on reasoned reflection and adopts a critical distance from matters of belief while at the same time hungering for intimacy and relatedness;
(5) the *dialogical* religious style, which is more open to beliefs different from one's own and involves a certain "letting go" of the self.

In the latest edition of the *Manual for Faith Development Research*, the authors write:

> While the perspective that faith development proceeds in a sequence of stages by which persons shape their relatedness to a transcendent center or centers of value is the basic framework of faith development theory and research, the assumption that a stage forms a 'structural whole' cannot be postulated a priori and prior to empirical investigation, when, besides cognitive development, the psycho-dynamic and relational-interpersonal dimensions of development, the (changing) relations to self and tradition, are included and when we theoretically allow for coexistence, for regressions to, or revivals of, earlier biographical forms of meaning-making. . . . Thus, it cannot be excluded that individuals may revert to earlier styles, that elements of different styles are at the disposal of a person at the same time.
>
> Taking up and trying to integrate these recent contributions, faith development research accounts for the multidimensionality of faith development, including biographical, psycho-dynamic and social contexts (Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004, p. 13).

Writing some years before, and from a far less research-based perspective, the Christian educationalist John Westerhoff also proposed "four distinctive styles of faith": experienced, affiliative, searching and owned faith. He likened these to the annual rings of a tree, with the individual retaining the earlier faith style as a new one is added, and being capable of re-adopting the earlier style at any time (Westerhoff, 1976, pp. 89–103). In his later work, Westerhoff declared that he had moved on from speaking of faith development and (surprisingly) of "four stages of faith", expressing a preference for the metaphors of "pathways" or "trails" in the journey of faith: the affiliative-experiencing, illuminative-reflective and unitive-integrating ways. Unlike Fowler's understanding of sequential faith development, these may be travelled "at any time, in any order", with the individual returning at will to an earlier track (Westerhoff, 1983, pp. 44–46).

Relevance and Implications

Despite the criticism voiced by Nelson and Aleshire about the limitations of Fowler's research method, these authors concluded by asking whether the developmental journey that he traces "'rings true' with travellers who reflect equally seriously on their own constructions of meaning, values, relationships and centers of power" (in Nelson & Aleshire, 1986, p. 200). Many have responded to the question in the affirmative. Thus Nicola Slee writes that Fowler's work "continues to offer a rich resource to educators, pastors and others concerned with the development of spirituality" (Slee, 1996, p. 92). A number of areas of faith development theory and research have been cited as providing a relevant and illuminating perspective on human spirituality and wellbeing, and the work of the helping professions (see Streib, 2003a, pp. 16–19).

Religious education. Education into (rather than nonconfessionally "about") religion is the area of practice that has adopted the faith development conceptualization most enthusiastically (see Seymour & Miller, 1982, chap. 4; Hull, 1985, chap. 4; Fowler, Nipkow, & Schweitzer, 1992; Astley & Francis, 1992, sect. 8; Astley, 2000a; Fowler, 2004, pp. 413–415). This may seem surprising, given that Fowler's theory deals with human development rather than learning, but educators need to take account of the stage of development of learners in planning their teaching (see Stokes, 1982; Moseley & Brockenbrough, 1988; Blazer, 1989; Astley, 1991, pp. 70–77; Fowler, 1984, 1991a). In this context, for example, Fowler's work encourages religious educators to recognize the importance of images with learners at Stage 1 and of stories with those at Stage 2. It might also influence them to be more sensitive to the adolescent who is at Stage 3 and not yet ready to take responsibility for his or her own decisions about beliefs and value. They might also anticipate the rather rigid "Either/Or" ideology of the person at Stage 4, which contrasts so markedly with the "Both/And" openness of the more mature adult at Stage 5. We should note, however, that according to Fowler, "it should never be the primary goal of religious education simply to precipitate and encourage stage advancement. . . . Movement in stage development . . . is a by-product of teaching the substance and the practices of faith" (2004, p. 417).

Much religious education in churches and elsewhere is targeted at groups rather than individuals and often needs to accommodate people at a variety of faith stages (as is the case with many sermons and services). For Streib, a religious styles perspective should release educators to get children and adults to "understand and anticipate the higher stages … and [even] … adopt them on a trial basis" (Streib, 2004, p. 432).

Pastoral work (including spiritual counselling) is the next most influenced area, with Fowler's monograph on faith development and pastoral care (Fowler, 1987) being a particular inspiration here. Those with both educational and pastoral interests are likely to take seriously Fowler's remarks about the importance of the "modal development level" of a congregation or other religious community (its average expectable level of adult faith development); as well as the significance of generating a "climate of developmental expectation" by providing "rites of passage and opportunities for vocational engagement that call forth the gifts and emergent strengths of each stage of faith" (Fowler, 1981, p. 296). Many of the mainstream topics in pastoral care—including the interaction of religion with health and coping—seem open to enrichment from a theory of faith stages or styles.

In brief, "the pastoral care of individuals needs to be informed by as full account as possible of 'where they are'" (Astley, 1991, p. 66; cf. Astley & Francis, 1992, sect. 7). Spiritual counsellors, like educators, will need to take account of people's developmental stage in seeking to help them walk their own spiritual paths (see Stokes, 1982; Fowler, 1984; Astley & Wills, 1999).

The family is another area where pastoral care and educational concerns overlap. The family has its own developmental history which overlaps with the faith development of its individual members; it also provides a paradigm of a social unit that comprises people at different faith stages (or styles), who need to live, work, care and learn together. The family with its shared stories, memories, celebrations and rituals—representing a shared faith content—may be viewed as a faith community or "domestic church", where both the problems and possibilities of unity with diversity may be helpfully informed by an account of the variety of ways of being in faith that it comprises (see Fowler, 1990, 1992c).

Public theology has been a growing interest of James Fowler in recent years. In this context he takes up Martin Marty's concern for a "public church" (Marty, 1981) that contributes towards understanding and enriching the common good of society. Faith development theory is relevant here if, as Fowler argues, a post-conventional (and, preferably, a Stage 5 faith) is necessary for a public church of this kind (Fowler, 1987, p. 97, 1991b, p. 191).

History of ideas. In some of his writings (see especially Fowler, 1992b, 1996), the sequence of faith development has been used by Fowler to illuminate the oft-remarked shift in cultural consciousness from a society structured by external authority (which parallels Stage 3), through the Enlightenment focus on reason and autonomy (Stage 4), to our current "post-modern" (Stage 5) outlook of openness to multiple, dialectical perspectives on the truth. This claim might illuminate the cultural and intellectual context of much contemporary spirituality.

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Chapter 13
The Psychology of Prayer:
A Review of Empirical Research

Tania ap Siôn and Leslie J. Francis

Abstract After years of comparative neglect, a renewed research interest developed in the field of prayer during the mid-1980s and has led to prayer being recognized as of central importance in understanding the role of religion and spirituality in human development and human functioning. In the context of this developing research agenda, the present chapter concentrates on three themes. The first theme focuses on research concerned with the subjective effects of prayer, looking at the correlates of prayer among those who engage in that activity. The second theme focuses on research concerned with the objective effects of prayer, giving particular attention to clinical trials of "prayer treatment", examining the medical outcomes of patients who do not know that they are being prayed for. The third theme focuses on the content of prayer as a window through which to view the religion and spirituality of ordinary people.

Introduction

From a theological perspective prayer is both an important and a problematic aspect of the Christian tradition (Le Fevre, 1981). Biblical theologians discuss the place and significance of prayer within the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (MacLachlan, 1952; Coggan, 1967; Kurichianil, 1993). Historical theologians discuss the development of prayer in the church (Simpson, 1965; Kelly, 1966; Jasper & Cuming, 1987; Guiver, 1988). Philosophical theologians discuss the meaning and implications of the religious practice of prayer (Phillips, 1965; Baelz, 1968, 1982; Alhonsaari, 1973; Clements-Jewery, 2005; Brümmer, 2008). Pastoral theologians provide manuals and suggestions to promote the practice of prayer (Thornton, 1972; Harries, 1978; Leech, 1980; Miller, 2008; Davidson, 2008).

Reviewing this theological literature, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that many claims are being made about the efficacy, consequences or correlates of prayer

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and that such claims should properly become the subject of empirical investigation. This case was made succinctly and effectively by Galton (1883):

> It is asserted by some that men possess the faculty of obtaining results over which they have little or no direct personal control, by means of devout and earnest prayer, while others doubt the truth of this assertion. The question regards a matter of fact, that has to be determined by observation and not by authority; and it is one that appears to be a very suitable topic for statistical enquiry . . .. Are prayers answered or are they not? . . . Do sick persons who pray, or are prayed for, recover on the average more rapidly than others.

This simple challenge is one which theologians meet in a variety of ways. Some, like Austin (1978) argue that theological concepts like the omniscience, omnipotence and all-loving character of the Christian God make divine arbitrary intervention into human situations in response to petitionary prayer inconsistent with the nature of God. Rosner (1975), speaking from the Jewish tradition, argues that the efficacy of prayer does not have to be scientifically proved to be trusted within the religious community. Others, like Wimber and Springer (1986) and Mac-Nutt (2005), document their personal involvement and experience in the ministry of healing.

One discipline which may properly concern itself with investigating empirical claims regarding the efficacy, consequences or correlates of prayer is psychology. In particular such claims should fall within the general remit of the psychology of religion. It is clear, however, from the major text books in the psychology of religion that the empirical study of prayer remained an underdeveloped field of research, at least until the mid-1990s. For example, there are just two references to prayer in the index of Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventis (1993), five in Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi (1975), five in Spilka, Hood, and Gorsuch (1985), six in Brown (1987), seven in Paloutzian (1983), eight in Brown (1988) and thirteen in Malony (1991). A similar impression is generated by reviews of the literature on the psychology of prayer undertaken during the 1980s and into the 1990s. For example, Finney and Malony (1985a) write

> Nowhere is the long standing breach between psychology and religion more evident than in the lack of research on prayer. Only a few studies of prayer exist in spite of the fact that prayer is of central religious importance.

Similar points are made in the reviews by Hood, Morris, and Watson (1987, 1989), Poloma and Pendleton (1989), Janssen, de Hart, and den Draak (1989) and McCullough (1995).

That lack of interest in research concerned with the psychology of prayer is particularly strange given the interest shown in the subject by early psychologists of religion. For example, James (1902) claimed that prayer "is the very soul and essence of religion." Coe (1916) wrote that "a history and psychology of prayer would be almost equivalent to a history and psychology of religion." Hodge (1931) argued in his study *Prayer and its psychology* that "prayer is the centre and soul of all religion, and upon the question of its validity depends the trustworthiness of religious experience in general."

Capps (1982) argued that prayer should once again be reinstated at the centre of the psychology of religion. During the 1990s there was some indication that psychologists of religion may be responding to this challenge. The number of index references to prayer grew to 37 in Wulff's (1991) *Psychology of religion: classic and contemporary views* and to 80 in Hyde's (1990) *Religion in childhood and adolescence*. The renewed interest in the psychology of prayer in the 1990s was heralded by Brown's (1994) major book, *The human side of prayer*, and by Francis and Astley's (2001) reader, *Psychological perspectives on prayer*.

This chapter, therefore, sets out to provide a map of empirical research concerned with aspects of the psychology of prayer, and to do so by focusing on three major themes. The first part reviews studies concerned with the subjective effects of prayer and examines the correlates of prayer among those who are themselves doing the praying. The second part reviews studies concerned with the objective effects of prayer and examines the correlates of prayer on objects for which or among people for whom prayers are offered by others. The third part focuses on the content of prayer as a window through which to view the religion and spirituality of ordinary people.

The Subjective Effects of Prayer

Empirical studies concerned with the correlates of prayer among those who themselves practise prayer begin with Sir Francis Galton's (1872) classic study published in *The Fortnightly Review*. He found that a sample of 945 clergy had a mean life value of 69.49 years, compared with a mean life value of 68.14 years among a sample of 294 lawyers and 67.31 years among a sample of 244 medical men. He argued that

> we are justified in considering the clergy to be a far more prayerful class than either of the other two. It is their profession to pray.

While on the face of it these statistics suggest at least a positive correlation between prayer and higher life expectancy, Galton rejected the conclusion that such data provide evidence for the efficacy of prayer on two grounds. First, he argued that the comparative longevity of the clergy might be more readily accounted for by their "easy country life and family repose." Second, he found that the difference in longevity between the professional groups was reversed when the comparison was made between *distinguished* members of the three classes, that is, persons who had their lives recorded in a biographical dictionary. According to this category, the average length of life among clergy, lawyers and medical men was 66.42, 66.51 and 67.04 years, respectively, the clergy being the shortest lived of the three professional groups. On the basis of this finding Galton concluded as follows:

> Hence the prayers of the clergy for protection against the perils and dangers of the night, for protection during the day, and for recovery from sickness, appear to be futile in result.

In a second attempt to assess the influence of a prayerful life on the constitution of the clergy, Galton (1869) reviewed the lives of 192 divines recorded in Middleton's *Biographical Evangelica* of 1786. The four volumes of this work set out to provide "an historical account of the lives and deaths of the most eminent and evangelical authors or preachers, both British and foreign." They included figures like John Calvin, John Donne, Martin Luther and John Wycliffe. On the basis of these biographies Galton concluded that divines are not founders of notably influential families, whether on the basis of wealth, social position or abilities; that they tend to have fewer children than average; that they are less long-lived than other eminent men; and that they tend to have poor constitutions.

Galton's early statistical study, published in *The Fortnightly Review* in 1872, was part of a significant debate stimulated by Professor John Tyndall's essay of the same year in *The London Contemporary Review*, under the title, "The prayer for the sick: hints towards a serious attempt to estimate its value." Much of the discussion was republished by John O Means (1876) in the collection of essays, *The Prayer Gauge Debate*.

A major strand in contemporary studies concerned with the subjective effects of prayer employ correlational techniques on data provided by cross-sectional surveys. For example, Morgan (1983) employed an interview survey to compare the self-reported personal behaviour of individuals who pray with that of individuals who do not pray. He concluded that

> Those who pray frequently, those who have integrated prayer into day-to-day life, seem to practise what they preach. The prayerful are less likely to "intensely dislike anyone," "to feel resentful when they don't get their way," to "like to gossip" or to get very angry or upset (i.e. "feel like smashing things"). On the other hand, the more prayerful are more likely to "stop and comfort a crying child," to be "a good listener" and even to "get along with loud-mouthed obnoxious people." They apparently "turn the other cheek" too. . . .. Finally, our only chance to see if they actually practise what they preach occurs in the interview situation. In this context, interviewers judged the more prayerful as more cooperative and friendly.

In a series of three papers and a book, Poloma and Pendleton (1989, 1991a, 1991b) and Poloma (1993) discuss the findings of a telephone survey conducted among 560 individuals concerned with the relationship between different types of prayer and subjective perceptions of quality of life. From these data they identify four types of prayer, styled meditative, ritualistic, petitionary and colloquial, in addition to measures of frequency of prayer and prayer experience. Each type of prayer was found to relate differently to the five quality of life measures included in the survey. The index of prayer experiences generally proved the best predictor of quality of life. People who perceived themselves as having received a definite answer to a specific prayer request were more likely to enjoy a higher level of general satisfaction with life.

In a study of 208 couples, Gruner (1985) asked the question, "How often have you used prayer in connection with your personal problems, problems of your children, and problems between you and your mate?" He found a significant positive relationship between prayer use and marital adjustment. Butler, Stout, and Gardner

(2002) also studied the use of prayer during marital conflict among 217 couples, and found a significant positive relationship between prayer use and conflict resolution. In a study of 708 elderly people, Koenig (1988) found a significant inverse relationship between the use of prayer and religious beliefs during difficult times and death anxiety. On the other hand, Markides (1983) and Markides, Levin, and Ray (1987) failed to find a consistent relationship between prayer and life satisfaction in their longitudinal analysis of data on Mexican-Americans and Anglos. Similarly, Koenig, George, Blazer, Pritchett, and Meador (1993) failed to find a significant relationship between prayer or bible study and anxiety symptoms in a sample of 1,299 adults aged 60 or above, while Ellison, Boardman, Williams, and Jackson (2001) found a weak negative association between frequency of prayer and wellbeing and a weak positive association between frequency of prayer and distress in their analyses of data provided by the 1995 Detroit Area Study.

In a study conducted among 345 members of a non-denominational programme, Richards (1991) found a positive correlation between intensity of the prayer experience and self-reported purpose in life. In a study of 100 members of Alcoholics Anonymous, Carroll (1993) found a highly significant positive correlation between a variety of spiritual practices, including prayer, and purpose in life. In a study of 100 subjects, who were either HIV-positive or diagnosed with ARC or AIDS, Carson (1993) found a significant positive correlation between prayer and psychological hardiness.

Francis and Evans (1996) explored the relationship between personal prayer and perceived purpose in life among two samples of 12- to 15-year-olds. The first sample comprised 914 males and 726 females who never attend church. The second sample comprised 232 males and 437 females who attend church most weeks. The data demonstrated a significant positive relationship between frequency of personal prayer and perceived purpose in life among both groups. In other words, churchgoers who pray frequently report a greater sense of purpose in life than churchgoers who do not pray regularly. Similarly, non-churchgoers who pray regularly report a greater sense of purpose in life than non-churchgoers who do not pray regularly. This relationship between personal prayer and perceived purpose in life, after controlling for church attendance, is given further support in a study among 674 Roman Catholic adolescents by Francis and Burton (1994).

Francis (1992) explored the relationship between prayer and attitude towards school among a sample of 3,762 11-year-old pupils. After controlling for individual differences in church attendance he found that pupils who prayed reported a more positive attitude towards school, English lessons, maths lessons, music lessons and religious education, but not towards games lessons. Long and Boik (1993) found an inverse relationship between frequency of prayer and alcohol use among a sample of 625 pupils in grades six and seven.

A second strand in contemporary studies exploring the subjective effects of prayer is concerned with monitoring changes within individuals consequent upon the practice of prayer. For example, Parker and St Johns (1957) monitored the effect of prayer among a sample of 45 volunteers suffering from either psychosomatic symptoms or experiencing considerable subjective emotional stress. The volunteers

were invited to indicate a preference for participation in one of three groups of 15 each. One group received weekly individual psychotherapy sessions. The second group agreed to pray daily that their specific problems would be overcome. They were styled *the random pray-ers*. The third group followed a programme of *prayer therapy*. At the beginning of the study all participants completed five psychological tests: the Rorschach Inkblot Test, the Szondi Test, the Thematic Apperception Test, the Sentence Completion Test and the Word Association Test. After a 9-month-period these tests were readministered. An "impartial tester" identified an average of 72% improvement from the prayer therapy group and a 65% improvement from the individual psychotherapy group, compared with no improvement among the random pray-ers. On the basis of this evaluation Parker and St Johns concluded that

> prayer therapy was not only a most effective healing agent but that prayer properly under-stood might be the single most important tool in the reconstruction of man's personality.

Elkins, Anchor, and Sandler (1979) monitored the effect of prayer on tension reduction after a 10-day training period among a sample of 42 individuals. Tension was measured both physiologically and subjectively. Prayer was found to reduce tension levels on both measures, but not sufficiently to reach statistical significance. Carlson, Bacaseta, and Simanton (1988) undertook a similar experiment among three groups of undergraduates enrolled in a Christian liberal arts college. Each group contained 12 students. One group followed a programme of progressive relaxation exercises. One group followed a programme of prayer and biblical meditation. One group served as a control. After a 2-week period members of the prayer and biblical meditation group reported less anger and anxiety than members of the other two groups.

Carson and Huss (1979) monitored the therapeutic effect of prayer among chronic undifferentiated schizophrenics resident in a state mental institution. Twenty clients were assigned to a student nurse in a one-to-one relationship. Ten clients and the students volunteered to use prayer and scripture readings. The other 10 clients and students used only the context of a therapeutic relationship without prayer. Both the clients and the students completed assessment tools before and after a 10-week experience. The findings showed that the students who participated in the prayer group perceived greater changes in themselves, including greater sensitivity to others. The major changes in the clients with prayer revealed an increased ability to express feelings of anger and frustration, a more positive outlook about possible changes in their lives and a decrease in somatic complaints.

Finney and Malony (1985b) studied the use of Christian contemplative prayer as an adjunct to psychotherapy among a sample of three men and six women. The authors conclude that the "results gave modest circumstantial support" for the hypothesis that the use of contemplative prayer would be associated with improvement in psychotherapy.

Ai, Dunkle, Peterson, and Bolling (1998) and Ai, Bolling, and Peterson (2000) examined the use of private prayer and psychological recovery among coronary artery bypass patients. The results showed that private prayer was associated with

better post-operative emotional health, in terms of decreased depression and decreased general distress.

Helm, Hays, Flint, Koenig, and Blazer (2000) examined the relationship between private religious activity and survival. In a survey of 3,851 elderly adult participants were asked "How often do you spend time in private religious activities, such as prayer, meditation, or Bible study?" responses to which were placed alongside a range of sociodemographic and health variables. The results showed that elderly adults who engaged in private religious activity before the onset of impairment in activities of daily living (ADL) appeared to have a survival advantage over those who did not.

Meisenhelder and Chandler (2000, 2001) studied the relationship between frequency of prayer and self-reported health among 1,014 Presbyterian church lay leaders and 1,412 Presbyterian pastors over a 3-year period employing the Short-Form 36 Medical Outcomes Study (Ware & Sherbourne, 1992). The eight health subscales measured physical functioning, role functioning (physical), bodily pain, general health, vitality, social functioning, role functioning (emotional) and mental health. The results indicated a significant positive relationship between prayer frequency and mental health in lay leaders and between prayer frequency and general health, vitality and mental health in pastors.

Krause (2003) studied the relationship between the practice of praying for others and the effects of financial strain on self-reported physical health status among a sample of 1,500 older whites and older African Americans. The results suggested that praying for others significantly reduced the harmful effects of severe financial difficulties on self-reported perceptions of physical health.

A third strand in contemporary studies exploring the subjective effects of prayer is concerned with case studies. For example, Griffith, English, and Mayfield (1980) use this method to discuss the therapeutic aspects of attending prayer meetings, and Black (1999) also employs case studies to discuss the use of prayer by older African American women who have experienced long-term poverty.

Contrary to Galton's early contention, the consensus emerging from contemporary studies concerned with the correlates of prayer among those who themselves practise prayer suggests that there are certain positive psychological or behavioural concomitants of practising prayer or of living a prayerful life. While such findings may lead to the conclusion that prayer is beneficial for those who practise it, they do not lead to the conclusion that these positive benefits are necessarily generated by an influence, force or being outside the self.

The Objective Effects of Prayer

Empirical studies concerned with the objective effects of prayer on objects for which or on people for whom prayers are offered by others also began with Sir Francis Galton (1872). Galton observed that the formal state prayers offered throughout the Church of England made the petition on behalf of the Queen "Grant her in health long to live." He then argued that "the public prayer for the sovereign of every

state, Protestant and Catholic, is and has been in the spirit of our own." Surely, he reasoned, if petitionary prayer is effective, then royalty should live longer than comparable groups.

To test this question empirically, Galton examined the mean age attained by males of various classes who had survived their 30th year, from 1758 to 1843, excluding deaths by accident or violence. The data comprised 1,632 gentry, 1,179 English aristocracy, 945 clergy, 569 officers of the army, 513 men in trade and commerce, 395 English literature and science, 366 officers of the royal navy, 294 lawyers, 244 medical professions, 239 fine arts and 97 members of royal houses. The highest mean age was among the gentry, 70.22 years. The lowest mean age was among members of royal houses, 64.04 years. Galton concluded as follows:

> The sovereigns are literally the shortest lived of all who have the advantage of influence. The prayer has, therefore, no efficacy, unless the very questionable hypothesis be raised, that the conditions of royal life may naturally be yet more fatal, and that their influence is partly, though incompletely, neutralised by the effects of public prayers.

A second major strand of research concerned with the objective effects of prayer was pioneered by the Revd Franklin Loehr (1959) and reported in his book, *The power of prayer on plants*. This body of research involved 150 people, 700 unit experiments and 27,000 seeds and seedlings. Loehr sets out the rationale for his series of studies in the following straightforward terms:

> A number of seeds are planted, any kind of seeds. Everything about them is kept just the same, except that half the seeds are given prayer and the other half are not. At the end of a set time, the growth of the seeds is carefully measured and the results are compared. If everything about them is kept the same except prayer, and if a difference in growth is produced, then prayer is indicated as the factor that produces the difference.

The original experiment began with the purchase of two sealed jars of water. One jar was brought to the Sunday prayer meeting and exposed to three prayer treatments. First, it was the subject of group prayer. Second, it was passed from hand to hand for personal prayer. Third, it was again subject to group prayer. Meanwhile, three pairs of test plantings were prepared under identical conditions. The three pairs contained eight kernels of corn, eight lima beans and an unreported number of sweet-pea seeds. Both sets of test plantings were given the same amount of water, one set form the water which had been exposed to the prayer treatment and one set from the water which had not been exposed to the prayer treatment. After 2 weeks seven of the corn prayer seedlings had sprouted, compared with three in the control pan; four of the prayer lima beans had sprouted, compared with none in the control pan; one of the prayer sweet-peas had sprouted, compared with three in the control pan. Repeated trials confirmed that two out of three times the prayed for plants came out ahead.

A second form of experiment involved the persons doing the praying coming into the laboratory and praying with as well as for the plants. Careful monitoring of the growth of these plants led to scientific conclusions like the following:

> Mrs Hoffman was an excellent helper and showed fine prayer power with her own plants in various experiments.

A third, more complex, form of experiment involved the same individual cultivating three identical pots, praying for growth in relationship to one, offering no prayer in relationship to the second, and praying for non-growth in relationship to the third. Mr Erwin Prust of Pasadena, for example, chose to plant three ivy clips in each of his three pots. After 5 weeks the non-growth prayer plants were quite dead.

A fourth form of experiment involved dividing one pot in half, giving positive prayer treatment to one side and negative prayer treatment to the other side. Erwin Prust, for example, planted 23 corn kernels in each side and administered the prayer treatment several times a day for 8 days. After this treatment he found that

> sixteen sturdy little seedlings greeted us on the positive side. On the negative side there was but one.

A fifth form of experiment was known as the 8-day prayer partnership trials. In this experiment 649 seeds for which positive prayer was offered produced a total of 34,409 mm of growth. By way of comparison 635 seeds for which no prayer was offered produced a total of 31,313 mm of growth. The overall prayer growth advantage was 8.74%.

A sixth form of experiment involved six teams of people. Each team was required to target three pots with three treatments: prayer for growth, prayer for non-growth and no prayer. This experiment involved a total of 720 seeds. The results demonstrated that the negated seedlings were running 10.95% behind the control plantings.

A seventh form of experiment involved sending out "a goodly number of home-experiment prayer kits." Loehr recognised that this technique lacked some of the objective control possible within the laboratory situation.

After investing so much energy in pot plants, Loehr (1959) turned attention to silkworm eggs. In spite of the remarkable claims made by Loehr's research for the objective effects of prayer, other researchers have generally failed to build on this tradition. Two exceptions are Miller (1972) and Lenington (1979). Miller (1972) employed what he describes as "a very accurate method of measuring plant growth rate by using a rotary transducer connected to a strip chart recorder." He selected rye grass as the experimental plant because "the new growth occurs at the bottom of the blades," with the consequence that a lever arm attached to the top of the blade of rye grass will measure total increase in length with accuracy. The prayer treatment was applied by Ambrose and Olga Worrell from their home some 600 miles away from the plants. The result was a growth rate increase of 840%. Lenington (1979) compared the growth rate of 12 radish seeds watered with holy water over which prayer had been offered with the growth rate of 12 radish seeds watered from the same source of water but without prayer. He found no significant differences in growth rate between the two conditions.

Also to this tradition belong *The Spindrift papers* which detail the series of experiments conducted between 1975 and 1993 and coordinated by Bruce Klingbeil and John Klingbeil (Spindrift Inc, 1993). Spindrift is a small group exploring ways to measure physically the effects of prayer on healing. Starting with seeds and yeast,

they went on to cards, dice, and finally random event generators. Comments on this body of research are made by Benor (1992), Rockwell (1993) and Rush (1993).

A third major strand of research concerned with the objective effects of prayer is exemplified in two early studies by Joyce and Welldon (1965) and Collipp (1969). Joyce and Welldon (1965) studied 19 matched pairs of patients attending two out-patient clinics concerned with psychological or rheumatic disease. One patient from each pair was assigned to the prayer treatment group. Prayer was provided by 19 people, two as lone individuals and the rest in four groups which met as often as once in every 2 weeks for sessions of up to an hour. All the prayer was supplied at least 30 miles from the hospital. Neither the patients nor the physicians were aware that a trial was in progress. All medication and physical treatment prescribed by the consultant was continued in both groups. The clinical state of each patient was re-evaluated by the same physician between 8 and 18 months later. The final statistical analysis was based on the performance of 12 of the original 19 matched pairs. For the first 6 pairs of patients, those in the prayer group did better; for 5 of the next 6 pairs, the controls did better. The authors suggest that the prayers' interest and commitment may have waned in the latter part of the study. Overall 7 of the 12 results showed an advantage to the group for whom prayer had been offered. This is not a statistically significant finding.

Collipp (1969) studied the progress of 18 leukaemic children. The names of 10 of the 18 children were prayed for daily by 10 families. Each family was sent a weekly reminder of its obligation to pray. At monthly intervals, parents and physicians independently answered a questionnaire which asked whether the illness, the child's adjustment, and the family's adjustment were better, unchanged or worse. Neither the children, their families nor the physicians knew of the experiment. After 15 months of prayer, 3 of the 10 children in the prayer group had died, compared with 6 of the 8 children in the control group. This difference, however, does not reach statistical significance.

Byrd (1988) built on these two studies in an original way. Over a 10-month period, 393 patients admitted to the coronary care unit were randomised, after signing informed consent, to an intercessory prayer group (192 patients) or to a control group (201 patients). The patients, staff, doctors and Byrd himself were all unaware which patients had been targeted for prayer. The prayer treatment was supplied by "born again" Christians. After randomisation each patient was assigned to three to seven intercessors. The intercessory prayer was done outside the hospital daily until the patient was discharged from hospital. Under the direction of the coordinator, each intercessor was asked to pray daily for rapid recovery and for prevention of complications, and death, in addition to other areas of prayer they believed to be beneficial to the patient.

At entry to the coronary care unit, chi-square tests and stepwise logistic analysis revealed no statistical difference between the two groups of patients. After entry, all patients had follow-up for the remainder of their time in hospital. The group assigned to intercessory prayer had a significantly lower severity score after admission. The control patients required ventilatory assistance, antibiotics and diuretics more frequently than patients in the intercessory prayer group. In the prayer group

85% of the patients were considered to have a good hospital course after entry, compared with 73% in the control group. An intermediate grade was given in 1% of the prayer group, compared with 5% of the control group. A bad hospital course was observed in 14% of the prayer group, compared with 22% of the control group. The chi-square test confirmed that this difference was significant beyond the one percent probability level.

Byrd concluded his study with an appropriate *acknowledgement*, thanking both those individuals who had been involved in the research and "God for responding to the many prayers made on behalf of the patients."

More recent studies in the same tradition have produced mixed results. For example, Harris et al. (1999) studied the effects of intercessory prayer on the outcomes of 990 patients in a coronary care unit in a completely blind, randomised trial. The results showed that those assigned to the prayer group experienced lower overall adverse outcomes than the control group, although length of hospital stay remained unaffected. Aviles et al. (2001) studied the effect of intercessory prayer on cardiovascular disease progression in a coronary care unit using 762 patients (383 assigned to the intercessory prayer group and 379 to the control group). The results showed no significant difference in outcomes between the prayer group and the control group, although the trend favoured the prayer group. Benson et al. (2006) studied the effects of intercessory prayer on 1,802 cardiac bypass patients. The results showed that overall receiving intercessory prayer had no statistically significant effect on patient recovery, although the knowledge of receiving intercessory prayer was associated with a higher incidence of complications.

Cha, Wirth, and Lobo (2001) studied the effects of intercessory prayer on the success of in vitro fertilisation using 219 females who were receiving IVF treatment. The results showed that women assigned to the prayer treatment group had a statistically significant higher pregnancy rate (50%) than women assigned to the control group (26%). Marlowe, and MacNutt (2000) examined the effects of intercessory prayer on 40 patients with rheumatoid arthritis including both direct contact intercessory prayer and remote intercessory prayer. The results showed that patients who received direct contact intercessory prayer had a significant overall improvement in the 1-year follow-up, while there were no significant effects on those receiving distant intercessory prayer. Leibovici (2001) explored the effects of remote, retroactive intercessory prayer on the outcomes of 3,393 patients with bloodstream infections. The results showed that the group who received remote, retroactive intercessory prayer had statistically significant shorter stays in hospital and shorter duration of fever.

On the other hand, Matthews, Conti, and Sireci (2002) explored the effects of intercessory prayer, positive visualisation and expectancy on a range of medical and psychological measures in relation to 95 kidney dialysis patients. Neither intercessory prayer nor positive visualisation had an effect distinguishable from expectancy on any of the variables. Krucoff et al. (2005) explored the effects of intercessory prayer and music, imagery and touch (MIT) therapy on 748 patients undergoing percutaneous coronary intervention or elective catheterisation. Neither intercessory prayer nor MIT therapy demonstrated a significant effect on clinical outcomes.

Other relevant studies in this tradition include Walker, Tonigan, Miller, Corner, and Kahlich (1997), Sicher, Targ, Moore, and Smith (1998), Harris, Thoresen, McCullough, and Larson (1999), Krucoff et al. (2001), Furlow and O'Quinn (2002) and Mathai and Bourne (2004).

Contrary to Galton's early contentions, several more recent studies concerned with the objective effects of prayer on objects for which or on people for whom prayers are offered suggest that there may be certain positive consequences of prayer. While such findings may lead to the conclusion that prayers effect changes in the objective world, they do not lead to the conclusion that these positive benefits are necessarily generated by the activity of the God or gods to whom the prayers are addressed.

The Content of Ordinary Prayer

Empirical studies concerned with the content of prayer provide a window through which to view the religion and spirituality of ordinary people, and can be traced back to classic studies like the one reported by Pratt (1910), which are easily differentiated from the studies set within the developmental paradigm as evidenced by early work reported by Godin and van Roey (1959), Goldman (1964), Thouless and Brown (1964), Brown (1966, 1968), Long Elkind, and Spilka (1967) and Elkind, Spilka, and Long (1968). A good recent example of this genre of research is provided by the work led by Jacques Janssen in Radboud University, Nijmegen. For example, Janssen et al. (1989), Janssen, de Hart, and den Draak (1990) undertook a content analysis of the answers given by 192 Dutch high school pupils (mean age 16.8 years) to three open-ended questions: what does praying mean to you; at what moments did you feel the need to pray; how do you pray? On the basis of these data, they concluded that the common prayer of youth can be summarised in one sentence containing seven elements:

> because of some reason (1. need) I address (2. action) myself to someone or something (3. direction) at a particular moment (4. time), at a particular place (5. place) in a particular way (6. method) to achieve something (7. effect) (1989, p 28).

In a subsequent study, Janssen, Prins, van der Lans, and Baerveldt (2000) analysed the responses of 687 Dutch young people (mean age 23.9 years) who were asked to describe their praying behaviour and also to describe needs, actions, methods, times, places and effects. On the basis of these data they described four varieties of praying. In *petitionary* prayer the effect is central. Here individuals ask that "things will pass off as favourably as possible", that "relations will be improved", that "war will be prevented", that "things will be good", that there will be "a happy end" and that "we can make things happen". In *religious* prayer the direction towards God is central. Here individuals are talking with God, thanking God, hoping to experience God, building a relationship with God and inviting God to share their hopes and sorrows. In *meditative* prayer the action is central. Here individuals meditate, reflect, ponder, consider, concentrate and often looking inwards towards the

inner-self. In *psychological* prayer the inner need is central. Here individuals pray "when my mother died", "when my father had a heart attack", "when my father and stepmother got divorced", "when my father attempted suicide", "when I was in crisis", "when my friend did not come home" or "when I got lost".

McKinney and McKinney (1999) explored the praying habits of 127 psychology and undergraduate students. Of the 107 who claimed on the screening questionnaire to pray at least a few times a year, 77 accepted the invitation to keep a proper diary for 7 days. A content analysis of the initial screening questionnaire identified six types of prayer within the students' definitions of prayer and in which they purported to engage adoration, petition, thanksgiving, reparation, communication and relaxation. When the prayers from the diaries were counted the following averages emerged:

> Over a 7-day period the average number of prayers of adoration was 1.18; petition, 12.75; reparation, 0.79; thanksgiving, 4.28; simple communication, 1.21; and prayer as relaxation, 0.91 (p. 204).

Of the petitionary prayers, most were requests for personal favours, such as "to get back into my schoolwork", "to get my job", "for my Lord to guide me", "to help me plan a date party", and "to afford graduate school and receive my financial loans". The remainder included requests for family and friends ("my grandfather who has cancer", "the prayer group") or for more global situations ("for the peace of the world", "for the local community"). Following these basic descriptions of the prayers, McKinney and McKinney (1999) proceeded to explore the texts from the perspectives of dramaturgical analysis (Goffman, 1959) and semiotic analysis (Eco, 1976).

Mountain (2005) employed the method of grounded theory to analyse the responses of 60 10-year-old children gathered through videotaped interviews, illustrations and written exercises. These data suggested four main functions for prayer defined as follows: finding help for self through individual connection to God; finding social identity through communal ritual, activity and belief; finding help for others, both close and distant; and expressing praise and thanksgiving.

A new research tradition is emerging concerned with the content and analysis of ordinary people's prayer requests in Christian contexts, and a number of exploratory studies have been conducted which identify the main themes and characteristics of prayer requests in terms of content and frequency. For example, Schmied (2002) analysed 2,674 prayers inscribed in the prayer intention books provided by seven Roman Catholic churches in Germany from the 1970s to the 1990s: four parish churches, one pilgrimage church associated with an education centre, a chapel of a university hospital, and a chapel of an international airport. The analyses examined four main issues: the addressees of the prayers; the kinds of prayers; the reference persons and groups; and the prayer intentions. First, just 72% of the prayers specified an addressee, which included 27% addressed to God, 21% to Mary and 5% to Jesus. Second, 91% of the prayers included some form of petition, while 23% included thanksgiving, 3% trust, 2% praise, 1% complaint, 1% love and 2% some other concept (acknowledging that individual prayers can contain more than

one kind of prayer). Third, 59% of the prayers made petition only for others, 11% for self and others, 16% only for self, and the remaining 15% made no statement. Fourth, the prayer intentions were allocated to seven categories, with some prayers embracing more than one category. Over a quarter (28%) of the prayers referred to health or to recovery of health, 22% to protection in general, 16% to religious matters (including vocations and forgiveness), 9% to specific projects (including surgical operations and long journeys), 8% to peace, 7% to faith, and 34% to other issues (acknowledging that individual prayers can contain more than one intention).

Working on a much smaller scale, Brown and Burton (2007) analysed 61 prayer requests left in a rural Anglican parish church over an 8-month period in 2004. The majority of the prayers were for people who were ill, in hospital, about to undergo operations, or recovering from illness or operations (43%), or for people who had died (26%). The other prayer requests fell into the categories of general thanksgiving, other, strength to cope, world situations, and new personal situations.

ap Siôn (2007) analysed 917 prayer cards left in a rural Anglican parish church over a 16-month period in the mid-1980s employing a framework which consisted of three main constructs: prayer reference, prayer intention and prayer objective. Prayer reference distinguished between four key foci with which the individual authors were concerned: themselves, other people who were known personally to the authors, animals which were known personally to the authors and the world or global context. Prayer intention distinguished between nine key areas with which the individual authors were concerned: illness, death, growth, work, relationships, conflict or disaster, sport or recreation, travel, open intention and general. Prayer objective distinguished between two effects which the individual authors envisaged as a consequence of their prayers in terms of primary control and secondary control. In primary control prayer authors explicitly suggested the desired consequences of their prayers. In secondary control prayer authors placed prayers and their consequences entirely in the hands of another.

Results for prayer reference showed that the majority of prayer requests were for other people either known personally to the prayer authors or placed in a global context (90%) with very few written for the prayer authors alone (4%). For prayer intention, 29% were non-specific in terms of not offering a concrete, physical context for the prayer. The next three highest categories were illness (21%), death (16%) and conflict or disaster (14%). For prayer objective, there were more examples of secondary control (57%) than primary control (43%) with prayer authors employing primary control more often than secondary control in prayers relating to illness, growth, work and relationships, and prayer authors employing secondary control more often than primary control in prayers relating to death, conflict or disaster, and sport or recreation. In later studies the same reference, objective and intention framework were also used to explore the content of ordinary prayers from the perspectives of rural theology (ap Siôn, in press a) and implicit religion (ap Siôn, in press b), while modifications to the intention construct within the framework allowed a further focus on the relationship between ordinary prayers and health and wellbeing (ap Siôn, 2008a) and the relationship between ordinary prayers and the

beliefs of "ordinary theologians" about the nature and activity of God and God's concern with and impact on the everyday world (ap Siôn, 2008b).

Outside church contexts, two studies have focused on prayer requests left in hospital settings. Grossoehme (1996) analysed 63 prayers in a chapel prayer book at a paediatric hospital in Ohio, USA, covering a 6-month period in an attempt to discover how the prayer authors viewed God and God's nature. Most of the prayers were intercessory prayers followed by thanksgiving. Grossoehme concluded that the majority of prayer authors, at particularly vulnerable times in their lives, appear to believe that God is able to act in response to prayer or at least to desire God's action, and that a special relationship is created between the prayer authors and the praying community.

A second hospital study was conducted by Hancocks and Lardner (2007) and involved the analysis of 939 prayers from prayer boards and books left in 2005 at the chapels and prayer/quiet rooms of three of the six hospitals which comprise Leeds Teaching Hospitals, England. Categorised according to type, 59% were concerned with specific intention (for named individuals who were sick), 7% for general intention (for the sick but of a more general nature), 20% for death (including people who were dying), 9% for thanksgiving (in instances of recovery, the life of the dead and the hospital), 2% for forgiveness (for themselves or others) and 3% for hospital staff and carers. In terms of addressee, 37% were addressed to God explicitly, 20% to God implicitly, 18% to the worshipping community, 17% to an uncertain addressee and 8% to a person or persons directly. The different names used for God were also identified and quantified as were 30 separate categories illustrating content. Hancocks and Lardner compared their results to Grossoehme's (1996) findings, concluding that they were largely similar although some differences were evident.

The consensus emerging from studies concerned with the content of ordinary prayers suggests that such prayers may provide valuable insights into the nature and role of prayer in ordinary people's lives from both psychological and theological perspectives. Whatever Galton may have assumed about the failure of prayer to survive within a modern and scientifically orientated world, there is ample evidence to support the view that prayer activity remains alive, well and conducive to human flourishing.

Conclusion

Since the mid-1990s there has been a renewed interest in conducting empirical studies in the area of prayer after a significant period of neglect, and this chapter has made it clear that useful foundations have been laid to influence the shape of future research. All three fields of empirical research identified in this chapter are now well-established and well-placed for further refinement and development.

The first type of study concentrates on monitoring the correlates of prayer among those who are themselves doing the praying. Existing studies in this tradition demonstrate a range of positive psychological or behavioural concomitants of practising prayer or of living a prayerful life. Great scope now exists to extend

this tradition of research by studying the relationship between different forms of prayer and a variety of other factors. Particular opportunities exist for developing the insights of those studies concerned with the relationship between prayer and purpose in life, psychological wellbeing and aspects of mental and physical health.

The second type of study examines the correlates of prayer on objects for which or among people for whom prayers are offered by others. Existing studies in this tradition provide mixed findings. The challenge, however, has been clearly focused. It is simply not sufficient for psychologists of religion to be critical of the methodology of those studies which claim to have demonstrated the positive effect of prayer on the growth of pot plants or on the health of individuals. The scientific response to such claims rests in the area of replication and refinement of the studies themselves. Future studies in this contentious field, however, need to be conducted to the highest standards. If the findings of such studies are to be taken seriously by those who are theologically informed and by those who are psychologically informed, future research in the field needs both to observe the strict criteria of objective *empirical psychology* and to be alert to *theological* nuances regarding the actual claims made for the efficacy of prayer within the community of believers.

The third type of study concentrates on analysing the content of ordinary prayers. Existing studies in this tradition indicate that the content of such prayers provides important insights into the religion and spirituality of ordinary people. Future studies need to extend analyses of prayer content to a wider range of contexts and to engage in replication and refinement of existing analytical models.

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Part II
The Role of Spirituality in Human Development and Identity: An Introduction

Daniel G. Scott

In this part we explore the role of spirituality in human development from several vantage points with a mix of perspectives, all based on a concern for the lack of consideration of the spiritual in existing developmental theory particularly in the lives of children and youth. As Glenn Cupit notes, "spirituality is generally ignored in human development texts and never treated as an essential component of development," while Kimball, Mannes, and Hackel point out there is a vacuum in this "important and understudied domain of human development." Aostre Johnson cites Roehlkepartain, King, Wagener, and Benson (2006) to suggest that:

> Spiritual development may be at a "tipping point" for becoming a major theme in child and adolescent development. A growing number of scholars in various fields have invested themselves in this field. The public imagination appears to be ready in numerous cultures, traditions, and contexts, all of which are struggling with social changes that threaten to undermine the spiritual lives of young people (p. 11).

The lack of models and theories for addressing spirituality in human development, after decades of life span development theory that did not include the spiritual, has created a need to identify and describe what constitutes spiritual development. There are theoretical gaps to be filled. In this part, the concern to establish theories grounded in existing literature and research efforts represents perspectives on spirituality and spiritual development that include academics and researchers from several disciplines. As well there are practitioners who observe the spiritual emerging in their therapeutic and educational work with children and youth and try to give conceptual structures or interpretative forms to assist in understanding spirituality as it seems to be experienced and expressed. The authors have questions that are shaping their inquiries: What role does the spiritual play in human maturation? What are the possible ways to study spirituality? Are there recognizable patterns of development, significant milestones, or common experiences that could be identified as spiritual and might indicate a process of spiritual development? What might count as evidence of the spiritual? Do existing theories and approaches offer insights or structures that might give us glimpses of spiritual development or formation? And of course the persistent question of what is meant by spirituality remains problematic and central to the conversation.

How one understands spirituality depends very much on one's context and on recognizing Jacques Derrida's (1988) insight that there is nothing outside of context. One's understanding of spirituality is rooted in one's cultural, religious/non-religious, social and personal locations, traditions, and experiences. In this part we have authors whose specialized interests, professional location, and training serve as lenses for interpretation. Some like Reimer, Dueck, Adelechanow, and Muto are rooted in and explore from the perspective of religious traditions and others, such as Perkins, Hoffman, and Ortiz, write from secular, humanist perspectives. King, Painton, and Cupit each draw on different psychological and therapeutic literature and traditions to inform their chapters.

The definitions chosen to represent the spiritual reflect the author's various sites and traditions. Perkins offers a clearly non-religious definition of spirituality calling it: "the inner felt experience of a connection to something greater than our thoughts, feelings and material existence or even the people and creatures with which we relate. It is described as energy and is defined uniquely by each of us." His definition represents one kind of understanding. Another tradition that more overtly includes a religious possibility comes from Kimball et al. who use a definition of spiritual development formulated by the Center of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence, an organization with strong Christian links who are striving to create a broad-based understanding of the spiritual rooted in religions:

> The process of growing the intrinsic human capacity for self-transcendence, in which the self is embedded in something greater than the self, including the sacred. It is the developmental "engine" that propels the search for connectedness, meaning, purpose and contribution. It is shaped both within and outside of religious traditions, beliefs, and practices (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude, 2003, pp. 205–206).

This broader definition, which could encompass Perkins' definition, includes the religious and collective dimensions of spirituality. Similarly, in spite of his reluctance to define spirituality and to keep it an open concept, David Tacey comes to define spirituality as "an innate human capacity to experience transcendent reality."

Paul King recognizes that "spirituality is a concept that evades simplistic definition" but points out that the spiritual "as a natural dimension of the human person" is now recognized in educational aims in Irish legislation that in turn echoes the language of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which acknowledges that spiritual development is one of the areas of development to which children and youth have an inherent right. King cites Rolheiser (1998) saying that: "Spirituality is about what we do with the fire inside us, about how we channel our eros" (p. 10) and then insists that spirituality not "something we *have*... it is something we *are*." Charlene Tan acknowledges the contextual shaping of spirituality by distinguishing between religiously "'tethered' and 'untethered' conceptions of spirituality," while Scott insists that "being human is being spiritual in the same way that being human is being physical or emotional. . .." What the authors hold in common is an insistence that the spiritual is part of human growth and development and that spirituality must be part of our understanding of human experience. The spirit as energy, as quest, as relationship, or as life force echoes throughout this part in a variety of ways.

As academics, researchers, educators, therapists, counselors, and practitioners attempt to evolve a field of study in spiritual development, they create theoretical models based on their research and/or professional experiences. Their perspectives contribute to a number of theoretical options for understanding the place and processes of spiritual formation or spiritual development in the lives of children and youth. Because they represent such different assumptions and contexts, their models do not fit neatly together. The rich variety of constructs proposed in this part immediately broadens the options, and therefore challenges those of us concerned with the spiritual development of the young to be thoughtful in making claims for definitive models of work with children and youth. We do not have a grand theory and need to respect the evolving diversity, resisting perhaps a singular definitive model. While each reader may have a preferred approach or a favorite theory, it may be important to keep concepts of spirituality and spiritual development open in recognition of its complexity, its cultural embeddedness, and its under-theorized state: it remains, in part, mysterious.

The Structure of the Part

The chapters that follow are written by researchers and educators from university faculty in Australia, Hong Kong, the UK, and the Americas as well as by practitioners from psychology, education, child and youth care, and counseling. Some of the writers are giving shape to insights that grew out of their practice-based experiences with children and youth. Others are looking at theoretical models from psychology offering options for re-thinking the spiritual within existing concepts and approaches. In addition others are drawing on literary and historical material and, of course, some are reporting on insights from research they have been conducting.

This part is structured in four clusters with chapters that share a common approach or focus placed together. The first cluster has three chapters that draw on psychological literature and traditions to make space for including the spiritual. Existing developmental theory has deep roots in developmental psychology and so it is useful to begin by opening some space in that domain. The first chapter, from David Tacey, calls for a recognition of spirituality in mental health and care across the whole of the life span. Tacey draws on his Jungian roots, traditional medicine, and rites of passage practices to claim the spiritual as central to healing for physical and mental health and calls for the spiritual to be recognized as a long-standing component of human wisdom and care. It is followed by Chapter 15; C. Glenn Cupit's offering of Dynamic Systems Theory as a lens to understand and explore spiritual development in the lives of children that recognizes the dynamic and complex non-linear processes of spiritual formation. The next chapter (Chapter 16) in the cluster offers Paul King's view that positive psychology can provide a place of hope and a perspective to address human suffering that can include the spiritual in our understanding of human development. He is concerned to create an open dialogue between religion and psychology that moves beyond fear and exclusion.

Because many of this part's authors turn their attention to experience to identify the forms and expressions that the spiritual takes in the lives of children and youth, the next cluster of chapters turns to research and practice. It begins with a grounded theory research project authored by Elisabeth M. Kimball, Marc Mannes, and Angela Hackel (Chapter 17) that foregrounds the voices of young people to ascertain how they speak of and understand the spiritual and its meaning in their own lives. This international study is part of a larger study conducted by the American-based Search Institute and uses focus groups and grounded theory methodologies to identify emerging theoretical constructs from the collected data.

The next three chapters present three different American practitioners working with children and youth in quite different settings. Chapter 18 takes us into an early childhood education and care setting with educator Mindy Upton where spirituality is seen in the daily interactions of children with one another, where the creation of an imaginative and open environment fosters connection, care, and means to interpret the events of life. Next Mollie Painton, who works as a children's therapist focusing on grief and loss, presents a model to understand children's spiritual journeys through difficulty based on a tree of life model. Her theoretical structure emerges from her interpretation of the different ways and means young children use to address their own wounds and their own life struggles. She accepts their identification of angels and monsters, totemic struggles, and imaginative play to describe their inner journeys. In Chapter 20, Peter J. Perkins explores the transitions of adolescent development as "portals to the spirit self." Perkins offers a *Five Dimensions of the Self*" holistic model based on his therapeutic individual and group work with adolescents. Both Painton and Perkins are suggesting an interpretative construct emerging from their experiences and observations in practice to describe spiritual processes in the lives of their young clients and patients.

The next cluster of chapters focuses primarily on a particular spiritual discipline, practice, or theme that might inform our view of child and adolescent spiritual development. The cluster begins with Charlene Tan (Chapter 21) who turns her attention to the adolescent capacity for reflection which she sees as a significant capacity for spiritual development. Tan, an Indonesian educator, is careful to distinguish between "religiously 'tethered' and 'untethered' conceptions of spirituality" but sees self-reflection as promoting spiritual development in both contexts. She examines several curricular approaches and suggests some specific ways to promote reflection in adolescent educational settings across religious and non-religious settings. Aostre Johnson, in Chapter 22, highlights contemplative aspects of spiritual development. She sees contemplative practice evident in a multitude of traditions as "at the core of all human capacities" and therefore a vital concern for our pedagogy with children and adolescents. Like Charlene Tan in the previous chapter, Johnson addresses both religious and secular perspectives on contemplative practices in developing the spiritual capacity of children and adolescents. She draws on a range of theorists in arguing that children have the capacity for contemplative experiences that will connect them beyond themselves to the wonder of life and the universe.

In Chapter 23, Douglas Magnuson reports a study that listened for "accounts of spirituality interpreted through the theological framework of the idea of vocation, a

calling" to see how adolescents might use a vocational sense to structure their lives. He embeds his argument in a comparison of four educational models to demonstrate "four ways of thinking about learning and growth, compared by organization of time, goals, values, data sources, methods and mechanisms of growth outcomes and metaphors." He sees spirituality as an educational ideology that promotes reflexivity, discernment, service, meaning making, and a sense of purpose and vocation that leads to "self-transcendence, responsibility, and authenticity."

The last chapter (Chapter 24) in this cluster is Scott's on coming of age through rites of passage as a model of spiritual development. Using the forms and practices of traditional rites of passage as a guide, Scott points out key qualities and characteristics of spiritual formation that adolescents may need to accomplish in coming of age. He also points out that cultural context and social engagement were critical in rites of passage and may be essential in contemporary spiritual development for adolescents. He implies that the absence of cultural recognition support and engagement may be hindering adolescent spiritual formation and development.

The fourth cluster in the part that follows focuses on defining experiences in the lives of children and adults. The first chapter of the cluster (Chapter 25) is part of an international study on childhood peak experiences. Edward Hoffman and Fernando Ortiz build on Abraham Maslow's (1959) concept of self-actualizing people and their capacity to "perceive reality more efficiently, fully, and with less motivational contamination than others do" (p. 64). Maslow (1970), just before his death, came to an interest in peak experiences and a recognition that "the great lesson from the true mystics. . . (is that) the sacred is in the ordinary, that is to be found in one's daily life, in one's neighbors, friends, and family, in one's backyard" (p. *x*). Hoffman and Ortiz report in some detail current research being conducted internationally gathering incidence of peak experiences based on a simple questionnaire developed by Hoffman. They examine results from Mexico, Canada, Norway, Indonesia, Japan, and the United States to explore the kinds of peak experiences adults report from their younger years.

In Chapter 26, Ann M. Trousdale, a specialist in children and adolescent literature takes a different track in bringing attention to life shaping peak experiences by turning to children's and young adolescent fiction. She identifies experiences based on the "relational consciousness" theories of Hay and Nye (1998) that she finds expressed in that fictional writing. Child–God consciousness, child–people consciousness, child–self consciousness, and child–world consciousness provide an interpretative map for a reading of children's literature as demonstrating spiritual experience. A considerable volume of youth literature has peak experiences that are central to the stories of the protagonists. Both boys and girls are shown to be making connections beyond themselves, reaching mystical heights in moments of insight and understanding and being swept away by the power of their experiences. The popularity of this literature demonstrates in part how it resonates with young readers and gives them a fictional context to process their own experience and characters with whom they can identify.

To conclude this cluster and this part, the final chapter (Chapter 27) presents the research of Kevin Reimer, Alvin Dueck, Lauren Adelchanow, and Joseph Muto.

They approach the question of the nature of spirituality and its expression through a project in which they interviewed exemplars from three religious traditions: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, who were identified as having "exceptional spiritual maturity." For Reimer and his colleagues it is a way to demonstrate what spiritual life looks like as it is lived and practiced in the context of religious life. They claim that "spiritual experience is likely to incorporate categories of transcendent value reflecting a spectrum of relational influences". They recognize the challenges of defining spiritual life and use a naturalistic approach to describe the spiritual as expressed by the lived experiences of religious exemplars. Their study identifies five themes in common across the three faith perspectives: relational consciousness, vocational identity, stewardship, tradition, and the divine as omnipotent and leads them to concluding reflections on spiritual identity.

Across the four clusters of chapters that follow the reader will engage considerations of the spiritual development of the young through multiple lenses that draw on both religious and secular traditions and scholarship. Theoretical models from psychology, education, and therapeutic practice and various combinations of the three as well as proposals for understanding spirituality and spiritual development from research projects are offered as ways to open further the discourse of spiritual development. As a number of chapters suggest the intensity of childhood and/or adolescent experience is significant in human life and calls for a better understanding of those experiences as part of human development. There are current and historical reports of the events, beliefs, and ethos that shape the lives of spiritual exemplars and religious leaders as well as the lives of ordinary unacknowledged people. Many questions will remain: What are the best theories to describe spiritual development? What existing psychological or cultural theory can be adapted to make spirituality and its experiences comprehensible? What are the implications for educational practice? For therapeutic work? For mental health and wellbeing? And for understanding spiritual development as it happens in the lives of children and youth?

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Chapter 14
Spirituality and Mental Health: The Mystery of Healing

David Tacey

> *Man creates in transcending himself, in revealing himself.*
> *He is not engaged in the discovery of what is there, not in*
> *production, nor even in communication, nor in invention.*
> *He is enabling being to emerge from non being.*
>
> – R. D. Laing (1967, p. 23)

Abstract The area of spirituality and health is developing as an academic field of enquiry, and this new perspective is beginning to be incorporated into training programs for medical doctors and health practitioners. A cloud of suspicion hovers over the issue of "spirituality" in the health and therapy professions. Part of the problem arises from the fact that a lot of activities go on under the umbrella term *spirituality*, and some of these warrant a critical eye. However, as an offspring of the Intellectual Enlightenment, medicine itself has had a materialist bias toward human nature and until recently has merely bracketed out the spiritual aspects of health and healing. There is a new air of receptivity today that was not evident even 10 years ago, and this is due to cultural changes wrought by postmodernism and to the sense that "spirit" can be understood apart from the hegemonic forms of the church that the Enlightenment opposed. Spirit can be claimed as part of the anthropology and psychology of human nature, and understood in its own terms, apart from any institutional authority. In this chapter, I review these problems and concerns, employing a perspective that derives from my professional background in Jungian depth psychology, spirituality studies and cultural studies.

The Changing Nature of Health

Spirituality does not have a hugely positive reputation in the medical and health-care professions. I have met professors of psychological medicine and psychiatry who have felt that spirituality is closer to mental illness than it is to mental health. It is true that what some people refer to as their "spirituality" can be a form of neurosis or a maladaptation to reality, as Freud argued in *The future of an illusion* (1927). But

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it has to be said that not all forms of the spiritual are pathological, and some forms of spirituality bring people to fuller health and renewed relationship with reality (Koenig, 2002). However, it is also true that our ideas about health and illness are constructed by historical values and conditions, and these ideas are subject to change and even to reversal.

We are living in a time in which notions of normality, health and illness are undergoing rapid change. What was regarded as strange or abnormal 20 years ago is being viewed with new eyes today, slightly less suspiciously. We are emerging from a long period of materialism and rationality, and just as our age is referred to as "postmodern", so it has been argued that it is "post-secular" as well (Caputo, 2001). We live in an era in which it is not uncommon for people to talk about their search for spiritual meaning, just as they might talk about personal relationships or employment conditions (Tacey, 2004). The spiritual is being included in the inventory of things that constitute our humanity. It is becoming normative and to be *spiritual* today is to be "nearly normal".

However, the spiritual is radically different to what it was in the past, when spirituality was felt to be the living heart or core of religion. Today, it is felt to be the living heart or core of the individual, and the location of spirituality has shifted from religious tradition to individual experience. This accords with the tenor of our times, which is individualistic and experiential. At present, religious traditions are displaced and take a secondary role in society. Today, that which was formerly outside has been taken inside, and this trend, if anything, looks like continuing into the future. It could be that the reductive logic and rationality that accompanied the "modern" period is being eclipsed. However, one can only hope that the eclipse of rationality does not result in a rise of destructive unreason. It is important that the spiritual is treated with care and respect, and not left to fester on the uninformed margins of society, where it can turn destructive (Wolin, 2004).

It behoves our health-care professionals and medical experts to re-educate themselves regarding the new discourses on spirituality and health. This area must be taken seriously as an important dimension of experience, and not left to the margins, where it is exploited on the one hand by right-wing religious fanatics and on the other by narcissistic forces of the New Age and sensation-seeking popular culture. The only reason why these movements thrive on the margins is because the centre of society, namely our medicine, our law, our education system, and even, ironically, our religion, does not include the spiritual element and does not integrate it as part of reality. What is suppressed at the centre re-emerges at the edges, and the worrisome edges will not go away until the centre of society and its professions have integrated this lost element of what it means to be human.

Our health-care professions and the discourses that support them have been shaped by a secular and humanist paradigm, and by a bio-psycho-social model that has largely ignored, or bracketed out, the spiritual. This model can hardly be expected to cope with the problem of spirituality, which emerges from a different set of assumptions about reality. It is not simply a matter of finding a few extra terms or concepts to add to our existing body of knowledge, but of opening to a broader horizon of possibility, with new values and ideas. We cannot just *add* spirituality

and "stir in" with what we already know. The whole point of spirituality is that it challenges everything we know. Spirituality is unsettling to secular knowledge, and if we have never been disturbed by it, I doubt we have ever taken it seriously (Peterson, 1997).

The medical and healing professions have forgotten, or perhaps intentionally renounced, their roots in the spiritual origins of healing, origins which in our Greek heritage go back to the temples of Asclepius, the "Divine Physician", and to the dream incubation chambers of Cos, Pergamon and Epidaurus. The healing professions are suffering from a form of amnesia, and must force themselves to remember what they have forgotten through centuries of rationality and neglect (Swinton, 2001). Culturally, we are at a turning point, where we need to take a detour to the past, to gather up again what has been lost from our scientific model, which has privileged a purely rational kind of knowing (Capra, 1982).

Wisdom and Medicine

What has been lost to our knowledge is wisdom, which is broader and more intuitive than rational knowing. Wisdom teaches that there are forces at work in life that are greater than rational motivations and larger than the biological laws of cause and effect. Wisdom introduces us to the view that consciousness is not limited to the human being, but extends beyond the ego and includes forces that have not yet been imagined by us. In the past, such forces were mythologised as gods, angels and spirits. These forces have the capacity to heal and make us whole, which is why medicine has historically been linked with religion, cosmology and shamanism.

The medicine man or woman of ancient tribes was the person who was trained in the knowledge of the spirit as well as the body. By making adjustments to the reality of the spirit, by seeing what needed attention in the subtle realm, healing could take place and patients could be cured. For instance, in the temples of Asclepius, the priest would pay attention to the dreams of the patient, and carefully observe what spirit or force was asking for attention in the symbolic language of dreams. If these internal suggestions were respected and acted upon by the patient, a form of healing could take place.

Most of this wisdom has been lost, but it can be recovered again, albeit in a new way and using a language that is scientific rather than mythological. Instead of speaking of gods or spirits, we might speak (following Freud) of drives of the psyche, or (following Jung) of archetypes of the unconscious. Our language will have to remain poetic to some extent, to grasp the subtle nature of mental forces, but we will need to recognise that the spiritual dimension requires a language that changes with the spirit of the times. Because our time remains scientific, the language of spiritual healing will have to appear at least as vaguely scientific, even if, to some people, Jung's theory of archetypes seems just as *mystical* as the theory of gods and spirits that it seeks to replace.

But some re-appropriation of the non-rational side of human experience will have to take place. When I notice the resistance that the health professions seem to put

up against this task, I often feel that the non-rational is confused with the *irrational*. The non-rational is not supernatural or occult, but is an entirely normal and natural element of human experience. The irrational, on the other hand, is contrary to rationality, and is potentially dangerous and disruptive to mental and physical health. These distinctions were made by Rudolf Otto in *The idea of the holy* (1923, p. 1). We need an appreciation of life beyond or outside the rational motivations, in order to understand the field of spirituality and its potential to heal or "make whole" the injured or diseased human psyche.

It is the rational approach to life and healing that causes some physicians to dismiss spirituality and regard it as lunatic or fringy. The haste with which many practitioners dismiss this matter in the clinical setting is sometimes justified as a desire to protect the client from delusional ideas. As London psychiatrist Andrew Powell (2005) concedes

> Patients' attempts to talk about their spiritual beliefs and concerns are often met with incomprehension and mistrust. Sometimes the chaplain will be called in but frequently the patient will be advised not to dwell on such matters, or else will find those experiences dismissed as delusions or hallucinations (p. 167).

But such dismissal might rather express a desire to protect the profession itself from a non-rational dimension that is too hard to cope with, given the model upon which the profession is founded. Andrew Powell (2005) continues

> The psychiatrist, frequently beleaguered and trying to maintain an emergency service with pitifully inadequate resources, relies first and foremost on medication, second on social support networks, third on psychological interventions where deemed appropriate and least of all on spiritual sources of strength. On top of that, he or she is three times less likely to hold a religious faith than the patient (p. 167).

There is frequently a significant gap between the assumptions and values of the health professional and the spiritual demands of the client, and this has been called the "spirituality gap" (Tacey, 2004). We can see from this sketch by a practising psychiatrist how difficult it is to bring the spiritual aspect into Western medicine. Spirituality appears to be operating on a different level, and is alien to the values of contemporary practice. To make matters worse, the hospital chaplain is often as confused and beleaguered as the psychiatrist, especially if he or she has not understood the all-important difference between religion and spirituality.

Professional therapists, like professionals in any field, like to be in control of a situation, and are reluctant to allow a meeting, of which he or she is purportedly "in charge", to drift off into areas of the unknown. Freud pointed out that therapists do not like to be "exposed" by their clients or found wanting. Freud talked of "the feeling of repulsion in us which is undoubtedly connected with the barriers that rise between each single ego and the others" (Freud, 1908, p. 153). How much more must this "feeling of repulsion" arise when clients try to take therapists into the unchartered waters of the spirit? When professionals sense they are losing control, they – we – are likely to pull back, and steer the conversation in a different direction. In this way, clients may be deprived of exploring spiritual questions. We have to face the fact that most therapists are not trained in spiritual matters, and are often "flying

blind" in this realm. However, this is a flaw in our system of knowledge, and not necessarily a personal failing of individual practitioners.

Spirituality as a Life-Enhancing Factor

Spirituality is a cry for hope in the midst of despair and chaos. With so much collapsing in today's world, with the demise of traditions and structures that were central to life in the past, including moral norms and ethical guidelines, authority figures, religious institutions, youth clubs, family networks and social supports, many people are turning to "spirituality" to find something solid, secure and reliable in their lives. And why not? The winds of change are howling in the streets, and people seek solace in the spirit and communion with forces beyond the ephemeral forms that are collapsing. It has always been the case that when a social order is crumbling, the people seek, by way of compensation, to make a new pact with the forces of eternity, forces beyond time.

Some people want to define spirituality according to a definite set of meditation practices, religious rituals or exercises, but I believe that the seeking of the spiritual is a personal choice, and we cannot pin it down to any one tradition or code. It is best that we are not too prescriptive about it, and that our definitions are general and broad. For me, spirituality is not merely something we do when we are being self-consciously spiritual. It is the pursuit at all times – and not just at meditation or prayer times – of *a particular attitude* toward oneself, the world and others. The attitude is one of reverence, awe and openness to mystery. The spiritual attitude impels us to search for connectedness, and this search intensifies when we live in disconnected times. There are many kinds of connection, but spiritual connection seeks a relationship with something greater than ourselves, something that links us to the cosmos, but also to what is most genuine and true in ourselves.

Spiritual connectedness need not express itself in otherworldly ambitions, in a longing to live in the heavens, to fly above the world or a desire for death. Spirituality, if grounded in reality and affirmative of life, can arise through our connections with others, society, nature and existence. This connectedness can restore flow and meaning to lives, make us feel part of a whole, connect us to our ancestry and family line, enrich us by restoring faith in community, ground us in our particular time and place and alleviate the pain of being isolated, lonely and apart. These are precious and life-giving gifts, and it is little wonder that spiritual achievements have been associated through the ages with such symbols as gold, treasure, living water, the elixir, the boon, flow, joy, delight, bliss – in fact, every imaginable metaphor has been attributed to the achievement of connectedness with the spirit.

Client-Led Recovery of the Spiritual

According to recent medical research, it is often the suffering patient who brings the question of spirituality into the clinical setting (Roach, 1997). The person suffering from a neurosis, mental illness, addiction or compulsive disorder, tentatively

expresses the barely formed view that a lack of "spiritual" meaning in his or her life might have something to do with their malady and feeling of despair. In our non-religious or post-Christian era, people often have inadequate language to express this feeling of spiritual absence, but they grope toward it, using their intuition and whatever resources they can find, whether these are drawn from organised religion, popular music, movies, conversations or the New Age movement. The attempt by suffering patients to express their illness in terms of a spiritual malaise is a problem that Jung first noted in "Psychotherapists or the clergy" (1932), but we are only becoming aware of this matter today.

Spirituality has arisen as a major item on the agenda of health and healing professions, not because university professors have had conversion experiences, but because suffering clients want to bring this vague and often ill-formed concept into the therapeutic setting. Today we can speak of a client-led or grassroots recovery of the spiritual dimension in health and healing (Swinton, 2001). It is a sign that civilisation is in transition, that man and woman "do not live by bread alone". The client-centred therapist has to learn to go along with this drift into spiritual discourse, even if he or she does not fully comprehend its meaning. If the spiritual has been raised as part of the healing process, there should be some acknowledgement that this element has crept into the professional setting, even if it makes both parties embarrassed, due to the secular paradigm.

If the professional happens to belong to a particular religious tradition or an evangelical church, he or she must, I believe, resist the temptation to turn the client into a new recruit, or to treat the disturbance as a sign that some particular religion is lacking. The problem is that postmodern spiritual hunger cannot always be nourished by traditional religious solutions (Moore, 1992). We live in fragmented, pluralist and diverse times, and can no longer assume that one spiritual solution fits all problems. There has to be receptivity to the particular case, a sensitivity that reaches out to the suffering patient and empathises with their condition and search (Orchard, 2001).

Spirituality and Suffering

Spirituality and suffering appear to go together. This is a theme found in all the world's religions and in all local indigenous traditions. Some of us find this theme to be morbid, and claim that the sacred should be experienced in joy and delight and not in negative ways. But the emergence of the sacred appears to demand a certain degree of suffering, as we find, for instance, in the rites of initiation into the mysteries of indigenous peoples. These rites of passage were felt to be savage and horrifying to some of the early explorers and missionaries who encountered these tribes in the history of Western exploration, and many tribes were encouraged to cease their initiatory practices. But the tribes seemed to know more than we know about the necessary suffering that is demanded of human beings if the sacred is to penetrate our lives.

In indigenous rites of passage, the profane self must be wounded, displaced, or symbolically put to death so that the spiritual self can emerge and replace the

authority of the ego (Van Gennep, 1908). The fact that all indigenous systems of initiation place this tortuous experience at the beginning of adolescence, at around the age of 12 or 13, indicates that the coming into adulthood is synonymous with a need to enter a new state of being, often symbolised in tribal societies by a totemic animal or ancestor spirit. It is little wonder that so many youth today feel lost and at odds with themselves during their teens, because these are the years when, spiritually speaking, something big is supposed to happen, some life-changing event is supposed to take place. Secular youth seem to have an intuitive notion that they have been left out of the great design, and this is why "spirituality" looms large for many of them, even if they are completely secular and do not know where to start.

All experiences of birth and new life involve suffering, and the birth of the spiritual self is no exception. The more heavily defended the ego is against the life of the spirit, the more forcefully does spirit have to displace our egotism to make way for our participation in a larger life. In spiritual rebirth, the person effectively "dies" to his or her former self, and is reborn to a new plane of existence. Although the rites of passage have been lost today, for many of us a certain degree of suffering is still the "royal road" to entering into relationship with the spirit. This does not mean that we should make a cult out of suffering, but it does mean that whenever suffering befalls us, we must be alert to the spiritual potential that might be signalled by such suffering. Even if the spirit does not instigate our suffering, we might say that spirit uses our suffering as a way of deepening our lives toward the ground of being. As poet Leonard Cohen sings, "There is a crack, crack in everything, that's how the light gets in".

Spirit is paradoxical in this regard, because while spirit might be seen as the instigator of suffering, it is true that without spirit our suffering cannot be endured. Without the sense that our suffering is meaningful, it is hard to put up with it. We become demoralised and numbed to others, the world and ourselves. But with spirit, we are invited to use the pain and ruptures to explore the face of the deep. If "spirituality" is suddenly being discussed in numerous disciplinary contexts, in conferences and research seminars, it is because clients and patients are bringing questions of spiritual meaning into the clinical setting, often to the bafflement of some professionals. We are in the midst of a revolution from below, and it is often from below that real change takes place.

We must not assume that this interest in the spiritual is a marginal activity of sick individuals in need of healing. This hunger afflicts not only the patients in clinics and counselling rooms, but society as a whole. Beneath the broken promises of secular society, its promises of wealth, happiness and fulfilment, is a pervasive sense that life is not as meaningful as it once seemed to be. Prior to modernity, people had religion to help them make sense of the bigger picture. Today, without religion, people are taking matters into their own hands, and the phenomenon of "spirituality" is a response to disillusionment, an attempt to go in search of meaning and find the vision that adds depth and purpose to life.

It is not true that an unfortunate few are spiritually afflicted and the rest of us are healthy. To the extent that we are cut off from the reality of spirit and its healing capacity, we are all diseased at this level. Patients conduct these painful journeys

of the spirit not only because their personal lives lack meaning but because modern consciousness as a whole lacks meaning. The mentally afflicted are the involuntary pioneers of a new dispensation, the human experiments, as it were, in which a new picture of reality is being forged.

The Mystery that Heals

Socrates said truth is not self-evident, and we have to say the same of the spirit. It has to be stirred to activity and awoken from its slumber at the core of our being. In the process of awakening, suffering is often the trigger. When life is proceeding normally, and the task of social adjustment is successful, there may not arise the need or opportunity to find a relationship with a spiritual core. But when the normal self has been ruptured, virtually the only option is to seek reunion with ourselves at a deeper level. By so doing, we turn to what is most profound in ourselves, and we ask it, implore it, to heal us, to close our gaping wounds and grant us new life.

This is why many recovery programs, or methods of dealing with addictions, alcoholism, drug dependency, eating disorders, depression and anxiety, as well as techniques to deal with grief and trauma, often find themselves moving into the spiritual domain, of which the AA movement is paradigmatic (Morgan & Jordan, 1999). This is not a move into "mystification", or an "escape into superstition" as some rationalists believe. It is an acknowledgement that what ultimately heals us and restores us to wholeness has a mysterious source.

Jung was one of the first psychotherapists to recognise this. In a letter of 1945, he wrote to his colleague, P. W. Martin, as follows:

> The main interest of my work is not concerned with the treatment of neuroses but rather with the approach to the numinous . . .. The fact is that the approach to the numinous is the real therapy (1945, p. 377).

Jung borrowed the word *numinous* from Rudolf Otto, who coined the term in 1923: "Omen has given us 'ominous', and there is no reason why from *numen* we should not similarly form a word 'numinous'" (1923, p. 7). The Latin *numen*, referring to a local deity, or the nod or will of a deity, is used to refer to the sense of an *other* that one might experience in intuitive, reflective or critical moments. Otto and Jung felt that the modern person living outside religion, and not only the traditional person living within a faith tradition, could experience the numinous in their lives. For Jung, the healing process of therapy begins in earnest not merely when the patient has understood the analyst's words, but when the patient has sensed the presence of an *other* at the core of his or her being.

Healing is ultimately self-healing, although the forces that initiate healing do come from outside the ego. The idea of an objective spiritual presence at the core of our subjectivity is new to Western medicine, which tends to externalise the healing process, seeing it as the result of one's encounter with the doctor, or the result of medical interventions and pharmaceuticals. The inward healing presence is often absent in Western religion as well, where it is felt that only the saint or the monastic,

and not the ordinary human being, has access to the holy spirit. If common people claim this same kind of experience they are often treated with suspicion, or in the past regarded as witches, blasphemers or frauds.

In the West we have systematically downplayed the inward healing resources of the body–mind–spirit, which is why so many of us are at the mercy of the external forces of healing, especially prescription drugs and health experts. As we know, many in the community are turning away from conventional medicine toward the so-called complementary medicine, whose sources are found in the East or in the pagan and pre-Christian West (Powell, 1998). The internal healing capacity of the body–mind–spirit is new to the mainstream, but it is not new to the East, or to Western paganism, gnosticism, wicca or hermeticism.

Wave and Particle

Jung believed that the encounter with mystery is what heals us, and that it is the "real therapy". What, then, is the relationship between spirituality and healing? How does contact with mystery heal us?

Many of us imagine the self to be solid, formed and discrete. But the self can just as well be imagined as a process rather than a static object. To borrow a metaphor from quantum physics, what we had previously thought of as a solid entity may turn out to be a wave of potentially infinite extension. Physics discovered that the smallest elements of matter behave in one moment as particles, and in another as waves. As particles, they are discrete and separate, and can be "split" to release energy. As waves, they behave less like bits of matter and more like bands of light or energy, reaching out to eternity. They cannot be confined or boxed in by specific forms, but participate in the ocean of being.

I would like to suggest that our human existence is twofold, and we live as particles and waves. As particles, we are distinct human beings, physical and concrete, each with our unique personality and makeup. As waves, we are not so individual; we are similar to each other, and participate in the cosmos in predetermined ways. As waves, we are spiritual beings, fluid, open-ended and connected to other waves. We are especially receptive to archetypal currents that course through us, which Jung correctly identified as universal and collective. The wave-like connectedness is precisely what we call *spirituality*, namely, the ability to feel connected to the cosmos and to the entirety of life.

My contention is that as soon as we experience ourselves as waves, this has a soothing effect upon consciousness. When this connection is restored, we overcome ego-bound existence and its petty concerns, and feel ourselves to be reconnected to the totality. This experience renews and vivifies us. It is burdensome to be confined to the ego and its tiny world. We are not meant to dwell there all the time, in its confining prison. There is a large amount of us that is not about biochemistry, biology or cause and effect. We have a dimension that has a grander source, and that, I take it, is what creation myths mean when they claim that we are created by God in his

image. When we transcend our ego-state in relationships, psychotherapy, rituals, art or spiritual experience we return to the ocean of being and are restored.

In normal life, as human beings going about our business, we live a "particle" existence. We behave like atomised entities, separate and autonomous, each concerned with his or her own self-interest or with a small family group. This is the only level that secular society knows us as human beings, and society imposes upon us its myth of the isolated individual. This is why secularism produces alienation, and barely knows how to create or sustain the bonds of community. But as waves, we seek connection to that which is beyond our ego. We extend beyond the particular, breaking its bounds, and reaching for eternity and the stars.

This wave-like participation is what all religions seek to engender. In ritual, liturgy, ceremony, our isolated selves are eclipsed, and we participate in ceremonies that connect us to the cosmos and each other. Religions and cosmologies build communities in ways that secular society never can, because they reach beyond the facade of individuality and draw from our depths the longing to connect with our mystical origin. At the same time, this impulse draws us closer to the healing centre and to each other.

Healing occurs when we no longer experience ourselves as a lone subject in a world of objects, but when we experience ourselves as a living subject in dynamic community. This is the formula that underpins the creation of human community, and it is the formula at the heart of the ecological vision. Thomas Berry (1988) said that ecological healing occurs when the world is no longer experienced as a collection of objects, but as a communion of subjects (p. 2). This is the winning formula for spirituality. The self may not realise its true nature, which releases bliss, until it experiences itself in relationship with a larger subject. The self "comes home" to itself when it glimpses the Other who is its origin. Longing is fulfilled when we recover our belonging.

Deep Security in the Other

Spirituality works toward healing by engendering a sense of security. The world of the ego, our atomised existence, is buffeted by the forces of change and subject to vulnerability and contingency. The particle self lives in the cycle of birth–death–rebirth, in the midst of coming to be and passing away. Our wave-like existence does not participate in the same reality, and exists as it were in the realm of the unborn, the realm prior to manifestation. When we contact our wave-like reality we feel detached from the tragedy of life and removed from the vulnerabilities that bring insecurity and anxiety. The particle self may try to find its security in the incarnate realm, by creating allegiances, traditions, networks, insurances, loyalties, plans and constitutions. But the world of manifestation is inherently unreliable and the things of this world do not assuage our need for a deeper spiritual security.

This is why the great spiritual teachings of all times have advised us not to look for security in the changing world. Rather, we are encouraged to look beyond the

world (Christ) or beyond the normal categories of thought (Buddha), to find our
true belonging and stable ground. Buddha insists that to attempt to find happiness
in the normal world of experience is self-defeating and a category error. We must,
he said, work with diligence on our enlightenment, because happiness can only be
found once we have broken through the attachments of this world and discovered a
connection to the eternal mind. Christ said his kingdom is "not of this world" and
urged those who would be influenced by his teachings to direct their attentions to the
eternal, not to the temporal. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where
moth and rust destroy them, and where thieves break in and steal" (Matthew 6: 19).
The so-called Christian West decided not to take his advice, but to live primarily on
the material level and seek satisfaction at this plane.

The deep security of the spiritual traditions is difficult to attain and involves effort
and dedicated work. It seems to involve the cultivation of trust, spiritual confidence
and faith, an ability to let go of the ego and its anxieties and allow oneself to be
embraced and held by an Other. In Buddhism, the Other is the supreme conscious-
ness and eternal mind, and in Judeo-Christianity it is personified as God the father,
to whom one hands over one's life, as well as one's troubles and anxieties. All stress
and tension are buried in the unfathomable depths of God, and this enables the ego
to live free from debilitating stress or incapacitating anxiety. The existential writings
of Søren Kierkegaard (1849) are especially illuminating on this point.

To experience the healing power of spirituality, the individual has to "fall in
love" with the mysterious Other. In religious language, we need to experience a
conversion. The psyche realises its depth when it sees that an Other loves it. In the
same way that the newborn infant realises its identity in the context of a loving
environment, the psyche realises its spiritual, wave-like potential only when it is
drawn toward a loving spiritual reality that is perceived as larger than itself. Without
the sense that love comes from the Other, I doubt that the soul could summon the
confidence and trust to embark on the spiritual journey, or to take the leap of faith
into reality. In this sense, the soul is by definition incomplete, and striving for a
new wholeness or integration is written into its constitution. It finds its completion
upon recognising its atonement with its creator. As St Augustine (c398) wrote, in the
words immortalised by Johann Sebastian Bach, "our hearts are ever restless, until
they find their rest in thee" (p. 346).

The Balance of Particle and Wave

We are emerging from an historical period in which our search for security in the
wave-like dimension of being has been represented as pathological or deluded, as
escapist or feeble-minded. Modern society has urged us to find security in the mate-
rial world, and this has amounted to a disastrous shift in the course and direction of
civilisation. The longing for security is innate, and without it we fall prey to various
kinds of nervous disorders, obsessions and illnesses. It seems clear today that if we
fail to care for the needs of the soul, we pay a great price for this at both individual
and collective levels.

Freud (1930) wrote of what he called the "oceanic feeling", that is, a sense of fluid identity in which we feel buoyed along by the current of being. This was his attempt to describe the wave-like dimension of psychic existence. But as a materialist, Freud viewed the oceanic feeling as an expression of neurosis. He believed the oceanic feeling described the condition of the embryo in the maternal womb, and characterised the feeling that neurotic patients experience in states of regression. In other words, the deep unconscious is characterised by a wave-like or fluid state, whereas our socially adapted state is defined and differentiated. In periods of psychosis, the suffering person can be lost to the world of form and dropped into a formless chaos of undifferentiated life.

The waves of preconscious existence can be destructive, like a tsunami or tidal wave, but they can also bring healing if we relate to them in the right way. This is what Jung (1928) calls "finding a right relation to the unconscious". A right relation to the oceanic must avoid *denying* the reality of the wave-like dimension by pretending it does not exist. This leads to typical modern attitudes, such as atheism, rationalism, cynicism, intellectualism and so on. On the other hand, a right relation must avoid trying to swallow the ocean, as it were, in an act of assimilation. This leads to hubris, arrogance, spiritual inflation, mania, paranoia and the psychoses. A right relation to the ocean of being can be found in attitudes of reverence and awe toward that which is greater than ourselves.

Paradoxically, as soon as we admit we are not in control, the possibility of regaining control is discovered. This is the truth announced in the 12-step recovery program of Alcoholics Anonymous, which was based in part on Jung's comments made to Bill W. in the 1930s (Levin, 1998). Jung admitted to Bill W. that his alcoholism seemed hopeless and endless visits to therapists and analysts would probably not cure him. Jung told him squarely that only God could save him, and uttered the strange words that acted as a catalyst to the AA movement: *spiritus contra spiritum*. Only an authentic "spirit" could counter and combat the negative "spirit" of alcohol. After initial bafflement and confusion, this was taken on board as the credo for healing. As soon as we respect the greatness of the wholly Other, our lives take shape again, the tidal wave recedes, and we can rebuild our dwellings on dry land.

We have to learn to live beside the ocean of being and not allow it to overwhelm us. If we learn to attune ourselves to the wave-like dimension, we can allow ourselves experiences of unity, bliss and harmony, and these can have a positive effect on our state of mind, on the nervous system, immune system and mental condition (Koenig, 2002). The numinous can heal the body and the psyche, but we have to allow this to happen. By experiencing the more-than-human, we are released from our ego and returned to a deeper sense of our humanity, from which the water of life flows. It is contact with the non-human, the dimension beyond time, that makes us human again and allows us to be restored at our source, so we can live another day and meet the challenges before us.

Jung (1951) insisted that those who want to bathe at this source have to maintain their ongoing connection with the "reality principle" at the same time. It is important to maintain one's connection with society, normality and "time and space" if one wishes to live a balanced life in which ego and soul are nurtured and fulfilled (p. 45).

As ego we live as particles, and as soul we exist as waves. If we seek only the wave-like existence, which is often encouraged by the New Age and other cultic movements, Jung would agree with Freud that this is neurotic and has to be criticised (Tacey, 2001). Our ego-lives have to be protected against the desire to drown in the source and bathe continually in ecstasy, a pattern found in drug and alcohol addictions, in consumerism and in various kinds of mental illness.

Although our ego-lives can give us pain and need to be overcome from time to time, they have to be respected as a central part of our experience of being human. In secular society, a typical pattern is to attempt to dissolve the ego on Friday nights or at weekends, in bouts of drinking or festivity. There are better ways to transcend the ego, but secular society lacks imagination in this regard. Certainly, our ego existence calls for adjustment to social norms, family, friends, employment and morality. If we live only for the wave, we become esoteric, "mystical" in a negative sense and remote from humanity.

In a certain light, the wave does not care about the particle, and may even seek to annihilate it in the ocean of non-being. When that happens, the wave might say good riddance to the ego, because the particle is viewed as an illusion from the perspective of eternity. In the East, the ego's existence and its world of time and space is sometimes regarded as *maya*, illusion, and of little consequence in relation to the eternal. But the particle has to stick up for itself, and not allow itself to be annihilated. We might say the wave annihilates the particle only if the particle harbours a death-wish, and sees no point in its separate existence. If the particle is able to build self-esteem, it will experience the wave as healing and nurturing, and not as aggressively destructive.

For its part, the wave does not set out to extinguish the particle. To use religious terms, God does not set out to destroy creation. Without the particular, the wave has no way of entering time and space or of incarnating into this world. It is vital that the particle maintains its integrity, not only for its own sake, but for the sake of eternity, which needs the particular to establish itself in time.

Negative Capability, Wholeness and Healing

By way of conclusion, I want to return to basics: what is spirituality?

I don't believe I have yet defined spirituality in this essay. I am ambivalent about definitions, because while they satisfy the mind, and its desire to know and gain control, they do not satisfy the soul, which may feel boxed in and confined. The spiritual side of our nature perhaps asks for acknowledgement, rather than definition. If we spent as much time on acknowledgement as we do on asking for definitions, we might be in better shape. Having said that, I would nevertheless define spirituality as *an innate human capacity to experience transcendent reality*.

What this transcendent reality is, I don't know. If I did know it would not be transcendent. I just know that we live better lives if we acknowledge it and act as if it were real and close to us. I feel it is healthy if we adopt an attitude of humility; we

should not attempt to know this reality too fully. An attitude of constant observance, matched with the art of not-knowing, or what Keats called "negative capability" is the best attitude to adopt. If we get too rational about the spirit and its substantive reality, chances are we have lost the plot and are heading into a kind of madness. It is simply not possible for our finite minds to grasp or know the infinite. When we think we know the divine nature, we can be sure, at that moment, we are far from genuine understanding. As Otto (1923) has said, "A God comprehended is no God" (p. 25).

The sacred makes claims on us and when we encounter the spirit we are called to a new life of commitment. In the past, such commitment was reserved for celibates and the priestly classes, but today, in our radically democratic world, everyone is called to commitment. No one can escape this encounter, because the self is incomplete and searches for completion. An encounter with spirit compels us to strive toward wholeness. Wholeness relates to the word "holiness", and the wholeness that spirit calls for leads to a search for connectedness (Sanford, 1977). We find ourselves searching for connectedness at various levels: to our inner selves (spirit or soul), to others and society, to nature and the cosmos and to transcendent reality – however it happens to be imagined.

A key break from the past is signalled by the shift from perfection to wholeness. Previously, it was felt by tradition that the best way to be holy was to become perfect, which entailed a moral piety and an extreme spiritual discipline which was antagonistic to the "flesh". The body and its desires were felt to be contrary to a spiritual life lived in pursuit of perfection. Today, this old ideal of holiness is in the process of being replaced by a new ideal of personal integration, in which body and spirit are brought together in relationship. There is a new "ecological" approach, and spirit and nature, or spirit and body, are no longer felt to be oppositional. This is another reason why the religious ideas of the past are often not suited to present need, which is to find a spiritual ideal in which the old moral conflicts are resolved in a new understanding of sexuality, desire and embodiment.

My sense is that spirit wants a new and more radical form of incarnation. It asks us to hold the tension between the heavenly, angelic aspects, and the earthly, sexual or instinctual aspects. To hold these elements together is an extraordinary feat, and we could not do it were it not for the support we receive from the spirit in giving us the courage to accommodate our contrary impulses. This support is what religion calls grace, and what Jung (1916/57) calls the transcendent function.

Acknowledgement of the spirit leads to healing, but not necessarily to cure. I think we have to be clear about this difference. Some believe that spirituality can lead to sudden or miraculous cures, and this is why they involve themselves in this pursuit. My belief is that miraculous cures do happen, but they are not our human province. We may receive them, as a boon or as grace, but we should not ask for them. The chances are that they will not occur, and if we beg for them, we will feel bereft and without hope. But healing is different. Healing may, for instance, give us the strength to endure what has to be endured. Healing and health share a common linguistic root, but the healing of the spirit may or may not bring cure. Spiritual experience may lead to a reduction of symptoms, but they are sought primarily to

make our lives endurable. Viktor Frankl (1963) wisely said that "when a man has a 'why' he can handle almost any 'how'" (p. 9).

The Art of Spirituality in a Clinical Setting

My hope is that the health-care professions can emphasise spirituality and not organised religion. It is certainly not the job of professionals, whether academics, medical doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists or counsellors to foist their particular beliefs upon students, patients, clients and suffering people. Ought we think that patients are somehow "cured" when they have adopted the beliefs of their doctors? Are they "well" when they espouse the things that counsellors think are right? This is not the way to conduct healing, and it cannot be condoned.

What the healing professions need is to develop an interest in what could be called a *generic spiritual attitude*. The clinical discussions could draw the spiritual core out of the person, and allow him or her to choose the path that their spirituality will take. Therapy and consultation can help people find the courage to believe in an invisible level of support, but it is not up to the professionals to supply the specific language or creed. That is a personal matter and not the province of those in authority. This makes a generic spirituality all the more attractive and desirable in today's world, and especially important for professional life and ethical conduct.

The aim is to find a large healing framework, which is potent enough to evoke a sense of the sacred, but loose enough to allow variations on a theme. The professional's task is not to evangelise or proselytise, but to encourage people to discover what is life-giving and creative in their experience of the world. I have been arguing in this chapter that healing is achieved when the self connects to that which is "more than" itself. The therapist's belief system, however genuinely held, can act as a barrier to the healing forces within the client's immediate world.

The key for professional practice is to place the patient's experience before our own theories or beliefs, and use the patient's language, not our own, to access and mobilise the healing forces. This requires listening instead of preaching, and the results will be liberating rather than oppressive. The art of spirituality is the art of deep listening, of attunement to the Other within and beyond the self. This is spirituality in action, not only as therapeutic content but also as clinical method.

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Chapter 15
The Dynamics of Spiritual Development

C. Glenn Cupit

Abstract Dynamic Systems Theory (DST) allows a description of spiritual development, applicable across a range of definitions of spirituality, without the paradigmatic limitations of traditional linear developmental theories which fail to account for the complexity of the phenomena associated with "spirituality". The concept of "Integrative Dynamic Systems" provides a powerful explanatory metaphor for "spirits" using concepts of "agency", "top-down causality", "emergence", and "attractors" which have direct parallels to terms commonly employed to explain spirituality. A DST stance allows us to transcend reductionism without losing scientific rigour. Through a DST lens, spiritual development exhibits sudden phase transitions from less to more functional organisation of the whole person, driven by "system parameters", ecological forces; organised by "attractors", patterns of behaviour which emerge regularly without clear causal factors; and responsive to the child's free choices. Children resist spiritual change, yet significant transitions may be precipitated by trivial events.

Introduction

While professional literature makes frequent reference to the spiritual (e.g., Crossley & Salter, 2005; Hodge & Bushfield, 2006; Josephson, 2007, Kvarfordt & Sheridan, 2007; Mercer, 2006; Miner-Williams, 2006; Moloney, 2006; Sayani, 2005), and non-scientific accounts recognise the ubiquity of spiritual experiences (e.g., Koulomzin, 1975; Gil'adi, 1992; Clinebell, 1996; Bunge, 2001; Cupit, 2006), spirituality is generally ignored in human development texts and never treated as an essential component of development. The lack of a developmental paradigm which marries humanity's phenomenological self-portrayal as free spiritual agent with the causal empiricism of normative science provides a rational justification for this. Current paradigms are limited by irremediable deficiencies in linear concepts

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of scientific explanation that underpin contemporary developmental psychology. Human spirituality transcends the boundaries they can successfully explain and is accordingly ignored or dismissed.

While traditional approaches have been effective in understanding restricted aspects of human development, none encompass people's complex diversity. Being derived from different images of the human person, they are also essentially contradictory. "It appears that each of these theoretical traditions owe their family resemblance to a particular metaphor, emphasis, or viewpoint, not a scientific explanation ... Mechanistic theories compare developing humans to machines, organismic theories compare them to plants, and constructivist theories compare them to builders with a universal tool kit" (Lewis, 2000, p. 37). Lewis incorrectly assumes the issue is use of metaphors. Science is metaphor based; familiar and simplifying parallels reduce incredibly complicated phenomena to that which is readily recognisable and comprehensible, for instance, the "solar system" model of the atom.

However, effective metaphor requires passably analogous parallels to be a reasonable representation of reality. It fails in current developmental psychology because people are qualitatively different from traditional comparison objects. Humans do not resemble machines except in their most basic functions. While other organisms provide a closer analogy, they fail to parallel human consciousness and higher order mental and language functions (Hofstadter, 2007). Apart from specific distortions, each "tradition" misrepresents the human person in four identical ways.

Limitations of Previous Developmental Theories

Despite the demonstrable non-linearity of empirical data, traditional theories presume human behaviour is expressible by linear functions; that the development follows continuous straight or curved trajectories. Individual children's capacities vary over short and long terms with sudden accelerations, stable periods, regressions and oscillations. Conventional developmental research, "... draws its conclusions from results obtained after the moment-to-moment fluctuations and individual differences of behaviour have been partialled out by statistical smoothing procedures" (Wolff, 1993, p. 189). van Geert (1994) indicates "If a researcher repeatedly tests a child for the same developing variable ... and finds an irregular, oscillatory or downward path, it is usually assumed that this must reflect random fluctuations or measurement errors and that the true variable follows a path of linear or log-linear increase" (p. 38). An adequate model needs to represent the variability of individual developmental paths rather than conceal it behind presumed linearity.

The second misrepresentation is a revitalisation of the discredited philosophy of preformationism; that the final developmental outcome is laid down in pre-existing structures, specifically, the genes and/or environment. This means that there exists a prior "blueprint for development" and denies the possibility that anything genuinely novel can appear during development. Thelen and Smith (1998) outline some problems when one applies this to the complexity of factors which

shape development: "... if the instructions to develop are in the genes, who turns on the genes? If the complexity exists in the environment, who decides what the organism should absorb and retain? ... Postulating an interaction of genes and environment merely assigns the pre-existing plans to two sources instead of one" (p. 564). One remarkable feature of the developing person is the incredible diversity of pathways of development and what appear to be genuinely novel solutions to developmental issues.

The third distortion lies in ignoring the unresolved anomaly that continuous stimuli to development lead to qualitatively discontinuous "stages"; prolonged periods of relative stability, interspersed with relatively brief periods of significant change. van Geert asks: "... how can a gradual mechanism that never ceases to operate explain a long-term process of stability penetrated by sudden changes?" (p. 7). It is a question standard theories do not answer.

Finally, by restricting themselves to particular developmental domains, established theories of child development omit consideration of facets of life which transcend the limits of their models. No theory presents a comprehensive picture of interactions between physical, social and conceptual development and the like, for instance, how thought and emotion mutually reinforce or hinder each other. Nor are higher level functions incorporated except, occasionally, through reductionist claims. Attempts to address moral, aesthetic, religious, creative and spiritual development generally extrapolate from structuralist theories of cognitive or social development. For instance, Kohlberg's (1984) theory of moral development and Fowler's (1981) theory of "faith" development are both derivative of Piaget's or Erikson's stage theories. Such argument by analogy may reasonably generate hypotheses but does not itself produce a valid theory of the more complex phenomenon.

Dynamic Systems Theory

Trenchant criticism of linear deterministic models of development comes from proponents of the new approach variously known as Dynamic(al) or Complex Systems Theory, Chaos Theory or Complexity Science (hereafter DST). DST claims to encompass the multifaceted intricacy of developing human "systems", using a metaphor based on highly complex phenomena, like weather, communities and information systems. As complex systems consist of systems of subsidiary systems, DST can deal simultaneously with the child as a whole, and as separate developmental domains.

The application of DST to human development has gained wide recognition following advocacy since the early 1990s (e.g., Kamm, Thelen, & Jensen, 1990; Thelen & Smith, 1996), recently justifying an entire volume of *Developmental Review* (2005, 25, passim). Albright (2000) and Goerner (1995) propose that it also provides a basis for understanding phenomena like spirituality.

It is not possible to fully represent DST in a brief summary. Reasonably accessible coverage is provided by Cupit (2002, 2005), Howe and Lewis (2005) and Lewis

(2000). While its essential character is clear, it is a new and growing approach, subject to ongoing modification. Most DSTists concede the theory is difficult to characterise, aggravated by their propensity for fanciful language such as "chaos", "butterfly effect", "strange attractor" and "magician system". Like relativity and quantum physics, it challenges our thinking because its outcomes contradict ways we have learned to see the world. I offer a limited description of its application to human development and how this may apply to spiritual development.

A Dynamic System Approach to Development

DST studies the behaviour of systems whose constituents are involved in complex mutual exchanges of influence. Such systems, including people, demonstrate behaviours unpredictable from their constituent parts (e.g., consciousness cannot be predicted from our chemical constituents or physiology). At each moment, every child confronts its "phase space", an imaginary region enclosing all its possible futures. These vary in probability (marriage is more likely than murder) and vary between children. The child's "trajectory" through its phase space, its actual rather than potential future, is shaped by three factors, "system (or control) parameters", "agency" and "attractors".

System Parameters

System parameters consist of all aspects of the child's genetic make-up, its environment (pre-empting nature-nurture arguments) and its history incorporating past learning. They both "determine" and "entrain" (cause works both "bottom up" as in reductionist theories and "top down" with more complex phenomena shaping the behaviour of less). For example, while, physiology determines thinking, thinking may equally entrain physiology; we may determine to ignore hunger. This is the first significant departure from traditional science. Despite their alternative name, system parameters do not "control" the child's trajectory but mutually interact to constrain and/or perturb it in directions consistent with their individual nature. They are not the only forces at work, nor do all work in concert. They "push" or "pull" the system but the system, the child, may well "push back".

Agency

Extremely complex systems, like people, are deemed "magician systems", though I prefer the less occult "integrative dynamic systems" (IDSs) (Cupit, 2002). These manipulate other systems, particularly their own subsystems, to maintain the integrity of their "whole". For instance, we deny pain from over-stressed muscles to fulfil a manual task and keep our partner content. Or, told we suffer from Type 2

diabetes, we engage muscles to exercise the body and deny impulses towards vanilla slices. This presumes agency, the ability to choose and act to bring choices to fruition. DST treats each child as an agent in its own development because its decisions mediate the impact of system parameters. Children internalise some influences, accept some and ferociously resist others. Their choices are important in shaping their development.

Attractors

The final factors can only be identified *ex post facto* by comparing many similar systems. Dynamic systems (DSs) are drawn into mysterious shared patterns of behaviour referred to as "attractors" (and recently "repellors"). So, while each child's trajectory is unique, all children's trajectories follow (or avoid) the same general pattern regardless of hereditary or environmental factors. Attractors are not determinable from the characteristics of the system itself. Examples include what other theories call "stages of development" and common behaviours like "crawling". Each child exhibits these but no two children in precisely the same way.

System parameters or children's choices perturb their paths away from attractors but, over time, they are drawn back. Systems resist shifting from an attractor even under significant pressure. A baby insists on crawling despite doting parents offering inducements to walk. Older children persist in inefficient approaches to problems despite being shown better resolutions. However, parameters which push the child towards more developed behaviour become progressively stronger and, when perturbations become irresistible, there is a brief chaotic period called a "phase transition" when the relevant behaviour becomes erratic. Then it settles down around a qualitatively different attractor. Children move from one favoured response to something totally different or from one developmental stage to a more advanced one.

This summary merely scratches the surface of a highly intricate and nuanced approach but concepts embedded in the characteristics of DSs are coherent with important aspects of children's spiritual development.

Spiritual Development Through a Dynamic Systems Lens

I have argued (Cupit, 2002, see also Hofstadter, 2007) that a hierarchy of complexity in species exists marked by the appearance of emergent capacities; for instance, life, adaptation, sexual differentiation and problem solving. But only with the complexity of human life does a superordinate integrative function (an IDS) emerge that is self-aware and seeks meaning for its existence. This novel system experiences itself as having a dimension which transcends less complex phases of being; it is more than just body and mind. From the way people describe this "dimension", it seems to entail a sense of mysterious yet discernible presence, at once immanent and ephemeral; unpredictable dynamism; strong beliefs, feelings and emotions; and

the life or essential being of something. It recognises a similar dimension in other persons. It names itself, and them, as "spirits", or some equivalent, and debates the meaning of "spirituality".

The distinctiveness of the human spirit does not lie in having characteristics which other entities lack. It lies in the complex pattern of interactions of characteristics, particularly cognitive abstraction, symbolic language and self- and interpersonal-awareness, which generate an IDS able to conceive of itself as having a meaning or purpose for being; entering into relationships; and transcending simple hedonism and reproduction in favour of aesthetics, ethics and religion. This "spirit" is an unprecedented emergent mode of being which is distinct and autonomous even while identified with its components. It is marked by autopoietic stability (it persists despite component change) based on self-awareness and self-organising behaviours which it uses to avoid dis-integration, i.e. I know myself by name and as separate from other selves, and I remain myself despite changing. It is also able to combine its constituent elements to create novel outcomes. I create situations around myself which make me who I wish to be, and some of those creations are genuinely unique to me and unprecedented in other humans.

As intimated, a few DSTists indicate that DSs may serve as a metaphor for spirituality. Goerner (1995) says: "The oddest thing about the whole situation—the new science approach and deep ecology in its many guises—is that science, pragmatism, and spirituality are in fact becoming intertwined" (p. 17). Phenomena we designate as "spirits" fit well the criteria for IDSs. DST language is not "spiritual" but there are clear parallels between the highly complex systems it describes and spiritual entities. I will identify some resonances between IDSs and spirits which allow the scientific theory of the former to inform our understanding of how the latter develop.

Spirits and Integrative Dynamic Systems

Many common understandings of spirits suggest they share the following characteristics with IDSs (here expressed in the latter language):

- spirits behave in ways unpredictable by classical scientific theories;
- they are identified with the entities they integrate;
- spirits transcend the limits of corporeality. Nevertheless, as emergent properties of complexity both are instantiated in, and never exist apart from, material entities;
- spirits entrain subordinate systems to act as a coherent whole in ways unpredictable from those constituent elements;
- they exercise agency and self-organise to fulfil their objectives, managing their subsystems to achieve goals which reflect their perception of the best outcome for the whole person. They may shed or deny aspects of themselves, entrain components to behave differently, or gain control over systems not currently part of themselves;
- spirits retain their identity despite changes to component parts;

- they use the energy of the system to construct more functional self-organisation, in other words, to develop; they are "auto-catalytic";
- over time spirits demonstrate a pattern of resistance to change, followed by significant precipitate reorganisation into other modes;
- they organise themselves hierarchically and heterarchically, interacting with both higher and lower order systems, as well as systems of comparable complexity;
- spirits follow common patterns of behaviour which can be either sequential or alternative; they are influenced by attractors;
- they are deeply influenced by minor events, being highly sensitive to small changes in conditions.

As a consequence, both spirits and IDSs are predictable in general pattern but not individual detail. As we cannot foresee the behaviour of any IDS, we cannot forecast spiritual development in detail for any individual. However, their behaviour is not random but drawn to common and predictable patterns that allow us to state which behaviours are more likely and which less.

Applying the Dynamic Systems Theory Lens

A DST framework can be applied across a range of naturalistic, Romantic, or theistic definitions of spirituality (Cupit, 2002). I assume other spiritual entities are real and interact with children as system parameters, to their benefit or detriment. Depending on one's preferred metaphysic, these include persons (e.g., parents), social systems (e.g., school spirit), ideologies (e.g., materialism), cultures (e.g., national identity), immaterial "forces" (e.g., nature), "entities" (e.g., demons) and/or deities. Precise specification of spiritual influences is a matter for hermeneutical, philosophical and empirical research. However, as a metaphor, DST suggests the following: spiritual development is a process of phase transitions from less functional to more functional organisation of the whole person driven by system parameters, organised by attractors, and responsive to children's free choices. In spiritual terms "conversion", "apostasy", "enlightenment" or "backsliding" (or several alternative terms), indicate that a person has experienced a momentous (the DST term is "catastrophic") alteration to their spiritual life.

When we speak of our spirit, we speak of what we identify as the essential "me". Rather than being separable from my body or personality, my spirit is what integrates all the many aspects of me into a single self-aware entity. "My spirit" and "I" are coterminous, which contradicts the view that I "have" a spirit with its problem of identifying what the "I" is that "has". Some concepts of spirits depict them as acting independently of their body but it is more parsimonious to consider spirit as an expression of a physical/mental/social phenomenon with transcendent capacities derived from being a manifestation of the whole. A simple analogy is "team spirit" which is more than the performance of individual players and may well survive changes of personnel.

Stories abound of how sensitive to small changes spirits are, with significant spiritual reorganisation following an afternoon in the bush, hearing a story, a chance encounter with a child, an overheard slight. Our spirits are in constant flux as they respond to life experience yet, being spirits, they maintain a core integrity of identity. They not only entrain their own subsystems; they communicate and form relationships with like spirits in religions, cults, covens, clubs and the like. They also arrange relationships in hierarchies where more powerful spirits entrain the behaviour of subordinates.

As self-organising agents, spirits integrate physiological and psychological systems to shape their own development, perhaps by bodily exercises (e.g., mortification) or mental disciplines (e.g., contemplation). They may train, seek different companions, or develop martial arts (because spirits can be destructive). Spiritual development is also shaped by common patterns or attractors. While each spiritual life is unique, its distinctiveness lies in variations around identifiable patterns all follow. Some attractors relate to the way spirituality changes with age, e.g., with the achievement of language, and some represent alternate patterns of spirituality, e.g., solitary or communal.

At birth, children are minimally functional as IDSs, and consequently are "objectively helpless" (Buckland, 1977, 1988) as spirits, entirely "open" to spiritual influences. Spiritual development consists of gaining capacities to progressively discriminate between influences, accepting some and successfully resisting others. The mature spirit is an autonomous and accomplished player in its spiritual ecology.

Though it is rapidly progressing, the current application of DST to child development is yet to specify a detailed theory of the usual developmental domains, let alone of spiritual development. But it is possible to propose a notional framework upon which to build such a theory and to identify areas for theoretical or empirical study to substantiate it.

Principles of Spiritual Development Indicated by a DST Approach

As emergent IDSs, spiritual entities entrain other phenomena, that is, constrain them to behave to benefit the spirit. The child's spirit is entrained by its parents' spirits, and, in turn, entrains system parameters which are part of its context, e.g., by choosing peers. Other spirits also entrain system parameters external to the child, e.g., by shaping diet, church theology, and media.

System parameters maintain gradual progression within stable periods and stimulate phase transitions to new levels of self-organisation. Most are observable by existing empirical methods. I argue that the parameters of spirituality represent two metaphysical principles, one expressive of spiritual "good", the other spiritual "evil". The first organises parameters to optimise the child's developmental trajectory towards attractors representing health and wisdom, the alternative directs the child into trajectories leading to attractors of disorder and folly. Depending on one's philosophy these principles may be represented as mere reifications of the outcomes,

emergent reflections of the good and evil in people or the world, or as signifying the existent of benevolent and malevolent supernatural beings. Both principles operate through common sources of spiritual encounter; nature, artefacts, relationships, ideas, etc.

Because of the dynamic interactions between the many factors that influence it, each child's spiritual development is unique and unpredictable in detail, and adults cannot prescribe how it will develop. However, broad conclusions can be drawn about children's response to spiritual parameters. Rather than continuous progression, intervals of stability will be interspersed with qualitative shifts, and even regressions. Trajectories will be marked by extreme sensitivity to changing parameters so that a small input (e.g., a song or a hug) at the right time may lead to significant change, and children raised in very similar contexts may follow different trajectories because of subtle variations unnoticed by adults.

Many religions propose a Divine intent that children follow sequential attractors towards "righteousness", however conceived. The reality of human life is that children are actually drawn towards alternative attractors, some which lead to God/goodness/positive spirituality, and others spiralling towards destructive spirituality/alienation/damnation, depending on your viewpoint. This duality of attractors expresses a moral bipolarity of spirituality rather than contrasting spirituality with unspirituality (Cupit, 2002, 2005).

In the early years, attractors are represented as wide and flat valleys separated by minimal medial saddles allowing easy transition from attractor to attractor, reflecting a spirituality readily deflected by contrasting system parameters. The most devout child in the Sunday school may be a tearaway in the playground. One mark of development is a decreased tendency to shift between attractors signifying greater spiritual stability; symbolically a narrowing and deepening of these basins. Nevertheless, attractors are not blueprints and no child's trajectory ever exactly matches them; the most "faithful" may not recognise the importance of tidying up.

Attractors and phase transitions in spiritual development will not exactly mirror those that occur in physical systems (Goertzel, 1997). In particular, "sudden" developmental transitions may be of extended duration. Previous organisation is not lost, but subsumed within the emergent organisation as a part of its more flexible functionality. After the phase change that allows walking, children can still choose to crawl; intuitive thought remains part of the toolbox of the more capable cognitive system capable of logical thinking. The developing person goes through many phase transitions of varied relevance to spirituality. For instance, the apparently neutral transition to walking allows rapid locomotion and consequent significant change in perceptual perspective, problem solving and agency. It is an important step towards the development of semantic symbolisation and, consequently, the emergence of concepts of truth and error.

Given the qualification that further empirical, phenomenological and philosophical/theological research is needed to articulate the actual transitions, some may be suggested a priori based on what we know from general developmental research and anecdotal accounts of those actively engaged with children, signalled by the emergence of qualitatively distinct patterns of global behaviour or phases of spiritual

development (attractors) (Cupit, 2002). Each marks a significant transformation from "openness" or "helplessness" towards competence. This does not exclude other attractors which are either recursive, reappearing in varying forms across the growth process, nor attractors which are unrelated to developmental progress. But it is important to identify those attractors which mark the course of development to maturity.

Phases and Phase Transitions in Spiritual Development

Prenatal—the Symbiotic Phase

During the prenatal period the child is biologically dependent on the mother; the "mother–child" is a single system and the "child" is dissipated by separation, i.e. it dies. The developmental parameters are hereditary factors and ecological factors mediated by the uterine environment. The "child" only encounters environmental sources of spirituality through their impact upon the mother. Consequently, the mother's context and choices govern what parameters operate and how.

Children in utero are vulnerable and resilient. The dominant attractor creates trajectories leading to healthy development to birth except in extreme circumstances. Its basin is both very flat and wide. Consequently, while it is easy to jolt the child's trajectory away from close conformity, it requires an extreme perturbation to push the child so far that it is not drawn back. Nevertheless, some negative attractors are atypically very deep and narrow. The rubella virus creates such system disruption that it is impossible to exit its attractor to return to the positive attractor. The consequences are lifelong.

The foetus is not yet a separate IDS, so to apply the term "spirit" may be inappropriate, though this is contentious.

Phase Transition at Birth

The period is terminated by a separation of the mother–child system into two physically independent systems. Though children remain reliant on others, this need no longer be the biological mother. A consequence of this transition is a significant increase in sensory input as sense organs are freed from intra-uterine restrictions. Because their prenatal developmental trajectory provides the entry point for infancy, children do not enter on an equivalent footing.

Infancy—the Trust Period

Children are born as open IDSs, delivered into a world requiring transactions with systems ranging from simple physical environments, through complex biological structures, to immaterial principles (e.g., justice) instantiated in the material world through people and institutions.

Many parameters influential during the previous period remain so, though with reduced potency as the infant is less vulnerable to their effects. New parameters become important. The quality of caregiver nurture and of their relationships to infants comes to be of significance. The expression or denial of caregiver love in sustenance and interaction provides a powerful impetus towards the trajectory amongst spiritual attractors the infant will follow. Though access to other sources of spiritual encounters may occur, it is generally limited by caregiver decisions.

Psychologists and theologians have recognised the importance of a basic orientation to trust in infancy and the possibility of bifurcation into ongoing mistrust. For example, Erikson sees in the development of trust in the infant the beginnings of faith (whether religious or not) (Hill, 1995), and Bridger concurs from a Christian perspective:

> The foundations of faith are being laid even at this early stage. A child who does not learn how to trust adults now will have difficulty trusting anybody at more than a superficial level later on. This extends to trust in God (Bridger, 1988, p. 13).

Whether their world proves itself trustworthy or not has permanent spiritual consequences.

Koulomzin associates the importance of the infant period for spirituality with the development of the unconscious. What is learnt is not encoded in verbal symbols. Consequently, the person later finds it hard to articulate this learning, and to reconfigure it, as it is not susceptible to logical argument.

The infant is not only less dependent than the foetus but also exercises greater reciprocal influence on those systems which offer nurture. Usually, infants engender in caregivers the need to offer care:

> In this way the child, seemingly so helpless, performs the mighty work of awakening in us a tremendous appetite for understanding and so brings us to the table of love (Wolf, 1996, p. 28).

Transition to Pre-critical Linguistic Symbolisation

Infancy is destabilised by gradual contextual changes in system parameters, none of which is alone sufficient to bring about reorganisation. Significant contributors to the change include growing motor competence, identification as a "self" separate from others and of others as "selves" in their own right, weaning and toilet training. Most important is the emergence of language and, especially, its symbolic use, with the change in thinking that initiates. This transition is of reasonably limited duration and, being constrained by maturational factors, allows an approximate chronological designation of the end of infancy. Later periods vary more widely in their emergence and dissolution and consequently are specified functionally rather than by age.

Pre-critical Symbolic—the Period of Beliefs

With the emergence of symbolic language children are able to contemplate and articulate that which is beyond their immediate experience.

> In this linguistic symbolisation, we find the principle of transcendence, making the child gradually stand above the physical world mentally (Kao, 1981, p. 75).

They begin to assimilate the formative narratives of their family and community. They hear caregivers evaluate in terms of aesthetics, morality, manners and culture. Matters of spirituality begin to be articulated to and by them. However, apart from what they experience directly, what they "know", including how they interpret those direct experiences, is entirely dependent on their caregivers.

> Much depends on what they have learned at home or in church, what pictures of God they have seen – if any at all, and what vocabulary they have come to use (Hyde, 1990, p. 69).

Children's trajectory as they exit from infancy iterates into this period. They enter predisposed to trust what they are told unless, in infancy, they were drawn into a "mistrust" attractor. One would expect such prior attraction to be reinforced unless system parameters relevant to trust undergo their own phase transition, e.g. following a change of caregiver. As they progressively deepen, transition between the trust and mistrust attractors becomes less likely.

Consequently, the spiritual attractors and essential parameters of this period relate to believing those who offer care. Caregivers' control and children's continuing physical emotional dependence mean that caregivers are usually accepted by children as authorities; what they say is believed. Questions seek information (unless they are a game) rather than having any evaluative element. There are four cardinal parameters: increasing intellectual and linguistic competence; the commitment of caregivers to truth; their commitment to goodness; and the validity of what they say about each.

While children are responsive to all spiritual sources, those related to truth and deceit become particularly significant. What caregivers say will ideally draw children into an attractor marked by commitment to ideas which validly represent what is true and what is good. Children will also believe what they read, once they are able, and what they see on electronic media, which they evaluate only by perceptual appeal, if attractive then "good".

However, children are not passive recipients of caregiver beliefs. As active meaning makers, they construct their own explanations of spiritual encounters, but in the context of inability to appraise legitimacy in what they encounter. The attempt to make sense of complex ideas without the capacity to apply critical logic leads to the seemingly "quaint" nature of beliefs during this period. Far from being quaint, anecdotal reports often reveal in children a profound though naïve spirituality (Coles, 1990).

The first alternative attractor to learning truth from caregivers varies only a little; where caregivers value but misunderstand truth and goodness. Children accept mistaken parental ideas because they cannot discern right from wrong or true from false,

except by what caregivers tell them. A far more significant alternative is failure to value truth or goodness based on adopting caregivers' devaluation of these. If one learns to cherish truth, then error is open to correction; if to appreciate "good", one can accommodate divergent ideas of virtue. It is much harder if children believe the very ideas of truth or goodness are vacuous.

How deep early attractors are depends on the resolution of the previous period. The more trusting the child, the deeper the attractor. Nevertheless, initially the saddles are low and children slip from one attractor to another depending on context, for instance, parental influences counteracted by grandparents or parents by educators. Ideally, trustful children are taught truth and goodness by trustworthy caregivers. The outcome is children able to believe, as well as to trust, dependable people. Not that beliefs in this phase have enduring stability. Rather they are extremely tenuous and mutable. The methodological difficulty in determining young children's religious beliefs reflects in part that there are no enduring beliefs to find (Tamminen, Vianello, Jaspard, & Ratcliff, 1988).

Neither ideal nor totally destructive caregivers exist. Rather all children experience caregivers who are both inconsistent with others and self-contradictory. So all children vary around identifiable attractors. Nevertheless, certain outcomes are far from optimal. Some children emerge committed to a distorted idea of, and others with little commitment to, truth and goodness. The former are likely to face disillusionment later; the latter follow an attractor which leads towards relativism and anomie. Children enter into the next period either following an attractor oriented to commitment to knowing the truth, or to a predilection to deny it.

Transition to Discernment

The acquired ability to recognise discrepancies between divergent accounts of reality and different moral demands precipitates the next phase transition. Although, previously, children accepted the truth of mutually exclusive claims, automatic acceptance of caretaker expertise now breaks down. Real questions begin to be asked. An increasing ability to evaluate alternative "realities" emerges with recognition that adults can and do err. Children begin to exercise the intellectual autonomy to choose between contradictory views, but in the context of significant constraint upon emotional and social independence.

Dependent Critical Symbolic—the Period of Discernment

This period is marked by recognition of alternative possibilities and development of the intellectual tools to discriminate between them, creating tension between the ability to decide what is true for themselves and continued socio-emotional dependence on caregivers. Children consider options and begin to use their experience and others' reactions to evaluate them. Exposed to a far wider range of spiritual sources, including multiple caregivers, they ask questions, often of different people, and

weigh up the answers they receive. In particular, children begin to use repositories of human intellect beyond their caregivers in culture, religion, text, art, performance and especially in educative-care systems.

However, children are not self-sufficient individuals and retain strong emotional ties to caregivers, finding it hard to admit that they are wrong on important matters or to contradict them, despite increasing intellectual ability to do so. Consequently, they may become reticent about spiritual matters (Hay, 2000, p. 39).

The stability of this period is maintained against continuing exposure to important system parameters such as life experience and world knowledge, improving intellectual strategies and growing social competence, decreasing dependence on particular caregivers and increasing self-reliance. In the spiritual realm, these interact with the degree to which children are able and allowed to explore their beliefs, and how caregivers respond to their questioning. Authority can become authoritarian, insisting on unquestioning conformity; or children's questioning can be encouraged as an occasion to extend their understanding. Whether caregiver responses reflect a coherent and consistent spirituality, spiritual confusion or denial is also influential.

The primary attractor is a spirituality which discriminates between true and good spiritual influences and those which are distorted and destructive. Not that these children can fully resist either, but they demonstrate preferences and seek to be excused from some. They are very sensitive to discrepancies between what caregivers assert and what they enact. They may criticise aspects of caregiver spirituality even while socially involved. The contradiction of independent belief and social dependency is poignantly expressed by one of Hardy's respondents:

> My sense of conscious contact with the power at the heart of the universe dates from the age of 11 or 12 when I used to run as quickly as possible through the prayers I had been taught to say in order to get on with the real business of talking to someone who was 'there' (Hardy, 1979, p. 69).

Caregivers may find it increasingly difficult to penetrate children's spirituality from now on (Koulomzin 1975).

Once again there are two alternative attractors to healthy spiritual discrimination. One leads to unquestioning acquiescence to a particular version of "truth" or spiritual practice. This derives from caregivers who refuse to allow growing intellectual and social competence and enforce spiritual immaturity. The other assumes a similarly uncritical acceptance of all knowledge as equally legitimate and all spiritualities as uniformly acceptable, or as having no currency beyond the pragmatic. This stems from caregivers themselves lacking an articulate belief system or lacking respect for the importance of spiritual questions. Some children are accorded an ersatz maturity requiring them to address their questions without the guidance of trusted caregivers. In the extreme, the first leads to a spirituality of rigid codes having less to do with genuine concurrence than with the need to be accepted; the other to a spiritual life without cognitive content or ethical parameters.

Some caregivers arrest the development of personal competence so their children cannot conceive of themselves involved in spirituality different from that of

their parents. Alternatively, being prematurely required to negotiate spiritual matters without caretaker guidance leaves children without the intellectual and social capital needed to recognise and accept mature spirituality. Any of these suboptimal attractors may prove sufficiently stable to resist subsequent parameter change. Consequently, subsequent phases are conditional rather than universal.

Transition to Exploration

For those who do transit to the following stable phase, the main precipitating factor is growing social independence from caregivers, even while physical reliance persists. For fortunate children, caregiver restraint is gradually withdrawn allowing freedom to make spiritual decisions without jeopardising important relationships. For others, autonomy has to be seized as caregiver restraint becomes intolerable. In either case, the system parameters relate to contextual and social factors which lead children to wish to disarticulate from spiritual dependence on the rest of the household, to make their own choices about what they believe and do.

Independent Constrained—the Period of Exploration

Many children traverse a period when they see themselves as sufficiently separate from their caregivers to consider a contrary approach to spirituality, even while, for pragmatic reasons, they have to comply with caretaker requirements. Avoiding irreconcilable conflict, some demonstrate this autonomy by symbolic choices about dress, hairdo, music and styles of speech. Those from a background without religious affiliation may experiment with religion. Children from religious backgrounds may resist attendance or participate sullenly. If caregivers recognise these as necessary to the process of maturing, they can help children reflect upon their experiences, recognising that their spirit can no longer be compelled, though it can still be placed under physical restraint where necessary. However, in some households and educative-care settings, children contemplating matters which cause caregivers grave discomfort creates considerable conflict. Certain caregivers experience great apprehension if children question the reality of the spirituality of their households (Hay, 1995, cited by Crompton, 1998, p. 51).

For the first time children are generally able to choose what sources of spirituality they are exposed to. Henceforth, caregiver mediation is superfluous and the critical system parameters are the direct spiritual encounters which occur. Children are close to spiritual competence but are not fully spiritually responsible as caregivers can still require participation in spiritual activities where they may be unable to resist the influences encountered. While a competent adult might flee influences they felt unable to resist, a constrained child cannot. Alternatively, caregivers may prevent children's chosen involvements.

The ideal attractor sees children choose to recognise and expose themselves to positive spiritual influences reflecting truth and goodness rather than growing

alienation from these. Both attractors are wide and accommodate a diverse range of individual trajectories. Now they dramatically intensify and transition between attractors becomes increasingly problematic. In some cultures a dominant religion or ideology mandates its own spirituality and uses the instruments of state to enforce involvement. Though a person may not believe, they can be forced to participate in situations where the "national spirit" is inescapably encountered. The independent-constrained period can become a stable state from which it is hard to transit.

The Transition to Maturity

The final phase transition can be precipitated at any time that a child chooses to wholly accept the responsibilities of spiritual maturity with full awareness of the implications, which may include persecution or death. At that point the person ceases to be a child.

Spiritual Maturity

The final stable period is marked by the person being able to resist entrainment by other spiritual systems. Not that higher order IDSs; ideas, institutions, people and powers cease functioning to effect such entrainment, nor to transform or destroy the mature spirit; the system will still be entrained by other systems, but as a matter of voluntary choice among contending principles, a choice which can change, but can no longer be compelled.

The mature attractor ideal is a healthy, trusting person, with a personally owned commitment to truth and goodness and the intellectual, emotional and physical autonomy to exercise that commitment. Sub-optimal attractors include ill health, inability to trust, denial of truth and goodness, unresolved interpersonal dependence or enforced compliance with others. Given people's mixed developmental histories and situations, the ideal is never fulfilled. In dynamic terms, mature people's life trajectories vary from the ideal insofar as their subsystems are either entrained to, or, at least, are perturbed by, IDSs which exist beyond the person's system boundaries and control.

There are those who embrace life patterns associated with attractors antithetical to the ideal. They may express mistrust through angry suspicion of others, encysting their spirit in bitter fear of betrayal. They may live in denial of truth or advocacy of evil. They may be so determined to sustain the authoritative truth they received that they drift into bigotry or pharisaism, whether religious or secular. They may drift along accepting the group norm, committed to nothing except conformity.

In maturity to change trajectory requires a radical transformation justifying terminology like "new birth", "repentance", "regeneration" or "illumination".

Summary

This model represents spiritual development as an emergent phenomenon reflecting the complexity of children as integrative dynamic systems, and marked by qualitative changes in their encounters with other spiritual entities. Children move through a series of phase transitions from a state of unqualified openness to spiritual influences, to a mature state where they identify by choice with a particular spiritual orientation and are able to exclude alternatives. The dynamic for this development lies in all those factors which foster the general development of the child, but especially in the nature of their exposure to spiritual encounters. Of particular significance, at different times, are parental nurture, the validity of assertions of trusted authorities, caregiver response to attempts to exercise discernment and freedom to explore alternatives. Children pass through a series of stable periods separated by shorter periods of conflict which indicate the dissolution of previous patterns of spirituality to be replaced by emergent patterns of greater spiritual efficacy and autonomy. Though there is an order and consistency in the development of these patterns sufficient to allow general conclusions to be drawn as to characteristics and sequence of stable periods, each child follows an individual trajectory within the broad parameters set by this overarching order. This may include gradual change, plateaus and regressions. Their trajectories reflect the conflicting sway of spiritual principles underlying alternative constructive and destructive attractors. Initially children are unable to resist pressure from system parameters to shift between attractors. Increasing maturity is characterised by enhanced ability to recognise, discern between, and either identify with or counter these influences.

The relationship between stable periods and chronological age is highly variable and sensitive to societal and cultural, as well as personal, factors. However, the sequence is predictable even if each individual trajectory is anything but.

Conclusion

Current approaches to human development are not conducive to consideration of spirituality because they adhere to a linear paradigm incompatible with most conceptualisations of the nature of spirit. DST evades these limitations because complex entities behave in ways which transcend their components. While application of dynamic principles to development, and particularly spiritual development, remains nascent, the theory has considerable heuristic value, not least in approaching spiritual matters with the rigour expected of scientific enquiry.

DST provides a scientific approach to spiritual development compatible with many philosophical and theological understandings, while using principles of wide explanatory power across scientific fields. It offers predictions open to empirical investigation and computer simulation. The identification of actual "system parameters", "attractors", "phase transitions" and the like for spiritual development is far beyond the scope of this chapter, yet DST provides a tantalisingly realistic picture,

sufficiently evocative to serve as a metaphor and also to contribute to an appreciation of how we may influence the development of children's spirituality in life affirming directions.

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Chapter 16
Does Positive Psychology Have a Soul for Adolescence?

Paul King

Abstract The discipline of psychology is often presented as resistant to the insights of religion and spirituality. Psychology, with its emphasis on observable and measurable behaviour, can be seen as standing in opposition to religion, with its emphasis on faith and the ineffable. For young people, factors such as finding a purpose in life, building on personal strengths and developing emotional supports have become evermore important in the face of adversity in an increasingly complex society. The new movement of positive psychology with a research emphasis on positive states and dispositions offers a vehicle for the reconciliation of positive psychology, religion and spirituality with respect to understanding and contributing to the holistic development of young people. This chapter presents the common ground between the contemporary development of positive psychology and the ancient wisdom of Christian spirituality as mutually inclusive frameworks for helping young people find meaning and purpose in life.

Towards the Spiritual Path

Traditionally, psychology and spirituality have shared a fractured and polarised relationship where both spheres have demonstrated a mutuality of suspicion and antagonism. Spirituality, particularly within organised religion, has cast doubt on the introspection created by psychology, identified by an excessive humanistic and materialist orientation leading to self-centredness rather than other centred. Psychology has, in general, equally been distrustful of Christian religion and spirituality indicating its disposition for psychological and emotional abuse, namely focusing on people as hopeless sinners, promoting patriarchy, practising blind obedience and offering a naïve and false hope for an eternal life. Freud espoused this perspective insisting that religious experience was a regressive phenomenon. He declared it to be incompatible with the scientific mind since "religious beliefs were motivated by wish fulfilments derived originally in response to conditions of helplessness"

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(Shafranske, 2005, p.105). It is perhaps a desire for independence arising from a fear of submergence by each other and potential for the violation of boundaries that has warranted this unnecessary dualism between both disciplines. Yet, paradoxically, psychology and spirituality have been continuously united in a single unified ambition: How can suffering (pathos) in the human experience be transcended or eliminated?

Regrettably, however, this common theoretical heritage has orientated efforts in both domains towards a disease or sickness model in deference to the urgency for health and healing. Disintegration rather than integration has too often been the obsession of both psychology and spirituality with the ensuing loss of a creative tension respecting the mutuality of chaos and order. An integrationist spirituality and psychology cannot be built solely on the pathology of the human person. Neither can there be a divergence of the organic unity of mind and body, nor of the soul and heart. The mystery and complexity of life is such that it cannot be reduced to a singular unified interpretation of reality. In recent years this divorce between spirituality and psychology has been addressed with a renewed interest in matters of a spiritual nature on the part of psychotherapists (Shafranske, 2005). Historically, not all psychologists have ignored the significance of religion and spirituality in the human experience. Many key figures in counselling and psychotherapy with strong religious backgrounds—William James, Gordon Allport, Erich Fromm, Viktor Frankl, Abraham Maslow, Roberto Assagioli—have tried to forge some integration between their therapeutic work and the search for spiritual meaning in life (Strümpfer, 2005). Carl Jung identified spirituality to be of such an essential ingredient in psychological health that he could only heal those in middle age who embraced a spiritual or religious perspective. For Jung, every patient over 35 years "fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook" (Jung, 1933, p. 229).

Spirituality is a concept that evades simplistic definition, categorisation or measurement and yet it affects the social, emotional, psychological and intellectual dimensions of the lives of young people. This chapter reviews some of the evidence linking spirituality and religious expression with different aspects of positive psychology particularly as it applies to adolescence. The author argues that the development of positive psychology as "an umbrella term for the study of positive emotions, positive character traits, and enabling institutions" (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005, p. 410) and the emanating research from the theory supplements and enhances the aforementioned contributions to the fields of spirituality and psychology and therefore can help to enable young people to transcend adversity or to cope with the sometimes harsh reality of living. The abundance of emerging themes—wisdom, courage, justice, temperance, transcendence, hope, resilience, optimism, happiness and wellbeing—do not replace what is known about human suffering, weakness and disorder. Positive psychology offers "a more complete and balanced scientific understanding of the human experience—the peaks, the valleys, and everything in between" (Seligman et al., p. 410).

It is apparent from the literature in positive psychology that it is a discipline which embraces the path of spirituality in order to emphasis a holistic world order

where everything is assumed to be connected with everything else. Its classification as a social science does not lessen the value of its contribution to the field of religion and spirituality but rather as a science and a practice of psychology it includes an understanding of suffering and happiness, their correlation and valid interventions that both relieve suffering and increase happiness. The tendency of psychological research to focus on distress, pathology and maladaptive functioning rather than on strengths, abilities and optimal functioning is clearly demonstrated in the study of adolescence. Research has tended to focus on youth's problem behaviour and the prevention of negative outcomes, such as teen pregnancy, violence, eating disorders, academic difficulties and suicide, rather than on youth's strengths and abilities and the promotion of positive outcomes, such as happiness, life satisfaction, resiliency and initiative (Larson, 2000). Many areas of practice in educational psychology focus on identifying the origins of problems experienced by children and their families. By expending the totality of resources researching factors that lead to psychological distress rather than the preventive and protective factors that buffer against pathology, we may be shortsighted and hinder the advancement of the field. We may lack the knowledge necessary to teach students, parents and teachers the skills required to maximise their potential and indirectly alter their psychological distress. However, the growing body of scholarship focusing on supporting and enhancing the development of adolescents' strengths and abilities suggests that positive psychology has begun to foster change in the study of adolescence by directing increased attention to the importance of building on adolescents' strengths and abilities as a means to promote positive outcomes (Chafouleas & Bray, 2004). In particular, it is the concept of resilience, as presented later in this chapter, which best offers a point of convergence with terms, which are commonplace in spirituality such as courage, hope, meaning, fortitude and transcendence.

It seems that positive psychology has a natural empathy for matters of the spirit. It shares a language with spirituality that does not constrict it to a single, unilateral interpretation. Psychology, and especially positive psychology, has demonstrated a desire to cross the bridge to spirituality in recognition that inclusion of this aspect of the human condition allows young people to find meaning in life and achieve resilience in the face of adversity. This crossing first began with the journey to explore our shadow and now attention is called to help young people integrate their strengths, for the spiritual journey requires self-awareness and self-transformation. If, as the author argues, positive psychology serves to enhance a vision which augments rather than detracts from the immeasurable richness of the many world religions about what makes life worth living then the ensuing insights can only serve, in the words of the theologian Paul Tillich (1952), to help adolescents "accept our acceptability despite feelings of unacceptability" (pp. 164–165).

Spirituality or Spiritualities: A Babel of Languages

Christian spirituality will be the main focus for the purpose of this article in seeking to understand the influence of positive psychology on spirituality for young people. Though not true generations ago, a distinction is frequently made today

between spirituality and religion, the latter focusing on defined structures, rituals and doctrines and how people exercise religious beliefs through their relationship with organised religion. Kenneth Pargament (1999) defines religion as "the search for significance in ways related to the sacred" (p. 11) and because this element of the sacred is core it separates religion from other human phenomena. There are obviously many ways through which young people search for meaning and significance. Pargament (1999) further clarifies that this search comprises two dimensions: a pathway and a destination with the sacred as part of either or both dimensions. Examples of the pathway include attendance at religious congregations, religious beliefs, involvement in prayer and rituals and are just a few of the many sacred pathways taken to find, hold on to or transform significance. If these pathways lead to sacred destinations then the search qualifies as religious, regardless of where it leads. The destination of a religious search may also be sacred. People may seek out God, transcendence, a spiritual mission, a religious community or any other number of sacred objects.

Spirituality evokes a plurality of definitions and the term *spirituality* is evidently an emotive and contentious one. For generations, religion as the sole mediator of spirituality has claimed a monopoly though religious spirituality and secular spirituality share common ground. Yet it is a contemporary bridge built on ancient foundations that renews the relationship between psychology and religion. Recognition of the spirit as a natural dimension of the person is expressed in how legislation in Ireland defines one of the aims of education to "foster an understanding and critical appreciation of the values—moral, *spiritual, religious*, social and cultural—which have been distinctive in shaping Irish society and which have been traditionally accorded respect in society" (Department of Education, Ireland, 1995, p. 10).

Philip Sheldrake (1991) notes that the Latin word for spirituality—*spiritualitas*, meaning breath—attempts to translate the Greek noun for spirit, *pneuma*, as it appears in the New Testament writings of St Paul. He is adamant that this understanding does not contain a dualistic contrast between the *physical* and *spiritual* or the body and soul as was evident in later classical Christian spirituality of the twelfth century. In tracing the evolution of Christian spirituality across two millennia he concludes that four characteristics of contemporary Christian spirituality can be classified. First, there is recognition that it is not exclusive to any tradition within Christianity or even to Christianity itself; second it is not the mere prescription of dogma; third it is concerned with the mystery of human growth in the context of relationship with the divine; and finally it is not limited to the interior life but integrated with all aspects of human experience (Sheldrake, 1991). Returning to Kenneth Pargament, he defines spirituality as the most central function of religion, and views spirituality "as a search for the sacred for it has to do with however people think, feel, act, or interrelate in their efforts to find, conserve, and if necessary, transform the sacred in their lives" (Pargament, 1999, p. 11). Thus we can see how spirituality goes further than religion and how in the context of the sacred it describes an awareness of relationships with all creation, an appreciation of divine presence and a search for purpose that includes a sense of meaning. The author considers it to be a more expansive term and differentiated from religion as an

expression that speaks to the greatest of young people's capacities. Furthermore this differentiation between religion and spirituality is of particular significance in the understanding of young people's spirituality as argued by Daniel Scott: "spirituality is as normative and natural as physicality or emotionality" (Scott, 2006, p. 1118).

In describing the profusion of terminology for understanding the purposes of Religious Education, Finola Cunnane adopts the term "a Babel of Languages" (Cunnane, 2004, p. 17). This appropriate image captures too the complexity of spirituality. Distinctions are perhaps most evident in the concept of spirituality as mediated through the dominant world religions. A contemporary Christian writer on matters of Christian spirituality, Ronald Rolheiser (1998), offers a strikingly similar analysis to Augustine's invocation, "You have made us for yourself alone, and our hearts are restless 'til they rest in thee, O Lord'" when he writes that spirituality is what we do with our desires, our unrest. He develops the nuances of this description as follows:

> Spirituality is about what we do with the fire inside of us, about how we channel our eros. And how we do channel it, the disciplines and habits we choose to live by, will either lead to a greater integration or disintegration within our bodies, mind, souls, and to a greater integration or disintegration in the way we are related to God, others, and the cosmic world (Rolheiser, 1998, pp. 10–11).

Thus for Rolheiser and others spirituality is about what we do with our spirit, our souls. It is not something we *have* but more than this, it is something we *are*. The loss of soul is not eternal damnation but more principally the loss of meaning and falling apart in this life. Positive psychology seeks to address how human beings can search for greater integration and achieve meaning in life which comes from active engagement with the purpose of living, namely to achieve one's fullest potential. Its mission is particularly apt for young people on the cusp of all the opportunities and challenges of living precipitated by the phase of adolescent development.

What Is Positive Psychology? – From a Similar Lens to a Sharper Focus

In contemporary times positive psychology has a resonance with parts of humanistic psychology through the work of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, particularly with the latter's concept of self-actualisation and the study of healthy individuals. As far back as 50 years Maslow (1954) lamented psychology's preoccupation with disorder and dysfunction:

> The science of psychology has been far more successful on the negative than on the positive side. It has revealed to us much about man's shortcomings, his illness, his sins, but little about his potentialities, his virtues, his achievable aspirations, or his full psychological height. It is as if psychology has voluntarily restricted itself to only half its rightful jurisdiction, and that, the darker, meaner half (p. 354).

According to Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2000) this brief rebellion launched by Maslow failed to ignite into any degree of permanency because it lacked

a solid empirical base. At least since the time of Aristotle, scholars, philosophers and religious leaders have pondered the question "How can we become lastingly happier?" This question has always been with us, even if lying dormant among a science of suffering but today its case for recognition "has been to consolidate, lift up, and celebrate what we do know about what makes life worth living, as well as carefully delineating the areas where we need to do more" (Linley, Joseph, Harrington, & Wood, 2006, p. 5). The distinctive essence of positive psychology, in contrast to the approach by the humanistic psychology movement of the 1960s and 1970s, is the use of empirical research as the substance for validity and reliability (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

The contemporary explosion of interest in positive psychology can be attributed to the work of Martin E. P. Seligman. On becoming president of the American Psychological Association in 1998, he declared that the time had come for psychology not just to study pathology, weakness and damage but also to study the strengths and virtues of the human condition (Seligman, 2003). Other writers have designated the term "*Psychofortology*" to positive psychology, from the Latin *fortis* meaning strong, to indicate the focus on strengths (Strümpfer, 2005). Research in this area has attracted a great many investigators encompassing a substantial scope of topics evolving around the scientific study of happiness and human strength. The vastness of potential study in this area is reflected in how its influence has transferred to many other subdisciplines within psychology to include personality, developmental, educational, social, health and clinical psychology leading some to suggest that "positive psychology can truly be considered a general psychology" (Keith & Baumeister, 2005, p. 100).

The question arises: is positive psychology just a reconfiguration of the ancient wisdom present in the spiritual practices of many of the great world religions and therefore has nothing new to offer young people in their quest for meaning and understanding in life? Seligman et al. have acknowledged that positive psychology has not invented the good life but stresses that "the value of the overarching term *positive psychology* lies in its uniting of what had been scattered and disparate lines of theory and research about what makes life most worth living" (Seligman et al., 2005, p. 410). A simple yet fundamental principle of positive psychology is a focus on the ordinary and everyday circumstances where opportunities to maximise fulfilment and happiness are facilitated. This preventive approach is an obvious antidote to the general domain of many disciplines—health, education, social care, psychotherapy—usually preoccupied with crisis and dysfunction. Happiness is not considered as an exception but rather the norm. This preventive model asks: how can we maximise happiness and health and promote resilience rather than why do young people become physically or mentally ill or give up on life? Seligman does, however, distinguish between a superficial transient happiness that we usually associate with fleeting moments of satisfaction and a happiness that is enduring and built on character and strengths. He writes,

> The belief that we can rely on shortcuts to happiness, joy, rapture, comfort, and ecstasy, rather than be entitled to these feelings by the exercise of personal strengths and virtues, leads to legions of people who in the middle of great wealth are starving spirituality. Positive

emotion alienated from the exercise of character leads to emptiness, to inauthenticity, to depression, and, as we age, to the gnawing realization that we are fidgeting until we die (Seligman, 2003, p. 8).

In the research on positive psychology although there are many core themes with substantial overlaps there are also differences in emphasis and interpretation present. It is not possible here to identify all the elements of subjective experiences, positive individual traits and the enabling institutions which have implications for young people and their development. However, in order to appreciate the implications of positive psychology a brief reflection on the concept of resilience reveals its potential to promote an understanding of young people from a strength rather than from a deficit perspective.

Resilience from the Perspective of Positive Psychology

Psychology has yet to fully learn about protective factors (optimism, hope and resilience) that may buffer young people against adversity and pain. Adopting a strengths-based positive approach can expand our ability to promote the potential of all young people not just those who are in need of "being sorted". This requires a shift in areas for those working in close proximity with adolescents. It asks practitioners, trainers and researchers to think outside the traditional service delivery models. Enhancing the strengths and virtues of children can accomplish effective prevention. Focusing on children's strengths can increase the chances that they will successfully manage difficulties they confront in the present and how they will cope with future battles. Amplifying the target individual's strengths rather than focusing on repairing their weaknesses may lead to more effective treatment. Nurturing human strengths such as optimism, courage, present mindfulness, honesty and perseverance serve as more efficacious buffers against mental illness as compared to medication or therapy (Seligman, 2003).

The concept of resilience holds great potential for work with children in a preventive manner. During the last several decades, research on resilience has been widely conducted in the areas of developmental psychopathology, psychology, sociology and anthropology. Within secondary education, conceptual and empirical work on resilience has gained recognition as a framework for examining why some students experience success in school, while others from the same socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds and communities do not. The development of such a framework is useful in helping educators design more effective educational interventions that take into account "alterable" factors that distinguish resilient students from non-resilient students.

The theoretical framework for understanding resilience emerged from longitudinal studies of "children at risk" illustrated by the work of Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, and Ouston published in 1979 and that of Werner and Smith in 1988. Researchers since then have examined *risk* factors—conditions indicating increase that a child will develop a problem and *protective* factors—conditions militating

against problems occurring. The findings of this research have indicated that adversity in childhood does not necessarily lead to adult pathology and have provided guidelines for developing services that foster resilience in children (Olsson, Bond, Burns, Vella Broderick, & Sawyer, 2003; Howard, Dryden, & Johnson, 1999). However, early intervention efforts focused on ameliorating the environmental adversities experienced by vulnerable children and attempted to provide remediation through reducing economic disadvantage and provide opportunities for mastery via early childhood education programs. In addition, they sought to enhance the nature and quality of the caregiver–child relationship by enhancing positive parental attitudes, increasing parental participation in relevant areas of the child's life and promoting age appropriate limits, consistent discipline and clear family structure. These remedial approaches tended to focus on the repair of pathology and were replaced with the quest to promote children's resiliency and competence to stressful life events from the beginning, rather than offering assistance once emotional and behavioural difficulties had emerged. Importantly, this perspective asserts that *early intervention* in multiple child contexts is of equal or greater importance than the implementation of treatment strategies later in the child's development (Weissberg et al., 1991).

Developmental theory is situated in the context of people's behaviour across the lifespan with a focus on terms such as *risk, vulnerability* and *protective factors*. The ecological perspective acknowledges the context or *multiple systems of influence* for the individual. Recognition is also given to the individual's *transactions* with a range of factors over time and their *relatedness* to others in their system. Finally, the strengths model adopts a move away from the emphasis on the client weakness to redefine resilience based on *capabilities*, *competences*, *knowledge*, *vision*, *optimism* and *hope*. More recently, the direction towards a strength-based model of resilience has received renewed impetus from the findings emanating from positive psychology as noted by Ann Masten who writes that "the message from three decades of research on resilience underscores central themes of the positive psychology movement" (Masten, 2001, p. 235). Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, considered to be the driving force behind this movement, elaborate on such themes, writing:

> The field of positive psychology at the subjective level is about valued subjective experiences: well being, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present). At the individual level, it is about positive individual traits: the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom. At the group level, it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic (2000, p. 5).

While encompassing the need to attend to the risk dimension of resilience, researchers and practitioners are recognising the benefits of a resilience model that equally takes account of factors, which optimise the strengths of young people and the institutions that are at the core of their lives.

Studies over the past four decades have identified characteristics and protective factors of individuals, families and communities related to resilience. While clinicians and researchers alike agree about the relevance of the construct, operational definitions of resilience have varied. Some researchers consider resilience to be a personal trait or attribute of an individual; others define it as a dynamic developmental process reflecting positive adjustment despite adversity (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). Block described the construct "ego-resiliency" (1996). This refers to an individual's general capacity to adapt adequately to external and internal stressors. In this definition, ego-resiliency is a personality trait that offers individuals the opportunity to demonstrate the behaviour to which they are accustomed and to adapt it in line with the demands imposed on them by the environment. Here, resilience describes the personal qualities that make it possible for young people to grow and even to make headway in unfavourable circumstances. Resilience can therefore be regarded as a way of measuring emotional stamina. Generally speaking, it is assumed that resilience develops over time. Connor defines resilience as a way of measuring the ability to cope with stress. According to Connor (2006) the concept comprises various elements. Brook's (2005) definition echoes the trait dimension of resilience as:

> the capacity of a child to deal effectively with stress and pressure, to cope with everyday challenges, to rebound from disappointments, mistakes, trauma, and adversity, to develop clear and realistic goals, to solve problems, to interact comfortably with others, and to treat oneself and others with respect and dignity... [and as the]...ability to meet life's challenges with thoughtfulness, confidence, purpose, responsibility, empathy, and hope (pp. 297–298).

Representing resilience as a personal attribute is hazardous since it paves the way for perceptions that some children simply do not "have what it takes" to overcome adversity. As Reivich and Shatté (2002) argue, emphasis on the trait dimension is laden with limitations since resilience is not a one-dimensional, dichotomous attribute that children either have or do not have. Masten has challenged the notion that resilient children possess some rare and special qualities in favour of the "*magic of the ordinary*" and has questioned an overreliance on the trait factor suggesting that resilience stems from a healthy operation of basic human adaptational systems. If systems are cohesive, children should develop appropriately even if challenged. However, if children's basic adaptational systems are impaired, prior to or following challenge, the risk for problems in development is increased. She argues,

> Resilience does not come from rare and special qualities, but from the everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources in the minds, brains, and bodies of children, in their families and relationships, and in their communities (Masten, 2001, p. 235).

Friborg, Hjemdal, Rosenvinge, and Martinussen (2003) regard resilience as a construct comprising various dimensions. The concept refers not only to psychological skills, but also to the possibilities for the individual child to take advantage of family, social and external support systems in order to cope better with stress. Generally speaking, resilient children are more flexible than vulnerable children and they protect themselves against stress by making use of various protective resources.

These resources may be internal or external. Various writers classify these protective resources as psychological/internal characteristics, support from family and friends and external support systems which develop over time. The attraction of the developmental process is that it does not overpromise. It does not imply perfection or constant invincibility but accepts the reality of fallibility and the probability of successful coping. It represents a capacity to rebound from adversity allied with renewed strength and resources. Resilience as a *process* is espoused by counselling psychologist E. J. Smith (2006) who attributes resilience to be a key dimension of her proposed strength-based counselling model. She describes resilience in this context as follows:

> the process of struggling with hardship, characterized by the individual's accumulation of small successes that occur with intermittent failures, setbacks, and disappointments. [and]. . . the process of an individual's persisting in the face of adversity . . . an individual's manner of struggling with the hardship rather than the end goal or state (p. 53).

Smith's model represents a clear alignment with the strengths approach and a perspective that allows positive psychology to see the glass as half full rather than half empty, and a movement away from a deficit-focused context. In general, this author welcomes the orientation towards a strength perspective since it addresses the imbalance that was so often present in the past in various strata of the helping professions—teaching, counselling, psychology, health care—where the focus was primarily on failure, distress, fear and anxiety, disease and mental ill health. However, the author also expresses concern that this wellbeing emphasis on the positive dimensions of resilience must not fail to discount the reality of pain and suffering nor present a false dichotomy which represents resilience as existing in isolation from the context of adversity. Masten, Best, and Garmezy's definition of resilience as "the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (1990, p. 426) captures a key issue which is—how best can we measure successful adaptation to adversity? If resilience can be taught as much as it can be an innate capacity, as this author believes, then it can emerge from relatively ordinary adaptive processes that promote competency, restore efficacy in the face of adversity. It ought to be possible to have structures and practices, which facilitate these processes for individuals and especially for children. Thus it may be more helpful to address the concept in terms of "*positive adaptation*" or "living with" adversity rather than general notions of resilience that seek to remove the negative aspects or overestimate personal traits.

In conclusion, common threads have emerged from resilience research, suggesting three main clusters of variables that appear to facilitate positive adaptation under conditions of risk: (a) individual attributes or characteristics, including positive temperamental or dispositional qualities; good intellectual functioning; self-efficacy; positive self-worth; perceived competence; sound problem-solving skills; internal locus of control; accurate and realistic attributions of control; and positive future expectations or a sense of optimism; (b) a warm, nurturing family environment; quality parenting and a structured, stable home; a sound relationship with a primary caregiver; and (c) broader contextual variables such as positive

extra familial support sources and identification models; links with extended family support networks; effective schools; connections to pro-social organisations; and neighbourhood qualities (Tedeschi & R. P. Kilmer, 2005).

Positive Psychology and Spirituality: Brother Sun, Sister Moon

Within positive psychology as a science there is evidence of strong correlations between religious belief and wellbeing where a higher rate of belief in a God is associated with higher average life satisfaction and lower rate of suicide. In addition to belief, church attendance is associated with higher reports of wellbeing across nations (Diener & Seligman, 2004). Positive psychology has rescinded from this adversity to spirituality and religion and has stridently recognised its pivotal importance. It is interesting how Seligman et al. (2005) speak of the "mission of psychology" (p. 421) with its purpose to offer scientific research on the entire breadth of human experience, from loss, suffering, illness and distress through connection, fulfilment, health and wellbeing. Nowhere is this sense of mission more manifest than in the *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification* (CSV) by Peterson and Seligman (2004). In complete antithesis to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*) this "manual of sanities" (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 3) seeks to classify the strengths and virtues for optimum human functioning. The general scheme of the *CSV* relies on six overarching virtues: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence. Under each virtue, they have identified 24 particular strengths, which meet 10 criteria and are classified in accordance with their capacity to enhance human striving. The authors of the CSV have also developed a *Values in Action* questionnaire (VIA) to empirically assess the 24 strengths.

It can be argued that all of the assigned virtues in positive psychology trace their origin from a historical and theological basis in scripture and the writings of the Church yet perhaps it is the virtue of *transcendence* and its accompanying strengths of *appreciation of beauty and excellence*, *gratitude*, *hope*, *humour* and *spirituality* that hold greater resonance with the broad concept of spirituality (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Transcendence strengths are those that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning. Positive psychology holds that these are ubiquitously recognised and grounded in evolutionary process and identified as psychological ingredients thus setting them apart from how they are understood in theology. Another important distinction from how these virtues and strengths are understood in positive psychology is the emphasis on how these can contribute to fulfilment in living rather than as antidotes in facing adversity. In order to circumvent the notion of virtues and strengths "causing" fulfilment by their mere adoption the idea of "contribution" captures the effort, willful choice and pursuit over time of morally praiseworthy activities. The author strongly concurs with this distinction since the wisdom of Christian spirituality teaches us that complete fulfilment is not possible in this life.

In calling attention to the possibility of "authentic happiness" (Seligman, 2003) in the here and now of life, positive psychology speaks to the incarnational dimension of Christianity. As Rolheiser (1998) writes, "The incarnation is not a thirty-three year experiment by God in history, a one shot, physical incursion into our lives" (p. 79). This theology, that the Word did not just become flesh and dwell among us—it became flesh and continues to dwell among us, is at the heart of Christian spirituality. The author believes that positive psychology in establishing spirituality as a core strength under the virtue of transcendence is, at the very minimum, reminding young people of this essential aspect to human flourishing. The language employed provides a "different interpretative lens" (Linley et al., 2006, p. 5) through the vision of scientific definition. Yet this author believes that it is perfectly cogent for positive psychology and spiritual writers to have an awareness of each other's work and necessary that they should actively engage with areas of mutual interest. If positive psychology is basing virtue and strengths on the wisdom of a rich Christian heritage then this can only be a cause for hope and optimism. Positive psychology by honouring the value of spirituality as subject matter is tacitly admitting its authenticity in representing a legitimate proportion of normal human experience and a contributory element to optimal human functioning. Within education it will give legitimacy against those who argue that the study of religion and the experience of spirituality lie outside of the domain of measurement and assessment. For if science recognises and embraces a belief and commitment to the transcendent aspects of life then we can no longer accuse it of a reductionist, biological approach to life. Instead, there is opportunity for "spiritual thought to reassert itself, regain credence in the public's eyes, and, more important, help to create a more healthy and holistic understanding of our world and our life" (Sharpe & Bryant, 2005, p. 146).

Peterson and Seligman (2004) have claimed their perspective to be empirical and scientific in the realm of spirituality. However, they acknowledge that despite the evidence of data suggesting a link between religion, spirituality and positive outcomes in life there is an admission that the positive psychology field will benefit from greater attention to the role of theology in shaping the core beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, psychological and physical health outcomes experienced by individuals. This interpretation presents positive psychology as a fluid, complex and human activity and it is commendable for its rejection of dualism already alluded to in certain parameters of science. It recognises spirituality as one of humanity's strategies for dealing with the limitations of the life cycle, separation and loss, biological fragility, transience and non-existence as well as giving strength, hope and meaning to life. It is ironic that from the perspective of the hard sciences positive psychology might be perceived as having a more natural liaison with spirituality and religion than with science because of its subjective enterprise in dealing with virtues and strengths. Perhaps, it is in anticipation of this allegation that positive psychology aligns itself so closely to empirical research. There is a common theoretical heritage between spirituality and positive psychology, each offering a different interpreting lens on the subject of spirituality. Both scientists and spiritual thinkers need to adopt an overarching empirical framework that makes it possible to validate scientific and

spiritual understandings of happiness. Spiritual thought must face science, adapting and recasting itself in the light of scientific discovery and science must recognise its own limitations, carefully considering the wisdom of ancient religions and spiritualities. The challenge will be to achieve integration and in doing so "we must demolish and reconstruct some of our most trusted conceptions" (Sharpe & Bryant, 2005, Introduction xi).

Neither domain need fear each other nor become possessive about their respective territories. All the evidence from reading positive psychology is that it is very favourably disposed to spirituality and religion. Positive psychology needs religion and spirituality to synthesise the positive and negative aspects of human experience providing an integrated understanding of human life. Perhaps, because it is rooted in optimism, long considered a recognisable facet of US culture, its focus on strength may have a tendency to be less appreciative of the full range of human functioning. The great religions have derived their essential validation by generations of mystics who have described their spiritual encounter with something beyond the self and by the provision of religious practices, beliefs and values that reflect the cumulative traditions of their religious faith. Many persons both inside and outside traditional religious structures report profound experiences of transcendence, wonder, awe, joy and connection to nature, self and others as they strive to make their lives meaningful and to maintain hope. Whether the value of this can be empirically validated should not be the obsession of positive psychology for commitment to spirituality facilitates engagement, participation and a commitment to something beyond the self. The emergence of a transcendent function may be far more difficult to study because the assumptions of traditional statistical methods remove the uniqueness of the individual. Specifically, if psychologists are looking for the one thing that a person can do better than ten thousand others then a wise, intuitive guide may be more appropriate than a multiple choice inventory. Qualitative approaches may better help positive psychologists to identify qualities that define the uniqueness of each person. For its part organised religion could consider the applications of positive psychology within religious settings, based on the principles that spirituality can serve as a point of connection between positive psychology's promotion of optimal human development and religious institutions that can serve as the vehicles for this development. The enduring task for both psychology and religion is to enable young people to live their lives with courage and optimism and to strive towards creating conditions that give then the strength to live well and that dispel beliefs and patterns which trap people in lives of misery. As Hayes and Cowie (2005) suggest, "A convergence, however, does not mean a merging" (p. 33).

A Dialogue for the Future

Although religious practice among young people, as traditionally indicated by attendance at church, is in decline across many Christian denominations in the Western world, many young people still consider themselves "religious". Spirituality continues to matter to them but the question of what spirituality is evokes much less

clarity. Both psychology and religion have too often concerned themselves with pathologies of the soul: What aches me? Where is my life's meaning? Why am I unhappy? In contrast, a healthy spirituality and psychology seeks to address: What gives me energy? How can I live with hope? Where and how does my life have meaning?

Spirituality, although having a long history that sometimes, when mediated through religion, has emerged from the shadows in confusion and disillusionment, obscuring reality beneath superstition and control, has helped to promote justice, speak truth and offer hope. Spirituality is the unquenchable thirst in life at the heart of most great literature, poetry, art, philosophy and psychology. In Christian spirituality a desire for wholeness does not seek to have it all together but is rather a sense of being on the way: the journey holds precedence over the destination.

To evaluate positive psychology against the longevity of religion and spirituality is premature. As with any new direction in psychology, it is necessary to question whether current enthusiasm will result in broad, valuable contributions to the discipline or whether such interest is a temporary "fad" that will quickly fade. The ongoing dialogue between psychology and religion requires sharing wisdom and insight in parallel but distinctive ways. One source of encouragement is the mutual agreement that young people do not find true meaning in individual accomplishments and material accumulations, though these may bring some temporary satisfaction, but rather in family, faith and friends.

Now positive psychology invites mainstream psychology to come full circle to rediscover the place of hope, the importance of spirituality and the centrality of connections within the community of the young and the complex reality connections constitute. To arrive at a more complete understanding of the universe it is necessary to respect insights and approach each discipline with an open mind.

Currently the struggle for significance in an increasingly cyber-friendly but personally isolating society intensifies the need for young people to find meaning in the world and in their personal existence. Approaches to education which enhance student participation will be needed in reducing exclusion from schools and helping young people to develop coping skills for life. However, this education must speak to the fullest expression of what it is to be human embracing the physical, social, intellectual, moral and spiritual aspects of the adolescent. It must enable young people to wrestle with the questions of existence and meaning commensurate with their life experience and intellectual development.

Psychology has yet to fully learn about protective factors (optimism, hope and resilience) that may buffer young people in adversity and pain. Adopting a strengths-based positive approach can expand our ability to promote the potential of all young people not just those who are in need of "sorting out". This requires a shift for those working in close proximity with adolescents. It asks practitioners, trainers and researchers to think outside the traditional service delivery models. Enhancing the strengths and virtues of children can accomplish effective prevention. Focusing on children's strengths can increase the chances that they will successfully manage difficulties that they confront in the present and be able to cope with future battles. Amplifying individual strengths rather than focusing on repairing weaknesses may lead to more effective treatment. That is, nurturing human strengths

such as optimism, courage, present mindfulness, honesty and perseverance serve as more efficacious buffers against mental illness as compared to medication or therapy (Seligman, 2003).

Religion/spirituality need not fear positive psychology. There will always be a role for religion to facilitate the experience of the sacred in the ordinary, to know the passion of existence that gives ourselves over to that which is greater than ourselves. The future of positive psychology and spirituality is a declaration of interdependence with a synthesis that does justice to the complexity of the human condition and can only be of immense richness and benefit to young people. If positive psychology can reliably teach young people how to become and remain happier, it will have made an important contribution to human life. Happiness is not in one fleeting moment; it is an unending process that has no guarantee. Its virtue is in the striving to surrender to moments where we give time for the creation of a space for the unexpected, to what cannot be bought or sold, to enduring love.

There is a human need to strive for "something more". We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new. Yet, it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through stages of instability even if it takes a very long time. We are told to live life with hope for this life is good even if, as the poet says, we tread on "slippery knowledge" (Levchev, 2003).

A Vision Along Salmon River
        (*To Robert Bly*)

Sunset had lit up its X-rays to examine
the lungs and heart of the world.
Right then I thought I saw the angel:
crossing the river,
stepping on stones
although he wore wings.
Perhaps he had been sent
to explain in his
symbolic way just why
we too cross over our life
dancing on stones, on rocks
or even ruins.

Rapid currents roar
washing our naked feet.
We tread on slippery knowledge.
But on our shoulders, and higher up,
Something invisible spreads its wings
to give us faith and courage.

                    Lyubomir Levchev

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Chapter 17
Voices of Global Youth on Spirituality and Spiritual Development: Preliminary Findings from a Grounded Theory Study

Elisabeth M. Kimball, Marc Mannes, and Angela Hackel

Spirituality is experienced in your own being. Most of religion is forced. Being spiritual means standing on a mountain with the wind blowing through your hair, and the feeling of being free.

(Youth, Africa)

I think spirituality is the way you look at something: the way you look at pictures, the way you look at nature, the way you read books, what kind of movies you like to look at.

(Youth, Israel)

Religion is more of a place . . . it's there, [where] you're supposed to find spirituality.

(Youth, U.S.A.)

Spirituality strengthens the bond between the members of society . . . it also strengthens the relationship between me and my Lord.

(Youth, Syria)

As these four quotes suggest, young people throughout the world have wisdom to share about a domain of human experience about which, as yet, the scientific community wrestles.

Abstract This chapter presents wisdom from international youth about their lived experience of spirituality and its relationship to religion. Eight robust constructs (themes) describing spiritual development in the lives of young people (12–19 years) emerged from a grounded theory analysis of context-sensitive data collected in 27 focus groups with 171 youth in 13 countries. The youth participants self-identified with a wide range of religious traditions, and a few had no religious affiliation. The theoretical constructs are offered with rich illustrative quotes and a through discussion of this preliminary study's contribution to the emergent field of adolescent

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spiritual development. In addition the study strongly suggests that young people desire more opportunities for intentional spiritual engagement, and it identifies the role of choice in active, sustained spiritual awareness. Both of these findings have significant implications for formal and non-formal educators.

Introduction

In 2006 Search Institute (Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA) launched the Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence[1] (CSD) as a global initiative to advance the research and practice of an important and understudied domain of human development. While inquiry into spirituality and spiritual development is conducted throughout the world, much of the research has been conducted primarily in Western contexts, with adults or children, and within specific (usually Christian) faith traditions. Although adolescent spirituality has in recent years garnered increased attention, the empirical research has, until now, focused on national samples of young people such as Christian Smith's National Study of Youth and Religion[2] (NSYR) in the United States or the Spirit of Generation Y Project in Australia[3] (a joint three-year venture of the Christian Research Association, Australian Catholic University and Monash University). With generous support from the John Templeton Foundation, the CSD initiated an ambitious research agenda to increase the understanding of what spirituality and spiritual development means across contexts (cultures, religions, continents, and disciplines), how they both manifest themselves in young people's lives, and what can be done to foster and support spiritual growth and expression among young people.

The CSD initially viewed spirituality as an active, engaging, life-long process articulated well by Hill and Pargament (2003), "A search for the sacred, a process through which people seek to discourse, hold on to and when necessary, transform whatever they hold sacred in their lives" (p. 65).

From that starting point, the CSD developed an operational definition of spiritual development that recognizes it as a universal domain of human capacity and as a fundamental developmental task:

> The process of growing the intrinsic human capacity for self-transcendence, in which the self is embedded in something greater than the self, including the sacred. It is the developmental "engine" that propels the search for connectedness, meaning, purpose and contribution. It is shaped both within and outside of religious traditions, beliefs, and practices (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude, 2003, pp. 205–206).

One core line of inquiry within CSD's research agenda is a focus group study, "Exploring Understandings of Young People's Spiritual Development Around the World" in which more than 500 youth, parents, and youth workers in 13 countries on six continents participated in 73 focus groups. Focus group data are being analyzed to examine the three different groups' understandings of, and experiences related to, spirituality and spiritual development. The purpose of this line of inquiry was to

collect and assess context-sensitive data (Way, 1998) as the basis for articulating an initial set of theoretical formulations of adolescent spiritual development.

This chapter presents one research team's contribution to that theory-building process. The authors describe the study's methodology and offer preliminary findings from a grounded theory analysis of the international youth focus group data. The intent is to identify key aspects of the emergent theory, describe its relationship to the emerging field in adolescent spiritual development, and suggest implications for further research and practice.

Methods

A focus group design was chosen to encourage individuals to share their particular experiences related to spirituality while engaging one another and the facilitator in a conversation about spiritual development as mutual learners. Members of the CSD's International Advisory Network[4] referred research partners with the capacity to conduct focus groups to the CSD. Final selection of sites were made based on partner's familiarity with adolescent development, their affinity with young people, and their ability to follow an established, comprehensive focus group protocol developed by the CSD staff. Each focus group lasted from 90 min to 2 h. The use of a generic protocol was intended to establish methodological consistency across groups and to improve the reliability of data gathered, while still affording the local facilitators some room to adapt the data collection process for cultural or practical reasons.

The protocol questions were designed to evoke rich descriptions of dimensions of young people's lives that had the potential to carry explicit and implicit understandings of spiritual development. To that end the protocol asked youth to (1) identify the spiritual aspects of times when they felt joy, wonder, hope, or experienced difficulties; (2) describe what "being spiritual" means; clarify how "being spiritual" is different from "being religious"; (3) describe people who seem spiritual and explain what they say or do which makes them spiritual; (4) generate words that can be used to define someone who is spiritual; (5) determine whether youth can be spiritual; (6) ascertain if being spiritual is seen as important and if so how it affects them; (7) clarify if being spiritual changes overtime; and (8) identify the factors that make it hard to be spiritual.

Awareness of being a spiritual person, having an understanding of the subject or the ability to articulate what spirituality means, were not criteria for youth participation. The focus groups included youth who are, and are not, actively part of religious traditions.

Sample

Twenty-seven focus groups were conducted with 171 young people aged 12–19 in 13 countries. The groups ranged in size from three participants to nine, and were conducted in English or translated into English in the field for analysis by

the research team in Minnesota. The countries represented are Australia, Canada, China, India, Israel, Kenya, Malta, Nigeria, Peru, South Africa, Syria, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The participants self-identified with a broad range of religious traditions: Buddhism, Christianity (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Reform), Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism, and a few had no religious affiliation.

Selecting Grounded Theory

There are a number of different research and analytical approaches this study could have employed. Boyatzis (1998) specifies three distinct research orientations and the related steps for analyzing qualitative data that are summarized in Table 17.1.

This study decided to employ the "data-driven" orientation rather than a theory or prior research driven orientation for a number of reasons. First, a developmental perspective on spirituality among international youth has not been the subject of extensive inquiry. Second, the knowledge-base on the subject is especially thin. Third, conceptual and theoretical development, much less consensus, has yet to be reached. Fourth, scholarly writing on the subject in the disciplines that concentrate on child and adolescent development is generally lacking. By adopting the "data-driven" orientation, the study not only strengthens the empirically informed theoretical foundation of the emerging field, but also sidesteps theory developed deductively from the study of spiritual development in adulthood.

The next research decision involved selecting an appropriate "data-driven" analytic approach. "Grounded theory" (Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), a major analytic method for qualitative data that is increasingly employed in educational and social research, was chosen. In the simplest sense, grounded theory is an analytic approach for developing theory that is derived from data that has been gathered and systematically analyzed. Theory emerges from the interplay between analyzing the data and reflecting on the analytic process. As a result of utilizing the approach, theory is produced that is based upon a set of plausible relationships identified among concepts.

Grounded theory analysis was viewed as congruent with the CSD's research goal of building knowledge and theory about the spiritual development of youth across

Table 17.1 Grounded theory: three distinct orientations

Theory-driven orientation	Prior research driven orientation	Data-driven orientation
I. Generating a code for analysis based upon existing theory	I. Generating a code from previous research	I. Reducing the raw information
II. Reviewing and rewriting the code for applicability to the raw information	II. Reviewing and rewriting the code for applicability to the raw information	II. Identifying themes within the raw information
III. Applying the code to the raw information	III. Applying the code to the raw information	III. Creating a code

the world, and with the CSD's intent to foster field formation. The study operated on the assumption that the results of the grounded theory analysis of the focus group data would delineate an initial group of theoretical propositions that can be investigated more thoroughly in subsequent international research as the field grows and matures.

Practitioners of grounded theory also reinforce its relevance to and viability for analysis of the youth focus group data. For Bell and Bromnick (2003) grounded theory is tied to the described reality of individuals and rooted in their feelings. According to Sirin, Diemer, Jackson, Gonsalves and Howell (2004), the goal of grounded theory is to understand a person's experience through his or her own words. Ponterotto (2005) affirms that it embraces an "emic" perspective and Goulding (1999) highlights its ability to acknowledge multiple realities. For Fassinger (2005), grounded theory allows for innovative theory to be grounded in the data collected from participants on the basis of the complexities of their lived experiences in relation to social context.

Like Charmaz (2006), the research team tends to "view grounded theory methods as a set of principles and practices, not as prescriptions or packages" (p. 9). She and we treat grounded theory methods as a craft that we practice, recognizing that they naturally complement and are complemented by other approaches to qualitative data analysis. The CSD focus group research team remains especially sensitive to their intimate involvement in the construction of grounded theories, and the implications of their involvement in theory creation, in several salient ways. First, being especially receptive as to how the words, tones, and intentions of the focus group youth participant conversations might be influenced by team member's own past and present experiences as spiritual beings. Second, being cautious of any inherent biases and being fully accepting of the relevant social context from which each youth conversation came to the research team. Third, acknowledging that the youth conversations are being analyzed as an integral part of an actively expanding academic discourse among social scientists on the role of spirituality in human development. Ultimately, in the ontological language of Rorty (1979), the research team wishes to establish and continue a rigorous "conversation rather than [to] discover Truth" (p. 364). Grounded theory offered a dialogical analytic framework for reading the transcripts and to learn how our participants make sense of their spiritual experiences. More specifically, this research was conducted using Glaser's (1992) model of grounded theory that stresses the contextual, interpretive, and emergent nature of theory development.

Data Analysis

The focus group protocol questions were used as the basis for organizing the analytic plan and providing structure for the coding system. The questions remained the key standardized element of the inquiry amidst the international, cultural, and religious diversities.

Two members of the CSD research team began the qualitative data analysis process by reading the written transcripts of the 27 youth focus groups. In order to mediate the variability in focus group size, participant ages, facilitator styles, and transcript quality, the two researchers completed the following steps.

Step One: Conducting Line-by-Line Coding

Both researchers began by studying the data closely within the body of each focus group. They engaged in line-by-line coding as a way to stay close to and become familiar with the data before beginning to abstract and conceptualize any ideas. The readers thus learned about the participants' worlds. This careful beginning allowed the researchers to remain open to the data and to appreciate the nuances in it, including implicit concerns (such as a persistent struggle with the definition of spirituality) and explicit statements (such as "all spirituality is good"), without moving too quickly toward theorizing.

Step Two: Producing Focused Codes

After approximately 50% (12) of the transcripts had been read, both researchers met, reviewed their line-by-line coding, and confirmed an effective analytic rapport, by noting sufficient inter-rater agreement on what portions of the transcribed text were salient. At that point the researchers made the decision to move to the next stage of grounded theory, focused coding, using a dual approach. This meant they continued to conduct line-by-line coding for each transcript and undertook the process of separating, sorting, and synthesizing large amounts of data (Charmaz, 2006) in two distinct ways:

> Researcher A: Engaged in focused coding for all protocol questions by specific focus group or transcript.
> Researcher B: Engaged in focused coding for each protocol question across focus groups or transcripts.

The goal of focused coding is always to move from many initial data codes toward succinct, insightful, and complete categories. A concrete example will show how the use of a dual approach to the process unfolded and how inter-rater agreement was deemed acceptable. From the responses of a Peruvian focus group to the question, "Do you think people your age are or can be spiritual?" Researcher A, using line-by-line coding and transcript specific focused coding highlighted

Yes, spirituality doesn't have to do with age. You can be 80,000 and be spiritual
or be 12 or 13 or 15 and be spiritual too. It all depends on your heart and if
we surrender it to God or not.

Yes . . . it doesn't matter the age or . . . religion

Any person can be spiritual. It doesn't matter the age because the only thing
you need is open your heart to God and tell him what you feel.

A person of any age can be spiritual . . . depends on his or her maturity and how
they handle things and how they live their lives.

Meanwhile, Researcher B engaged in cross transcript focused coding identified
very similar content:

. . . doesn't have to do with age—depends on your heart—surrender it to God
or not.

Age or religion doesn't matter.

Any person can be spiritual.

Age is not defined.

Open your heart to God and tell him what you feel.

Maturity—how they handle things, live their lives.

Both researchers wrote memos along the way capturing moments of awareness,
insight, and wonder. They also noted possible and emergent patterns and raised
questions of concern. For example, "I'm aware of the 'me' quality of spirituality,
especially when compared to religion . . . to what extent does this reflect cultural
privilege? What if spiritual development really is personal, individualistic work to
be done? Perhaps religion is just one way of doing spiritual development?" Or, in
response to the comment, "the only time I talk about spiritual issues, sadly, is in
church because that's the only time it's brought up. And I would like to talk about it
a lot more" one researcher wrote, "Could this be a mandate to youth workers?" And,
after a young person claimed, "I have faith in goodness. God to me is goodness. Do
good and you'll get good," a margin memo reads, "This sounds very similar to the
NSYR findings, all the while critically reflecting on the analytic protocol itself."

The researchers met regularly, exchanged memos, compared notes, discussed the
ideas behind and the words used to describe the focused codes, and examined areas
of agreement and disagreement regarding the focused codes. The interaction was
intended to maintain coding exchanges between the two researchers and continually
monitor the degree of consensus, or lack thereof, as the analysis proceeded.

Step Three: Generating Consolidated Categories or Themes

Over time the research team members became progressively more integrative. This
required reconciling differences, affirming consensus, and building a conceptual
crosswalk between the line-by-line and the two focused coding procedures. It

entailed discussing and reconciling conceptual and/or wording differences that were present in the consolidated codes. It would also result in the elevation of certain focused codes to the level of consolidated categories (themes).

For example, in terms of Peruvian focus group responses to the protocol question about whether young people can be spiritual, Researcher A suggested the following consolidated categories:

> Being spiritual not correlated with age.
> Spirituality associated with openness to God.

Researcher B suggested somewhat similar and slightly different consolidated categories:

> Age is not a determinant of spirituality.
> Being spiritual implies action or choice on part of individual.

These consolidated categories/themes from both researchers were then compiled so that there were composite category sets derived from all 27 focus groups for each protocol question. Completion of this task set the stage for forging theoretical constructs.

An additional round of integration often occurred as focus group protocol questions that had come to be recognized as having a strong resemblance to one another (Wittgenstein, 1958/1968), and were producing logically related data, were incorporated into three distinct conceptual clusters that brought convergent data and congruent consolidated codes together:

A. Describing one's spiritual experiences
B. Reflecting on spiritual development
C. Considering the expression of spirituality.

It is important to mention that while the protocol questions could be naturally and usefully organized into these three clusters, the clusters and the data each contains are not mutually exclusive.

Step Four: Establishing Emergent Theoretical Constructs

The researchers took the consolidated categories established in Step Three and employed a process of "adapted" theoretical sampling in order to identify certain themes as emerging theoretical constructs. The term *adapted* theoretical sampling is used because, given the realities of this preliminary study, it was not possible to return to the empirical world to collect more data about the properties of our proposed categories. Standards of saturation were limited to the "fresh data" which could only be found within the body of existing transcripts. This

distinction is made in response to Glaser's (2001) definition of saturation as a standard higher than simply observing described repetition of events, statements, and/or actions:

> Saturation is not seeing the same pattern over and over again. It is the conceptualization of comparisons of these incidents which yield different properties of the pattern, until no new properties of the pattern emerge. This yields the conceptual density that when integrated into hypotheses make up the body of the generated grounded theory with theoretical completeness (p. 191).

Glaser's standard must be considered in relation to Dey's (1999) assertion and Charmaz' (2006) supportive skepticism about the notion of saturation. They contend that saturation is a subjective standard because most grounded theorists produce categories through partial, not exhaustive, coding. The researchers did indeed "stop short of coding all the data" (Dey, p. 257) and "relied on conjecture that the properties of the category are saturated" (Charmaz, p. 114). Dey would contend that "rather than establishing categories saturated by data ... we have categories suggested by data" (Charmaz, p. 114). While recognizing the limitations of our process, the research teams believe that the adapted theoretical sampling process has produced consolidated categories and theoretical propositions much sturdier than mere collective suggestions.

To establish sturdier themes and theoretical constructs via the adapted theoretical sampling process, the emerging theoretical constructs were compared with the text of the original focus group transcripts, memos that had been written, and to both researchers' personal and professional knowledge of spirituality and spiritual development. The merits of the adapted theoretical sampling were tested by asking questions such as

- What sense do these comparisons make?
- What questions are raised and left unanswered by the comparisons?
- How well is actual experience (of the youth participants) reflected in the theoretical language? Would they see and/or hear themselves in the constructs we are proposing?
- What contradicts or challenges the theoretical constructs?

The following chart summarizes the structural logic of the focus group data analysis from 13 individual protocol questions to 8 emergent theoretical constructs. The consolidated categories were created from the systematic process of two researchers line-by-line coding each of the 27 focus group transcripts, then entering into their dual system of focused coding to generate proposed categories that ultimately informed one list of consolidated categories across groups. Note the three question clusters and the examples of consolidated categories that helped to shape the theoretical constructs (Table 17.2).

Table 17.2 Sample analytical process from protocol questions toward theoretical constructs

Protocol question clusters	Sample consolidated categories	Emergent theoretical construct
Describing one's spiritual experiences		
Moments experience spirituality?	Calming influence,	
Words to describe spirituality?	not panicking	
Active S shapes purposeful orientation to life		
What does it mean to be spiritual?	Feeling sense of support, shield, inner power	S experienced as protection or comfort
	Overcoming adversity, doing well	S rooted in special connection
	The way you look at something	
	Beyond the senses, mystery, miracles	Capacity for S is natural
	Reflective – think before act	
	More to life than materialism	
	Having potential	
	Realizing who you are	
	Being connected	
	Doing something I love	
Reflecting on spiritual development		
People your age spiritual?	Yes and no, depends on environment	Being actively S is a choice
Different now than when younger?	Depends more on person than age	SD mediated by dynamics of context
How deepen your spirituality?	Awareness and appreciation grow with experience	
Important to you?	Provides roadmap, purpose	
	Being challenged—key to solving problems	
Hard to be spiritual?		SD not dependent upon age
	The more you are, the more you understand	
	Ideal—pleasing God	
	Requires more effort/responsibility with age	
	Fear of being judged, life urgency	
	It's a choice, can't be forced	
	Hard to talk about	
Considering the expression of spirituality		
	Way of living—who she/he is	Capacity for S is natural
Describe spiritual person		
Qualities of a spiritual person?	Sets an example, open to learning	
Hard to be spiritual?	Focus on right things	
Important to be spiritual?	Going beyond belief, motions	SD more expansive than R

Table 17.2 (continued)

Protocol question clusters	Sample consolidated categories	Emergent theoretical construct
Spirituality vs. religion	Loving, generous, self-motivated, wise; Able to forgive, virtuous, trusted	
	Enjoys life, hopeful	
	Search for answers	
	Attentive in the moment	
	Mental/inner peace	
	Accepting destiny	
	Beyond laws, beyond tangible	
	Deeply personal, just "is"	

S = spiritual city
SD = spiritual development
R = religion

Emergent Theoretical Constructs

As seen in the chart above, the researchers identified eight robust constructs from the youth focus groups data analysis. These theoretical constructs, resulting from this exploratory study, contribute to an initial delineation of the theoretical terrain of youth spiritual development. As the products of a grounded theory analysis it is important that each proposed construct be well supported by the raw data and this is illustrated here by the inclusion of rich quotes chosen from the original transcripts. It should be noted that voices from all 13 participating countries are "heard" supporting these constructs even though the particular experiences of individual focus group participants varied greatly.

Capacity for Spirituality Is Natural

The capacity for spirituality appears to be natural and readily available to all youth, although many can identify impediments.

The youth participants described an inherent capacity for awareness of, or awakening to, spirituality and active engagement with their own spiritual development, whether they were or were not growing up in a religious environment. The language they used to describe their capacity, and the experiences they offered to illustrate it, varied across cultural contexts. Some examples of their determination that spirituality is an innate part of being include

> Spirituality is important. If you lost your spirituality, you lost the attraction, you would become only flesh like a messy garlic; every day knocked here and there, eat and do not do work (Youth, China).
> I think spirituality is important to everyone. Maybe there's a section of people that doesn't realize they are following that path, but they are spiritual. And I think everyone has that kind of adaptability in themselves to go into that kind of path to being spiritual. Maybe

the word "spiritual" is more important in some people's lives, but the whole definition and the concept I think it's there in everyone (Youth, Pune, India).

I believe that every person has some spirituality within themselves because they believe in something, whatever it is they believe in (Youth, Peru).

Sometime I try too hard to find it, and don't just let it happen and just let it be natural. Like I try to force it. And I think my spirituality is better when it just happens (Youth, United States).

Being Actively Spiritual Is a Choice

As youth participants described their lives they often made a distinction between the natural capacity for being spiritual and being actively spiritual. For a number of youth worldwide, being spiritual requires an individual choice to activate their agency. Youth go on to explain this concept by asserting that

If one wants to become spiritual it will depend on the will of that person. If he wants to he can (Youth, Syria).

I used to think being spiritual meant having a rule to obey, but now I know I have to make a choice (Youth, Kenya).

You can be *religious* by coming to Jamat Khana (mosque) and doing your duty, but to be spiritual means that when you actually do your duty, you interact with Allah (Youth, England).

If you are not spiritual, then you don't ever struggle with things, you don't make a choice or ask, "why did this happen to me?" If you are not spiritual you will never learn anything . . . goes together with wisdom . . . you have to reflect on what's happening to you (Youth, South Africa).

If you don't want to be spiritual then can't nobody make you do it (Youth, United States).

Active Spirituality Shapes a Purposeful Orientation to Life

Spirituality affects the way a person looks at life, makes meaning, and/or lives his/her life with intention and direction. When asked about how spirituality impacts their lives and the lives of others, youth responded that

Spirituality is a force that helps you find your self and accomplish your goals (Youth, Peru).

I don't think you would find your way through this world without being spiritual. I don't think you would succeed (Youth, Israel).

Spirituality is dynamic. It will greatly inspire people and encourage them to progress (Youth, China).

Spirituality to me is finding meaning in life or finding beauty in the everyday (Youth, United States).

A person who vibrates positive energy, who teaches you how to stay calm and happy throughout all phases of life. That person is spiritual (Youth, India).

Spiritual Development Is Not Dependent Upon Age but Is Affected by Other Dimensions of Human Development

Youth participants gave ample statements which indicated that spiritual awareness and agency are not dependent upon age. Indeed their experience suggests spirituality and age are not correlated in meaningful and important ways.

When asked about one's ability to be spiritual at a certain age participants asserted that

> Spirituality doesn't have any age barriers. Depends more from person to person than the age group (Youth, India).
>
> I think sometimes we underestimate the spirituality of children. . .kids of 10 years old can be spiritual. . .I realize that there are people who are younger than I am who are examples for me (Youth, South Africa).
>
> You don't need an age to be a spiritual person (Youth, Peru).
>
> A person who has more experiences in life doesn't really mean that he's more spiritual than another person. I think a 17 year old can be more spiritual than a 44-year old man (Youth, Israel).

Spiritual Development Is Mediated by the Dynamics of Interpersonal Relationships and Social Contexts

The nature of interpersonal relations and the fluid contexts that youth experience in daily life (including the presence or absence of a religious tradition) are seen as encouraging or constraining to one's spiritual development. Many of the focus group participants were able to describe times when they had been particularly aware of their spirituality, and other moments when the demands or distractions of their lives made them oblivious to the spiritual domain.

> I mean one minute you are thinking spiritually, "This is what I'm supposed to do with my life. This is what I should do." The next minute your friend calls up, "Let's go to a movie!" and you're out there! (Youth, India).
>
> My being spiritual depends on whether my friends are good or not (Youth, Syria).

When describing their ability to articulate their own personal sense of spirituality youth responded that

> I think people feel comfortable talking about spirituality with anyone with whom we feel we are valued (Youth, England).
>
> To be spiritual you need to have an opinion. But here in this community, you always have to shut up. But in other communities, if you say something you will be appreciated for what you say (Youth, Israel).
>
> I know lots of people in my life are deeply spiritual, but I feel like that's something that's private almost-and I don't see that side of them (Youth, United States).

Spirituality Is Seen as Different from, and More Expansive than, Religion and Religious Observance

Participants discussed the relationship between spirituality and religion, but their descriptions revealed little consensus. For certain youth, religion and spirituality are synonymous, while for some religion is one practical dimension of, or context for, the expression of spirituality. For others religion and spirituality were best understood in contrast with each other. Respondents voiced their perceptions of the relationship between spirituality and religion explaining that

The religion is somebody who has gone in depth into the religion and he knows a lot about his religion, while the spiritual is more in control of his soul (Youth, Syria).

Spirituality is something open, without limitation (Youth, China).

A person can, he is spiritual, by sitting down and meditating and goes in certain type of mediation. While another person can feel he is spiritual by doing good only. Another person feels that praying every day and building a relationship with God, another by not eating meat…Everyone has their own ways how to feel spiritual. Now to say that he is right, mine is right . . . wrong . . . is a bit difficult (Youth, Malta).

Spirituality is the search for answers and religion provides the answers (Youth, England).

Spirituality Is Commonly Experienced as a Source of Protection and/or Comfort Especially During Troubling Times

Many youth indicated they experience spirituality as a source of protection or comfort in particular during difficult moments of their lives. When asked to elaborate on the role that spirituality plays in comforting them, youth asserted that

Spirituality is the most important thing in life. It is the pillar of everybody's heart. It's like, with spirituality nothing will go wrong (Youth, India).

Spiritual is when the human being feels happiness inside his heart. That is the time when he gets comfort (Youth, Syria).

When I got hurt it was spiritual because when it happened, at the time the bomb exploded, I just stayed relaxed and I didn't panic and stuff (Youth, Malta).

Spirituality, I believe I did become a lot closer to God after Katrina. Because you know, there was a lot of communication going on there…a lot of hoping and praying and pleading that my family, me and my mother who I was separated from would be okay…as long as you pray you can get through it (Youth, Louisiana, United States).

Spirituality Is Rooted in a Special Connection

While youth often had difficulty finding words to discuss spirituality, they still spoke of the experience as one of "being connected" to something or someone beyond oneself at a deep and mysterious level. Participants recognized others as being spiritual because of their capacity for connection, their ability to "make me stand in a proper way" (Youth, China). When asked about their experiences being spiritual, youth from India responded as follows:

There is something connected from your soul to something. And that "something" can be called God or whatever. So sometimes you feel a connection between you and someone else (Youth, India).

I think a connection of the soul to soul is spirituality (Youth, India).

To me it's important to be spiritual because it's related to everything around me: my future, my family, the people around me, things to do with them, and how I'm going to be in the next ten years. It's all related to being spiritual (Youth, Israel).

Spirituality strengthens the bond between the members of society…It also strengthens the relation between me and my Lord (Youth, Syria).

With spirituality you have a sense of relationship (Youth, Malta).

An additional insight acquired from the grounded theory analysis is worth mentioning. While this is not presented as a theoretical construct it is shared for the contribution it can make to ongoing studies of spiritual development and practice in education and youth work.

Youth Are Open to Having Conversation About Spirituality

While few of the focus group participants had ever reflected on their experiences of spirituality or being spiritual beyond the doctrinal, programmatic or linguistic frameworks provided by their involvement in religious traditions, most welcomed the opportunity to explore the subject with intention and purpose, and without any fear of being judged as wrong. Despite uncertainty about the subject of spirituality most of the participants were highly engaged in the conversations and eager to learn more.

It was clear that the focus groups themselves offered a type of active intervention on the subject of spirituality—a place to become aware and then integrate holistically otherwise segmented or taken-for-granted dimensions of personal experience—a value-added benefit for most participants.

> I wasn't interested in this topic before [the focus group] but now I actually am (Youth, India).
>
> I would like to talk about this spiritual thing with all my friends, but when? (Youth, India)
>
> As we started to talk, I began to understand it. I think we need to understand it because not a lot of people know about it . . . It's very important, especially in the Arab community. Because in our community, if you are different they start to blame you or if they are young, they blame the parents (Youth, Israel).
>
> It is possible one individual would come to discuss spirituality with another individual, like somebody else from another tradition. So he speaks to him about the soul and the other would tell him that if you are convinced about this idea then all your community is wrong (Youth, Syria).
>
> I would like to talk about it a lot more . . . but the people I know are not really focused on talking about spiritual things. They're so busy ripping and running and trying to get their lives back together (Youth, USA).

Some young people like this 17-year–old Israeli were especially pragmatic about their level of interest in the subject of spirituality, "It's a weird subject, but I would like to know more information about it."

Contribution to Emergent Field of Adolescent Spiritual Development

The emergent theoretical constructs derived from this study of the life experiences of a diverse cross-section of young people on six continents offer strong support to the growing body of literature that recognizes spirituality as an innate, relational

dimension of human development throughout the life-course (Groome, 1998; Harris & Moran, 1998; Hay & Nye, 1998/2006; Hill & Pargament, 2003; Roehlkepartain, King, Wagener, & Benson, 2006), distinguish spirituality from religiosity (Tacey, 2004/2007; Yust, Johnson, Sasso, & Roehlkepartain, 2006), and understand spirituality as opportunity for engaged, purposeful living (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006; Lantieri, 2001).

This study builds naturally on the foundation laid by Hay and Nye (1998) who successfully located children's spirituality as an essential dimension of child development. It honors the grounded theory approach Nye (1998) used to analyze conversations she conducted with children in particular political and social contexts and expands this listening tradition to adolescence.

Damon (1995) focused on moral development through the lifespan, suggested young people's need for spirituality is grounded in transcendence, an orientation of service to others, and an intimation of life's deeper meaning. By doing so, Damon confirmed the priority spirituality deserves in community youth development, and created a credible scholarly space between human development, education, and religion into which, these theoretical constructs now fit.

Five years later Lerner (2000), a progressive American Rabbi and social critic, published *Spirit Matters* in which he argues compellingly (for a popular audience) that spirituality is an essential and too often missing domain of human life. He called for a focus on emancipatory spirituality as a core dimension of personal and public purpose, a concept very similar to the core category of relational consciousness that Nye (1998) found "told the story" of the children she interviewed about their experience of spirituality.

The voices of the participants in this study suggest that young people not only experience spirituality as a process of emancipation—becoming fully alive and purposeful, but also demonstrate an unusual level of consciousness or perceptiveness in the context of relating to things, other people, themselves, or the transcendent, and recognize the importance of agency or choice in becoming actively spiritual.

> Realizing who you are is spirituality. It's not discovering myself, because I am already there. It's getting in touch with that. I mean it's like I am already whatever it is I am. But it is getting in touch with whatever it is. In response, yes, spirituality is "being what you are." (Youth, India)

It is the value-added dimension of reflective choice that seems to differentiate spirituality as many participants in this study experience it from rote religious observance or even right behavior. Spirituality seems to be beyond "God-talk" (Hay & Nye, 1998/2006). It appears to be something prior to religion (Tacey, 2007). According to the young people in this study, it is neither static nor passive. It is experienced in moments of protection, connection, mystery, and achievement but only "known" when consciously engaged. The extent to which participating in these focus groups triggered new awareness and understanding illustrates the iterative, episodic, and situational nature of spiritual development. It also suggests the importance of moving beyond the scholarly space of spiritual development to

infuse spiritual consciousness into the everyday practice of youth work and youth education. Knowing about spirituality and living it may be as distinct as reciting a religious creed and actually believing it.

Limitations and Implications for Further Research

The preliminary nature of this study must be emphasized. The goal was to engage young people from as many countries, religious backgrounds, and cultural contexts as possible within the time and financial constraints of the study. Given the high costs and quality control issues of working across cultures and languages, and the complications introduced when research is conducted in multiple languages but the data are to be interpreted in one language, preference was given to conducting focus groups in English. Where this was not possible, transcripts were translated into English by local translators before being returned to Search Institute in Minneapolis. Youth participants were recruited through the CSD's international advisor network. These criteria limited the pool of eligible participants in non-English speaking countries to a convenience sample that was significantly middle/upper middle class and educated. Future studies should include youth from a much wider portion of the socio-economic spectrum.

Similarly, while there is significant religious diversity represented by the youth participants, the majority of the participants were Christian, and future studies should increase the participation rates of youth from other religious traditions and non-religious youth. Special care should be taken to recruit from non-theistic and beyond mono-theistic belief systems.

There was evidence in the focus group transcripts that spirituality could be interpreted as a form of culturally weighted individualism, a luxury of choice, an add-on in the developed world, perhaps most specifically in Western Christian capitalist contexts. While this concern is worthy of further consideration, the preliminary findings suggest something else. Perhaps the Western influence that needs to be recognized is the tendency to dichotomize—in this case to place religion and spirituality in an oppositional, either/or framework rather than one that is synergistic and in which religiosity and spirituality become inter-reliant. It is possible that spiritual development is indeed highly personal, inner work to be accomplished but in the rich cultural context of relationships and religious heritage.

Given the challenges inherent in facilitating conversation about a subject most young people have had little experience exploring, the fact that many participants were doing so in a second language and with adult facilitators who were often their religion teachers or youth leaders, it is not surprising that most of the conversations focused on the positive, almost idyllic dimensions of spirituality as expressed by this Syrian young man, "A spiritual person would have far-reaching vision, does not care for the shells but he cares about the essence. Generally his mistakes will be very few." In the next quote, a young South African girl captures the optimistic, positive view of spirituality many of the participants expressed, "Spiritual can be anything, except bad things . . . Someone is very spiritual when they are in church 24/7."

There are hints in the transcripts such as, "Someone can be spiritual and still be a jerk" (Youth, Canada) that suggest, but do not make explicit, the possibility some experiences of spirituality may be other than positive—stirring conflict, distorting perspective, causing pain, stagnation, or just being value neutral. It will be important for future studies to move beyond the "niceness" of spirituality and, more importantly, an a priori assumption that spiritual development is always good.

A related conundrum this research points out is the common temptation to elevate "spirituality" to "all things pure" and denigrate "religion" to its immutable institutional reputation, thus falsely or over-simplistically defining spirituality as "religion minus doctrine" or "religion minus God" as articulated with confidence by this Syrian girl, "The spiritual has a soul . . . A religious person is not a good one. The spiritual does not commit any mistakes, while the religious does."

Finally, despite thorough attempts to recruit experienced and neutral focus group facilitators, several of the groups were led by adults who knew the participants well, thus introducing the likelihood of reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1986) and increasing the risk of social pleasing in the participant responses.

Summary

Despite the tremendous uncertainty among, and variation between, participating youths' understanding of the term "spirituality" the findings from this preliminary study confirm Tacey's (2007) observation that, "youth spirituality is alive and well, growing in strength and full of diversity . . . a vast potential resource of spiritual vitality, and holds tremendous promise for the religious, moral and environmental renewal of society" (p. 75). The study also confirmed the existence of spirituality as a dimension of human experience and human development worthy of attention distinct from, and in relationship to, the other more established dimensions of human development. The apparent lack of importance of biological age as a determinant of spiritual experience became very clear, while the complex relationship between cognition and spirituality invites further study. The role of choice in active, sustained spiritual awareness suggests a degree of agency and stage of cognitive development not typical of younger children.

Perhaps one of the most important messages from the study findings is that spiritual development is mediated by the dynamics of interpersonal relationships and social contexts, and young people desire more opportunities for intentional engagement with their spirituality. This is a siren call to parents, educators, youth workers, clergy, and others engaged in the healthy development of young people. Many, if not most, youth have an unmet and often yet unrecognized hunger to experience spirituality as distinct from, or more expansive than, the religious tradition(s) they experience and within which they interact. Rather than having to break religion to release spirituality (Tacey, 2007) this study suggests that in most cases, there is room to nurture and build spiritual awareness alongside traditional religious practice. Healthy spirituality and active religious observance are neither mutually exclusive nor interchangeable. At best, in the context of 21st century global religious pluralism, spirituality and religion may have a synergistic relationship.

While this study endeavors to contribute to an increasingly coherent scientific picture of adolescent spirituality and spiritual development, it is important to remember that much of what Western scientists are now finding fundamentally supports certain core precepts that many aboriginal cultures never lost. These principles acknowledge that children are sacred beings; everyone is related in this world and beyond; discipline is used to teach courage not obedience; and spirituality is as fundamental to being alive as the air we breathe (Brendtro & Brokenleg, 2001).

Notes

1. www.spiritualdevelopmentcenter.org
2. www.youthandreligion.org
3. http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/ccls/sppub/sppub.htm
4. 120 advisors from around the world who reflect a wide range of perspectives, disciplines, and ideologies, bringing scientific, theological, and practice expertise to the work of the CSD.

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Chapter 18
Moment to Moment Spirituality in Early Childhood Education

Mindy Upton

Abstract Younger children explore the world through curiosity, questions, and engaged excitement. This chapter, based on the author's experience of children in over 25 years of kindergarten practice, will look at the "twinkle" manifested in children's questions about the world: "Where does the water go after it goes down the bridge?" "If the sun is made up of fire fairies, how come it's round?" or the continual "Why?" "Why?" Why?" Behind the questions is an ever-expansive quest for understanding that leads to an intimate relationship with the world. The questions are one way that children express their quest for connection. The road to a child's "truth" can be an exciting one, depending on their environment, school, peers, and family (karma).

Introduction

The day after the tragedy of 9/11, the children in my classroom started to build houses. Not just little houses. Big houses. They used every table, every chair, every wooden box and stool that they could find. The children were very careful during this process. They made sure it was a sturdy house that they were building. They all worked together, everyone having a special job. Some children were the gatherers, some were the construction workers, some were the helpers to the workers, some just sat and observed. Everyone was involved in some way. The teachers went about their daily work, but all the while they were sensitively watching the construction site evolve. When the buildings were completed and just the way the children wanted them, the oldest of the children in the group looked at each other very intently.

All was quiet. The teachers and the rest of the students turned to look. We watched as the older children knocked the houses down with determination and direction. The teachers watched and waited, not commenting but still. The little ones started to help knock down too, but the workers sent them back so they wouldn't get hurt.

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"This is the one," said one of the 4 year olds. "This is the building that fell." Other children asked, "Who did it?"

Someone else whispered a reply, "Someone made a mistake."

Just a moment's quiet pause…and then the process began anew. The workers gathered the blocks, the helpers started piling, the construction site was "built-up" once again, while the rest of the children in the room either watched or waited or went onto their own work and play.

Every morning for weeks, this process of "building and destroying houses" was repeated at playtime. In different ways on different days, the theme remained the same.

By the end of those weeks, every child in the class had a turn to be a worker, helper or watcher. Then it was over. As quickly as the "building up" theme arose, gently it seemed to be replaced by other little buildings and with the everyday business of the children's work. Little groupings of families moved into the houses together. Mommies and Daddies sat inside the houses with "babies." Animal play, with dogs and cats, became the next new theme. Before we knew it, spring arrived, and we were outside in the sand under the cottonwood trees making rivers and streams and feeling the warm breeze against our faces.

I have been honored to witness the richness of such profound play as a kindergarten teacher for the past 25 years. Each day the theme of the play was different, but here is one thing that has remained the same throughout all these years that I have noticed and observed on a daily basis in all children. I would call this children's "spirit." We have all used this word one way or another in our lives. Most commonly "spirit" has been used in mystical and religious contexts. Here, let us define "spirit" and the word "spirituality" as it is used in early childhood education. This spirit/spirituality is the impulse behind everything we as educators do and all that we offer to children in the classroom every moment that we are together.

This wonderful word "spirit" has its Latin root *spirare*, meaning breath—a perfect metaphor to use for the young child. Children breathe out into the world with all their senses. They thrust themselves into water. They fly into piles of snow. They roll in the mud. They sit and stare into the sky and then quickly run after a butterfly. They breathe in all that they have observed in their environment with their sensuality and curious minds. They can't help but see, be, and do whatever is in their environment. Children are always on the move, wanting to get somewhere, touch something, jump on what is near them, or connect to their closest adult. They are continually breathing out into the big world and then coming "home" to their own. They give their all, but very rarely stop until they fall off into dreamland at nighttime. We can see that within each child there are infinite possibilities for enjoying the wonderment of life. This joy is a unique characteristic of this age and it is the spirit of early childhood—to connect with one's world wholeheartedly.

Spirituality in early childhood is this: **Exuberance for life that fosters deep connections to family, friends, and nature. It is in this connecting to the wonder of daily life activities, beauty, and all creative endeavors that the child experiences his/her spiritual nature.**

The Child

Who Is this Spiritual Being?

The room was a lively workshop. Children were baking at the main table in the middle of the room, underneath was a family of mice. A bagel factory was being built off to the side, and I was busy with a crowd of bakers baking bread. I noticed the doll corner was empty. I looked up as Sam walked over and began gathering dolls into a pile. One at a time he piled them together. Once he had a huge pile of dolls he squished them as close together as possible on the floor, then intently sat on as many of them as he could.

When I saw he had taken every single doll in the entire classroom, I started to walk over to him to suggest that he might let a few dolls stay in their cradle for other children to play with. As I was walking over to him, I heard that he was "tweeting." I stopped a minute and listened closely. I listened to this "Papa bird" singing to his birdie babies. He sat on them in his nest quite content for a while, and then he flew away.

Childhood is filled with these rich sensual experiences of connections to oneself and the world. Children live deeply in their sensual experiences. Their whole bodies act as sense organs joining the outer world with their inner world. Impressions come into their bodies and are seeds for the human beings they will grow into. All their sense perceptions become information to be used later in life: their spiritual food.

Children, master imitators, learn how to be human from the humans that surround them—a reason to think deeply about what we offer their forming spirits as food for the foundation of their quest. Not only do they want to wash the dishes with us, wear our shoes, and sound like Mommy and Daddy, but also through this they continue to deeply connect with our inner being or spirit as well. From the moment they are born, they learn how to walk, talk, and live from us. Children's work in this magical time of life is to imitate all that is around them, connect with all of their environment, and use these forces to manifest their highest potentialities.

> There is in a child a special kind of sensitivity, which leads him to absorb everything about him, and it is this work of observing and absorbing that alone enables him to adapt himself to life. He does it in virtue of an unconscious power that only exists in childhood…this fashioning of the human personality is a secret incarnation (Montessori, 1988, p. 57).

The child is absorbing all the time, but he/she is not only absorbing the tangible world and events of life, but the living spirit—the spirare—of all he/she meets. This is the dreamy consciousness of childhood, a world in which everything has life.

This dreamy state of being is the spirit of childhood. Children are like butterflies tasting nectar from each flower, enjoying every little sip. The world is their flower. They fly from moment to moment with joy and wonder, very rarely stopping for rest—unless they need to hatch their eggs. Children are on a busy, magical quest of tasting every thing, every moment, filtering nothing, and digesting everything into the very heart of their being.

Healthy children must have the room to live in this dreamy state and sensually experience their world. This is only possible if caring adults are creating an environment for them that is predictable, safe, and protected so that they are not overwhelmed by life's challenges. Living this way is harder to manifest in our present world and is an important challenge for adults in this current culture with all of its pressures.

> Every thought is a living reality for the child. She (sic) sees the flower and experiences the inner reality of the flower. The child not only experiences the outlook but also the "in look", the inner being or the "I am" of the object perceived. The child is not awake like the adult is. She cannot separate the inner from the outer and think about the one or the other. She is neither fully awake, nor is she asleep. Her consciousness is in between, like a dream. Yet within that consciousness it is alert to the world and takes everything in (Glöckler, 2008, p. 73)

The Mindful Teacher

A cry came from the corner of the room. Two girls were fighting. They were tugging on the same doll. I slowly walked over and said:

"Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmm,". "I wonder what's going on here?"

I sat and watched. I did not judge or evaluate. "Breathe. Take in. Sit. Breathe. Take in. Breathe out." This is how I connect with what's happened between the two children. I touched each child at her shoulders so she could feel me. We all sat together. There were some tears, and some screaming. I let that happen. I waited. I took in the crying, wiped the tears and just sent love. We all just sat together. Breathing, just breathing. And when the children were ready, the crying stopped.

Now the children are ready to tell their stories.

"She took my dolly!" one child says.

"I did not!" says the other.

"Yes, you did!"

Then the fun usually begins. I look at each of the children with the same curiosity.

I say, "Looks like you both like that dolly!"

As a teacher my first goal beyond anything else is to be a loving and joyous human. This "living experience" that Rudolf Steiner talks about is inherent in every gesture, every word, and every interchange between the children and myself. I create an environment that fosters wonder in the children and teaches love, gratitude, and kindness. I acknowledge each child's unique spirit.

Then many things can occur. Most of the time, the children can work something out. I stay, I do not budge until they are both laughing and the dolly seems to be of little importance. Maybe some other child comes over and brings another dolly. That child is thanked and then the game can go on its way.

I practise meditation to cultivate this intimate connection to spirit. Through watching the thoughts that arise in my mind, their patterns, and allowing them to come forth and melt away, it is possible to stay present in *spirare* or nowness.

> In this kind of meditation practice the concept of nowness plays a very important part. In fact, it is the essence of meditation. Whatever one does, whatever one tries to practice, is not aimed at achieving a higher state or at following some theory or ideal, but simply, without

any object or ambition, trying to see what is here and now. . .for each respiration is unique, it is the expression of now (Rinpoche, 1996, p. 61).

This openness is the basis for the unconditional love that I have for every child in my classroom, regardless of if they are having a "good day." This love is the connecting piece that is needed for children to feel safe, and cared for, and for their learning to be able to take place.

I have experienced that the children occasionally imitate even the thoughts I have in my mind. I have experienced this before when children come to me and say: "Why are you sad?" when I haven't said a word or expressed a tear. Maybe there was a feeling of sadness in my thought at that moment. Children have that kind of spiritual empathy and they can appear to be mind readers.

Clearly, teachers need a quality of peace and tranquility in order to fully be present in the classroom, to be available and not overwhelmed. There are so many events in any moment of classroom life that the teacher can easily be pulled out of mindful presence. One has to have a "big mind" in order to sense the mood of the room and be able to guide the children. What is this "big mind" of the teacher? How does the teacher's big mind mold and sculpt the classroom environment?

Rachel was a dear little one with long braids, very large eyes and a sturdy physique. She was in my classroom for a full year. Her cheeks were always rosy. She played with the other children, ran happily around the house and loved dollies. There was one thing that was unique to Rachel—she never spoke. A three-and-a-half-year-old in a bustling classroom and not a sound from this dear child! The rest of us sang songs all through the day. I told many stories, while we had discussions around the snack table. The children would talk to Rachel, but she never spoke. I wondered on a daily basis what to do. She smiled and had a sparkle in her eye, and she ran to school every day. She seemed content and happy. Every day, every moment, I loved her within my inner spirit. Outwardly I would hug her. I would hold her hand on our walks, and I would also talk to her. Her parents said she talked at home and was a happy child. Most importantly, I did not judge her nor did I expect her to do anything other than what she was doing.

This experience with Rachel affirmed in me the importance of an environment of love without any words. As teachers, this is our first and foremost duty. Rachel, now a singer in her twenties, is a wonderful lively, talkative young woman. My meditation practice has given me the courage and confidence to create an environment in my classroom where even the unique can be fully loved and accepted without fear.

The big *mind* from meditation helps me face challenging situations like Rachel's silence without losing my composure, without losing my awareness of the whole room. I can be present for the next kindergarten situation that will, without a doubt, come up quickly. If something does occur that requires my attention, I move slowly toward the commotion. I walk toward the children who need some kind of attention, and with a *big mind* I sit down with them. I go in with an attitude of curiosity, nothing else.

The discerning innocence of young children deepens my conviction that at every level of education, the selfhood of the teacher is key. . . In order to foster the magical spirit each

child possesses one must have a relationship with ones own inner life, one's own inner spirit. To educate is to guide students on an inner journey toward more truthful ways of seeing and being in the world. How can schools perform their mission without encouraging the guides to scout out that inner terrain? (Palmer, 1998, p. 5)

Allowing: Nurturing the Spiritual Moments

We were playing in the yard last week, when Leo came running over to me. He stood at my side silent for a moment. He then looked up at me and said,
    "Mindy where does the wind come from?"
    I looked up and down and behind me, and all the children around did the same. And there was Leo, looking too.

It is *big mind* that allowed me to be *with* Leo, to hear the depth of his awe and wonder, and to honor it. It allows me to listen with my heart. Allowing is an important practice that occurs in my classroom. Allowing connects with the concept of *spirare*. The give and take of the breath parallels the give and take of each interaction. Allowing creates an environment of acceptance and respect, honoring each child's unique expression and spirit. This allows this acceptance of the whole child that nurtures and honors his/her sense of wonder. When I emanate an atmosphere of acceptance, the children feel secure in their spirits. They are free to play and create with each other.

What allowing means is that we as teachers attend to the moment-to-moment experience of each child, without coming up with some adult solution for the situation. We do not have to impose or create peace. Instead, we allow space for peace to develop. Sadness, anger, disappointment, frustration, and glee are all part of a child's process of tuning into their own unique spirit. The way in which teachers can allow children to tap into the strength of their own spiritual moments of connection is a potent expression of our love for each and every one of our students. We allow children a moment to be fully in their experience.

To create visionaries in our world, one must allow a child his/her moment of wonder. Children need to know that they are listened to. If we adults can allow a moment of space before answering their questions, we nurture this moment of spiritual curiosity. Leo's chance to wonder openly was a tiny moment in time, yet so important. One can only imagine how it might impact who he will become. We acknowledge each question with our state of nowness. When the children feel this empathy from us, they connect with our hearts. We must be teachers with "listening hearts."

Moment to Moment Sounds of Spirit

Connecting with Language, Voice, and Song

Some girls in my class this past winter were excluding another child from their play, saying, "This is just a two person game."

I overheard their conversation. That afternoon I told a story, originally told by Isaac Bashevis Singer, of a family in Russia who cared for many children in their home. A starving little deer that had lost its way in the cold visited them. The old woman wanted to take the poor animal in to care for it.

She said to the children, "There's always room for one more."

Weeks passed, and I overheard the same girls say to another who wouldn't allow her classmate to play, "There's always room for one more."

"Once upon a time. . ." These words of wonder have, for centuries, taken us to distant lands in our minds. Through the power of story children see and hear with their minds' eyes and ears. When children listen to the storyteller there spirits are empowered to imagine pictures that might change from day to day. I tell many kinds of stories in the kindergarten to foster the theme "the world is good." I do this from moment to moment, day to day, season to season, in my classroom and in myself. This is the quest of early childhood teachers. From moment to moment we have to create a living spiritual environment that says to the children, "It is all right to remain in childhood. We will protect you, care for you, and honor your spirit with the message of goodness."

Stories can offer words and language—whole worlds—that have been passed on to us for many generations. This verbal lineage brings a spirit of life from the past as its gift. It is a moving experience for me to tell stories to children that have been told over and over again. I can feel the power of the past in the language of the story, which I live and breathe in my classroom over many days.

We also tell original stories in the Kindergarten. I have a squirrel that lives in my classroom—Squirrel Nutkin. She is a furry brown puppet that I have had for 20 years. Having her own particular spirit, she appears to connect with everyone and to love all children. She comes out to tell a story if something happens in the kindergarten that needs some attention.

A little girl was in the habit of pushing others. Squirrel Nutkin came out at story time, crying. I asked Squirrel Nutkin why she was so sad. She told a story about how her friend pulled her tail and hurt it. Stories such as these create pictures of the goodness we all possess. Children who are listening can absorb how to treat each other. Stories create a world where there is still plenty of magic and wonder, and the stories live on and on. The children in my class retell the story to each other at playtime. They make tickets and invite the little ones to come, creating a stage for all the actors or puppets. They have their own story time. They invite me to be part of the audience, as they create what is now their story. Sometimes it starts out to be the exact story they have heard the day before, but sometimes they just get everyone together and begin with their own story. It is quite the spirited moment when they all are offering their own little piece of magical truth. The audience is riveted. Children are honoring their connection to the world. Hearing stories, children become great storytellers.

Whether the stories come to us from long ago or are created on the spot, story is the breath of connection. The children sit and openly receive. They are transported to other worlds and other parts of themselves as they absorb the very essence of

who I am. Sitting and receiving for children takes practice, but is an important life practice for learning and discovering inner spirit.

Tremendous power lives in our words. Our words are pathways to our hearts, our passion, and connection to our life experience. Stories are vital roads to learning about the spirituality of life and its complexities.

Singing Spirits

Children are moving music. They "become" the sounds they hear. Children inwardly feel the sounds. Watching children listen to music one can actually see the music in motion.

The teacher's joy of singing is a profound experience for young. Songs offer pictures of what is happening or going to happen in Mother Nature's world. We sing of the coming and goings of the changes in our world. We sing of the small little beetles and the sleeping bears. When we sing we are in harmony with each other. Our kindergartners become a chorus for all to hear. Some favorites are as follows:

Winter
  Rose red is the evening sky
  Milk white is the snow
  Let's go on our winter walk
  Do, do let us go.
  Tomorrow the sky may be dark and gray
  Tomorrow the snow may be gone
  So let's go on our Winter walk
  In the last rays of the sun (Swinger, 1972, pp. 22–23).
Spring
  Oh it is a happy morning
  There are blossoms on the trees
  There's a merry robin singing
  There's a golden flight of bees
  There's a tiny dew drop clinging
  Like a rainbow to a rose,
  And the sun is busy shedding
  Little freckles on your nose.
  Oh it is a happy morning
  There is joy in everything
  On such a happy morning
  All I want to do is sing (Swinger, 1972, pp. 22–23)
Summer
  When on a summer morning, As I go on my way,
  And hear the brown bird singing
  And blackbird whistling gay,
  And high the lark goes winging
  And call from sky so blue
  Then, oh, I must go singing
  And must go humming too! (Swinger, 1972, pp. 22–23)
Fall
  Golden in the garden

Golden in the glen
Golden golden golden
September is here again.
Golden in the treetops
Golden in the sky
Golden, Golden, Golden
September's flying by (Unknown author).

There are a myriad of songs for children. The songs we sing in my classroom are songs that evoke the spirit of the season and a reverence for the spirituality of life. We sing songs that bring pictures to the imaginations of children. They assure a refreshing and vibrant mood for the group. We become a chorus of little voices that ring through the neighborhood as we go by the apple tree or garbage truck. We are minstrels on a merry journey together. On our daily walk in the neighborhood we sing to the trees, to the squirrels, and to the wind. When the moon is out in the morning we sing:

Mister Moon, Mister Moon you're out too soon
The sun is still in the sky,
Go back to bed and cover your head
And wait for the day to go by . . .

Songs are nourishing to a child's spirit, and from that "food" for their spirit they can relax within themselves and with others. This aspect of heartfelt singing is part of the climate the teacher helps to create in the spiritual classroom.

The Classroom Environment

On Mondays we always bake, every Monday. When my children come into the room they always run for their aprons. Seeing the big bowl of dough rising on the table, they sit eagerly down. I don't say, "It's baking day!" They wait anxiously for the white powdery flour to drift down to the table. When the table is white with flour their little hands can slide across the maple and feel the luxury of the silky bread flour. The dough comes out and the pounding and molding can begin. The dough grasps every child's attention.

What I do as a teacher, I know that my little ones will do too. All I need to do is bake with love, connection, joy, and spirit. When the bread comes out of the oven the whole school community can enjoy the efforts of our happy classroom bakery. The smell permeates the entire neighborhood. Everyone knows it is baking day!. . .

The teacher creates an environment of safety and dependability in the children's day with a predictable daily rhythm. The day has many breathing in phases and breathing out phases. The children begin their day with breathing out into free play and walking in the neighborhood. Then when they come into the classroom they come into a "ring time" with story and songs in a group. Next is an open time of work and play, followed by an in phase of rest time and lunch. We go outside in the

garden (breathing out), and then come back inside for our last breathing in phase of story and good-bye.

Between these there is also a moment of acknowledging the shift from one mood to the next. I sing the children in from their outside play to gently gather them together for their morning greeting which flows happily into our circle of singing together. Every part of our day has a song. We sing to all the children to gather for the morning walk, to tell them it's time to clean up, to warn them that going home time is soon. Songs bring the aliveness and spirit into the classroom and carry the children through the day.

We repeat this rhythm all year long because children thrive in this atmosphere of predictability and consistency. Their spirits can soar because they know what will happen. When my children come into the classroom in the morning, they take their shoes off, put on their slippers, go to the restroom, and then go to circle without any directions from me. We begin our day that way every day. They wait at circle with a joy in them knowing exactly what is coming next. They never say, "What are we doing now?" They come to circle carried by the rhythm of what they know.

> Simply put, life is a rhythmic event. It is the nature of our heartbeat, our breath, and our digestion. It is the child being rocked to sleep, the runner hitting his stride, the dancer at one with the music. It is the turning of the earth and the rise and fall of the tides. **There is no way that we can come into harmony with our world or ourselves unless we honor and work in harmony with the principles of rhythm**. Rhythm does not imprison, rather, it frees (Sutton, 2001, np)

The kindergarten is very much an extension of the home. Maria Montessori actually called one of her kindergartens "Casa." When we think of home, we think of a place of refuge, of love, of caring and of protection. The kindergarten/preschool should have the same qualities. A child's first experience away from home should offer the same happy impressions a home has. Great care should be given as to what is in the classroom "casa." We want to make sure that the materials and activities are from real life. Every day, life experiences and activities can be seen as spiritual moments with the exuberance of spirit. All activities that are domestic—polishing, sweeping, dusting, washing—are joyful spiritual activities that the children take pride in.

Everything that the children come in contact has a lively spirited quality. Each object that is in our classroom, whether it is a broom, piece of wood or doll is cherished. My love for each and every thing in our kindergarten world is a reflection of my spiritual connection to the children and their environment.

> Adults admire their environment, they can remember it and think about it, but the child absorbs it. The things he sees are not just remembered, they form part of his soul. He incarnates himself all in the world about him that his eyes see and his ears hear (Montessori, 1988, p. 56).

Our ordinary classroom activities engage in everyday are infused with this spirit. When I sweep, I use a broom that a friend has made me. Hand-carved, it has a little face of a bearded old man on the top of the handle. Early in the year I tell a story about my friend and how she chose the wood. How she asked the tree people in the

forest if there was a spare branch. I tell how long it took her to carve the broom, and then tell a story about an old woman who uses her broom and "sweeps and sweeps all day, she never stops to play." After the telling of that story I lay out many pieces of wood and with tiny children's carving tools. As I sit and peel off bark, and many children come to join me. My broom becomes a lively tool with its own spirit. A simple tool can become "alive" because of my story and my connection to the broom itself.

Children love activity with purpose. The environment of the classroom is full of opportunities to satisfy this type of need.

Seasonal activities bring the children much excitement. Bags of wool that still smell of sheep give us a great opportunity for washing, drying, and carding the wool. This activity can take us days. In my classroom, I have children who can't wait to do the washing. Many children crowd around the sinks with washing boards and scrub all morning, happily singing "Baa, baa, black sheep," or "This is the way we wash the wool." After washing we dry the wool, brush it, spin it, and make it ready for knitting. Providing this type of process-oriented activity leads the children into a healthy picture of life. We can all participate in our environment. This process brings the community of the classroom together. Simple and natural materials can nurture our spirits. The message we present is that life is fun. The children experience that the world is literally at their fingertips.

Bits and pieces from nature as well as other beautiful objects are important for manipulating and using for play in the classroom. Materials from nature provide different textures and the spirit of the elements. The child's spirit blends with the shell, acorn, or pinecone to create magical use for inner spirits to play with. The wonder of daily existence is in itself a spiritual experience in the school setting.

Because children are such great observers of life, beauty has a strong component in the sensual environment of the classroom. Just like in the home, great care is given to the spirit and look of the classroom. Every season offers its own unique opportunities to evoke the color of the seasons. In my classroom we change the tablecloths and napkins every season. When the children come in for lunch and see the new seasonal lunch table, they ring with excitement.

Simple surroundings are an invitation to the spirit of the child. Walls should be simple, so the eye and mind can relax and the children can remain in a sensual place without too much stimulus. Natural wood and simple lines in furniture allow a freedom of movement and invitation for a child to explore the space. Open space is integral for any kind of building or dramatic play to occur. In my kindergarten we have an abundance of raw materials for the children to use to create whatever comes to mind. One day a blue cloth can be a roof of a house; the next day it is a river. With this kind of open-ended material, children's spirits can be satisfied with personal connection and fulfillment.

I love watching children build. Materials that do not have a predictable outcome feed children's imaginative forces. Pieces of wood, large and small provide an array of opportunities for visual and tactile play. Little villages and roads can be built. Train stations are constructed out of chairs and tables. Everything in the room can

be used as a "prop" for the child's work. The whole classroom environment is transformed into a workshop of happy little bees. Everything in the room is used for the child's vision. What the children see, they use. The whole classroom world is at their fingertips.

I also have an array of tools so that my little carpenters can go to work. I have hammers, nails, wooden stumps, wood-handled saws and little pieces of wood. Each playtime the children have an opportunity to work with real tools.

We work therefore we clean, cleaning is an important component to play time. All the cleaning utensils come out. While we clean we sing or hum. Sometimes we just get down on the floors and wash. Children sometimes start arguing about who gets to be a sweeper or duster. Cleaning is done, as with every spiritual activity, with a sense of joy. Since I love my room; the children imitate this love and care. We are family! We use everything in our environment and we care for it as well. We have a "shining day" where we oil the wooden things in the room. Some children sit all morning and shine. I can see other children sitting on the floor washing with their wooden brushes. When all the furniture is put right side up, when the babies are tucked in, when the wood goes back to the wood pile, when the chairs are put in their places, when the crayons are back in their little houses, and the wool is wound for knitting, we look around the room for a moment and see if there is anything left to put away. The children take great care to find some little thing we have missed, and happily find its home too. The feeling in the environment is lively, happy, and purposeful, a true picture of connection for our sacred world.

The outside environment is vital to the appreciation of the magic of the world. My class and I walk every day to watch birds, greet the squirrels, welcome the garbage truck, watch the apple tree turn from bare to fruit, help the worms cross the street, and feel the wind on our faces. We walk in rain, sleet, and snow. We have the primal experience of nature as our walks provide a connection to the natural spirit of the season. In fall we collect golden leaves and make leaf crowns. In winter we slide down the ice-covered streets and watch the snowfall glittering to the ground. In spring we rejoice with the blossoms that grow on the apple and cherry trees, and in summer we enjoy the fruit from the plum trees. As we stroll through the neighborhood, the children watch the signs of the change that is about to happen. When the first apple arrives on the tree, the children dance for joy. The children's little hands find many things to hold and collect. Big and small treasures come back to our classroom to be used in artistic ways, and in play. Thanks to their power of spirit, imagination, and fantasy the children bring life to everything they find. When they find acorns, they make an acorn village. The leaves become beds and blankies for the fairies. Fairy flowers have houses, and the rock people need to rest somewhere in the classroom. Everything the children find in their world has a living sense to it. One can often see children talking to pieces of wood or little bugs. Tiny worlds arise out of the spirit that the children bring to each found thing. My special task as a teacher is to provide the rich, natural outdoor experience for the children to awaken the artistic aliveness in the children, and in myself as well.

Play: Vital Food for the Spirit

On our daily morning walk in our neighborhood my children and I watched a house being built over a year. First we watched a truck come and knock down the little white house down and haul it away. We watched the workers put old pieces of wood into the dump trucks. The next week we watched as they dug a space for a new basement and foundation was poured. Every day we passed by, watching with awe and wonder as the new house being built went through many transformations. We sat across the street watching and sometimes singing to the workers, who we got to know by name. When the house was complete, we were walking by one day and the construction manager, whom we had talked to all year, invited us into the house to see the completed project, my children were thrilled. They walked inside and pointed out all the places where they thought the pipes were and the wires were. Everything they saw they commented on as if they were professional builders. They talked about the day they saw the sheet rock delivered, and they shared their favorite stories of construction. They spoke of the construction as if they built it themselves. In a way they did. Every day in the classroom they would come back and imitate what they had seen. In their own play we had haulers and dump trucks. They used every play frame for walls and floors. We had roofers and cement workers. The children took wool and put it inside washbasins and made cement and covered the floor with it, they created their own homes. They did all this creative building because they had space to play. I watched as the children used their free imagination to use simple materials to manifest their unique ideas: ropes became wires: small pieces of wood became telephones: pillow, a helmet: chairs, a ladder.

The children's spirits had room to breathe into the environment. They were shaping their world from what they had seen. Every year I watch how children come into the class with a myriad of different things they like to do, knowing that it all has a similar enthusiasm and spirit. This spirit is the passion and love the children have for life and everything in it. They want to connect with all they see in their environment and use it to choreograph what they have seen from their life experiences and from the people around them.

What the children experience comes out dramatically in each child's play. This sacred space of "play time" is crucial for a child's inner spirit to synthesize what they have seen, heard, felt, and experienced in their short life. The child experiences the powerful aspect of feeling part of a whole is through play. When they feel part of a whole, their spirits relax. They can learn, play with each other, and love each other.

The children can come into the classroom and join in with what I am doing or choose to be in the group with what other children are playing. There is a happy buzz in the room. This part of the day is the "breathing out". The children's energy is lively and their spirits are engaged. They have many choices. They have space and freedom within a rhythm that is honored by the teacher, a rhythm that is dependable.

There are many themes in the classroom over the year. Some themes are universal: house building; playing house; playing mommy and daddy; being construction workers or zoo animals; being store keepers or restauranteurs; train conducting;

being kings, queens, and princesses; playing kitty or horsy or bunny; being cleaners or polishers or cobblers or street cleaners.

There are also very personal themes depending on what is going on in the home life or in the world: going on a trip; having a visitor for the weekend; having a new baby in the family; or becoming a baby again.

Allowing children's spirits the space and time for play in the classroom is vital for forming friendships with others and with one. Feeling that we are part of a tribe, be it large or small, is a rich and irreplaceable opportunity for the experience of connection to the world. In play we learn how to be human. The space for play is vital for the spiritual connection to each other and us.

> Play is the child's most useful tool for preparing himself for the future and its tasks. . .Play teaches the child, without his being aware of it, the habits most needed for intellectual growth (Bettleheim, 1987, p. 36).

Moment to Moment Spirituality in the Kindergarten

Little Moments, Many Times

Nola, a 5 year old little girl in my class last year came running over to me and said, "Mindy, look at my picture!" So that is what I did.

Nola sat down next to me.

She and I sat and looked at her picture.

We looked for what seemed to be a long time, maybe 3 minutes. Then she looked up at me and I looked at her. She looked at me as if to see what I was doing. I just kept looking.

We looked for another minute and then she spoke again. "Mindy."

I said, "What Nola?"

"I love you," she said.

"I love you too, Nola," I replied.

When we give children the space to connect to their own spirit, they are able to feel love within themselves and for others. Children rely on us to emanate love. We offer ourselves as a mirror for their self-love and spirituality. If they see themselves through their own eyes of love they can become the people that they want to be. This spirituality of connection is vital for confidence, a positive sense of wellbeing, the ability to receive, and the spirit of loving-kindness. All these qualities are necessary for human beings to create a peaceful and compassionate world for our future together.

The Latin root for education is *e-ducere*, "to lead out." As a teacher I lead my children through each day of the school honoring my own spirit, the spirit in the children, the classroom, and the environment. For spirituality in early childhood to thrive in our world, we must as educators work desperately to continually create a world of goodness for these most precious little ones. Our quest is to look deeply into what we offer these sensual, imitative, spiritual beings, so we do not bombard them with the overly mechanized world that stops their spiritual flourishing.

The children and myself, dance through the school year with our love and connection for each other to nature, to rhythm, singing songs, listening to stories, honoring day-to-day life experiences, and wholeheartedly engaging in our important work and play. This is a window into the world of Spirituality in Early Childhood.

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Chapter 19
Children's Spiritual Intelligence

Mollie Painton

Abstract The purpose of this chapter is to explore the evolution of a variety of intelligences, from IQ to emotional and social intelligences, with an emphasis on the emergence of awareness of spiritual intelligence. While a definition of spiritual intelligence is offered, it is found to be close in description to children's inner worlds. The author details the cost of oppressing spiritual intelligence in children and the aftereffects on adults. She also emphasizes the need for adults to be spiritual partners for the children in their lives. The illustrative stories of the Seven Branches of the Spiritual Tree of Life are taken from the author's clinical study of children in play therapy over a period of approximately 20 years. Much of the content is cited from the author Mollie Painton's book *Encouraging Your Child's Spiritual Intelligence*.

In recent years we have moved our understanding of intelligence from acknowledging one kind, IQ, to recognizing multiple intelligences. According to Howard Gardner (1998), multiple intelligences include visual–spatial, bodily kinesthetic, linguistic, logical–mathematical, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. In the past 10 years, Daniel Goleman (1995) has introduced us to emotional intelligence, and more recently, social intelligence.

As stated in my article *Inner Worlds* in the September 2007 issue of the Rocky Mountain Parent Magazine,

> I would like for us to go one step further to really honor our children by being aware of their inner worlds, or spiritual intelligence. Without this knowledge, how can we honestly say that we know "what makes our children tick?" (Painton, 2007b, pp. 18–19)

At the same time, how can we be helpful to them as they grow and develop, navigating the rough waters of their transformation?

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Journey of Grief and Enlightenment

Let me begin the way I commonly introduce my work in a variety of settings by telling a story to shed light on what I am saying. In 1979 my husband Max, a clinical psychologist who started the Gestalt Institute of Phoenix, died of cancer leaving me a widow with two daughters, aged 3 and 7. As we moved through a grieving period that lasted several years, both my daughters reported seeing their dad on many occasions. The oldest was visited nightly for nearly a year after her father's death. While I was overwhelmed by my loss and aware of my daughters' pain, their wisdom and openness touched me.

One night my youngest daughter Sarah, who had recently turned 4, sat on my lap as I cried about her dad. She held my face in her hands and said, "Mom, at least we have life!" For about 2 years after her father's death my oldest daughter saw what she called "colors" around friends, family, and even strangers. These events began to shape my life, the life of my children, and my work as a therapist.

Children's Inner Worlds

Ten years later, when I was in private practice as a child psychologist and play therapist, my child clients told me similar stories that they were not comfortable sharing with many others:

> A ten-year-old boy disclosed that he is nearly incapacitated by his awareness of the pain of others, while feeling rejection from his peers ... A four-year-old boy told me that his deceased father visits him often in a variety of forms. A seven-year-old girl shared that after her grandmother died, she became the girl's guardian angel who watches over and protects her daily (Painton, 2007b, pp. 18–19).

During the course of my practice, many children have described their guardian angels and spiritual companions. A 9-year-old girl sees fairies dancing around her room every night when she goes to sleep. Another girl had a butterfly who was her spiritual companion. One child, who was in play therapy with me, interacted with nine different "ghosts" after having a near-death experience. His journey is similar to that of other children whose experiences have been acknowledged by clergy and documented by medical personnel as well (Painton, 2007a).

As child clients have disclosed their journeys to me, I realize that they live in a world that is incomprehensible to most adults. Exploring their own developed and developing identities, they are not confined to the limitations of life as we adults know it. They describe gaining entrance to other domains in which they coexist and prosper. From their stories, it is apparent that they journey easily, both in sleep and awake, from our everyday realities to profound worlds with an endless variety of fascinating, even magnificent, beings. They often appear to have an unconstrained rapport with these visitors who help them to survive while enriching their lives. As such their inner worlds are bursting with wisdom, guidance, and enriching experiences essential for their lives, and those of their parents, relatives, and friends.

According to these children, the angels, fairies, elves, deceased friends, and relatives who visit them, are, more often than not, advocates who watch over them. They enjoy a dynamic relationship with these helping spirits, many who are constantly at their sides, offering them a sense of protection and safety in a not-so-friendly world. Inevitably, children who have spiritual visitors report that they are greatly impacted by these guests. As they become accustomed to their presence, they are as much a part of the child's world as family members. Most importantly, their role in the healing of the child is paramount.

By healing, I am referring to a child's capacity to gravitate toward and benefit from an inner balance, while moving out of a state of conflict, developing more positive hopes and beliefs, and maturing to a developmentally appropriate state. Integral to healing is a sense of safety and protection that spiritual companions, as well as nurturing adults, can offer children. Awareness and validation are also central to the healing process. Much of this healing takes place in children's play as they creatively change the ingredients and outcome of the disturbing or traumatizing story to one with which they can comfortably live. Thus, they realize a shift from victimization to empowerment.

Picture children in their spiritual worlds as having their senses so finely tuned that they can hear a butterfly's wings flapping while standing next to a train moving full speed down the tracks. Everyone may see that butterfly, but few are able to not be distracted by the sounds of the train that drown out the butterfly's announcement, "I am!" Children are more finely attuned to stimuli that are present all the time. I remember watching my neighbor's 6-year-old daughter lay in the tall grass with her arms outstretched. Her legs were pointing up to the clouds, kicking gently with the rhythm of the wind. Her eyes were deeply focused on a small brown bug that she repeatedly rolled into a ball and shot across the wide expanse of meadow. "Roly-poly! Roly-poly!" she repeated with a giggle as she began to curl up in a ball and turn over and over in the wet grass. She continued this play for nearly half an hour, ingeniously mimicking the motions of the bug.

Children joyfully absorb every aspect of their environments. You may remember experiencing your world like these children. Unfortunately, for most people these experiences are unique to childhood. These moments may be ignored by adults who may have gradually lost touch with their gifts of sensitivity, intuition, and expanded consciousness, that can produce a deep capacity for compassion for all peoples of the world, a desire to be healing to themselves and others, while acting as peacemakers in a not always so peaceful world. To the extent that they restrict their awareness, adults become more narrowly focused with time as they lose their ability to be truly present.

Definition of Spiritual Intelligence

In Carl Jung's (1963) book *Memories, dreams, reflections*, he said

> Most people identify themselves almost exclusively with their consciousness, and imagine that they are only what they know about themselves. Yet anyone with even a smattering

of psychology can see how limited this knowledge is. Rationalism and doctrinarism are the disease of our time; they pretend to have all the answers. But a great deal will yet be discovered which our present limited view would have ruled out as impossible (p. 300).

After nearly 20 years of working with thousands of children, I have discovered that what I am observing is not pathology, and need not be a liability. It is a form of giftedness or a phenomenon called spiritual intelligence. *What is spiritual intelligence?* Spiritual intelligence is boys' and girls' capacity to be awake and aware of a deeper dimension of themselves that leads to wisdom and intuition, compassion, and other-worldly experiences. It refers to the inner world of the child.

Spiritual intelligence, related to human's struggle for meaning, vision, spiritual awareness, and worth. When children's spiritual intelligence is encouraged, their greatest gifts and potential for healing and happiness are realized. It is vital for their survival and human wellbeing.

The Cost of Oppressing Spiritual Intelligence

Unfortunately, boys and girls in Western cultures often find themselves lost in a world that does not believe in or support, much less nurture, their exceptional spiritual gifts. To the scientific mind "seeing is believing." It is perplexing to most Westerners to grasp that children encounter realities that cannot be seen by the ordinary (adult) eye and therefore, that which is unseen or unable to be precisely calculated is unthinkable. Worlds or realms that are invisible to some, simply do not exist for them.

As children feel that their inner worlds or spiritual intelligence is not valued, they live in fear of rejection. In his article, "Adults Who Had Imaginary Playmates as Children," John Connolly (1991) tells of a boy's cousin who was traumatized by his own father as he angrily put an end to his son's closest companion.

> I have a twelve-year-old cousin who had an imaginary friend when he was smaller. It drove his father crazy. One day his dad had had enough of it and asked him where his friend BoBo was, and when he pointed it out, my uncle stomped down as hard as he could and smashed BoBo into the ground. My cousin turned pale and wouldn't talk for the rest of the day. That is how he lost his imaginary friend (p. 118).

In contrast persons from many other cultures believe that contacting hidden realities and communicating with spirits are natural everyday occurrences. For instance, a boy in the Philippines saw a ghostlike woman at his home. After telling his family about what he saw, his grandmother asked him to identify the woman in their family picture albums. Feeling his family's support, respect, and validation, he readily found the person, clothing included, whom he had seen.

When spiritual intelligence is oppressed, it may lead to alcohol and drug abuse, as well as depression and suicide, panic disorders and anxiety, fearfulness and poor self-esteem, not to mention desperately unfulfilling lives. Major life decisions made without awareness and encouragement of a person's spiritual intelligence will

inevitably lead to unhappiness. For teenagers their anger and sadness may be evidence of a vague sense of loss of their inner spiritual world. As they develop and move into adulthood, they may lose sight of their giftedness. If they have refused to let it flourish, they will inevitably live inauthentic lives, and gradually forsake their inner spiritual worlds. They may merely feel that something is "missing or wrong with them." Alienation from their inner worlds is a spiritual death that sets in motion a cycle of suffering that may last a lifetime. The source of this grieving is difficult for them to identify and therefore impossible to articulate.

Searching for heroes to lead them in their quests for truth, most children, fearing criticism and rejection, do not feel free to disclose to anyone the spiritual aspects of their extraordinary stories. They may consider these stories to be unusual, or even forbidden, especially when they include ongoing relationships with their spiritual visitors. When questioned, the greater majority respond, "Are you kidding? I would never tell my parents about that! They don't believe me. They don't believe in those things."

Many parents are critical of their children's spiritual gifts, characteristics, and encounters; fearful that others learning of their experiences will harshly judge, and perhaps shun, their children, as well as themselves. While their intention is to protect their child, this fear prevents boys and girls, as well as adults, from thriving emotionally and spiritually. Feeling like outcasts, they begin to suffer the destructive effects of isolation born of their spiritual giftedness.

The Spiritual Tree of Life

Boys and girls who share their spiritual intelligence with supportive significant others do not suffer from the same isolation. Reaching out for connection, they enrich the spiritual worlds of others. After a lifetime of being a privileged visitor in their worlds, I found myself in a limitlessly creative and fascinating universe—the inner spiritual realm of the child. In the center of their world I envisioned a grand, playful, and childlike tree that stood with great presence. Its massive and sturdy trunk provided support to the interconnected network of seven major branches, representing the seven spiritual themes most commonly manifested by girls and boys. As I pictured this astonishing tree that welcomes all children to play on its branches, the name *Spiritual Tree of Life* came to me.

The seven branches of the Spiritual Tree of Life, inspired by the children in play therapy with me, embody the gifts, rites of passage, and experiences associated with children's inner worlds or spiritual intelligence. As described in my book, *Encouraging your child's spiritual intelligence*,

> The first branch depicts children's spiritual gifts of wisdom and intuition; the second branch represents their profound compassion coupled with their need for belonging and connection. The third branch embodies children's belief that death is permanent only in a physical sense. On the fourth branch, they participate in a world, both invisible and incomprehensible to most adults, that primarily consists of spirit. Acting as spiritual warriors on the fifth branch, kids are sensitive to the notion of light and darkness, good and evil. On the sixth branch,

they spend much of their time in a world of metaphor, while engaging in healing play. The seventh branch concerns the transformative journey many spiritual boys and girls undergo as they shed their old lives on the road to spiritual rebirth (Painton, 2007a, pp. xxvi–xxvii).

First Branch – Wisdom and Intuition

Benjamin Hoff (1992) describes wisdom as the natural state of a child:

> Children are born with it; most adults have lost it, or a good deal of it. And those who haven't are, in one way or another, like children. Is it a mere coincidence that the Chinese suffix tse, which has come to mean "master", literally means "child"? (p. 195)

While children on the first branch are wise beyond their years, they are blessed with profound insights, understanding, and vision that come naturally and effortlessly to them. These insights take them beyond their ages and immediate experiences, allowing them to see outside the ordinary. In other words, these children have a natural wisdom that enables them to live an enriched life unexplained by the physical properties of science and beyond the confines of rationalism. This intimacy with truth is at the core of their spirituality.

While most children rest on at least one of the branches of the Spiritual Tree of Life, occasionally there is a child who is involved on each and every branch. Four-year-old Kyle, whose older brother James died in a car accident, is one of these children. He rests thoughtfully on the first branch of the Spiritual Tree of Life concerning the basic nature of children to be wise beyond their years. A few days after his brother James died, a neighbor approached Kyle and his mother asking if it were true that James had died in a car accident. Kyle's mother sadly told the neighbor, "Yes, we lost James." Kyle responded after listening closely, "Yes, he was lost, but now he is found. God found him!" At another point Kyle sent a message to the participants at a conference on the spiritual world of children. He insisted that I tell everyone, "People are really in good care, because they have angels and God."

The lives of the boys and girls on the first branch are enriched by their uncanny insights. I offer several examples drawn from hundreds of children who share Kyle's gifts on the first branch beginning with a Native American woman whose 4-year-old grandson predicted that he was going to die soon. He wanted to take his brother with him when he went to heaven. I was very touched by the grief of this grandmother, who remembered telling her grandson, "No, you are not dying! Both you and your brother will be here for a long time." Within 6 months the boy died of a brain tumor. Another child, Jonathan described his "inner voice" as keeping him safe. "I had a dream about my inner core. That inside part of me sometimes said, 'Jonathan, you have to be scared!' Then I would be very careful about what I was doing."

Boys and girls on each branch demonstrate strengths that are resources for their lives. The innate wisdom of children on the first branch makes them skillful candidates for journeying to great inner depths. While they are thinkers "outside the box" they may have an "inner voice" that guides them. As they value living, knowing,

and telling the truth, they candidly and courageously face their own stories of major adjustments, destruction, and trauma. They desire to live their lives in the fullness they realize from their wisdom.

On the other hand, boys and girls on the first branch may suffer from a fear of exposure as they hide who they are in terms of their wisdom, intuition, and insights. Living with an expectation of rejection and criticism, they are likely to experience poor self-esteem, a sense of being weird, "not fitting in" and of course, a feeling of aloneness.

Second Branch – Compassion, Connection, and Belonging

On the second branch of compassion, belonging, and connection, children's love for their personal and global families, along with their need for a sense of belonging with people of all nations, colors, and creeds is as strong as their intolerance of the many inhumane acts of cruelty on our planet Earth. For instance, when the World Trade Center towers were destroyed, many deeply compassionate children felt a shared sense of sadness and hopelessness. They were moved to ask painfully thoughtful questions about the future of our world, the concept of hate and war, and the idea of killing people in retaliation for their attacks on our land. For many months they demonstrated their distress in their pictures, play, stories, and dreams.

Out of their compassion and need for belonging, they are sensitive to the fact that, despite differences among all people, there is a universal thread that connects all of us; our appearance of diversity quickly melts away as we join together in a hymn of the universe. Children on the second branch of the Spiritual Tree of Life reach out to the world of differing nations with an understanding and compassion that has no bounds. In fact they may become alarmingly distressed, physically ill, or even not want to live, if their purposeful goal of bringing about peace, inner and outer, is not reached.

During a group meeting with children his age, Kyle realized such a profound connection with all people in his global family. While in meditation with their eyes closed, I asked them who they saw standing in front of them. Kyle responded with excitement, "Mollie, I see all the people in all the world who have ever died—the Japanese are here too. And my brother is at the head of them all." Kyle reached out to his global family with love and comfort in his healing play announcing loudly, "I love people everywhere. . .all over the world. I feel really close to them. I hurt when others hurt. . .even people far away."

Other kids, like Brooke and Luke, who speak out in appreciation of children across the globe who suffer with handicaps, ask the pertinent question, "Why do children have to suffer?" Their answer is so complex, yet so simple—they do so in order to teach us about life, love, and our purpose here on earth! There are also children who have had near-death experiences. Their effortless, yet resounding, message is, "The most important thing is that you love one another!" They may live their lives playing out this desire for oneness, like Sean, who designed a community living peacefully together in a few homes that housed an entire city!

On the other hand, Sean envisioned the closeness of all people as a community living peacefully together in a few specially designed homes that housed an entire city! While these children may never travel beyond their own city, state, or country, their hearts are awakened to a compassionate connection with all peoples, even those beyond their immediate sphere. No matter how limited their actual contact with other nations, the healing they bring about has a force that is far-reaching!

On the second branch, children's need for connection and belonging, as well as their compassion, are tremendous resources for engaging with others in their lives. While these boys and girls are trusting and open by nature, they respond effortlessly to love and support. They are generous, cooperative, conscientious, scrupulously fair, and honest. When these boys and girls are involved in any activity, they are catalysts for establishing a sense of community. Rather than emphasizing differences, they create healing connections, working to change the world for the better.

Their innate ability to connect on such a deep level may create some vulnerability for them. As they bond so readily, they are likely to absorb others' pain and therefore become depressed and/or anxious. As a result of their sensitivity, they may tend to be overly responsible, even co-dependent in their relationships. Children on the second branch may be challenged to establish healthy boundaries without enmeshment. While they are overly compliant, they may find that they are easily taken for granted. If faced with rejection, these boys and girls may be prone to poor self-esteem, a feeling that "one is not enough," sometimes leading to hopelessness, anger, and suicidal ideation.

Third Branch – Physical Death

The third branch of the Spiritual Tree of Life describes "death" as permanent only in a physical sense. In the healing play of some of these children, the people, animals, and super heroes who die come back to life. In other cases the child actually realizes the presence of a deceased relative or friend. Spiritual children teach us that death is only permanent in a physical sense, and that death, as we commonly know it, does not exist.

Children's deeply spiritual practice of mourning can be understood as a communal process in loving union with those who have died. Thus their grief, although more often than not involving an immense amount of pain, can more easily give way to a realization of joy and completion. In this way, grieving by children takes on incredibly fresh and promising dimensions, especially when the person who is being mourned is part of the ongoing process.

In Kyle's case, he is always accompanied in the playroom by his deceased brother James. In fact, he says he is always with him. He commented on several occasions that James was not in the ground where they buried his body. He said, "He's in heaven. . .and here! He's always here, when I am. He's up there by that window. He likes it up there. James loves group!" Kyle continued, "I talk to James. I tell him, 'I love you' and all that stuff about everything going on. I told him he gets to go to see Ice Age with me and a neighbor and mommy. I tell him a lot how much I love him."

Many children suffer the loss of a sibling, parent, or grandparent through death. In countless cases the child says that the loved one who has died not only visits, but becomes a guardian or protector of the girl or boy. A spiritual boy, Sammy, describes his dad, "Sometimes I feel weird like my dad is around. . .he is always there, even though you can't see him! He is my guardian angel!" Another such child, Stephanie says of her deceased mother, "Even though she died, she still loves me and watches over me!"

Years after her mother's death, Renee felt blessed by her loving presence, saying with joy in her heart, "I know that my mother does not only visit once in a while, she is with me every minute of every day!" Another child, Devon, prayed that his dad would not die. While he was not granted his wish, he believed that God did give him a miracle! "He lets my dad talk to me sometimes, when I am alone in my room. He also lets him be in my dreams. We are always doing fun things together!" Meanwhile, Taylor spoke of her recently deceased father as "no longer being in his body," while enjoying an enriched relationship with him, including visits and dialogue.

Among the many resources of the children on the third branch is the innate ability to keep alive their connection with deceased friends, family, and others. Their grief is lessened by their gift of spiritual intelligence. As a result of their comfort with "death" they are willing to create, play, and dialogue around their unique circumstances. As they reenact their loss, they more readily come to terms with their grief while keeping their connection alive with the deceased one.

Children on the third branch may be vulnerable to feeling guilt for the death of a loved one. As they blame themselves, their fear of losing the surviving parent is intensified, while their ability to remain connected with the deceased person is diminished. During their time of mourning, they are likely to feel vulnerable, angry, and insecure faced with judgmental peers who make fun of them for having a deceased parent. Without a safe place to express their grief, their self-esteem will suffer.

Fourth Branch – World of Spirit

The fourth branch of the Spiritual Tree of Life is multi-faceted in its scope, emphasizing that spiritual children live in a world that primarily consists of spirit—a mystical territory wherein great potential for healing and happiness lies. On this branch the spiritual boys and girls are not necessarily "earthbound," while they play in worlds incomprehensible to most adults. For example, they report interacting with spirits such as angels, elves and fairies, deceased relatives and others, seeing lights, colors, and rainbows around people, and desiring to fly and/or remembering having done so at another time.

While Kyle demonstrated his ongoing relationship with a variety of unseen spirits and invisible worlds, his contact with angels was the most outstanding. He remarked excitedly, "Mollie, your angels are always with you in the playroom! You have

dozens of them." Exuberantly he continued with his hands extended out to encompass the entire room, "There are lots of angels filling this whole room! Mom has lots of angels. My brother has lots, and dad has lots."

Even before James' death, Kyle's angel Velma went everywhere with their family. While she had been a family member for several years, Velma sadly disappeared when James died! Kyle described his loss, "Velma angel is in the angel hospital up in heaven. She's sick. She's with her family of angels. There's lots of different kinds. Every time they fly down and visit me. James is my one special angel. He stays with me all the time. James lives in our house, but he is just visiting. Velma came back to the world. She's not dead. She just moved back to her house in heaven for a while." In his healing play, Kyle unites two otherwise separate worlds—that of the seen and unseen, lending hope to a world greatly devoid of such numinous relationships.

Many more children, like Kyle, have dynamic relationships with unseen spirits and invisible worlds. Jane describes her angels, "I have angels who take care of me! There are at least three of them. Their names are Laurel, Nicole, and Mallory." Six-year-old Alex says that her fairy, which takes care of her, has a blue dress, green eyes, and pink wings. Thomas enjoyed a relationship with his grandmother, who was his spiritual companion who visited him all the time.

As to their resources, these girls and boys have at their disposal fascinating worlds of spirit that enrich their play. Their ability to see the unseen or to access worlds invisible to most adults provides an expansive support system that magnifies their potential for healing. Consequently, their dealings with trauma and loss take on a hopeful perspective.

At the same time their self-esteem may be poorly affected when their experiences or "truth" are not validated by the significant others in their lives. They may not only face lack of support, but disbelief and ridicule are common elements in their lives. As their integrity is undermined, they are likely to be ridden with anxiety, anger, hopelessness, powerlessness, and once again, a sense of isolation.

Fifth Branch – Light and Darkness, Good and Evil

The fifth branch on the Spiritual Tree of Life concerns children's sensitivity to the notions of light and darkness, good and evil. In their healing play they take on the role of spiritual warriors to help create a world of peace, harmony, and good will. They are compelled to design a battlefield wherein darkness is transformed into light and good defeats evil. They may play on this branch as super heroes, identifying perversion, destruction, and hate as evil forces they are compelled to overpower.

Sometimes the evil that boys and girls are fighting is both symbolic of someone or something that has set out to destroy them and represents an unbearable situation they have experienced. Occasionally, these children seem to have no reason to fight darkness in the world other than a natural tendency, often from birth, to be on a mission to save the world from the forces of evil. In all these boys' and girls' play,

as the two opposing forces are eventually assimilated into one, they describe the evil they were fighting as "defeated" – meaning it no longer has power over them.

During several sessions Kyle rested steadfastly on the fifth branch. On at least one occasion, he insisted that I be a fairy who unlocked him from chains that were put there by the bad guys. Once he is unlocked, Kyle says, "The bad guys get me with a hook. I can't fight them, because they also took my gun away with the hook. They handcuffed my brother's arm to mine. Then I started to make a new house. I did what I had to do, and I played with my dog. Then my brother slid his hand out of the handcuffs. My brother and I both shot the bad guy's hand off and put the hook on him. It didn't work, because we did it all wrong. So we both threw the hook away. With the hook gone, the bad guy died and went away."

> During several sessions he (Kyle) . . . acted out the role of a spiritual warrior compelled to create a battlefield where darkness is transformed into light and good defeats evil. Six-year-old Kyle spontaneously created the following picture. At the bottom of the large easel in the playroom he first drew a circle with a plus sign (+) inside of it. Connected to this circle and trailing upwards is what he referred to as a path. He said, "The circle with the plus sign inside is 'us' and we are OK, if we stay on the path where animals live, where there is a river, and lots of food, mostly in stores. We are safe there, until we get to the top of the path where there are more large circles, followed by similar circles surrounding the path." Pointing to the neighboring circles, Kyle said, "All of these circles are evil. It is all around us." He quickly added, "The food at the top of the path nearest the first circle of evil belongs to us, but it is being eaten by the evil ones." (Painton, 2007a, p. xxviii)

Jeremy is another child who, like Kyle, spends much of his time fighting the forces of evil. He is rare even among spiritual children on the fifth branch, as he is on a mission to save the world from the forces of darkness, even from an early age. He was a spiritual crusader in the purest sense of the word. As soon as he was able to speak, 18-month-old Jeremy enlightened our world in a most compelling way. "I am here to teach people. I teach everyone!" Years later as though it were a matter of life or death, he fought evil in the playroom and elsewhere for over 6 months. When he finally defeated the evil ones, he announced, "Now I'm free and I can take the stars and put them in my eyes, and my eyes sparkle, and all of me sparkles!"

The tremendous resources of children on the fifth branch include their gifted ability to be spiritual warriors who lovingly touch our world, softening the harshness of disparate forces of good and evil. While they determinedly promote peace and goodness, the energy they create is a life-sustaining force that is revitalizing to all of us.

On the other hand, by the very fact that they are compelled to overcome "darkness," they experience overwhelming anger, agitation, fear, frustration, and powerlessness. Their task is so daunting that they need a safe port to dock their ship and find refuge from the inevitable storm. While they are seeking support and understanding, they may be, more often than not, anxious that they will be rejected merely for their involvement in this frightening battle. As they journey through the dark waters, their loss of innocence, power, and hope may lead to depression.

Sixth Branch – Healing Play

On the sixth branch of the Spiritual Tree of Life children become focused on play that heals whatever distresses them. Their play stories are often metaphors that are not literal representations, but rather symbolic communications. In other words their metaphorical play is the language by which they implicitly convey their life story, along with their feelings and beliefs, in an amazingly meaningful and healing way. The healing play of spiritual kids comes from their intimacy with the truth, which is at the core of the spirituality of kids. Healing play as a spiritual process is boys' and girls' primary language. While they have an intrinsic ability to live within this spiritual realm, a great deal of their potential for wholeness lies within this branch.

While their play stories are at the heart of their enriched living, they are as powerful as what has actually happened to them in the "real" world. Girls and boys are able to transform their distressing stories in the nurturing milieu of a play setting, especially in the presence of a trained play therapist, who understands their inner spiritual worlds or intelligence.

Kyle's healing play involved the following, "All the farmers in Colorado will be washed away by a sand storm. The blue guy is me. He is getting sucked in by the sand storm, but he can dig his way out. Everyone can, so everyone is okay, but for now they are still getting sucked in. Sand storms are really bad! Then a big thing tried to stab our body parts, and the other guys. I think that's weird. Mollie, you and I will be on the same team. We are okay after the sand storm. . .right? Let's go to our house and have a celebration. We will have a ceremony. There's a trap box that I will stand on, because I don't speak very good. The trap box is my speaker box so everyone will hear me." In his healing play Kyle is celebrating his movement out of the sand storm of his grief, as well as that of his family's.

In addition to Kyle's story is that of a young girl whose parents were recently involved in a highly conflicted divorce. As her unique way of grieving and ultimately healing her wounds, she created a home with an idyllic family: a father, mother, and six children, who lived in a wonderful house, went to a great school and church, *never* fought, and did everything fun together *all* the time. Yet another story is that of Elizabeth, who has been physically abused by her babysitter. She plays out this sad story adding healing elements, such as her abuser is incapacitated one day, made to move far away, and later destroyed, while Elizabeth becomes powerful, playing as though she is the lion puppet, never again to be overcome by this perpetrator.

Interestingly, a boy whose sister was ill, created a family he referred to as "The First Family," who lived in the White House where his sister would *always* be protected by the soldiers. One more spiritual boy, whose father frequently visited him after recently dying, reached for the ghost figurine out of all the dozens of toys in the playroom. Keeping the connection with his father alive, he insisted that the ghost be a visitor in the play house along with his family and friends.

As healers in their play many spiritual children not only deal with their own concerns, but rather act as agents to help bring closure to their family's "unfinished business." Repeatedly, on their spiritual paths, children act as amazing sponges that soak up the unresolved pain. Because they are such creatures of love, their doors

are open to honestly receive the truth of their existences, no matter how disturbing. Armed with this truth they go about their lives creating awareness and the need for change. They enlighten those near to them as they illuminate the issues hidden in the dark.

For instance, Rose repeatedly depicted the story of a young man who died in a fire. She added after a couple of weeks that the woman who was watching was finally able to say "Good-bye" to the man. When sharing my confusion about this play segment with Rose's mother, her eyes suddenly lit up, while she appeared both shocked and awestricken. I will never forget her amazing response! "I'm not sure what this could be about, except that when I was about six years old, my sixteen-year-old brother went to sleep while smoking in his bed, and he burned the house down, killing himself. I've always regretted the fact that I never said 'Good-bye' to my brother! But Rose knows nothing about this!"

In another case, my child client played that two babies had died! I was not too surprised when she did this, because her mother had recently miscarried. However, her daughter did not know anything about her pregnancy or miscarriage. Even more peculiarly, when I told the mother that I found it rather confusing that her daughter had played that *two* babies had died, rather than one, her face instantly flushed. She immediately disclosed to me that she had actually lost twins, but that no one, other than her doctor and the hospital staff, knew about this.

As catalysts for the expression and eventual healing of past wounds, boys and girls on the sixth branch stir up the issues "in the closet," so to speak, creating a powerful energy that will move those around them to expose their hidden or unconscious issues to the light of day. Once exposed, it is more likely that they will begin to honestly deal with their distress in a forthright fashion and eventually arrive at a place of peace and healing.

Children on the sixth branch of the Spiritual Tree of Life are fiercely imaginative individuals, who are natural creators of compelling metaphorical stories that are symbolic expressions of their lives. Through these stories they transform their troubled worlds, while softening the impact of their trauma by adding powerful elements to their play. In healing play they are their wisest, freest, and most balanced selves.

On the other hand, when overwhelmed by life events, children on this branch may suffer with poor self-esteem, feelings of insecurity, and hopelessness, while crying out in frustration for a safe place to creatively express their trauma, loss, or major adjustment.

Seventh Branch – Transformation

The seventh branch of the Spiritual Tree of Life holds within its supple boughs the agonizing journey children sometimes experience as they shed their old lives on the road to spiritual rebirth. Often having known abuse, exploitation, or neglect, these children feel alone and abandoned with nowhere to hide from their distress. They often play out themes of death that represent the devastation of their lives as they have known them. They are tormented by nightmares of mutilation, such as

animals or monsters eating them, as well as fears of future losses. In their play they act out the trauma of their worlds falling apart, leaving them without a dependable foundation.

Resting with some apprehension on the seventh branch, children who have suffered deep losses and trauma, courageously find themselves in the depths of desperation and darkness. Their play is often represented by their interaction with skeletal or ghostly figures, or dismemberment of their dolls or superhero figures, all of whom are symbols of a frightening journey through an uncharted world of darkness. Their bravery and integrity allow them to successfully complete this challenging, and often excruciating, step toward healing themselves, along with their larger worlds and thus they gain a stronger, more authentic, sense of self.

Their new identity remains unshakeable until their life takes them to new crossroads, requiring more change and growth. In this process, boys and girls experience movement from an excruciating loss of everything to an unyielding recovery of their life force. At the end of this journey they find inner peace, as they build their new lives, with unearthed strength and vitality, on a strong spiritual foundation with all the richness of their never-ending resources.

Kyle played out stories of dismemberment and mutilation, as he traveled the agonizing road to spiritual rebirth. He was carrying a terrible burden of guilt about his brother, because they had fought only recently before James' death. He told me, "That was a bad day. It wasn't at all a fun day. James didn't want me to play with his castle. We had a big fight. I see pictures of us fighting every time I think of James. When James and I fought, things got broken. My stomach hurts. I begged my brother to forgive me for fighting with him over the castle?" Kyle paused adding sadly, "My heart is broken. James died, then there's no more fights."

Kyle also acted out the story of a shark that dismembered a woman's arm by eating it off. He ended his story with the assertion that now the woman is an angel. Immersed in his journey a couple of weeks later, Kyle was compelled to continue his story repeating, "The woman whose arm was eaten died. Then God turned her into an angel. Then he turned her back into a people and fixed her arm with a robot arm. Now her lives with a robot arm in a big house because she has a big family."

In close proximity to the session about the woman whose arm was torn off representing Kyle's powerlessness and upheaval, he enacted the play of a "dinosaur (symbolic of death) that took a big chunk out of one of the cavemen who didn't wear a shirt. When the police arrived, they turned the caveman's place into a jail." Kyle followed these sessions of mutilation and dismemberment by creating a safe home that symbolized a secure haven—a much needed retreat out of harm's way.

Luke much like Kyle, found himself in an agonizing situation. He felt he had lost his family when his baby sister was profoundly developmentally disabled from birth. Alone and abandoned as though his parents no longer cared about him. Luke was challenged to love, nurture, and feel compassion for one little girl, who had greatly robbed him of his peaceful life and nurturing home. He asserted that his happy home had become a "haunted, scary spooky house." As Luke and Kyle were struggling to survive the challenges of the seventh branch, Ashley and Michael were thrust into a painful journey of transformation as they lost contact with one

another after Michael's sexual abuse was exposed. Ghosts, skeletons, and monsters haunted Ashley as her play was full of frightening events such as "scary picnics" with zombies that attacked her.

Boys and girls who journey through the seventh branch of transformation do so with honesty and courage, despite their heartache. Their journey strengthens their definition of self as well as their self-esteem, as they are transformed into extraordinary people with great resilience and in touch with incredible inner resources. They experience a deepening of spiritual depth and wisdom, an exaggerated desire and capacity for connection, and an awakened sensitivity to the pain of others.

During this difficult, yet enriching, transformation they are challenged to manage opposing forces within, such as love and caring versus anger and fear. Their insecurity as a part of feeling stripped of everything that is grounding to them, leads to a need for expression and validation, comfort, and support. As they redefine who they are in the light of their altered world, they may no longer have a will to live. Their spiritual and psychological turmoil are colored with the darkness of agonizing grief.

While playing on the Spiritual Tree of Life, children everywhere are hungering for support from spiritual partners on their unique journeys. They need significant adults in their lives, who are invested in their safety and wellbeing, to listen with a compassionate ear and communicate interest and acceptance of their innate spiritual nature or spiritual intelligence. While they share stories and information with these boys and girls, these spiritual partners are likely to benefit by allowing their own spirituality to blossom once again. Thus, spiritual partnership ignites a universal flame between adults and kids alike.

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Chapter 20
In Search of the Spiritual: Adolescent Transitions as Portals to the Spirit Self

Peter J. Perkins

Abstract Certain internal and external descriptions of youth during adolescence inspire inquiry into their development of the spiritual dimension. These descriptions are seen throughout developmental theories, while in clinical practice, there is growing interest in how the spiritual dimension may have promise, even urgency, in the key developmental years of adolescence. This chapter offers a selection of these developmental descriptions, my clinical observations, as well as first-hand accounts from youth themselves that support the call for education of the spiritual dimension during adolescent development. A holistic model of human development will be presented as a tool to set the context for adolescent education through mid- to late adolescence.

Opportunity for Deep Growth

Introduction

For many adults, recollections of adolescence conjure up a variety of responses, ranging from feelings of relief over its passing to sighs of recognition over the awkwardness of those first intimate relationships to unforgettable memories of risks taken with friends. I invite you to read this chapter with your own adolescent memories on your sleeve, ready to draw upon as we study and imagine the power of spirituality in the adolescent developmental journey.

Often 16-year-old boys and girls appear void of any spiritual dimension; rather, they seem steeped in their carnal awakenings and the discovery of material pleasures. This chapter suggests that, by stepping back a moment with a more holographic view, we can witness deeper manifestations of this developmental period—youth's essential odyssey toward becoming and more fully realizing their potential.

The theorists included here corroborate the wisdom of the youth with whom I have worked clinically, engaged in recreation or focus groups, and befriended over

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the years. These youthful illustrations give expression to the research and literature, suggesting that there is a real opportunity for youth to discover a portal into the spiritual dimension of life.

Description of Spirituality

In our most intimate public institutions of education, health care, and human service, we often find there is an important missing link. It is the link to the deeper or inner aspects of human development. It is access to the whole self including access to the non-material—the spiritual dimension.

The adolescent spirituality referenced here is the inner, felt experience of a connection to something greater than our thoughts, feelings, material existence or even the people and creatures with which we relate. It is described as energy and is defined uniquely by each of us. Our unique experiences essentially lead us all to a spiritual gestalt through the collective—an experience of something greater than our individual expressions of the spirit. This spiritual dimension resonates in many forms and results in varied impact on each individual life.

Everyone has a spiritual capacity from which to draw, while the twofold challenge often is becoming aware of it and learning how to access it. The spiritual has been part of the human condition from the beginning of time as evidenced by the suggestion of ancient belief in gods and goddesses (Eisler, 1987), religious practices, and rules of behavior all seen in early writings, archeological digs, or the history of humanity (Campbell, 1988). It is when and how one develops this capacity during adolescent development that is of most interest here.

In contrast to organized religious traditions, the spirituality we will explore in this chapter is secular in nature, personal in practice, hidden in each of us until tapped. Organized religion and its practices may well be the form some come to in order to develop their spiritual capacity, but not everyone taps into traditional religions to discover his or her inner dimension. For some, spirituality is deepened through a connection with nature, yogic breathing, spiritual teachers, meditation practices, or peak experiences. Many adolescents have not yet isolated their own spiritual experiences to allow for deeper exploration, and as a result they either resist or simply question organized religion. As a matter of fact, research (Wilson, 2004) with focus groups of middle to late adolescents in New England showed only 35% attended church regularly, while two-thirds of these youth also considered themselves to be religious. In addition, most (86%) considered themselves to be spiritual. One might infer that while these youth may recognize the value of spirituality and religion, they often have no guidance or opportunity to support an exploration of their spiritual dimension.

An adolescent on the journey to discover new opportunities is in the midst of a meaning-making time. He/she has to make sense of body changes, sexual feelings, deeper thoughts about the universe, ways to be in relationship to adults, or life's purpose—"Why am I here?" To make meaning is one basic element of spirituality.

Opportunities in Development

Much of our understanding of development focuses primarily on the cognitive development of the individual. This is sometimes complemented or enhanced by emotional, biophysical, psychosexual, psychosocial, or ego-specific development. Few writers directly discuss spiritual development as a determining aspect of the human developmental process.

More and more theorists approach the topic of development with ideas that reach beyond mechanistic explanations to focus on deeper systemic concepts that seem to reflect the real and complex life of a modern adolescent. When we recognize that the spiritual dimension is critical to healthy adolescent development, our thinking expands beyond categorical limitations.

Carl Jung (1933) acknowledges a deeper experience in development as he refers to the *consciousness of self*. He discusses this higher view of the self that youth can access in order to better understand who they are in order to grow a consciousness of life going on around them. The philosopher and psychologist William James (1952) describes the *Constituents of the Self* in his broad view of human development. He lays out three primary aspects of the self that are guided by what he calls pure ego: material self, social self, and spiritual self. Native American philosophy has long considered spiritual health as part of an individual's natural self-concept (Bopp, 1985). Spirituality is part of the icon of native teaching seen in the medicine wheel. Many Eastern philosophies such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Sufism put great emphasis on the spiritual aspects of life. In these Eastern philosophies the spiritual dimension can hardly be distinguished from other aspects of being human. Even among the poverty and decay in Nepal, references and practices of the spiritual are everywhere in rituals, greetings, altars, icons, and simple day-to-day interactions.

In my 25 years of clinical practice as a substance abuse counselor with youth I have witnessed how significant the absence of the spiritual was for most of the youth with whom I worked. I found consistently that, although boys and girls could change their drug-taking behavior, it was not until they had experienced a deeper shift within themselves that more sustainable and more significant change would occur. It would not come from their thinking about the behaviors needed to change or from resolving the feelings they might have about their families as much as it would result from achieving a shifting perspective about themselves. This was often seen when they realized that maybe they are important in the world regardless of what their family says; maybe they do have a purpose in the world; maybe others do care about and need them; or that maybe life is about more than partying, drug taking, and sex. Call it what you will, but this deeper realization brought energy and hope into many youthful lives. It did not necessarily make everything all better, but it seemed to introduce a vitality and resilience that was not there previously.

On Adolescent Development

Introduction

In many ways spirituality is the experience of living one's life fully. It is the "human beingness" of life that Kegan (1982) describes. Joseph Campbell (1988) sets the stage for this adventure of exploring adolescent spirituality with this quote:

> People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that is what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is the experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonance within our own inner most being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive (p. 3).

The rapture of being alive!—what a powerful segue into the busy and ever-changing world of the adolescent. Adolescents are truly in rapture with being alive. They could not hide it if they tried. Their lives are filled with exploited and missed opportunity after opportunity. It is a time for emerging completely out of the shell, shaking oneself off, and beginning to live with a true sense of one's own existence and control over that existence (Perkins, 1991).

Adolescence as a Spiritual Portal

Erik Erikson (1980) writes about adolescence as a crisis though not an affliction. This crisis characterizes the youthful development as an opportunity. Although there is a particular increase of internal conflict, this time possesses a high potential for growth and learning from the challenges presented. This potential is probably both the greatest beauty and tragedy of adolescence. Many who have embraced this potential by taking risks with what "could be" rather than what "appeared to be" have continually amazed adults with their successes, in what might otherwise have been written off as folly. While some adolescents explore their potential, others remain stuck, never moving beyond what is in front of them, not seeing the potential in moments, relationships, or decisions.

Italian psychologist, Vittorio Guidano (1987), indicates that adolescence is the beginning of a commitment to life. It is a time of new appraisal of the self. The world is actively "discovered" or experienced as volitionally imposing one's view upon reality, as opposed to passively "accepted" or experienced as adapting oneself to an externally defined view of the world as in childhood. Guidano goes on to discuss how adolescent integration experiences set the stage for future life span integration experiences. How a youth experiences the separation process, from the passive role of an infant or from the special parent relationship a child has known, will, to a large degree, determine separation patterns for the person in young adulthood and the rest of his/her life.

How those around her/him perceive the separation process itself will also influence life patterns. Carol Gilligan's perspective (1982) expands on the separation process of youth by suggesting that one knows oneself as separate only in being

in connection with others. Along with that, one experiences relationship only to the degree that one can differentiate others from one's self. It is a wonderful moment for youth to come to the place in their development when they can recognize and even enjoy themselves being connected in meaningful ways to someone else while seeing both their uniqueness and separateness from that person. They can be intimate and still hold on to who they are as individuals. It is not necessary to give over the whole self and be what the other person wants; instead the individual comes to the place of knowing self through knowing another.

So when the adolescent moves through the natural process of separation, it can be a time of learning about the value of both attachment and separation and how these experiences can be meaningful. This experience of separation often results in a sense of alienation, arousing fear, and anger. This, Robert Kegan (1982) would say, stems from the natural fluctuations of the growth process, the duality of inclusion, and independence. This duality becomes the internal battle as one grows: "She loves me, she loves me not." The never-ending desire to be included in tension with a sense of too much inclusion rings the alarm for independence.

In adolescence we see a break in the time symmetry between past and future; an awareness of past and future develops, leading to life planning, future bound-lessness, possibility, and even the feeling of immortality. Guidano (1987) uses the metaphor of the individual life span as a journey, with the "developmental pathway" being built during infancy and the preschool years. It is along the adolescent journey that youth recognize there is no turning back. The possibilities to the future are unending and one can plan for or manipulate these opportunities to achieve them. The future is a wide open highway. Note the recurrence of unrestrictive themes in music for adolescents such as wondering, openness in relationships, sexuality, drug use, traveling, movin' on, and riding down the highway.

Guidano joins with psychoanalytic theory in agreeing that the crucial aspects to life span development do not happen in the first 5 years of life. Rather, it is the integration of process that is or is not accomplished in adolescence. It is the genuine quality of this integration that most powerfully affects the life span developmental processes.

Furthermore, the adolescent is in a search for the "dynamic balance" of the "apparent self"—the way he/she behaves in situations, and the "real self"—the way he/she feels in situations, according to Guidano (1987). There is a constant struggle between being who one is versus being whom friends might want you to be.

There is also a balancing of the notions of "decentering and recentering" (Kegan, 1982). "Decentering from the world" is the experience of a newfound perception of oneness and uniqueness as separate from others. "Recentering on the self" is the pressure toward a steady commitment to that new unique sense of self. So adolescence is a time of tremendous balancing of all this new information about oneself and how one fits into the world. The adolescent tries balancing feelings and behaviors regarding her uniqueness, his oneness, the pressure to be him/herself, and the releasing from the old childhood self.

Jean Piaget (1958) calls adolescence the "metaphysical age par excellence." It is the time when one moves from the concrete thinking of childhood years ("concrete

operational phase") to the abstract thinking processes ("formal operational phase"). The adolescent can reflect and speculate about concepts such as God, right and wrong, and ideals. He/she can distinguish between fantasy and reality.

This is a time where the formation of "identity" culminates according to Erik Erikson (1968). It is the first opportunity to become aware of the "self" as having control of one's destiny. It is a time for differentiating self from one's parents or siblings, for discovering what one thinks and feels about people, things, and issues. The question of "Who am I?" is prevalent.

Writing about youth, Carl Jung (1933) says "the individual finds himself (sic) compelled to recognize and to accept what is different and strange as a part of his own life as a kind of 'also I' " (p. 116). He seeks an identity bigger than him. Perhaps this at least partially explains teenagers' intrigue with the occult, heroes, mystery, rock and roll bands, dissidence, and anarchy. They are looking for that "also I," a larger identity beyond themselves. I would venture to say that this desire is present because the adolescent comes so abruptly into this new consciousness of self. Prior to this, as an infant and a child, he/she had been guarded, protected, dependent, and unconscious of his/her self.

Jung goes on to describe adolescence as a time of becoming conscious of problems in life. It would seem natural for a person at this point to seek company in order to diffuse the burden of the newly identified existence of problems. Identity is becoming clearer due in part to this new consciousness. He/she seeks comfort in relationships with peers who, at least to him/her, are the only ones who understand what it is he/she is feeling. The rest of the world (adults) is out of touch if not peculiar.

Jung (1950) puts his work on the phenomena of consciousness and soul immediately into perspective with these powerful words: "The art of life is the most distinguished and rarest of all the arts." He sees the human experience as something beyond simply observable, quantifiable, or even predictable. Like art, life develops through experience and reflection on that experience from one's unique perspective—one's soul. The main character, Cody (2007), in the film with the same title, shows her viewers this art in action as she explores relationship from her perspective as a pregnant teenager. Her soul deepens as the film progresses. Experience becomes the art of life.

Jung's metaphor has the "Dawn" of development finding the child to be essentially unconscious of problems around him/her. It is not until the "Morning" of youth that consciousness begins to develop; an awareness of the challenges, problems, and opportunities in life. The "Afternoon," or adulthood, is when conscious develops to its fullest with lots of doubts about oneself and the world and a recognition of being at "variance" with oneself; changing from who one thought one was to something new. Consciousness begins in youth and develops in adulthood. Adolescence bridges this divide between youth and adulthood and perhaps should be seen as the lunch hour of adolescence: a frenzied feeding indeed.

Holistic View of Adolescence

Meaning Making

Adolescents quickly and deeply respond to an invitation to explore the whole self. So much of their lives is spent in the superficial realms of their material worlds that they desire more in their lives. As an adolescent develops the search becomes increasingly about finding something more; finding meaning. It may be illusive and even unattainable, yet the search goes on. As one girl reflected during one of my short self-discovery workshops, "Wouldn't it be nice if my friends and I knew this much about each other? What we tell each other is just not deep like what we did here with strangers in half an hour."

During my own late teen years I hitch-hiked and drove many miles, meeting many youthful comrades who were looking for something. Often their comments were of a contemplative nature; they would express a longing for something more but were unable to articulate precisely what it was they sought: "...it was time to move on." When asked about their travels, a common response would be, "I don't know, just gotta' hit the road and see what I find ...," clearly a deeply felt and indefinable search for something different and in many something meaningful.

In early adolescence, there is certainly little to no overt awareness of the search for identity. There is, however, a tremendous amount of energy and excitement over the newfound feelings and sensations of being older and a bit more independent. It is often this first stage that catches a parent by surprise. Suddenly a daughter acts like she is her own person. A son makes many demands on how he will spend his free time.

These changes actually catch the young teenager by a bit of surprise. Like a child in a candy store, he/she is suddenly aware and overwhelmed by all the possibilities. It seems that an adolescent wants it all and assumes the right to have it all. This initial growth of self-awareness often comes in the early teen years with recognition of boundaries being both problematic and even advantageous. He/she begins to create boundaries in order to feel more comfortable in the chaotic world of early adolescence.

At a dinner with friends recently, I listened with amazement as my 14-year-old son described his own personal boundary at school, telling how he liked "fooling around in class at school just to the point that I won't get into too much trouble." He went on to describe his friends as not being the "cool group" or the "nerd group," but rather known as the group who likes to "have fun and not get too crazy."

By around 16 to 17 years of age, youth are generally quite ready to explore themselves more overtly. They have had some of the reckless experience of their earlier years from which to learn. They have already experienced tremendous emotions without necessarily understanding them. Mid-teens may know more about what they want, a little more about who they are as well as who they are not. There seems to be an opening toward self-awareness, a little more patience, and interest in deeper thoughts and ideas.

By about 19 years of age, they have experimented with many behaviors and feelings. They have pondered many things about their lives. They are beginning to realize there is life after high school. The desire to explore their deeper dimensions may increase dramatically and, if and when it does, rapid development of values and behaviors will lead into their first adventures with adulthood. There is a discovery of more than themselves in this bigger world. It is no coincidence that this is when youth are willing to join the armed services and fight a war, become political activists, or grow more outspoken about issues in the world. These older youth are playing out an important developmental challenge—a desire to make a difference in light of their feelings of immortality. *How old were you when you began to look for more meaning in your life?*

Build It and They Will Grow

There is much fertile ground to grow our work with holistic adolescent development. Solid theoretical conclusions speak to the urgency of adolescents accessing the resources they need to know themselves—to find that "also I" by expanding their view to include spiritual development.

In searching for a usable holistic view of human development for my work with youth and adults, I recalled the words of Kurt Lewin (1951): "There is nothing so practical as a good theory." But where was a good practical theory on human development from a holistic perspective? Theorists referred to the physical or material self as psychosexual, biophysical, or biological aspects of development. The intellectual or thinking self is referred to as cognitive processes, cognitive complex, personal cognitive organization, or ego. The social or community self is called psychosocial, social, or moral. The emotional or feeling self is referred to as affective, psychological, or as in emotional states. And the spiritual or conscious self is marginally referred to as self-awareness, consciousness of the self, or self-actualization. Collectively these theorists create a model of human development that suggests a multidimensional view of what it is to be a human being. Each dimension is reflected in specific theories that have proven to assist people in understanding aspects of themselves.

Five Dimensions of the Self

The *Five Dimensions of the Self* (Perkins, 1990) is an inclusive model of human development that describes our thinking and feeling processes, our material and human relationships, and our spiritual nature. Each dimension can be described, examined, and experienced individually, while in actuality all five dimensions are interconnected and do not operate in a vacuum; rather, they exist as a plethora of capacity in all of us. We are organic and open complex systems that draw on multiple resources. This model of *Five Dimensions of the Self* is a way to name and honor

The Five Dimensions of the Self: A Way of Looking at Ourselves (Perkins1990)

Thinking self (mind)

Feeling self (heart)   Material self (body/stuff)

Spiritual self (non-material)   Social self (family/friends/community)
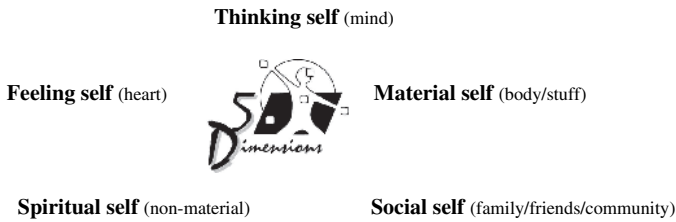
Fig. 20.1 The Five Dimensions of the Self: a way of looking at ourselves (Perkins, 1990)

the capacities that we all have. Capacities exist but they do not automatically come alive. They need to be acknowledged, nurtured, drawn out, developed, and affirmed (Fig. 20.1).

The Thinking Self: What Goes on in My Brain or Mind?

The thinking self is the dimension we rely on to consider possibilities and ultimately make decisions. It helps us create a perception of our world and how it operates. How we experience our world may well be created through our thoughts about it. The deepening thoughts of an adolescent often incite emotions of excitement, confusion, dismay, and frustration. The mind then draws conclusions from all the information it has about what is reality. Because the mind of the adolescent is not yet fully developed, the reality created in the mind of youth may well not be accurate.

To simply notice thoughts that pass through the mind, sometimes at a million miles per hour, is a critical step to distinguishing thoughts that are true about oneself from those that do not fit self-image. This sorting begins to help an adolescent stabilize his/her behavior and be more balanced in acting as he/she really wants to act as opposed to how others may want him/her to act. Journeying through adolescence, youth explore thoughts about fairness, injustice, politics, fun, how others view them, getting what they want when they want it, the universe, meaningfulness, and more immediate needs such as appearance and peers.

The thinking self has tremendous influence during the adolescent years with so many conflicting thoughts and desires leading to behaviors that may be peculiar, risky, and unpredictable. With more life experience and increased self-awareness this dimension begins to be more congruent. The balance of the apparent self and the real self begins to emerge so that the adolescent may act as he/she thinks and feels is right. *What thoughts dominated your mind at eighteen?*

The Feeling Self: What Goes on in My Heart?

An adolescent's feeling self is the dimension that helps him/her experience the quality of life. It recognizes deep and shallow responses to experiences and gives emotional description to it. It might be a quick angry reaction with little thought

behind it when reacting out of pure emotion. It may be a thoughtful compassionate response that balanced the thinking and feeling self. Access to honest emotions challenges everyone. We are often told to put away feelings in exchange for rational thoughts.

It is common to confuse our thoughts with our feelings by describing feelings as thoughts, i.e., *I feel you are a good person*, rather than, *I feel so comfortable around you because you warm my heart*. Feelings can get masked by our thoughts. Learning to express the feeling self effectively brings a fuller experience to life and clarifies how thoughts and experiences feel to us and lead us to certain reactions. Through emotional responses to life, youth find a voice or expression for their chaotic experience. Consider an emotional, even bizarre outburst you may have witnessed from a teenager. There may be lots of confusion and there is likely rationale behind it. *How did you deal with strong feelings in early adolescence?*

The Material Self: What About My Body and All My Stuff?

Experiencing the adolescent world through the material self draws immediately on body sensation and image, life-support materials (headsets, iPods, and particular fashions), and physical expression through movement (sports and dance). What one sees (or thinks one sees) is what one gets. This perception of oneself in the world and the life circumstances that influence that perception together play a powerful role in developing the material self.

Our material perception also sets up our emotional responses to things in the world. That is to say, if I think I am fine just the way I am, an emotional response to life will most likely be from a confident perspective; for example, the adolescent who tells a friend offering a marijuana joint to smoke that he does not want to smoke it. In doing so, he is not afraid the friend will no longer be a friend. From a position of confidence, the notion of peer pressure is insignificant. Good material choices in adolescence come from a perception of confidence in being satisfied with who one is. On the other hand, for the adolescent who thinks of the self as not good enough, an emotional response that may follow is insecurity, leading to unhealthy choices. Peer pressure thrives when lack of confidence influences poor choice-making—smoking that pot even though it is not wanted; when fears dwarf confidence and reason.

The material life of an adolescent focuses on body image and possessions, "my stuff" as one 19-year-old put it in one of my workshops. What we wear—clothes, jewelry, or hair style—makes a statement to others about whom we are or what we believe. The emotional and social need to look a certain way, to feel a part of a peer group, or make a certain political statement determines the physical manifestation of this need. Tattoos, body piercing, hairstyles, or choice of clothing all can be deliberate ways to say "I am me," "I am different," "I believe a certain way of thinking," and "I am part of a certain group." However, the visible choices youth make regarding body and clothing often precedes their consciousness of a bigger process of identity development. Instead of a cognitive decision to be themselves, it is a reaction coming from the emotional need to be part of a group. This is what

can lead to personal beliefs being compromised, such as choosing inappropriate or unsafe sexuality, drug use, gang membership, and criminal activity, since the need for belonging can dominate so much at this time of life. Photographer Carley Stevens-Mclaughlin (2002) captured thoughts about the adolescent material self, as with the following statement by "Travis," a male teen:

> I never considered myself gothic. I don't like to be categorized; I like to be myself. Everyone's different. Even if people dress the same it doesn't mean they're the same in anyway except appearance. I would wear dresses or skirts to school if there weren't people who would really dislike that and probably abuse me for it.

What was your' relationship to material possessions as a teen?

The Community Self: How I Connect with Others in the World

The adolescent community self is the dimension that draws on both peer and adult relationships influencing who one becomes throughout life. The community self is made up of relationships to people and the environment. It is through social interactions that we find meaning and opportunity and how healthy or unhealthy behaviors can be reinforced. Meaningful work gets recognized, leading to civic responsibility, and a sense of responsibility for self. The development of peer relationships through friends and lovers grows very strong, especially in early adolescence. The importance of peer relationships seems to diminish some in strength and intensity as independence is realized in later years. Intimate relationships, however, seem to continue and even deepen.

The larger community of friends and other relationships may vary in scope and intensity but are central to survival in an unfolding world. The discovery of the self and of the bigger world beyond childhood brings many other people into the adolescent world. Friends become essential for support and camaraderie as well as simple distraction, comfort, and fun. For the typical adolescent, friends may be seen as the only ones who understand what he/she is thinking. There is an urgency driving his/her belief that adults simply cannot know "what it is like for me. I must be with my friends now!" However, an apparent contradiction arises in that adolescents simultaneously have a growing desire to be recognized and engaged by adults; but the adolescent's peer bonds often dominate because of the lack, or perceived lack, of adults reaching out to engage and to recognize youth in a meaningful way.

Skills such as communication, conflict management, and self-expression and the desirable traits of good judgment and a sense of humor develop through social interaction and allow the individual to live a healthy life. *Which adults, other than parents, were important to you? What made them important?*

The Spiritual Self: What Goes on in My Soul?

The adolescent spiritual self varies for each person and is unlike the other dimensions in quality of description. When youth describe their spiritual self they tell of deep and very personal things such as their relationship to nature, music, their

soul, God, their dead relatives, or feelings for which they can find no words. It seems to be the one aspect of ourselves that plays a role in each of the other dimensions. It may be the glue that holds all the dimensions together. It may be a religious form for some. It may be an earth-based form for others and even form-less yet for others A common ingredient is relationship to something greater than only one's self; as described in Alcoholic Anonymous as the *Higher Power*. It is that non-material dimension of the self that is elusive and difficult to capture in description.

Exploring the self more deeply within, youth will describe an inner life that is a source of calmness, safety, comfort, and even guidance. It becomes evident through music, writing, sitting and thinking, talking with friends and, for some, a relation-ship with a higher being. It gets described as an energy that moves one to do good and to be interconnected with others. It is part of a bigger energy of some kind. One 16-year-old described his understanding of the soul as "It is like an inner body that tells you what to do." A high school senior girl described spirituality as "the morals that affect your thinking and your decision-making."

The inner world of the adolescent is alive. It may be dormant from a lack of self-awareness, yet it can be awakened with the right opportunity. From focus groups which I facilitated with various high risk (homeless, runaway, in state custody, gay, lesbian, or questioning) youth exploring spirituality (Wilson, 2004), a pregnant teen said "You have to believe in something. You don't know if it's really there or not. You can't see it or touch it, but you just have to believe" (p. 31). An 18-year-old male reflected, "I am only on this earth for a short period of time; If I can make somebody smile, even if my life is feeling like hell, at least I made somebody feel good about themselves" (p. 31).

"I am trying to figure that out right now – what it is we're living for. Like, why? It's really a hard thing for me, because it doesn't make any sense why people live for the things they do," a 17-year-old female thoughtfully considered (p. 31).
When did you first think about your spirituality?

A Context for Educating Youth

For the adolescent, there is fear, excitement, and tremendous conviction about the more mysterious aspects to life. The mysteries of the inner life rarely find oppor-tunity to be explored through any means. The spiritual self often lacks exploration even with family, in peer conversations, or in youth programs and educational set-tings. When it does find its way into conversation, it seems to consistently resonate strongly through diverse thoughts about God or energy, a range of feelings like conviction or doubt, as well as physical reactions of quiet stillness or raucous dance.

Youth have the resources to look deeply at themselves; stand back and assess themselves; see their journey as an exciting opportunity to get to know the self; and find the portals into their self-discovery. Adults can help youth to find these portals as long as they too have done this internal exploration. Education that draws on the known to explore the unknown is at the heart of what Jane Vella (2002)

calls Dialogue Education. It is through this kind of dialogue that we help youth first acknowledge what they already know or think they know and then move them deeper into their own understanding of the spiritual in their lives. The Five Dimensions of the Self provide a context to have the dialogue with youth about the whole self. We can start with the assumption that we all have all the capacities of all five dimensions. From there, exploring each dimension briefly leads to a dialogue about how they interconnect, moving on to what the spiritual can really look or feel like. I find youth will consistently delve into this kind of dialogue if we honor what they do indeed perceive regarding the spiritual before we facilitate in guiding them to what they may not know.

Consider how you describe each of your Five Dimensions of Self. Which are most prominent right now and which were least present during your adolescent years?

Adolescent Spiritual Self

How Does an Adolescent Make Sense of Spirituality?

A 16-year-old girl at the Alternative High School in Montpelier, Vermont (Perkins, 1991), wrote about her understanding of spirituality in a self-assessment at one of my workshops:

> My understanding of spirituality is ... life and your conscience which is the door way to God and to your soul and you can find it in anything you see beauty in. Love, music, colors, friends, God, thoughts, people, woods, feelings, yourself (p. 45).

These words are evidence that she is certainly familiar with the complexity of the concept of spirituality and knows where she can experience it in her life. She describes with ease many aspects of spirituality.

So let us now return to some of the theorists' points of view which support adolescent spiritual development. Erikson (1980) writes about the high "growth potential" of adolescence and as it being the time when the formation of her identity culminates. Spirituality inspires further growth potential and informs a youth's identity. So when the spiritual dimension is explored, we see deep and sustainable growth. When you meet a teenager who has this deeper sense of self you see it in his/her body, hear it in his/her words, sense it in his/her presence, and feel it in his/her compassion.

Guidano (1987) writes about adolescence as beginning a time of commitment to life; a time of first recognizing the differentiation of past and future; and a discovery of the uniqueness of the self and how one experiences oneself and is experienced by others in the world. A teenager needs this commitment to his/her life in order to give it meaning and direction. The search for meaning and direction can lead to discovering his/her spiritual sense of life. Meaning begins to take shape with this larger view of life—a view beyond one's material self alone.

Gilligan (1982) speaks of the value of attachment in relationship. In the spiritual sense it may be the youth's attachment to beliefs that fit who he/she thinks he/she is.

It may be attachment to a teacher or deity that gives a comforting relationship that he/she can rely on in difficult times.

Piaget (1958) refers to adolescence as a time when abstract thinking, reflection, and speculation begin. Spiritual discovery requires reflection or inner exploration. Many religious and secular practices support this kind of discovery—prayer, ritual, mediation, yoga, writing, or music. At a large high school in Vermont the health education curriculum has included mediation and yoga (www.talkaboutwellness.org, 2007). The students and faculty have embraced this opportunity in numbers exceeding what any of the school personnel could have imagined. The school recently sought funding for more yoga mats to meet the increasing demand. Youth long for time to reflect quietly and deeply as well as speculate about their lives.

Jung (1933) also emphasizes the discovery of what is different and strange about one's life but goes on to include the adolescent search for a connection to something else, the "also I." Youth dream. They look to potential and opportunity. They need to be part of something bigger than themselves. When given time to reflect and speculate on their spiritual dimension they can see how it can provide an "also I." It opens new doorways of understanding and ways of being in the world.

Youthful changes are acknowledged in some cultures through organized religion. The Jewish Bar Mitzvah and the Christian confirmation are two rituals that acknowledge this time of change for youth in early adolescence. In both of these there comes recognition of the young person by adults in the respective communities. Along with social and cultural affirmation, there is often a spiritual acknowledgment that manifests in these practices. In American Indian practices there is the Circle of Courage (Brendtro, 1990) that explores the spiritual nature of life.

Conclusion and Openings

All in all, adolescence is a monumental time of transition from childhood into adulthood when important thinking processes and emotional responses develop. Youth can come to consciousness and self-awareness and discover their identity. It is a time to begin looking outside of the self and to recognize the self as an active participant in the world—choosing sides with issues of importance. These powerful developmental events unfold in adolescent bodies, hearts, minds, and souls and especially in relationship to others in their lives. Adolescent development persists from about age 11 on into the late twenties and even thirties in some cases. Along this span of life are many portals into the spiritual dimension for these high energy and vulnerable youth. Portals will vary depending upon the path chosen as youth step cautiously through these turbulent years. They may have healthy or unhealthy beliefs and behaviors. They may delve into drug use, deeper relationships, sexuality, travel, new ways of being in the world, provocative questioning, deep listening, the natural wilderness, yoga or meditation, the mind–body–spirit connection, and/or explore other portals into the spiritual self.

One of my most influential spiritual portals came in Old Snowmass, Colorado, at the age of 19. I was growing weary of all the drug use and shallow relationships. I

was looking for something more in this beautiful fun-loving valley. I signed up for a weekend retreat called "The Art of Loving" that a friend of mine was facilitating. This opportunity opened to me without my seeking; it just came to me and it was clear that I should step into it—a portal into myself. I left that intense weekend changed forever, especially in terms of how I viewed myself in the world. I differentiated myself from others in my life—even from my family and my best friend. To this day I count that portal as key to my personal growth. Prior to that event, drugs, sex, and Colorado were all that was on my mind.

Adolescents are prime candidates for the discovery of their spiritual selves. They may be developing this part of themselves as these changes are being experienced; or as their identity becomes more explicit; discovering their spiritual self. Adolescent youth are emerging from an identity with parents only to discover that there is a "cruel, crazy, beautiful world" (Clegg, 1990) out there, which is scary and wonderful all at the same time. They need much support to help them make this discovery within themselves.

As one parent ruminated about how she might help youth after she attended the Spirituality of Prevention Conference in Fairlee, Vermont (1994, p. 3). "I am. I'm worthy. I'm released from the earthly expectation. I'm acceptable. There is reason. If we were able to instill this in our youth, would they have the need to try to escape? Spiritually loving fully, completely, accepting all others for who they are without judgment. I pray that this will be ours and our children's way of life."

According to my clinical observations with youth in multiple settings, adolescents do wonder about the meaningfulness of life. They are interested in spirituality and what it means to them. They generally believe in God, life and death, willpower, right and wrong, and love. Several youths describe spirituality in complex ways. Based on their feedback, it is clear that this is important to them. It can act as that part of themselves that provides consistency and a sense of inclusion. It is also closely related to self-esteem. The more one takes charge of her life with a confident self-perception and embraces it, the more likelihood there is of having high self-esteem. Spirituality can either be a catalyst for this self-acceptance or an outcome of it.

In conclusion, the words one teenager provided on her workshop evaluation (Perkins, 1991) show how, when given the opportunity to explore the deeper dimensions of the self, adolescents are ready and waiting. She described what she liked about the spirituality workshop: "What I realized in myself that I didn't know" (p. 49). This statement emphasizes how important it is that we listen to and support youth in their developmental process and that we recognize spiritual development as part of that process. We can help them start with what they know and move them into an open dialogue about what they can know.

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Chapter 21
Reflection for Spiritual Development in Adolescents

Charlene Tan

Abstract Adolescence is a period characterised by a personal quest for purpose, meaning and relationships. This chapter distinguishes between religiously "tethered" and "untethered" conceptions of spirituality. The former is linked to or housed within the tradition of a religious faith, while the latter is concerned with beliefs and practices that are disconnected from religions. This chapter proposes that reflection is effective in promoting spiritual development in adolescents so that they can derive personal destiny and direction; develop their personal identity and ethical worldview; and build relationships with others. Given that adolescents are at the crossroads of life and face many issues and challenges that are unique, uncertain and value-conflict, they need to critically reflect on practical interests and examine broad issues on religiously tethered and untethered spirituality in their lives.

Introduction

Confronted with issues and concepts that are embedded in existential and transcendent realms, adolescents undergo major identity transformations during this period of life (Erikson, 1968; Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude, 2003; King & Boyatzis, 2004). They experience great ambiguity and uncertainty as they move beyond an absolute form of knowing based on authority towards multiple perspectives, critical self-awareness and construction of one's own beliefs and values (Love, 2001). Students in late adolescence in particular experience "heightened sensitivity about personal identity, relationships, ideology, and decisions about the future" when "concerns about individual purpose, meaning, and commitment interact with forces of cognitive development, maturation, and social expectations" (Dalton, 2001, p. 18).This chapter proposes that reflection is effective in promoting spiritual

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development in adolescents so that they can derive personal destiny and direction; develop their personal identity and ethical worldview; and build relationships with others.

Spirituality and Spiritual Development

It is important, at the outset, to distinguish between religiously "tethered" and "untethered" conceptions of spirituality (Alexander & McLaughlin, 2003). The former is linked to or housed within the tradition of a religious faith. It "takes its shape and structure from various aspects of religion with which it is associated and that make it possible for us to identify criteria for 'spiritual development' " (Alexander & McLaughlin, 2003, p. 359). Religion here is defined as an organised and shared system of beliefs and practices related to a transcendent entity such as God, higher power or ultimate truth or reality, and is closely linked to a particular faith institution (Reich, Oser, & Scarlett, 1999; Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001; Love, 2001; Chae, Kelly, Brown, & Bolden, 2004; King & Boyatzis, 2004). Religiously untethered spirituality, on the other hand, is concerned with beliefs and practices that are disconnected from religions. This form of spirituality is not associated with any named supernatural power, institutionalised doctrines, or religious affiliations. It is about *transcendence*—where one reflects on things pertaining to one's spirit or soul. It propels the search for personal meaning, purpose and identity in life, connectedness with others (whether divine or human), and a commitment to contribute to others. In terms of the search for meaning, personal cultivation, manifestations of spirituality in life, responses to aspects of the natural and human world, and the collective domain, religiously untethered spirituality tends to be unstructured, less specific, more open-ended and diffused (Alexander & McLaughlin, 2003).

Spiritual development is a process of self-transcendence where the individual is an active agent in shaping his or her own spiritual growth (Benson et al., 2003; King & Boyatzis, 2004). Dowling et al. (2004) define adolescent spirituality as "seeing life and living in new and better ways, taking something to be transcendent or of great value, and defining self and relation to others in ways that move beyond the petty or material concerns to genuine concern for others" (p. 7). That adolescents show a high interest in spirituality is seen in the Search Institute's survey of 218,000 6th- to 12th-grade youth in public schools during the 1999–2000 school year in the United States. The survey informed us that 69% of 6th- to 12th-grade youth reported that "being religious or spiritual" is at least somewhat important, and 54% said it is quite or extremely important (cited in Benson et al., 2003, p. 208). In Singapore, adolescents have also increasingly turned to religion. According to Population Census 2000 for youth aged 15–24, Buddhism rose from 29.1% in 1990 to 38.9% in 2000 while Islam saw a slight increase of 0.9% from 17.7% in 1990 to 18.6% in 2000 (National Youth Council, 2007). The interest in religion is evident in the high percentage of religious conversions among adolescents. A survey by *The Straits Times* on 622 Singapore residents aged 15 and above showed that 27% of believers

were converted when they were below 15 years old, 19% were converted when they were aged 15–19 years old, 26% between 20 and 24, and 12% when they were aged 25–29 years old (cited in National Youth Council, 2007). Love and Talbot (1999, p. 364) identify the following characteristics of spiritual development (SD):

1. Spiritual development (SD) involves seeking personal authenticity, genuineness and wholeness as an aspect of identity development.
2. SD involves continually transcending one's current locus of centricity.
3. SD involves developing a greater connectedness to self and others through relationships and union with community.
4. SD involves deriving meaning, purpose and direction in one's life.
5. SD involves increasing openness to exploring a relationship with an intangible and pervasive power or essence that exists beyond human existence and rational human knowing.

In short, spiritual development helps adolescents to derive personal destiny and direction; develop their personal identity and ethical worldview; and build relationships with others.

The Concept and Nature of Reflection

To see how reflection in spirituality is relevant to adolescents, it is instructive to clarify the concept and nature of reflection. Dewey (1933) defines reflection as the active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends. It involves a cycle of paying deliberate attention to one's own action in relation to intentions so as to expand one's options and make decisions about improved ways of acting. Dewey (1933) identifies three characteristics of a reflective learner: open-mindedness, whole-heartedness, and intellectual responsibility. Dewey views open-mindedness as the freedom from the prejudice, partisanship and other such habits as close the mind, and the willingness to consider multiple or novel ideas. It focuses on the learner's self-examination of aims, beliefs, assumptions and actions. This is premised on the belief that one's own experiences and knowledge are essential to reflection (Schon, 1987). This process of self-evaluation requires the learner to be open-minded.

Whole-heartedness refers to the genuine enthusiasm to channel one's mental, emotional and physical resources to resolve a problem (Dewey, 1933). It is essential for the learners to examine, frame and attempt to solve the dilemmas that one faces. Finally, intellectual responsibility refers to the consideration and adoption of the consequences of any proposed plan (Dewey, 1933). A reflective learner is one who constantly reviews and changes his or her goals and actions. Such reflection empowers the learners to connect the insights gained from the reflective process to changes they are making in real life.

There are two continua along which conceptions of the notion of reflection are located (McLaughlin, 1999; Tan, 2008a). The first continuum refers to the nature of reflection, while the second continuum refers to the scope and objects of reflection. McLaughlin (1999) identifies one view of reflection which stresses the explicit and the systematic, and one that emphasises the implicit and the intuitive. The type of reflection that is explicit and systematic involves "technical reason" or what Schon called "technical rationality". Under this notion, the focus of reflection is on possessing the technical knowledge and skills to apply to routinisable and pre-specifiable procedures and strategies. McLaughlin associates this to Aristotle's notion of *techne* which is "an activity of making or production (*poesis*), aimed at a pre-specifiable and durable outcome (a product or state of affairs) which constitutes its purpose (*telos*)" (McLaughlin, 1999, p. 12).

At the other end of the continuum is a type of reflection that is implicit and intuitive based on the ideas of Schon (1987). Arguing that one's daily decisions require judgements which go beyond the technical, Schon points out that they involve "reflection in action" which is tacit and intuitive. Given that adolescents face many issues which are unique, uncertain and value-conflicted, they need to set, frame, construct and solve problems based on their reflective judgements. McLaughlin (1999) sees a parallel between Schon's account of reflection and Aristotle's *praxis* which "involves the engagement of persons in activity with others which is non-instrumental in that it is not intended to realise goods 'external' to the persons involved but rather excellences characteristic of a worthwhile form of life" (pp. 14–15). *Praxis* requires "a kind of knowledge that was more personal and experiential, more supple and less formulable than the knowledge conferred by *techne*" (Dunne, 1993, p. 10, cited in McLaughlin, 1999, p. 15). Aristotle describes the knowledge of *praxis* as *phronesis* (or practical wisdom) which is a major ordering agency in our lives.

While the first continuum focuses on the nature of reflection, the second continuum along which views of reflection can be located refers to the scope and objects of reflection. McLaughlin distinguishes between reflection that involves specific and proximate matters, and that which involves general and contextual ones. The former relates to the present and particular concerns of the adolescents, while the latter focuses on matters viewed from a broader and less immediate perspective. These may include the overall aims and purposes of one's life, and questions of a philosophical, psychological, social and political kind.

McLaughlin's distinctions between the explicit and systematic versus the implicit and intuitive (in terms of the nature of reflection), and the specific and proximate versus the general and contextual (in terms of the scope and objects of reflection), are echoed by other writers. Elliot (1993) contrasts two main types of reflection: reflection that focuses on technical interest, and reflection that focuses on practical interest. Describing the first type of reflection as non-problematic, impersonal and non-critical, he notes that it involves clear and unambiguous standards, impersonal means-ends rules as the source of standards and instrumental thinking. On the other hand, reflection that has a practical interest involves intrinsically problematic standards, regards the person as the source of standards, and promotes critical

self-reflection. The former serves a technical interest in controlling and predicting the material and social environment, while the latter serves a practical interest in acting consistently with human values. While McLaughlin, Schon and Elliot identify two main types of reflection, van Manen (1977, 2002) proposes three levels of reflectivity: technical reflection, practical reflection and critical reflection. Technical reflection is concerned with techniques and strategies for specific goals, while critical reflection examines broader ethical issues. Situated between these two types of reflection is practical reflection which goes beyond looking at skills, strategies and rules to question the goals themselves. Louden (1991) highlights four forms of reflection, from technical reflection at one end of the spectrum to critical reflection at the other end. The other two types of reflections are personal reflection which focuses on one's own life, and problematic reflection which aims at the resolution of the problems of professional action as explicated by Schon's account of the reflective practitioner (Elliot, 1993).

King and Kitchener's (1994) three levels of reflective thinking are also helpful for us to understand the stages of reflection. The first level is pre-reflective thinking (levels 1, 2 and 3) where the individuals justify their opinions in a simple fashion because they fail to perceive that answers to the problem at hand must contain some elements of uncertainty. Such learners often view the problems they face as having a high degree of certainty and completeness. The next level is quasi-reflective thinking (levels 4 and 5) where the individuals recognise that knowledge claims about ill-structured problems contain elements of uncertainty. While they can acknowledge differences between well- and ill-structured problems, they are often at a loss when asked to solve ill-structured problems because they do not know how to deal with the inherent ambiguity of such problems. The third level is reflective thinking (levels 6 and 7) where the individuals recognise that one's understanding of the world is not "given" but must be actively constructed and that knowledge must be understood in relationship to the context in which it was generated. This view presumes that judgments must not only be grounded in relevant data, but that they must also be evaluated to determine their validity.

Mclaughlin's notion of reflection that is explicit, systematic, specific and proximate corresponds to Elliot's technical interest, van Manen's and Louden's technical reflection. Such reflection falls under King and Kitchener's first two stages of reflective thinking: Pre-reflective thinking and quasi-reflective thinking. On the other hand, McLaughlin's conception of reflection that is implicit, intuitive, general and contextual corresponds to Elliot's practical interest, van Manen's practical and critical reflections and Louden's critical reflection. Such reflection matches King and Kitchener's reflective thinking where one actively constructs, assesses and evaluates judgements. Reflection for spiritual development in adolescents should go beyond the explicit and the systematic which emphasises expert knowledge and skills that are applied to predictable situations. Given that adolescents are at the crossroads of life and face many issues and challenges that are unique, uncertain and value-conflicted, they need to "reflect in action" (Schon, 1987) by setting, framing, constructing and solving problems based on their personal judgements. They also need to reflect beyond specific and proximate matters to consider general and

contextual issues that concern their meaning in life, long-term plans and identity formation. By moving towards the third level of reflective thinking (King & Kitchener, 1994), adolescents will be able to reflect beyond technical concerns (Elliot, 1993; van Manen, 1977, 2002; Louden, 1991) and critically reflect on practical interests and examine broad issues on religiously tethered and untethered spirituality in their lives.

Reflection for Religiously Tethered Spiritual Development

Reflection is instrumental in the development of both religiously tethered and untethered conceptions of spirituality. Within a religious framework, reflection can help adolescents develop their personal ethical worldview and build relationships with others, thereby giving them a sense of personal destiny and direction.

Benefits for Adolescents

Within a religious context, educators should aim at providing a stable initial culture for the adolescents to reflect on their purpose of life, their relationship with the divine, and their desired personal values to guide them in their life journey. A number of writers have indeed pointed out how religion(s) can help a person to think and act morally. Moulavi avers that "it is a fact that moral education cannot succeed without religious education, because morality has its foundation and root in religion" (1987, p. 8). Haydon (1997) argues that religious beliefs provide the wider framework of meaning for moral demands to be experienced. Jesuit priest Dr (Rev) Robert Balhetchet, who was involved in preparing the secular moral education programme in Singapore, explains that there is an added dimension for Christians to be moral as they believe that goodness comes from God (*The Straits Times*, 22 October 2002). By underscoring things that are metaphysical and transcendent, most religions also promote "less pragmatic and utilitarian attitudes and dispositions [such] as faith, hope, charity, forgiveness, chastity and so forth" (Carr, 1995, p. 95). Some parents also share the belief that religious knowledge is salubrious for their children's moral development. It is reported that non-religious Chinese parents in Hong Kong are keen to send their children to religious schools because they perceive that these schools have more effective moral education (Cheng, 2004). In their research, Taris & Semin (1997) also conclude that the religious faith of mothers helps in the transmission of moral values to their children. They note that widely shared and objectively important core values such as caring, honesty and fairness are passed down from the mothers to their children.

However, it is important to note that the mere teaching of religious knowledge does not automatically translate into greater moral commitment. The positive effect of religion on morality depends on other factors such as religious orienta-

tion and level of education. In an empirical study on how religiosity affects moral development, Ji (2004) concludes that the degree of devout commitment to traditional religious doctrines and beliefs is conversely related to the likelihood that Christians act at the principled level of moral reasoning. This means that a fervent believer who holds dogmatically to teachings from his or her religious leaders is less likely to reason morally and act independently. This can be potentially dangerous if the religious beliefs are not shared by others in the society, or worse, are detrimental to society at large.

Besides developing the adolescents' ethical worldview within a religious framework, reflection on spirituality also encourages adolescents to build relationships with others, especially those of different faiths. Reflection should go beyond highlighting the commonality in religions and draw participants' attention to the disagreements among the religious traditions without leading adolescents to judgemental thinking. A dialogue among youth of different faith traditions is based on the common understanding that there exists a variety of moral traditions and legitimate moral differences (Runnymede, 2000). Reflections underscoring the ambiguous, controversial and dangerous are necessary to develop in students "religious literacy" which is crucial for the development of active citizenship (Ipgrave, 2003). By understanding and reflecting on the conceptual differences in religious worldviews and their influences on the motivations and behaviour of believers, students can develop their own beliefs and values critically (Erricker, 2006). Without such dialogues aimed at inter-religious polemics, interfaith dialogue exercises remain superficial as universal agreement is reached but is devoid of meaningful ethical, metaphysical, anthropological or theological content (Lindholm, 2004, cited in van Doorn-Harder, 2007). What is recommended is a culture of tolerance where religious education takes place in an open and inquiring way.

Reflections based on Dewey's open-mindedness, whole-heartedness and intellectual responsibility can be encouraged when teachers refer to universal themes and values from religious sources to get students to reflect on, discuss and apply the values learnt. For example, teachers could introduce moral teachings from different religions and ask students to reflect on their significance for each religion and draw comparative perspectives. For example, the golden rule in Christianity, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you" finds parallels with the teachings in Islam: "No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself", and in Buddhism: "Hurt no others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful".

Reflections can also be introduced when students of various faiths participate in school or community projects where they are encouraged to practically reflect on their learning experiences. Through working on shared projects such as environmental or service learning endeavours, they will be able to build friendships with those of different religious worldviews. This helps them to go beyond their preconceptions of people of other faiths, and dispels certain prejudices and stereotypes they may have about others. Schools can also introduce specific curriculum aimed at inter-religious education through critical reflection.

An example of inter-religious engagement is a special curriculum known as *(Re)embracing Diversity in New York City Public Schools: Educational Outreach for Muslim Sensitivity* to foster dialogue and process for public schools in New York. The curriculum aims to address and prevent intolerance towards Arab American and Muslim American students in the wake of the tragic events of 9/11; and promote interpersonal and intercultural dialogue based on tolerance and respect for ethnic and religious diversity by raising students' critical understanding of and sensitivity towards Muslims in America (Kenan, 2005). Through activities such as problem solving, critical reflection and collaborative learning, the students learn about topics such as "Towards Understanding Islam and Muslims"; "A Common Language for Discussing Bias and Hatred"; "Reflections on Prejudice" and "Field Trip to an Islamic Institution". Kenan (2005) points out that research has shown that the curriculum has succeeded in promoting and restoring the value of tolerance, peace and diversity in public school communities.

It is also essential to draw the students' reflection to the diversity within a religion so as to avoid stereotyping a particular religion as intolerant, radical or militant. In the aftermath of a series of terrorist acts by some Islamist groups, it is especially important to direct the adolescents' spiritual reflections to the different worldviews and trends within Islam. For example, students could engage in critical dialogue by learning about the teaching of pluralism and respect for all religions in many Islamic traditions. One Islamic scholar explains

> Islam is categorical: "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (*Surat al-Baqarah*, 2:256) and "To you be your Way and to me mine" (*Surat al-Kafirun*, 109:6). The Qur'an also reminds humankind that society, by divine design, is plural that is, multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and multi-religious (Moten, 2005, p. 233).

The students' attention could also be drawn to the critical humanist tradition in Islam which is a branch of Islamic thought that is often overlooked today due to the limelight given to the interpretations of Islam by some Islamist groups. The critical humanist tradition seeks to be open to new knowledge through the exercise of human reasoning while remaining rooted in Islam. It regards human beings as God's steward on earth who have been given the task to attain perfection in this life. This is achieved by exercising one's rational faculties given by God to integrate various branches of knowledge to become a virtuous person who is integrated into society. An Islamic scholar argues that "It is only with the recognition of the efficacy of human reasoning, an intellectual openness to enrich Muslim intellectual culture, and the consciousness to fulfill the task for humanity, that Muslims would be able to appreciate the tradition of critical humanism which was once explored and developed in the classical period" (Azhar, 2008, p. 130). Another Islamic scholar concurs that Muslims need to "work towards cultivating certain traits, such as the courage to live, willing to stand on their own, taking initiatives, sensitive toward others' rights and the common needs of humanity; willing to co-operate for common good, in the continuous process of social change, without fear of the changes taking place" (Soedjatmoko, 1985, p. 275, cited in Azhar, 2008, p. 130).

Religion and Indoctrination

In the context of religiously tethered spirituality where the problem of religious indoctrination is a concern, reflection is essential to develop the learners' rational autonomy and avoid indoctrination. There are three main approaches to religious education available to educators, namely, teaching *for* commitment (the confessional approach), teaching *about* commitment (the phenomenological approach) and teaching *from* commitment (Thiessen, 1993). The confessional approach tends to indoctrinate by paralysing one's intellectual capacity characterised by an inability to justify one's beliefs and consider alternatives (Tan, 2005, 2008b). Indoctrination is reprehensible because it makes a person incapable of thinking independently. In extreme cases, indoctrinated individuals are easily manipulated by others to inflict harm on themselves and/or others. Such an approach is inconsistent with the aim of parents and educators in a democratic society to develop rational autonomy in children. There is no reason why religious beliefs must be taught in an unthinking manner: rational autonomy is compatible with genuine religious commitment. After all, as Laura and Leahy (1988) put it, "an authentic faith is an autonomous faith" (p. 259).

Rejection of the confessional approach has given rise to the phenomenological approach, which teaches about commitment. This approach seeks to avoid indoctrination by rejecting any induction into substantial spiritual beliefs, and concentrating instead on different social and cultural expressions of spirituality. Rather than simply teaching one religion, children are exposed to a wide range of religious views in a neutral and objective fashion. The phenomenological approach has met with a number of objections (Tan, 2008c). The most common criticism is that it does not represent the true character of religion in its Herculean quest to avoid any religious point of view. Scraps and fragments of different religious traditions are presented which are meaningless, superficial and distortive of any real understanding of religion (Carr, 1996). Such an unreflective approach is not only inadequate in giving students a realistic picture of religion, it has the danger of misrepresenting the character of a faith. By making little or no reference to the lived experiences of religious believers, this approach also does not encourage students to see religion beyond its status as an academic subject. By presenting a truncated and superficial account of religion, it is also not favoured by parents and educators who want their children and students to have an empathetic awareness of religion. It is also questionable that indoctrination will inevitably occur when only one religion is taught, which is the presupposition for teaching a plurality of religious views to children. Whether indoctrination has taken place depends on how religious views are taught, not how many religions are addressed. A teacher could deliberately teach comparative and historical material on religions in a manner that amounts to the indoctrination of a particular religion. Hence, the phenomenological method, with its emphasis on neutrality and pluralism, cannot ensure a religious education that is non-indoctrinative. In fact, some have countered that religious liberals who embrace the phenomenological method can be as dogmatic as religious conservatives. For example, Alexander (1992) maintains that "religious liberals are attracted to their own dogmas, from

the secularist denial of any value in theological discourse, to claims that ultimate authority for one's religious posture lie[s] in individual autonomy or the positivist historical study of tradition" (p. 385).

What is needed to avoid the problems associated with the confessional and phenomenological approaches is to promote a form of reflection that balances "openness" with "rootedness". An ethos of openness is needed for participants to explore critically the domains of religion. Alexander and McLaughlin (2003) explain that "open" refers to "the range of traditions and perspectives considered, the attitude that is invited toward them, and the forms of autonomous judgement and response sought on the part of students" (p. 365). This "openness" is accompanied by "rootedness" where students should be given the opportunity to acquire an insider perspective through an empathetic awareness of and critical approach towards religious traditions. Arguing for "openness with roots", Alexander and McLaughlin (2003) posit that participants should be "exposed to, and involved in, a form of education articulated by a particular conception of the good, but they are encouraged to put their formation into critical perspectives and to make any acceptance of it on their part authentic" (p. 369; also Thiessen, 1993; Tan, 2008c). Reflection through openness and rootedness both affirm the value and uniqueness of the adolescents and give them a sense of value in connectedness to a faith community:

> For example, if a religious tradition emphasises the faith community, without valuing the uniqueness of its members, youth may not have the necessary opportunities to explore different aspects of identity. When youth are not given the freedom to experience moratorium, and are either forced or pressured into adopting a specific ideology, social group, or expression of spirituality, identity foreclosure is at risk (King, 2003, p. 202).

In other words, reflection for religiously tethered spirituality is premised on an empathetic awareness of and critical approach towards various religions worldviews. Leirvik (1999) posits that "religions need to be approached both from the 'insider' as living sources for faith, morals and life orientation—and from the 'outsider', as objects for critical investigation" (p. 83, cited in Leganger-Krogstad, 2003, p. 179). Such a form of reflection can be achieved by providing the balance between openness and rootedness through the "teaching from commitment" approach (Tan, 2008b). In this approach, adolescents are introduced to a particular religion from *within* the religious system while developing the adolescent's reflective thinking and enhancing rational autonomy. Using the idea of a "primary culture" developed by Ackerman (1980), McLaughlin (1984) highlights the importance of parents' providing a stable and coherent primary culture as a precondition of the child's later development into an autonomous liberal citizen. A primary culture in the sense of a shared framework of fundamental beliefs is essential to the preservation of one's culture. The need to provide a primary culture is especially relevant to religious minorities in plural societies. Halstead (1995) notes that the cultures of minorities are threatened by prolonged exposure to liberal values. There is therefore a need for these communities to use education to maintain their shared framework of fundamental beliefs.

The initiation into a primary culture is not indoctrinative. On the contrary, initial commitment is necessary for children to develop their critical faculties for reflecting

and evaluating the different alternatives presented. Without initial beliefs, there is no point of comparison and, when confronted with opposing views later in life, "an individual reared without parental instruction will likely be indifferent to the alternatives" (LaFollette, 1996, p. 165). The initiation of children in their early stages of development into a particular worldview is not indoctrinative as long as their autonomy is not stifled. The aim is to encourage them to gradually "reflect critically on the committed perspective into which they have been nurtured" within the religious context, knowing that "they will eventually make an independent choice" for or against the religious commitment (Thiessen, 1993, p. 255).

Likewise, McLaughlin (1984) argues for a need to balance the demands of stability and openness at the same time; he describes the intention of parents and teachers to achieve this balance as aiming at "autonomy via faith". The short-term aim is to develop faith within a stable primary culture, although this faith is not impervious to any change or rejection in the future. In the long run, the ultimate goal is for individuals to exercise their autonomy in making a personal decision about the faith. In embracing the "teaching from commitment" approach, which avoids the pitfalls of teaching for commitment (with its problem of indoctrination) and teaching about commitment (with its problem of a truncated and superficial account of religion), the aim is for religious faith to be acquired not indoctrinatively but reflectively and meaningfully.

Adapting suggestions from McLaughlin (1984, p. 81), educators should nurture the following attitudes and procedures to promote reflection in the adolescents:

- Encourage adolescents to ask questions and be willing to respond to their questioning honestly and in a way which respects the adolescent's developing cognitive and emotional maturity.
- Make the adolescent aware that religion is a matter of faith rather than universally, publicly agreed belief.
- Encourage attitudes of tolerance and understanding in relation to religious disagreement.
- Indicate that morality is not exclusively dependent upon religion.
- Be alert to even subtle forms of psychological or emotional blackmail.
- Ensure that the affective, emotional and dispositional aspects of the adolescent's religious development take place in appropriate relationship with the cognitive aspect of that development.
- Respect the eventual freedom of the adolescent to refuse to participate in religious practices.

Reflection for Religiously Untethered Spiritual Development

Reflection is also salutary for religiously untethered spirituality in adolescents so that they can derive personal destiny and direction; develop their personal identity and ethical worldview; and establish connectedness with others.

Benefits for Adolescents

First, reflection enables adolescents to develop themselves by exploring, clarifying and identifying their sense of personal calling and destiny, values and commitments for their future. Dalton (2001) avers that students' spiritual reflections are especially important in helping them to identify and commit to future goals and career choices:

> Self-understanding and acceptance are important outcomes of spirituality, but I think we fail as educators if we do not help students link the ethical claims of life and work with others to one's relationship with what is transcendent and sacred. . . . If we do our job well in higher education, then students inevitably reflect upon the greater purpose of their lives. They ask questions about worthy commitment, moral commitment, moral responsibility, and life's inevitable transcendent claims and experiences (p. 24).

Reflection propels adolescents to search for meaning, belonging and ultimate answers in life—an endeavour that is central to the task of identity exploration for adolescents (King, 2003; Benson, 1997; Hill et al., 2000). Adolescents experience great insecurity and uncertainty in their journey of faith development as it is a period where any "absolute form of knowing breaks down and other perspectives are heard and recognised, the individual grows in self-awareness, authorities may be resisted, and the definition and experience of the community become more diffuse" (Love, 2001, p. 10). Through reflection, the adolescents' personal identities are developed by combining intellectual knowledge and abilities with personal values and convictions, leading to a lasting and holistic experience that links knowing and feeling (Dalton, 2001). Given that adolescents are at the stage of developing and exercising their abstract reasoning and thinking, reflection on spirituality provides meaningful opportunities for them to reason critically and sceptically about previously held beliefs (King, 2003; Loder, 1998; Markstrom, 1999). Through philosophical questioning and responding to experiences of great sadness or joy, adolescents ponder the purpose of their lives, their personal journey and important life choices (Dalton, 2001).

Reflections on ideological frameworks can provide youth with the fundamental beliefs and values essential for their identity formation and societal roles (Furrow, King, & White, 2004; Damon, 1983; Erikson, 1968). Research shows that highly moral people were often recognised by religious or spiritual attributes, and that their morality was determined by their spiritual experience and thought (Wagener, Furrow, King, Leffert, & Benson, 2003; also see Walker, Pitts, Hennig, & Matsuba, 1995; Walker & Pitts, 1998). Underpinned by a moral and value-laden framework, youth "develop not only integrated civic and moral identities, but a transcendent or spiritual sensibility that propels them to contribute to the common good" (Furrow et al., 2004, p. 17; also see Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003). Reflections about one's commitment to values such as justice, fairness, respect for others and the common good will prepare students to build relationships with others and be active participants in social and civic communities (Dalton, 2001).

Through reflection, educators could encourage adolescents to explore spirituality by developing a greater connectedness to self and others as well as personal

destiny, direction and identity. Guided by Dewey's (1933) open-mindedness, whole-heartedness and intellectual responsibility, adolescents can transcend the self to reason critically about previously held values, beliefs, feelings and behaviour. Relying on tacit and intuitive reflection (Schon, 1987), adolescents are free to ponder their feelings of personal destiny and decision-making about their goals and the means to achieve these goals. Reflective learning is also salubrious for identity formation as adolescents become active agents in seeking their individual authenticity and wholeness.

Promoting Spiritual Reflection in School

Spiritual development through reflection can be promoted in school through the school curriculum, ethos and climate. The overall aim is to use reflection to help adolescents discover personal destiny and direction; develop their personal identity and ethical worldview; and build relationships with others. Spiritual development could take place in various subjects across the curriculum, especially the arts—literature, poetry, drama, painting and music. Carr avers that the arts "have a key part to play in communicating or explicating the sense of a connection between the temporal and the eternal, the finite and the infinite, the material world and the world of the soul, in human affairs" (Carr, 1995, p. 95). Universal themes from a variety of sources may be introduced to encourage students to reflect on, internalise and apply the spiritual values learnt. For example, the poems of English Romantics such as Wordsworth and Coleridge could be used to help students freely explore the themes of love, self-fulfilment and worship, and the implications for their construction of their personal identity and destiny. Spiritual reflection can be nurtured in the students when appropriate feelings and a sense of connectedness are aroused, and desired spiritual values are inculcated. For instance, students can reflect on metaphysical and normative principles such as truth, human nature, justice, compassion and social responsibility.

Critical discussions can also take place when teachers refer to spiritual perspectives on social issues such as natural or man-made disasters and tragedies (Tan, 2008; Robson & Lonsdale, 1987). By discussing cases such as the Ethiopian famine, the Asia tsunami tragedy or the Bali bombings, students can debate on the different metaphysical concepts and interpretations of suffering, evil, justice and compassion from various spiritual worldviews. Such a reflective process will contribute towards adolescents developing their personal and ethical worldviews. Teachers can get students to be involved in projects where they choose a system of beliefs of their choice such as Confucianism or Humanism, research an aspect of that system of beliefs and present their insights and the lessons gained. The focus is not just information gathering, but a sincere exploration of the belief system in its teachings and everyday experiences. Such a task serves to help them to clarify their personal beliefs, life goals and identities.

In terms of pedagogy, educators can use different types of scaffolding to promote reflection in spiritual matters in adolescents. Among the strategies, watching films

and writing journals are helpful in getting adolescents to reach a higher level of reflective thinking. Films, when appropriately chosen, are ideal in triggering the pre-service teachers to reflect on an issue of concern, ponder the meanings and implications for themselves, and finally change or modify their values, beliefs and actions. Recommended films which focus on spiritual themes include *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* on love, memory and personal identity, and *Matrix* on reality, truth and destiny in life. Suitable religious films include *Jesus Camp* which raises issues on religious instruction and indoctrination in the United States, and *Sepat*, a Malaysian film which examines the interfaith romance between a Muslim Malay girl and a non-Muslim Chinese boy.

After watching a film, journal writing can be used to promote and facilitate reflections based on the film. A journal captures the free flowing personal interpretations and expressions of a diary where the writer documents his or her learning process. Critical thinking is also encouraged as the learner is required to discuss and integrate different insights in the drawing of coherent conclusions. Writing journals helps the learners to gain the most from the films and thereby facilitates reflective thinking. For example, students can write their reflections after watching *Sepat* on their views of love and religious differences, or they could reflect, after watching *Jesus Camp*, on whether they agree with the American pastor's claim that religious indoctrination is necessary and desirable for children.

Conclusion

Adolescence is a period characterised by a personal quest for purpose, meaning and relationships. This chapter distinguished between religiously "tethered" and "untethered" conceptions of spirituality. The former is linked to or housed within the tradition of a religious faith while the latter is concerned with beliefs and practices that are disconnected from religions. This chapter proposed that reflection is effective in promoting spiritual development in adolescents so that they can derive personal destiny and direction; develop their personal identity and ethical worldview; and build relationships with others. Adolescents are at the crossroads of life and face many issues and challenges that are unique, uncertain and value-conflicted. Hence they need to critically reflect on practical interests and examine broad issues on religiously tethered and untethered spirituality in their lives. The chapter further suggested how educators can promote spiritual development in adolescents through reflection.

Spiritual reflection is crucial as it focuses on the adolescent's own construction of meaning in his or her life through personal reflection, experience, exploration and construction of both religious and non-religious phenomena. It is a form of "deeper learning" because it touches on students' encounter with transcendence and ultimate meaning in their lives; as Dalton (2001) rightly avers: "Education that does not connect with and integrate these spiritual dimensions of learning and development is ultimately less engaging and lasting for a student" (p. 19). Through a liberating and self-fulfilling reflective process, spirituality—both tethered and

untethered—could provide the humanising effect of education for adolescents in their holistic development.

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Chapter 22
Developing Contemplative Capacities in Childhood and Adolescence: A Rationale and Overview

Aostre N. Johnson

Ah, not to be cut off,
not through the slightest partition
shut out from the laws of the stars.
The inner—what is it?
if not the intensified sky,
hurled through with birds and deep
with the winds of homecoming.
Rainer Maria Rilke

Abstract This chapter articulates an overall definition of "contemplative" and reviews research on the benefits of contemplative practices. It suggests four overlapping but differing ways of defining contemplative development, including (1) attitudes and emotions, (2) intuitive knowing, (3) religious or spiritual knowing, and (4) rational cognitive reflection. Relevant developmental theories and developmental trajectories for children and adolescents in each of these categories are discussed, addressing the following questions: Do contemplative capacities "develop" and if so, in what ways? How does each definition relate to early consciousness? Is it valid to refer to "stages" of contemplative development? How can teachers and parents support rather than impede contemplative capacities in youth?

Introduction

I have been researching the multiple ways in which spirituality is interpreted and integrated in educational settings for many years. I read current literature and interview and surveyed teachers about their personal definitions and understandings of spirituality and how these impact teaching and learning environments. Distinct (yet interrelated) themes of definitions have emerged and I categorize them into the following: religious, reflective, meaning-making, creative, ethical, ecological, and

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contemplative. Although I list these as separate categories, they are really intertwining and overlapping. The central metaphor common to all of the categories is connections (Johnson, 1999a). Each way of thinking about spirituality and education emphasizes differing kinds of connections with self, others, world, and "spirit" or "God." In addition, each contains within it a number of more specific abilities and attitudes that I refer to as "capacities." These emerge and change in varying ways and rates.

Adults inside and outside of religious traditions are realizing that in this era of tumultuous cultural, social, and environmental upheaval, the emergence of fresh ways of understanding and supporting the inner lives of our youngest and most vulnerable members is necessary. As Roelkepartain, King, Wagener, and Bensen (2006) state, "Spiritual development may be at a 'tipping point' for becoming a major theme in child and adolescent development. A growing number of scholars in various disciplines have invested themselves in this field. The public imagination appears to be ready in numerous cultures, traditions, and contexts, all of which are struggling with social changes that threaten to undermine the spiritual lives of young people" (p. 11).

In this chapter, I will highlight *contemplative* aspects of spiritual development for several reasons. In one sense, contemplative capacities are at the core of all human capacities. In addition, most adults recall very formative contemplative experiences in their own childhood and adolescence—and current studies of children confirm the existence of many types of experience that can be labeled contemplative. Also, "contemplative" is an emerging focus of scholarly and popular concern that cuts across many disciplines and aspects of development. The growing body of literature on contemplative development and education across the life span draws on religious and secular, historic and current knowledge from nearly all disciplines. There is a dawning realization that contemplative capacities are critical not only for the wellbeing of youth but also for the survival of the human species and the planet. High-speed, high-stress, acquisition-oriented ways of living are taking an enormous toll on all forms of life. Emerging research suggests the benefits of contemplative educational practices and methods—and, therefore, the inclusion of contemplative perspectives on development and education has the potential to be effective and appropriate for secular, spiritual, and religious settings.

I will begin by reviewing the literature on definitions, including aspects of contemplative practice, briefly positing four ways of defining contemplative development. I will then turn to relatively recent research on the benefits of practices and educational methods that strengthen contemplative capacities. Next, I will look more closely at each of the four categories, considering relevant developmental theories and possible developmental trajectories for children and adolescents, with emphasis on the following questions: How does each way of defining "contemplative" relate to early consciousness? Do varying contemplative capacities "develop," and if so, in what ways? Does it make sense to talk about "stages" of development? How can teachers and parents support, rather than impede this development? What are the benefits of attempting to enhance contemplative capacities through education? Are there potential dangers? Which approaches are suitable for secular settings and which for more specific spiritual/religious settings?

Definitions and Practices

Contemplative derives from the Latin word *contemplari*, to gaze attentively or observe, and *attention* is at the root of many definitions. In defining contemplative, the idea of inner/outer is significant—while attention may be directed outward, it never excludes inner experience. In fact, *contemplative* implies focus on the "inner" or interior dimensions of being, or more often, seamless integration of inner and outer, as the opening Rilke poem illustrates. It sometimes means the opposite of action, a withdrawal from the active life. Definitions also vary along the following dimensions: They may distinguish between *single-pointed* ("narrow angle lens") or *diffuse* ("wide angle lens") *focus of attention*. They may include, highlight, or exclude *various aspects of the human being*, such as intuition, mystical knowing, emotions, attitudes, or the mind. They may fall along a *religion, spiritual, and secular continuum*, with a "divide" between definitions that assume that there is an "ultimate spiritual reality" or God and those that do not.

My four major categories of definitions are derived both from dictionary definitions and a literature review and vary in their implications for development and education. They are,

(1) a combination of *attitudes and emotions* that support the act of living with presence, attention, sensitivity, nonjudgmental awareness or "mindfulness";
(2) an *epistemology* or intuitive way of knowing;
(3) *religious or spiritual knowing* or meditation on spiritual or religious ideas;
(4) *a way of thinking or using the mind* when considering something deeply, i.e., deep thought, insight, pondering, examination, consideration, study, and reflection, including self-reflection and ethical reflection.

It is difficult to separate the definition of the word *contemplative* from practices to strengthen contemplative capacities since the latter are often used as aspects of definition. Practices noted vary widely from specific to general, as Roth (2006) expresses, "While various methods to attain contemplative states of consciousness can be found in such religious practices as chanting, prayer, ritual performance and meditation, such states can also be found in a wide variety of nonreligious practices, such as music, dance, drama, poetry and prose, painting, sculpting, and even mindful observation of the natural world" (p. 1789). The practice of contemplative reading and writing also has deep historical roots in all of the major religions. Some forms of contemplative practice are more bodily based, such as yoga, tai chi, walking meditation, or simply being aware of one's physical presence.

The most general contemplative methods include any activities in which we are slowing down, sitting quietly, relaxing, becoming more aware of our sensory experiences (including tasting, smelling, touching, listening, looking), reflecting, and/or responding with attention to any situation in daily life. In fact, in its most basic form, any activity we perform slowly and consciously can be seen as contemplative experience. For example, Krishnamurti (1969) suggests, "Meditation can take place when you are sitting on a bus or walking in the woods full of light and shadows, or

listening to the singing of birds or looking at the face of your wife or child" (Blau, 1995, p. 241).

In many traditions, meditation techniques are used to increase contemplative skills or religious understanding and to disrupt the identification of self with personal ego. Some are very specific with the intention of connecting believers to a particular religious worldview. Others are more general, for example, breath practices such as awareness of breath or control of breath are used as a way to focus the mind. A popular contemporary approach to meditation is referred to as *mindfulness* meditation, stressing conscious awareness of the breath, body and surroundings and attentive self-examination of thoughts and feelings that arise during the practice. Trungpa Chogyam (1988) explains, "By meditation here we mean something very basic and simple that is not tied to any one culture. We are talking about a very basic act: sitting on the ground, assuming a good posture, and developing a sense of our spot, our place on this earth. This is the means of rediscovering ourselves and our basic goodness, the means to tune in to a genuine reality, without any expectations or preconditions" (p. 36).

While contemplative definitions and practices vary widely, they center on ways of accessing our "authentic" inner selves, including feelings and knowledge that may seem more "real" and true than those we ordinarily access. Another aspect of the literature revolves around why it is important that we do so, as well as the proof that it is.

Benefits of Developing Contemplative Capacities

Much recent research is attempting to validate contemplative practice, but from one perspective, this utilitarian focus violates its most profound truth. As Rockefeller (2006) says, "Contemplation is a form of human activity that possesses its own inherent value, and it may involve a beautiful experience that is a fulfillment complete in itself. In this sense, it is an end in itself" (pp. 1777–1779). From this view, contemplative activity is natural and beneficial by definition. Historically, in fact, the assumption that all education and intellectual study is by nature contemplative was characteristic from the time of the Greeks, including neo-Platonists and all religious traditions, which were generally the centers of schooling. In fact "contemplative" education was typical until the 12th and 13th centuries when scientific methods began to rival and eventually to eclipse contemplative/religious ones.

The recent awakening of interest in contemplative practice has resulted in many claims made for its efficacy, and an argument can be made that a research base is necessary for wider acceptance in light of the commonly accepted contemporary "scientific" worldview. While research on the results of contemplative practice is not new, up until recently it has been sparse and variable in reliability. Yet, it seems that a few conclusions are gaining clarity. Hart (2004) summarizes,

> "There are hundreds of studies of the effects of contemplative practice, particularly on meditation, offering varying degrees of methodological precision. Among the main trait effects (changes that endure over time) are improved concentration, empathy, perceptual

acuity, a drop in anxiety and stress symptoms, and more effective performance in a broad range of domains from sports and academic test taking to creativity. . . . What has been best documented is that contemplation of this nature affects physiology" (p. 31)

Among the most precise physiological studies have been in the field of medicine, as Stock (2006) articulates:

We know that stress reduction techniques like meditation lead to a positive state of the parasympathetic nervous system and meditation is increasingly used to help prevent and treat heart disease, autoimmune disorders, chronic lung disease, headaches, diabetes, eczema, asthma, allergies, infertility, and gastrointestinal problems, as well as panic, depression and hostility (p. 1763).

The second major area of research findings relates to focus of attention. A number of studies suggest that contemplative practice results in a greater ability to focus, sustain, and/or expand attention/concentration (e.g., Berggraf and Grossenbacher; 2007; Hart, 2004).

Other claims for the potential of contemplative practice relating to character and personality traits are less experimentally documented, but exist in the literature based on more qualitative observations and also on the "traditional wisdom" of contemplative practice traditions. For example, Berggraf and Grossenbacher (2007) suggest that contemplative practices have been found to enhance creativity, open-mindedness, the ability to hold paradox and compassionate civic engagement, suspension of judgment, compassionate listening, and a sense of awe. Rockefeller (2006) says, "Contemplative disciplines may help some people become less frenetic and more centered, more aware of goodness and beauty of their own being, more responsive to suffering, more attentive and mindful and more open to I–thou relationship and meaning" (p. 1777). And Thurman (2006) states,

We would like for people to develop contemplative states that increase contentment, detachment, tolerance, patience, nonviolence and compassion, which simultaneously decrease feelings of anger, irritation and paranoia. We would like them to develop more wisdom, more freedom and more capacity for freedom and responsibility by seeing through the constructed realities in which our materialistic culture has enmeshed us (p. 1766)

These capacities are naturally seen as desired educational outcomes by many parents and teachers. A body of literature is growing relating to the most effective methods of realizing them. The importance of the adult teacher or parent's contemplative consciousness is frequently emphasized. In keeping with the broadest definitions, any practice that supports adult capacity to focus attention and self-awareness on being fully engaged with each young person can be called contemplative educational practice.

In one example, in his graduate education classes, John P. Miller (1994) introduces his teacher students to many forms of contemplation practice, including meditation on the breath, mantra (a "sacred" word), visualization, concentration on poetry or sacred texts from any religious tradition, and "movement meditations." After selecting one of these and practicing it regularly, teachers observe any effects on their lives and teaching and record their observations in journals. In his study of approximately 400 educators engaged in this endeavor, several benefits clearly emerge. Teachers report increased self-acceptance, fuller perspective on their lives,

more calmness, increased listening skills, and a growing sense of interconnectedness with others, with nature and with current issues. Some began to use contemplative practice with their own students. And in a teacher education program rooted in contemplative practice, Richard Brown (1998) reports that educators skilled in contemplative self-observation become extremely adept at child observation skills. Once grounded in this perceptual and reflective awareness, they become more able to engage in a genuine way with their students and with pedagogical practice.

Some studies have been conducted on young people in schools but the evidence is just beginning to emerge. For example, McLean (2001) qualitatively studied the benefits of 15–30 min a day of meditation in British elementary schools and found increased calmness of teachers and many benefits for students, including greater calmness, concentration, readiness to learn, ability to handle distractions and pressures, creative expression, awareness of the world around them and their place in it, awareness of the beauty of the world and sense of wonder. Brown (2007) reports that initial studies of effects of meditation in public elementary schools in the United States suggest increased control of attention, less "negative internal chatter," and improvement in "mood disorders." According to Lantieri (2008), studies by Schonert-Reichl in Canada suggest that children who practiced "mindfulness meditation" were less aggressive, more attentive in class, and more optimistic, and The Mindfulness Awareness Research Center at UCLA reports that meditation can help students with ADHD to focus better and experience less anxiety. Lantieri is currently conducting an empirical study of the effects of mindfulness meditation and calming techniques on children in New York City schools and reports similar preliminary results.

Further formal research as well as informal experimentation on developing contemplative capacities could be enhanced by greater clarity about the varied ways it is defined and understood. The following section offers an overview of this endeavor.

What is Contemplative Development?

There is a continuum of views of contemplative development with opposing visions at the extremes. In one, children are "natural contemplatives" who are, as the poet Wordsworth said, "trailing clouds of glory" because they are a manifestation of spirit or God; they are in touch with a deeper "ground" or "realm" of being that is their birthright since it is the very essence or nature of who they are. They are by nature loving, fluid and open, and able to live fully in the present. The other end of this continuum holds that true contemplative capacities are the highest form of development, and can only be reached by going through the complete developmental cycle, expanding our cognitive capacities until we are able to reach above or through them to deep, contemplative multidimensional states. According to this view, we cannot really call children contemplatives, although adolescents could be well on their way if they are being educated correctly. I suggest that both views are partially true and depend on one's definition of contemplative and one's assumptions

and beliefs about the very idea of development. Each of the following four definitions fall somewhere on the above continuum; in the first two, children are natural contemplatives whereas in the second two, their contemplative potential must be developed. All four definitions have varying emphases on emotion, spirit, intuition, and/or mind—and it is not necessary to accept or embrace all of them. However, they are overlapping and intertwining.

The Act of Looking at or Attending Intently with Presence, Attention, Sensitivity, or "Mindfulness"

Nakagawa (2000) says, "the way of contemplation has been the royal road to Awakening in the traditions of Eastern philosophy for thousands of years" (p. 177). He goes on to define contemplation as "an art of awareness" in its basic forms; it is the art of being aware of that which is taking place in the present moment. The Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh (1999) suggests that contemplation in this sense is at the core of Buddha's teachings. He emphasizes two steps in the contemplative process. The first is stopping, calming and resting and the second is looking deeply (at self or world) once we have calmed down. This "looking deeply" or attentiveness is often referred to as mindfulness. Berggraf and Grossenbacher (2007), who teach in Naropa University's Department of Contemplative Psychology take their basic definition from William James's Principles of Psychology: "the faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention over and over again" (p. 1).

In this category, the focus of attention can be either inward or outward, focused or diffuse. We can focus attention outward on an object, on our surroundings, and/or on our own actions, thus highlighting a powerful sense of presence inherent in each concrete moment of our experience, awake to our full experience of the world around us. Alternatively, the focus may be inward on self, the state of our body, senses, emotions, or thoughts—or it can be both, an inclusive focus on everything in the present moment of our experience, a nonjudgmental acceptance of sensory experiences, thoughts, feelings, images, and physical sensations. The *awareness* of these rather than identifying with them is key. Duff (2003) defines contemplative as awareness: "something we are awake to. . .knowing our relationship with the world, ideas, people" (p. 230).

This definition emphasizes attitudes and emotions such as openness, peacefulness, relaxation, acceptance, fluidity, and a sense of living in the present, with a sense of integration between self and world, body, emotion, mind, and awareness of these. It does not assume a belief in ultimate spiritual reality or God, although it can coexist with this belief.

In *The Spirit of the Child*, David Hay and Rebecca Nye (1998) suggest three interrelated categories of spiritual sensitivity or awareness based on their study of spirituality and childhood. They are (1) *awareness-sensing* including *here-and-now* (living in the present), *tuning* (tuning into or feeling "at-one-with"), *flow* (intense and seemingly effortless absorption in activity), and *focusing* (a bodily based sense

of feelings and reality); (2) *mystery-sensing* including *wonder and awe* and *imagination*, and (3) *value-sensing*, including delight and despair, ultimate goodness, and meaning. They point out that these are characteristics of young children's thinking, based on many sources that validate this. Hart (2003) has also researched the spiritual experiences of young children utilizing qualitative methods, autobiographical studies, and case studies. Two of the "domains," similar to Hay's, in which even very young children exhibit spiritual capacities are *wonder and awe* and *relational spirituality*.

I think that most people would agree that young children have the ability to focus attention intensely, even for a short time, to engage deeply with their senses with objects of interest to them, to relate very directly to people around them, to be in touch with their own emotions, to exhibit awe and wonder, and to freely use their imaginations. Under ordinary circumstances, these contemplative capacities seem to be "given" to us, an aspect of our human nature, but most contemporary cultures do not encourage or enhance them. The potential for these remains throughout life; stages of development are not highly relevant since we can encourage children to retain and sustain these qualities at any age or stage.

However, young children do not necessarily show awareness of their awareness. As cognitive abilities develop, especially in adolescence, the ability to be self-reflectively aware of all aspects of experience without identification with them can increase greatly in the appropriate environment and does have a developmental dimension, which will be discussed in the fourth category.

Children's natural contemplative capacities must be protected from the incursion of speed-driven, acquisition-oriented, stressful living. "Reclaiming childhood," an increasingly commonly used "mantra," is fitting here. The causes of the increasing frequency of ADD and ADHD in young people are uncertain, but many theories suggest a strong cultural influence.

The following recommendations for parents and educators are consistent with this view of contemplative: Infants and children should not be hurried, either in terms of time or developmental goals. As Wood (2007) expresses this, "Because young children spend so much time at school, rushing through school means rushing through childhood. Doing so stresses the children, their teachers and their parents" (p. 4). He suggests that even small changes—such as changing the order of the day to allow more "breathing room," giving children more time to complete and transition activities and to reflect on their learning—can make a significant difference. Children should be allowed as much time as possible for learning through play and delving deeply into investigations of topics that interest them. The natural world is usually fascinating for both children and adolescents and an effective place for nurturing contemplative capacities. We are now starting to hear about "nature deficit disorder," the contemporary problem resulting from children spending increasingly less time outdoors at all ages. Many studies about attention span and young children have been conducted and overall, have demonstrated that children's attention spans increase naturally as they grow older but are considerably longer when they are able to select objects they are interested in looking at or playing with. Adults often make the mistake of distracting children with one toy after another and surrounding

them with an overabundance of material objects, which shortens the attention span. Technological toys, computers, and television often inhibit the contemplative capacities of young children because they tend to move rapidly, disrupt natural play rhythms, substitute externally imposed images from more spontaneously arising, inner play-based imagination and take away from the child's tendency to focus on the people, objects, and activities going on around them.

Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (1999) suggests that rather than being uni-dimensional, intelligence has a number of "frames" through which it can manifest, including logical–mathematical, linguistic, visual–spatial, bodily kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, and existentialist. Engaging all of these can promote contemplative consciousness. Children should have access to an environment rich in "raw materials," of many types and be offered multiple opportunities to use these imaginatively and artistically to learn about themselves, others, and the world around them.

Ideally, young children would not need imposed meditation techniques to put them in touch with their contemplative nature or reduce their feelings of stress, but in the current cultural environment, it may be helpful to offer them simple contemplative practices as an "antidote." In the most general sense, this simply means helping them to slow down and pay more attention to their senses, their bodies, and natural world. Additionally, this may involve basic practices such as asking them to examine natural objects closely, leading them through exercises in which they focus on each of the senses, helping them notice the effects of stress on their bodies, offering a guided imagery experience, or simply asking them to sit quietly with eyes open or closed. As children get older, the above practices can be lengthened and made more specific and more explicit forms of mindfulness meditation can be introduced.

Some potential problems with these practices are that adults will get caught up in technique rather than consciousness and that practices will be artificially substituted for play and meaningful exploration, a slow rhythm, and nature-based experiences. Because of current cultural and educational tendencies that focus on outcome at the expense of process and experience, there is a real danger that they will be utilized in a way that, ironically, is the very opposite of contemplative.

Intuitive Knowing

Another way of understanding contemplation is as an epistemology. Hart (2004) calls it "a third way of knowing that complements the rational and the sensory" (p. 29). Many theories have contrasted two basic contrasting types of thinking or knowing, for example, William James' pure experience and reflective thought (1912/1971), the Buddhist concepts of the conditioned and unconditioned mind, John Dewey's qualitative and quantitative thinking (1931), and James Macdonald's meditative and calculative thinking (1981). These can all be seen as different words for the contrast I am making between contemplative and rational thinking and knowing. Meditative or contemplative understanding is the "ground" out of which more

explicit, rational, intellectual thinking arises. Dewey explains. "Things, objects, are only focal points of a here and now in a whole that stretches out indefinitely. This is the qualitative 'background' which is defined and made conscious in particular objects and specified properties and qualities" (Dewey, 1958, p. 163). James describes this ground as infants or young children know it: "Experience in its immediacy seems perfectly fluent. The active sense of living which we all enjoy, before reflection shatters our instinctive world for us, is self-luminous and suggests no paradoxes" (p. 49).

The consciousness of infants is generally referred to as global and relatively undifferentiated. However, this may be seen as merely primitive or alternatively as an intuitive/contemplative way of knowing that is often forgotten as we grow older. Significantly, from this perspective, contemplative awareness is inherent in our being and does not have to be externally imposed. Infants are born with the ability to experience reality globally through a feeling-intuition in a direct, unmediated way. This knowing provides the motivating and integrating power for all of their subsequent ways of making meaning of the world, including rational understanding. The power of contemplative knowing in this sense connects infants and young children to the world around them in an unmediated and engaged way, also providing the motivation to explore it. We could say that infants come from the "inner realm" but add the "outer" as they interact with and learn about it. The challenge is to allow them to gain in their knowledge without losing their connection to the "inner." Various writers have articulated this dilemma for centuries. In one example, as Rockefeller (2006) points out,

> Two hundred years ago, Frederich Schleiermacher, the founder of the modern liberal Christian tradition. . . . noted that every person is born with a capacity to experience directly the mystery, wonder and beauty of the world, which is essential to human well-being and a sense of the joy and meaning of life. However, he lamented that this capacity is "crushed out" of children in the course of a their education by the modern rage for calculating and explaining. . . (p. 1779)

As in the previous category, it does not really make sense to talk about stages of development since this way of knowing is a "given" but it can become "crushed out" or obscured when it is not recognized and honored by the culture. There have been many words written on the way in which contemporary culture tends to force babies and young children to focus prematurely on rational thinking. One key is in allowing and supporting ongoing access to this capacity, with a gradual introduction of academics, using imagination and the arts as a bridge. All of the educational suggestions from the first category are relevant. A recognition of and respect for the reality of the intuitive knowing of young people is critical; I believe that this one practice can have a profound effect. Macdonald (1974) recommends the following educational processes: meditation, perceptual experiences, imagination, sensitivity to others, ecological awareness, meaning-making based on all aspects of patterning (especially, artistic forms, play, and playful experiences), and a wide range of physical experiences.

Mystical Knowing, Meditation on Spiritual, or Religious Ideas

Contemplation also has distinctive connotations in religious and mystical traditions. This definition can be seen as an extension or subcategory of the previous one, in that if we have a belief in God, a divine presence or an ultimate ground of being, our intuitive understanding links us directly to the "source." For example, Thomas Keating defines contemplation in Christianity as "the knowledge of God based on the intimate experience of his presence" (p. 20). Yust (2004) understands contemplative as the "inner" side of spiritual life… "the times we and our children spend pushing aside the noisiness of the world so we can attend to God's presence and God's voice. When we dwell in this space, we are in listening mode, inviting the silence or the word and images of others to 'speak' a word from God" (p. 145).

In a more general mystical sense, this definition of contemplation includes connecting to "the unseen world" that the philosopher William James called "something more," meaning more than is immediately obvious to the senses. As he says, "the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which it draws its chief significance." This is the realm of the mystics. Margaret Smith (1980) suggests that mysticism is "an attitude of mind, an innate tendency of the human soul which seeks to transcend reason and to attain a direct experience of God" (p. 20). All religious traditions have mystical branches that teach contemplative practices such as meditation or prayer. These enhance a "believer's" ability to feel a direct connection with God or spirit, although the type of mystical experience is mediated by beliefs of the religion and the forms of practice. In addition, these traditions often emphasize a withdrawal from the everyday world for varying time periods—brief times daily, regular monthly or yearly times for days or weeks or even months, or, in the case of "contemplatives" such as monks or nuns, permanent lives of relative removal from "the world" in order to live a life based on direct connection with God.

This category is based on a belief in God or a spiritual world. It can be understood as rooted in same epistemology as the previous one, but with the added assumption that all intuitive knowing is anchored in God or a spiritual "ground of being" that underlies but is fully present in the material/temporal world. Religious contemplation is experienced as a simultaneous insight/emotion and a profound knowing. It seems to confirm knowledge already possessed, an uncovering rather than an adding and leads to a deep sense of connection to God or source, shaped and modified by particular religious or spiritual beliefs.

Although it is impossible to "prove" that contemplative religious knowing exists, in certain circumstances, such as meditative experience, it can be seemingly "isolated." When perceptual or conceptual objects of consciousness are removed, as in deep meditative experience, the mind is "thrown back on itself" to experience itself directly. When this happens, there is a sense of locating oneself in relationship to the most existential aspects of the human condition as well as a sense of connectedness with all beings and the entire cosmos—classic characteristics of mystical experience. While it is logical that during meditative states of consciousness, brain wave activity can be recorded, traditional mystical and spiritual views of intelligence

would say that it is not *reducible* to what can be measured in the brain. Nonetheless, this is a task of current interest to many researchers and in fact, "neurotheology," the study of the neurobiology of religion and spirituality, is an emerging field. For example, A. and S. Newberg (2005) research the neurobiology of spiritual experiences, "defining" them at base as "the sense of having a union with some higher power or fundamental state of being" (p. 185). In one study they conducted brain scans on Tibetan Buddhists and Franciscan nuns while they were meditating. Their research demonstrates that these kinds of experiences are accompanied by a blocking of input into the posterior parietal lobe of the brain and also by an "affective discharge via the right-brain limbic connections" (p. 186) with the amygdale and the hippocampus likely to be involved.

In comparing brain functioning during adult spiritual experience to brain functioning of infants regarding these unitary states of consciousness, the Newbergs suggest that there are differences due to the absence or the presence of sense of ego self. However, they also see "some remarkable similarities, and it has been remarked by a number of mystical traditions that the ultimate goal of spiritual pursuits is to return to a time in which the mind was at the beginning" (p. 189).

From this definitional perspective, humans are born with the capacity to be in direct contact with the God or spirit. But adults must offer children and adolescents a conscious religious or spiritual perspective with accompanying practices that allow them to remain in touch with and grow into a more profound and self-aware relationship or understanding of spiritual ground or God. Infants can *experience* but not fully *know* God. A number of theories suggest that there are clear stages that human beings must progress through to reach our full contemplative potential. I will give two examples.

Michael Washburn's (1988) theory of development is a "spiritualized" psychoanalytic view. It holds that emotion, not mind, is the critical organizing force in human development. Unlike Freud and most neo-Freudians, though, Washburn believes that emotion is rooted in spirit—he calls it "Dynamic Ground . . . The power of the Ground . . . is the very life of the soul" (p. 130). He believes that the newborn baby is absorbed and intoxicated by blissful feelings of this "Dynamic Ground." Washburn calls this *original embedment*. The baby's body is flowing with magnetic energy; she is bathed in the "water of life" (p. 48) and lives in a numinous, shimmering, meaning-filled, entrancing, "magical" world. Even though she is aware of the world and people around her, she is also so filled with this intense energy that she can be very contented and self-absorbed—in much the same way that "mystics"—or ordinary meditators—can become absorbed in their meditative states. Washburn says that we never really forget this feeling, that all adults, in a sense, yearn for embodied childhood bliss all of our lives, except for the few humans who do become spiritually fulfilled as adults. Washburn's stages of development are based on the assumption that our emotional–relational lives, as well as modernist cultural conditioning, lead to a rupture with Dynamic Ground. We develop a separate ego and identify with it, thinking that it is the entirety of ourselves rather than an ever-changing aspect of ourselves. Once the ego has emerged, the psyche is "bi-polar" in relationship to the Ground and the personal ego. The ensuing stages of development result from the

relationship between these two poles of development, in a heroic journey of struggle. In the "highest" level of development, we return to a merging with the Ground, with a transformed but highly functioning ego. Adolescence is a critical time as the ego fully forms and begins to become capable of not only reflective, moral, and sexual awakening, but also spiritual transformation.

Ken Wilber (2002) has written a great deal about spiritual/contemplative development. His model integrates many approaches, but it is more rooted in a cognitive perspective, using Piaget as his base for the earlier stages. Wilber's view is that the psyche, or mind, is inherently endowed with basic structures that are universal to human experience, dependent on experience to draw them out. The structures emerge in a hierarchical order, one at a time, starting at the lowest, or physical level, and proceeding to the highest, or spiritual level, the level of "ultimate reality." The development of the consciousness of each human being, therefore, evolves from matter toward spirit. As each structure is dependent on the one before it in order to emerge, this means that no stages can be skipped—and no stages are ever completely left behind; rather, they are incorporated, or subsumed, into the next highest level. Thus, when we move from the "sensorimotor" to a higher level, we continue to use the evidence of our physical senses as raw data for our minds, but we add the ability to use our imaginations as data for our minds, an ability we do not have in a previous stage. Similarly, we do not lose our ability to use logic when we incorporate a profound contemplative level at a higher stage of development. From this view, a contemplative childhood consciousness either does not exist, or exists at a very low level. This is because reflective consciousness is such a significant aspect of this theory of spiritual development—we could not become contemplative without first having developed our logic. Each human being has the potential to develop to the highest levels of consciousness, but this is not given.

Thus both Washburn and Wilber believe that there is religious or spiritual "reality" which can be fully realized by adults as a result of what happens to children during each stage of development, although the nature of their proposed stages differs. Washburn's theory, leads us to honor infants and young children as "unconscious contemplatives," whereas Wilber is cautious about "elevating" childhood to a contemplative status.

Each of these theorists emphasizes the relevance of accepted contemporary developmental theories, both cognitive and emotional–social, as primary components of meeting children's needs that becomes the foundation for contemplative development. In other words, for example, infants and young children need loving, responsible, and responsive adults to interact with and the freedom to move safely and explore a variety of materials with all of their senses. In addition to these, school-age children should have access to guided, in-depth explorations in a variety of disciplines utilizing their varied intelligences and emphasizing the mastery of skills and knowledge. However, for optimal contemplative development, other experiences are critical. For example, 'William James' theory of mysticism leads to the inclusion of religious history and mystical experience in education (Johnson, 2002).

The way that adults regard children is key. Historically, all religious traditions see children as a reflection or manifestation of God, although to differing degrees.

In contrast to deficit models prevalent in many modernist educational systems, religious contemplative views offer the potential for seeing each child as a unique and sacred gift of the divine with valuable gifts to offer the world. (Johnson, 1999b)

While religious traditions vary, all "view children as spiritual beings able to connect to God" (Yust, Johnson, Sasso, & Roehlkepartain, 2006, p. 82) and each has some theory of significance of stages of development and of adult responsibility for ensuring that children have the appropriate experiences at each stage. Children must be taught practices of that religious tradition. Practices include individually based ones and communal ones, such as various types of meditations, prayers, scripture readings and chanting, services, stories, rituals, and ceremonies. Some of these mark transitions or passages in children's or adolescents' spiritual lives. In general, the practices become more specific as the child gets older, until the adolescent is incorporated into the adult community.

The Act of the Mind When Considering Intently—Deep Thought, Insight, Pondering, Reasoning, Study, Reflection, Self-Reflection

This category emphasizes more traditional rational aspects of thought and learning, including the capacity to think logically, lucidly, and self-reflectively. For example, Holland (2004) suggests that contemplative education promotes reflective thinking and personal insight. Since this definition does not assume a belief in God or spirit and aligns with capacities usually included in definitions of "an educated person," it would be reasonable to assume they are already being supported in public schools. Yet, many contemporary critics suggest that schools are not engaging students' critical, reflective, substantive intellectual thinking with much depth or frequency.

Historically, religions tend to value intellectual education highly, and the first formal schools were located within religious traditions. Developing a sharp mind along with compassion and ethical reasoning was seen as a critical aspect of religious formation in all major religious traditions. Stock (2006) emphasizes the historic link between contemplative practice, intellectual thinking, and ethical action, with an emphasis on self-knowledge, beginning with ancient Greek philosophy. The method for developing this type of thinking was direct conversation, with the teacher sharpening the students' intellectual understanding in order to introduce them to their ethical responsibility for the greater community's needs: "The exercises by which individuals were prepared for this challenge were not arid and abstract, although they were intensely cognitive" (p. 1761). As suggested above, intellectually oriented contemplative practice tends to include community involvement and social justice, rather than merely working toward individual fulfillment. It can lead to a growing awareness of the relationship between self and others, the effects of individual action on the whole. In this category the emphasis is on the type and quality of intellectual thinking; it is critical, insightful, self-reflective and ethically aware.

Content is relevant in this category. The mind is focused on topics worthy of consideration that can be classified as philosophical, existential or religious, such as "Why do we exist? What is the meaning of our time on earth? What is our origin? What happens when we die? What does it mean to be human? How can we live together equitably? How can we learn about the world around us and utilize that knowledge equitably? What is beauty and how can it be created and appreciated? What activities are most worthy of time and attention? How can humans best live a balanced, thoughtful, ethical, and beautiful life?" Religious traditions have historically posed these questions to children and youth while also supplying the answers.

But there is also a secular approach. Howard Gardner's (1999) idea of existential intelligence is one example of this. For some years he posited the possibility of a ninth spiritual intelligence but ultimately rejected it because of difficulties in defining its content, dealing with its truth claims, and proving its existence. He settled instead on existential intelligence, which includes the potential to think about cosmic issues and to ponder existential, philosophical and religious questions, but excludes any notion of knowing or attaining ultimate truth.

Mathews' (1980) research on young children's ability to reason and grapple with complex philosophical issues led him to suggest that, "for many young members of the human race, philosophical reasoning—including, on occasion, subtle and ingenious reasoning—is as natural as making music and playing games, and quite as much a part of being human" (p. 36). Robert Coles (1990) who writes about children's spirituality points out "how young we are when we start wondering about it all, the nature of the journey and the final destination" (p. 335). Similarly Hart's (2003) second two spiritual "domains" (introduced earlier) are *wondering* and *wisdom*. By wondering, he means the tendency for children to ask, ponder, and puzzle over the "big questions" and by wisdom, the ability of children to "come to the heart of the matter," to see issues or situations clearly and compassionately. His research suggests that some young children demonstrate remarkable strengths in these domains. All of these theorists are challenging the assumption that contemplative reason is not accessible to young children.

Clearly this is an area that is compatible with aspects of developmental stage theory. Piaget's theory of rational cognitive development is relevant, but with some qualifications. Mathew and others have critiqued Piaget as not understanding and therefore missing the philosophical responses of young children. Where Piaget believed that real philosophical understanding cannot take place until adolescence, Mathews, Hart, and Coles argue that many 5-, 6-, and 7-year-olds are philosophically astute. Yet, most people do develop in their ability to think contemplatively in terms of becoming more insightful, reflective, and self-reflective—and cognitive stage theory is relevant. Parents and teachers can focus the mind on existential topics worthy of deep consideration beginning at the preschool stage. By adolescence, meaningful philosophical reflection could be incorporated into most academic subjects. Noddings (1993, 2006) and Theodore Sizer and N. Sizer (2007) are representatives of many educational theorists who advocate for the inclusion

of profound existential questions with strong ethical dimensions at the core of the curriculum. T. Sizer and N. Sizer (2007) say,

> A curriculum rich in content will teach young people that important matters of sensitive living have everything to do with hard, substantive, and often agonizingly painful thought. ...We're selling our children short when we believe that grappling is beyond them. In fact, most of them are dealing with questions of intense seriousness while we're looking the other way (p. 155).

Conclusion

By ignoring the development of contemplative capacities (in any way we define them), we are "looking the other way." All four of the above perspectives on definition assume that contemplative capacities not only exist but also are key elements of living fully, and it is possible to embrace them all in a "nondualistic" consciousness. Thomas Merton (1972) defines contemplation as follows:

> The highest expression of man's (*sic*) intellectual and spiritual life. It is that life itself, fully awake, fully active, fully aware that it is alive. It is spiritual wonder. It is spontaneous awe at the sacredness of life, of being. It is gratitude for life, for awareness (p. 1).

By consciously educating for contemplative capacities, we are embodying our hopes that our children will not be "shut out from the laws of the stars," will experience "the intensified sky hurled through with birds" with spirit, heart, mind, and senses and will feel again and again "the winds of homecoming."

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Chapter 23
The Contribution of Spirituality to "Becoming a Self" in Child and Youth Services

Douglas Magnuson

Abstract Spiritual development can be considered as a kind of educational ideology and compared with the constructive-developmental, romantic, and cultural transmission ideologies on the basis of their organization of time, goals, values, data sources, methods and mechanisms of growth, outcomes, and metaphors. One view of spirituality, originating in a theology of vocation, is based on discernment of self-transcendence, responsibility, and authenticity, in response to a calling, and youth programs can be organized to nurture discernment of a calling in the lives of youth.

In Don DeLillo's *Underworld*, a seminary instructor—a priest—and a student are conversing about the student's education. The priest looks down at the students' wet boots and says,

> "Name the parts. Go ahead. We're not so *chi chi* here, we're not so intellectually chic that we can't test a student face-to-face."
> "Name the parts," I said. "All right. Laces."
> "Laces, one to each shoe. Proceed."
> I lifted one shoe and turned it awkwardly.
> "Sole and heel."
> "Yes, go on."
> I set my foot back down and stared at the boot, which seemed about as blank as a closed brown box.
> "Proceed, boy."
> "There's not much to name, is there? A front and a top."
> "A front and a top. You make me want to weep."
> "The rounded part at the front."
> "You're so eloquent I may have to pause to regain my composure. You've named the lace. What's the flap under the lace?"
> "The tongue."
> "Well?"
> "I knew the name. I just didn't see the thing."

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> He made a show of draping himself across the desk, writhing slightly as if in the midst of some dire distress.
>
> "You didn't see the thing because you don't know how to look. And you don't know how to look because you didn't know the names."

The priest continues on to name the cuff, counter, quarter, welt, vamp, eyelet, aglet, grommet, and last.

Like this student's encounter with the shoe, what we see when we "look at" young people reflects how we have come to name and interpret. In formal and informal education, a small number of ways of naming things are common, and spirituality is the unadopted foster child of youth services. It is referred to, discussed, and desired, but outside of religious ministries the literature is small and practices tend to be individual rather than systemic or programmatic. Scott and Magnuson (2005) point toward one kind of integration of spirituality into child and youth services by describing the practices of forgiveness, gift-giving, and responding to suffering and pain as exemplars of spiritual development, especially in services for children and families who are distressed. That discussion did not include a comparison with alternative or related ideologies and practices of child and youth services or what might be required to have a fully developed child and youth services practice of spirituality. Here I take a step back to consider (a) common alternative conceptions and ideologies of practice in child and youth services and informal education, and (b) one perspective on the practice of spiritual development based on the historical and theological idea of "vocation."

This work begins with Kohlberg and Maier's (1972) explication of the constructive-developmental, cultural transmission, and romantic educational ideologies, which is still the most thorough explanation of educational ideologies in formal and informal education, and I compare to these one interpretation of the practice of spiritual development. This interpretation is derived from a post-Reformation Protestant theology. The data and literature review on which this discussion is based are from an exploratory study, the Project on Vocation, Work, and Youth Development (Baizerman, 1999). We interviewed 145 youth in long interviews, listening for accounts of spirituality interpreted through the theological framework of the idea of vocation, a calling. One purpose of that study was to think about how vocation might contribute to an understanding of spirituality as an organizational principle of daily life for young people.

A good place to begin the discussion is with a comparison of schools, since everyone has experience with some kind of formal education, and the ideas and practices related to each of the ideologies is easiest to access there.

A Comparison of Educational Practices

The first kind of school, the progressive school based on constructive-developmental principles, aims to "build a free and powerful character" (Kohlberg & Maier, 1972), and this is accomplished through the active, democratic participation of students in

organizing daily life (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). Students take on roles in administering various components of the school, including the administration and maintenance of rules and guidelines, disciplinary actions, extracurricular activities, and project-based learning activities. They participate in service projects and peer-helping programs for students who need and want help with student work or with personal issues. With the guidance of teachers, in these activities students challenge and support each other, think and reflect, and students learn gradually to take the perspective of others, to actively coordinate between competing interests, values, and ideas. Conflict and disagreement are seen as means for deepening understanding of others and of moral principles. In these the exercise of judgment helps students move from a perspective embedded in their own needs and impulses to acting as principled moral agents. Students explore, test, and experiment in and with the world around them, like poets or scientists, and both success and failure are educational.

A second kind of school aims to nurture the creative, spontaneous, authentic self and help each student achieve self-actualization. Like Steiner Waldorf schools, it is believed that students are like flowers in that there is an innate biological imprint that needs nurturing—but not active management. In fact, it is believed that active management interferes with this innate growth. The most important educational role is to provide room to explore and play, "education toward freedom" (Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, n.d.) to protect the rights of children to be themselves and to be unique, to allow the "inner good" to unfold, and there is great faith in this inner good. Like the progressive school, this kind of school encourages student exploration, but while progressive schools believe that growth requires encountering persons and minds more advanced and disciplined than oneself, here it is believed that discipline will result from the individual's emerging sense of self in exploration of the world. Conflict is more likely to be perceived as a violation of one's own or someone's rights and right to be an individual.

A third kind of school is most concerned with preparing students for future participation in adult life, and the goal is to help students internalize moral values, habits of successful living, and the content of the culture. Students are wax, and the cultural values are imprinted on the wax for life; it is believed that outputs depend on the quality of the inputs. These schools attend carefully to the building blocks of the culture and how they are transmitted to students. They will typically have careful programs of reward for achievement and consequences or discipline for failure. Moral values and the content of the curriculum are seen as similar—they must be explicitly taught; in some districts, these schools are called "traditional" schools, and the content is the three "Rs": "readin' ", "ritin", and "rithmatic." Successful living requires learning the specific skills of the academic, social, and moral curriculum. A common phrase for the moral curriculum is "character education," in which students are provided role models, shown the consequences of bad choices, and taught explicit skills for refusing bad choices and making good choices. Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) is a common program in these schools.

A fourth kind of school is also concerned with preparation for adult life, although its methods are to have students participate alongside adults in adult activities. The primary pedagogical method is to have available to students interesting adults who

are doing interesting things and to invite students to participate with them. For example, science teachers may be working on a robotics project and students, when they see it, become interested in learning how to build and animate such a thing. They start hanging around the teachers, and if the project and the teachers are compelling enough, students ask to help and ask to be taught the necessary skills. The work is a craft, and like apprentices in any craft, the skills, values, attitudes, and expertise take time, commitment, and discipline to acquire. Students come first to identify with and try out adult activities, experiences, values, and points of view, and they do this primarily by identifying with the people who are the experts, and they also respond to the implicit practice wisdom, values, and techniques of the craft. In this they are responding to an invitation, a calling, that embodies particular and general ideals and identities, intrinsic values that are required in order to accomplish an expertise. The work requires interdependency and teaching occurs at all levels of expertise, not just from teacher to student but also from student to less experienced student. Learning activities, in this view, are embedded in a larger community that gives those activities meaning.

These four different kinds of practices, all based on actual schools, assume different things about the meaning of learning and of what it is to be a young person, and there is implicit in and assumed by each a kind of metaphor: The constructive-developmental model—the progressive school—assumes that youths' main learning project is testing oneself against the world and organizing what is learned into a system of meaning—the scientist-poet. The therapeutic/romantic model assumes that young people are flowering organisms, with an innate pattern of growth, and the learning project is finding one's authentic, self-actualized self. The cultural transmission model assumes that the goal is preparation for the future by learning the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to be a successful adult. And, finally, this "situated learning" model assumes that learning is a craft and that young people are responding to a "call," a vocation, embedded in everyday life—including one's spiritual tradition—and in this response is, in some sense, a working out and expression of one's self-transcendent, authentic, and responsible commitment.

The Educational Psychology of Growth and Development

Table 23.1 shows some of the characteristics of these four ways of thinking about learning and growth, compared by organization of time, goals, values, data sources, methods and mechanisms of growth, outcomes, and metaphors.

Organization of Time

Cultural transmission programs are based on clock time, in which linear progress is the measure of growth, and expectations are synced with objective measures of time, such as grade and age. Hirsch (1988), for example, presented a schedule of when

Table 23.1 Education psychologies of informal and formal education

	Constructive-developmental	Therapeutic/romantic	Cultural transmission	Spirituality
Organization of time	Developmental	Event time	Clock time	Rhythmic
Goals	–Becoming a "self" –Building of a free and powerful character –Reorganization of psychological structure –Nurture interaction with developing society	–Finding authentic self –Self-actualization –Spontaneous, creative, self-confident personality –Health and growth –Self-awareness	–Teaching strategies for avoiding trouble –Transmission of information, rules, and values collected in the past –Internalization	–Practice of spiritual disciplines –Experience of ultimate concerns –Spiritual discernment and listening for one's vocation
What is true?	–Resolved relationship between human actor and a problematic situation	–Curiosity –Intellectual reasoning –Natural and inner self –Innate patterning –Novel immediate, inner experience	–Patterning or association of events in the outside world –Repetitive and objective knowledge	–Congruence with one's spiritual tradition
Source of data	–Thought and valuing processes –Meaning of experience –Longitudinal, universal, qualitative states	–Freedom –Inner feelings –Happiness, inner awareness –Mental health –Enjoyment –Novel, intense, or complex experience	–Favorable response –Incorporation –Discipline –Performance –Conformity to cultural standard –Skills –Traits	–Spiritual value system –Evidence of transcendence, responsibility, authenticity

Table 23.1 (continued)

	Constructive-developmental	Therapeutic/romantic	Cultural transmission	Spirituality
Organization of time	Developmental	Event time	Clock time	Rhythmic
Methods and mechanisms of growth	–Nourish natural interaction with developing environment –Rights grounded in justice –Ethical universals –Democratic practices, decision making, participation –Role-taking, increasing complexity of experience	–Permissive enough to allow the inner "good" to unfold –Freedom –Respect and defend rights of children –Avoid interfering –What children want is what they should want	–Direct, explicit instruction –Imitation –Reward and punishment –Discipline –Conformity –Demonstration	–Commitment to a calling/vocation "gift-giving," conversion –Pursuit of expertise service, faith, hope, love
Outcomes	–Principled agency, including toward and about oneself –Empathy –Perspective-taking	–Acceptance of oneself –Insight –Flourishing –Self-care	–Staying out of trouble –Contributing to society	–Finding a "calling" –Transcendence –Conversion –Authenticity –Responsibility –Expertise at spiritual disciplines
Metaphors of the self	–Scientist-poet (experiments) –Philosopher (organizes meaning)	–Flower; organic growth	–Machine –Wax –Telephone switchboard –Computer	–Craftsperson

students should learn ideas and concepts. There is a right age for everything, and some things are wrong at any age. Moral values are conceived to be the same—and look the same—at all ages. Honesty looks the same at 5 years of age as it does at 25. In comparison, romantic programs function by event time (Levine, 1997), in which the right time for beginning and ending is when individuals and groups are ready. When developmental milestones happen, when learning occurs, is when they *should* occur.

Developmental time is a consequence of the interaction between persons and the environment, and it is close to event time, except that there is a linear progress that results from increasing complexity of experience. Our expectations of kindergarten students going away from home for several hours are different from our expectations of college students leaving home for months, and their sophistication in managing the transition is developmentally different. Unlike clock time, though, progress takes a more discerning eye to recognize, because in the dynamic movement from agency to communion—and back—connection and independence are emphasized and experienced to relative degrees (Kegan, 1982), and developmental progress may, on the surface, look like regression. A child who, at age 4, orders dinner items off a menu may, at age 8, be too shy to do so, even though developmentally he or she is far more advanced. That new shyness may be a result of increasing self-awareness.

Finally, rhythmic time is cultural and ritualistic, being keyed in religion to the rhythms of the church calendar, call, and response in the liturgy, the organization of the day in a monastery or religious summer camp, and the rituals of daily spiritual practices. In secular settings, there are rhythms of the seasons, the year, and daily life, and child and youth care organizations are increasingly attentive to these. Residential programs attend to the rituals of going to bed, for example. These rhythms give life order and significance. There are also rhythms—and patterns—of dysfunction, and good programs recognize and intervene with discordant rhythms.

Goals and the Methods and Mechanisms of Growth

It has already been mentioned that the goal of constructive-developmental programs is "building a free and powerful character." This is thought of as resulting from the interaction with the developing society and the continual "reorganization of psychological structure" (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972, p. 457) that occurs as a result. Growth is registered as an increasing disembeddedness from context, the ability to recognize oneself, to "take a perspective on oneself," and to exercise agency over one's impulses, needs, and goals. These programs nurture qualities of experiential, social, and material interaction with the developing environment, and they provide opportunities for role-taking, increasing complexity of experience, reflection, continuity, and a balance of support and challenge (Reiman, Sprinthall, & Thies-Sprinthall, 1997). The therapeutic/romantic programs are aiming for psychological traits like confidence, self-actualization, and situated constructs like "health" as well as meeting one's own needs. In this view programs respond to what children want, believing

this to be markers of what they need, and they aim to be just permissive enough to nurture the inner good as well as defending the rights of children. Cultural transmission programs aim for internalization of the values and habits of the culture, the lessons learned from the past.

In sum, the constructive-developmental program wants richness of interaction, with the content taking a subsidiary role, while the romantic–therapeutic approach wants richness of individual and individualistic experience. The cultural transmission programs want richness of content, and the content is transmitted through explicit, direct instruction, imitation, and behavioral and behaviorist discipline. For spiritual programs, the goals direct attention to what Mullen (1995) called "ultimate concerns," the goal of existence and how a spiritual tradition answers the questions about those concerns. This attention requires "discernment," the ability to distinguish and choose from signs and signals about how one is to live. Spiritual programs nurture commitment to a vocation, whether general or individual, and they attend to spiritual practices such as gift-giving, forgiveness, love, and faith (Scott & Magnuson, 2005).

Values and Sources of Data

Each ideology values something, and the sources of data about these values differ. The constructive-developmental tradition, with its focus on interaction, believes growth is shown by a "resolved relationship between a human actor and a problematic situation" (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972, p. 460). Persons are problem solvers, and in the process of mastering problems, they achieve a new qualitative state of development, shown by longitudinal differences in sources of meaning and in qualities of valuing processes. What they value, and the richness of how they value it, changes in progressive, developmental ways. The romantic/therapeutic program values qualities of inner experience and the richness of immediate experience which are, in part, aesthetic criterion. How much one enjoys something is important, and the self-awareness, authenticity, and uniqueness with which one enjoys is a measure of its importance and one's own growth. The cultural transmission program values objective experience: behavioral outcomes, intellectual and factual knowledge, skills, traits, and expertise. It is measured by performance and achievement, by demonstrating its accomplishment. Spiritual programs, in contrast, value the quality of one's discernment in response to a calling, as measured by the historical values of self-transcendence, responsibility, and authenticity.

Vocation as a Foundation for Spirituality in Informal Education

The constructive-developmental and cultural transmission models aim for outcomes that are true for everyone. The romantic/therapeutic model values individual experience, and one looks within oneself for guidance. In contrast, the perspective on

spirituality offered here directs attention to self-transcendence, to processes of discernment from outside oneself, but following Adams (1987) and Kierkegaard, the existential difficulties of being a person are not about understanding the general ethical rules or responsibilities that apply to everybody—the universal—but individual responses and responsibilities. "The cases in which I am most likely to be morally fragmented, crushed, or immobilized, however, are those in which this procedure [the application of ethical principles] fails to write my name legibly on any particular task" (Adams, 1987, p. 448). In Kierkegaard's terms, it is consideration of one's "absolute relation to the absolute" (Adams, 1987, p. 452), the ethical obligation that is unique to me. This is a vocation, Adams says in referring to Kierkegaard, "as part of what makes him who he is in the sense that it is part of what gives his existence, his life, a unity that is humanly and morally significant. It is part of what matters about being himself" (Adams, 1987, p. 455). The central existential question is, from the point of view of the idea of a vocation: "Who am *I* called to become, and what is *my* responsibility?" Historically, this question was answered through the interaction between an individual and his or her "station." I will briefly review the historical development of the idea of vocation as a way of describing vocation's contemporary role in spirituality, summarized as the experience of and commitment to self-transcendence, responsibility, and authenticity.

One's Station as the Site of a Vocation

Luther believed that one's vocation is mediated through a "station" in life, for example, the station of work. Work is a divine vocation, although not the only one. A "vocation is the specific call to love one's neighbor which comes to us through the duties which attach to our social place or 'station' within the earthly kingdom" (Hardy, 1990, p. 46). Work defined who one was, the moral commitments required, and it placed one within the social hierarchy in a community. The idea of a "station" in life—others include family, marriage, work, church, social role, or synagogue, community, or education—is a helpful metaphor for thinking about what it is that religious youth require in order to mature. A station is both a destination and a waypoint. It directs attention to the social roles, traditionally ascribed, and to the values and identities embedded in it. It is how one knows who and what one is, a road map that tells one how far there is to go. These social stations were believed to be sanctioned and chosen by God, and one's spiritual and moral responsibility was to accept that call and commit oneself to it. One cannot choose one's birth family or one's community, and only an elite few have been able to choose their schooling and work. One could, in many cases, choose one's spouse and those with whom one associated. But an understanding of one's station was relatively stable and came to resemble an ascribed identity, an identity about which one could hardly imagine being otherwise. Thus, individuals came to see themselves in the image of the stations in which they lived, whether religious, family, or occupational. Kohn and Schooler (1978), for example, have described how blue-collar and white-collar workers come to see themselves in ways that are uniquely consistent with their

occupations. Individuals may have formerly had a more static image of their life chances and possibilities, and to step out of this was literally to step out of the self, to be another person—not one's self.

Stations as Humanly Organized

According to Hardy (1990), Calvin modified Luther's understanding of the origins of stations by suggesting that the stations were not necessarily divinely inspired but were themselves culturally shaped and humanly formed; thus they require reordering and transformation so that they are compatible with God's intentions and so that individuals can truly exercise God's purposes within those stations. In this the community exercises reason and good judgment. Since the station is the context of God's calling, "our calling itself must be brought into alignment with God's Word" (Hardy, 1990, p. 66). This introduced an element of human agency into the experience, although it was still true that stations were largely ascribed. Still, Calvin's interpretation was that the world, and one's place in it, needed to be evaluated by the standards of what one believed God wanted. This requires some discernment and wisdom about God's will and the willingness to act on the basis of one's discernment in ways that help make the world more just. And stations in life themselves became subject to reordering, tinkering, and creation of the new and elimination of others. This is one historical source of the Protestant roots of entrepreneurial activity and the idea that one's success in life was sanctified by God, and it is the source of the idea of the value of individual discernment and authenticity.

Calling: Divine, Social, and Individual Imperatives

Over the past few centuries, learning about and coming to know and choose one's calling has been historically a weaving of divine—as Luther understood it—social—as Calvin understood it, and individual imperatives (Healy, 1986), but knowing whether one's call is "right" (true to God's will) has always been a difficult matter of faith and belief, and that problematic has its roots in conflicting tendencies within Puritanism (e.g., Clapp, 1996; Healy, 1986). In addition, according to Healy, cultural changes in western and American society have influenced how one's calling is discerned. As divine, social, and imperative strands became unraveled, the idea of a calling became secularized and individualized. Its roots are no longer always considered to be in a divine relationship or in community goods and needs. More recently, an "individual" confirmation of one's calling has taken precedence over other methods, even for many Christians.

> One effect of a secularized concept of calling is a change in perspective, from outward—first listening for God's call and seeking confirmation of that call in the tangible things around one, then hearkening the voice of one's society and finding fulfillment in a life of service—to inward: Listening to the voice of one's true self and seeking confirmation in one's own sense of satisfaction, fulfillment, and inner peace. . .Hearing the voice of God,

after all, has not—at least since Biblical times—been a simple matter. *How* does God speak? As I have already indicated, the Puritans never satisfactorily resolved this question (Healy, 1986, p. 95).

One's ear must be tuned carefully in order to understand God's call as mediated through the world; it is just as difficult to "hear" the call of God when the search turns inward, a kind of "eavesdropping on the self" (LaMagdeleine, 1996) in order to listen to God, and the signals of this call that are authentic—to me—are not always easy to discern. Still, there is here a historical process of listening to transcendent voices, represented in secular terms by other people, and in religious terms by God, as well as listening to oneself.

The Authentic Self

In addition to self-transcendence and responsibility, a vocation in contemporary terms is often heard, chosen, and committed to as an expression of authenticity, a sense that "this is who I am." One example is Ruby, who shows how her idea of an authentic self is used as an instrument of discernment and engagement with God. She is an intelligent and energetic high school senior who has many friends. In school she is in advanced placement classes, participates in a variety of extracurricular activities, and she has leadership positions in school and in her youth group. Even so, she does not think her same-age friends are always comfortable with her; her theory is that because she likes to be in charge and is very vocal she intimidates others. Some of her closest friends are older than her. She also feels atypical because she has a peaceful and harmonious relationship with her parents and brother; she is puzzled by the stories of intense conflict and disagreement with parents that are related to her by friends and acquaintances. She has not had many opportunities to date because, she says:

> I think sometimes I give almost a picture of being perfect. I mean, I go to church. I love going to church. I love my activities with church. I love my activities with school, and with [peer counseling youth group], and I'm in Campfire. So I'm very involved in everything I do. And sometimes I think that kind of gives this. . ... I think I just give this image sometimes that I'm perfect and it takes a lot to be in my world, but it doesn't.

Despite her busy social and academic schedule, Ruby feels somewhat the emptiness of her public image and the barriers that image has created between her and others, both male and female. She believes, though, that to become more "accepted" and more typical of her peers might require changes in herself that she believes would compromise her self-integrity, specifically, to not be herself. She has lost friends and dating relationships because of it. In this she has truly chosen herself.

The process of choosing a self can be a monologue, and Ruby describes herself in early adolescence as someone who knew what she was about and thought everyone else ought to be similar to her. Instead of continuing with this monologue, Ruby chose to "dialogue." One of the ways her dialogue with the world engaged herself, her family, her peers, and her sense of life's possibilities was in her choice of a high

school. Ruby's family and community is white and middle class, and students in her community have a choice between a high school that is white and middle class and a high school that is integrated and has few middle-class students. Ruby's family wanted her to go to the middle-class school because they were concerned about her academic opportunities and about her safety. Her friends also chose that school. However, Ruby felt that the choice of schools represented an opportunity to test herself, to test her faith and God, to test the world and in so doing to find an authentic expression of herself. Further, she intuited that trying this high school would reveal something inconsistent about herself and about her faith as it was framed by her church. Essentially, she was testing her experience against her beliefs, motivated in part by a search for herself, and a search for authentic and real experience that she had not yet discovered.

Her intuitions proved to be true. Her choice to go to an integrated school illuminated racist attitudes prevalent in her church, expressed in their concern for her, and she found herself teaching them about another way of thinking:

> Ruby: That's going to make my church sound bad, but there's even some people in my church that are prejudiced themselves.
> Interviewer: Well, church is filled with human beings.
> Ruby: Yeah, oh, I agree totally. By learning to see that. … By saying, "Well, look at their perspective," I've been able to show other people—"Why don't you maybe stop and think about what they're feeling?"

She found some of her former friends to be wanting, since she realized that some of their choices were made for reasons of comfort and ease of thought "…they had that same background. They were from the upper middle class. That's why they went there. We thought exactly the same. And then I went to [high school] and it was like, 'These people don't think the same way I do!' And it wasn't necessarily the color, the race issue. It was so many different ideas."

Another example of learning to dialogue is in Ruby's experience of debate.

I think my being in debate, that has helped me also to be able to see both sides of things, because, oh, gosh. It was chaos! When I started debate, it was chaos! Me and a friend were the only two Christians in this class. And debaters, they just have this gung-ho, "Say whatever we want to say" attitude. It wasn't, "Well, okay, I'll respect that that's your place." It was, "Well, that's not right. I'm right and you're wrong." So I had to learn to see their side of things before I could show them mine.

At first I was just like, "I'm right, you're wrong." So it took me a while to see that I'm going to have to look at how other people feel, sometimes before I can see what I feel. Before, I didn't think that there could ever be a possibility that they could be right. I was just right and that was the end of the story! So I really learned to see that they could be right. Yeah, I have to listen to what they think without… I would listen, but I wasn't listening. I would hear them, but I would be thinking what my come-back was going to be, what I was going to say in return. I wasn't thinking, "Well, maybe I could think about this. Maybe they could be right." And another friend has taught me a lot about if I don't understand something, question it. And I always thought if I questioned something about my faith, then I wasn't having faith. I was, "Well, I can't question that, that's just the way God wants it to be." But without questioning it, I didn't understand it. And that's why I had questions. So now, if I have a question, I question it until I understand it, and then I understand and we go on.

She found that attending this high school was an essential expression of herself: "If I didn't go to [high school], I would not be who I am." This is an expectation of authenticity, of a self created in part through her own agency, in dialogue with her past, her family, and her community.

It is this demand for authenticity that is characteristic of how contemporary youth discern their call—God's call, if they are religious. Authenticity is a form of self-fulfillment that Taylor (1991) believes can be a moral ideal: "The moral ideal behind self-fulfillment is that of being true to oneself" (p. 15). A moral ideal is "a picture of what a better or higher mode of life would be, where 'better' and 'higher' are defined not in terms of what we happen to desire or need, but offer a standard of what we ought to desire" (p. 16). Ruby expresses an ideal that Taylor (1991) describes as new to modern consciousness:

> Before the late eighteenth century no one thought that the differences between human beings had this kind of moral significance. There is a certain way of being human that is *my* way. I am called to live my life in this way, and not in imitation of anyone else's. But this gives a new importance to being true to myself. If I am not, I miss the point of my life, I miss what being human is for *me*. . .Being true to myself means being true to my own originality, and that is something only I can articulate and discover. In articulating it, I am also defining myself. I am realizing a potentiality that is properly my own (p. 29).

My potentiality is the goal of the spiritual educational ideology based on discernment of one's vocation. Ruby accepts the moral invitations of her faith. She accepts her responsibilities as they are framed by her family and church. But Ruby also feels called to be an authentic person, and she has experimented with her life possibilities and her self-definition. Most importantly, *her experience of authenticity, of being herself, is a criterion for discerning God's will*. In secular terms, it is a requirement for discerning who she should be and, in Taylor's terms, being true to the moral ideal. Authenticity is an experiential criterion, the expectation that what I feel be real, make sense and, most importantly, that my experience live up to my ideals. In Ruby's case, the process of choosing a school, for example, was her interrogation of God; she wanted her life live to live up to the high-minded ideals of her faith.

Discerning the Transcendent

Baumeister (1986) points out that most of the stable markers of identity for adults are no longer stable such as parenting, marriage, employment, religion, even though successful adaptation to adult life requires stable aims. As a result, the underpinning of meanings that sustains everyday life is missing or obscure for many youth, and many interventions with youth misdiagnose the problem. Most activities in education have to do with the "economies of the culture-spheres . . . which remain beholden to the metaphors of production and consumption, distribution and exchange" (Schrag, 1997, p. 135). This is typical of most youth development goals, such as the intent to "produce" mature youth, to create moral persons, to "get youth" to be responsible, to reduce risks for them and for society, to make them

economically viable, to teach knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and to prevent social problems.

Spirituality's contribution that is unique is a transcendent point of view. Schrag (1997) argues that transcendence has the function of "providing a space and a dynamics for a transfiguration and transvaluation of the life of self and society within the intramundane culture-spheres" (p. 134). There is more to being a person, especially, than the immanent, mundane world, and there is more to raising young people than production values. Schrag argues that the metaphor of "gift-giving" is crucial to the idea of transcendence, corresponding to Kierkegaard's movement from Religiousness A to Religiousness B, from "religion as a cultural configuration of beliefs and practices tending toward institutionalization" (p. 120) to religion as the "rupture of immanence" (p. 120), a "transcendent dimension of depth" (p. 123). The immanent demand of a return on investment is what most youth development assumes. "Be good and the return on investment will be good." But one element of transcendence proposed by Schrag is the metaphor of a gift which, if is truly a gift, is given without expectation of being reciprocated.

> The point that carries the pivotal weight in the phenomenon of gift-giving and gift-receiving is that the gift as gift remains outside, external to, the economy of production and consumption, distribution and exchange. Indeed, the gift remains radically transcendent to the determinations of reciprocity within the economy of goods and services; and insofar as it does impinge upon and interact with this economy, the gift displays a surplus of significations that overflow the particulars within the cycle of putative gift exchange (Schrag, 1997, p. 140).

The stories youth tell us that are the most powerful almost always display this element of gift-giving—either as a recipient or as one who gives: A single mother gave up a lucrative career in favor of one which allowed her to be at home with her daughter; a family that chose to adopt a developmentally disabled child; a boy from a Hispanic community who, when given a car by his grandfather, restored it into a family symbol and turned down an offer of $100,000 for the car; a girl who chose to attend an integrated high school rather than the "safe" local high school; a boy whose family sacrificed to help the father go back to school; a 13-year-old girl who, with her 12-year-old sister, ran the family business when the father was suddenly disabled; a boy's commitment to creating a community center for other youth; tenacious friendships; teachers and youth workers who invite youth to be colleagues; creating a work of art, music, or poetry; caring for a sibling.

God can be heard, seen, and felt in these stories of grace and gracefulness. From an immanent point of view, these are stories about youth risk-taking and about youth "at-risk," about "resilience," about competencies and skills, about "assets." At its best, this point of view emphasizes the importance of a "caring adult in the lives of youth" and the value of service to others, but these are typically methods of ensuring outcomes and of reducing risk. From a transcendent point of view, the point of gift-giving is not ensuring the outcome. The aim is the act of rupturing immanence which for youth illuminates and provides access to grace.

Discernment of Discernment

David Foster Wallace (1998) writes that in his experience of teaching Kafka to college students, he finds that they have difficulty with the difference between the idea of a "self as something you have" and the difficulties of "being a self." The "call to selfhood," the struggle to be "a self," requires discernment. We propose that child and youth services, both formal and informal, give some thought to focusing on spirituality and one's vocation as a way to make a subtle but powerful shift from the goal of arriving at the structure and form of identity, exemplified by knowledge, skills, and attitudes, to a focus on the emerging "struggle to be a self." This is a shift from identity as the goal to identity as a reflexive process of growing to maturity: In short, it is a shift from the static goal to the dynamic goal of "development." As Goodman (1956) said, young people look for something in which to have faith. The advantage that religious youth have is the typically firm belief that there is a purpose to their lives, a destiny. They do not always know what it is, but they are intent on figuring it out through experience and with discernment. This search is the origin of a dialogue with the church and the content of that dialogue. In their own terms, secular youth services can also engage young people in a dialogue about "being a self," about the individual relationship to the absolute, about one's calling.

Few youth have mature adults in their lives with whom to talk. Only 4 of 145 youth said that they have an adult who really talks to them about the meaning of their lives for any length of time. These two concerns are experientially attached to each other, not only in the value of conversation for nurturing, therapeutic, and supportive purposes, but also because reflection and conversation are themselves the experience of a "productive hermeneutic" (Veling, 1996, p. 68). Not only can youth learn from adults how they interpret the meaning of experience, but inherent in this dialogue in contemporary terms is the developmental importance of youths' emergent and emerging new self-interpretations as a result of these reflections. These are acts of discernment.

Vocation in a Youth Program

> "Well you know, sometimes I look in the mirror and I say, the face is familiar, but what's my name?" (Member of an Exploring Post)

Developmentally, on occasion the anchors for knowing oneself come loose. Sociologically, Baumeister's (1986) suggestion that almost all anchors are now unstable means that linear processes of "growing youth" into adulthood have a more muddled target. Mead (1970) described contemporary society as pre-figurative, in which young people live in a different world than their parents, and Coleman (1972) said that the prescriptions and wisdom of the past are not much of a guide to young people in choosing what to do with their lives. Coleman and Mead may have overstated it, but it is true that less is fixed. In the Exploring program, described below, of 69 youth who were interviewed, only 9 expressed any interest in the occupations of their parents, and of these some were interested specifically in avoiding their parents

lifestyle. Under these conditions, discernment may be even more important than in the past.

One example of how this might look in practice is illustrated by the Exploring program, a national co-education, experiential youth development program in the United States. This is a volunteer-run program in which individual youth groups—called "Posts"—are sponsored by organizations—businesses, churches, nonprofits, public agencies, and recreation services. The organization provides youth access to its resources, its personnel, and its expertise, and the youth learn that expertise and are expected to share it with others in service projects. The program is intended to be run by youth in collaboration with adults. When it works well, extraordinary things happen. Youth in an engineering post design robots, in an emergency medical services youth participate alongside adults in providing First Responder care, in cadets youth learn to fly planes, at a Living History farm youth do historical research and write articles for publication, and in outdoor adventure youth go spelunking, white-water canoeing, and rock climbing. These are concrete, linear activities, and they are attractive to youth.

In the interviews of youth from good programs there were signs of more than activity: Youth experience an invitation, a calling, that we interpret as a kind of spiritual vocation. One kind of invitation is to be an adult. "We get treated like adults. . .well, we're on the same level. I wouldn't say adults, but it's like we're all on the same level. I mean, they treat us like they respect us and we respect them, so I guess that's like adults." A second kind of invitation has to do with competence; the opportunity to associate with competent adults—competent professionally and interpersonally—to be friends with them, and to see what it is they do and how they do it, is important.

> Youth: We have police officers, we have counselors, social workers—just whatever deals with the issue that we're talking about. We get the highest person that we can get because we don't want any information to be false that we're giving to people.
> Interviewer: Got it.
> Youth: We get the pros.
> Interviewer: Get the pros, okay. You guys are the pros.
> Youth: Yeah! We like to think so.

Youth were excited about being measured against adult criteria, surprisingly. They found the challenge of it exciting, and when they measured up and were able to use those skills in meaningful situations, it was quite powerful. "But I guess I like to be counted on." There was an invitation to learning, and it was often tied to specific needs, as in this youth who said, "And he dragged me. . .he was like, 'I need your help with something.' I was like 'What?' And he goes, 'I need your help. Come help me.' " When youth respond to these invitations, they become and are repeatedly invited to become responsible and to accept responsibility—for teaching and caring for others, for the safety of community members, and for the leadership opportunities. There was an interesting dynamic among some interviewees, especially young women. The more troubled and difficult their own family life, the more serious and intense experience they desired.

Explorers also talked about "being themselves." Their Exploring Posts were places where they could try being authentic: "Personality. Every. . .see when you. . . the school I attend now, I met all the people in the seventh grade, so you know, you only make your first impression once and, unfortunately, kids are not very likely to drop the things that they remember from you in the seventh and eighth and ninth grade, even though I know I've changed a lot and I know they have. Most people change over a five year period of time. They're a lot different, but you go into the Post and you just pick out right where you want to be and you don't have to worry about, you know, things people already know about you, not necessarily bad things." This girl joined an Exploring Post where nobody knew her, and she deliberately kept it separate from her school life.

Finally, there is an invitation to try out a way of life. Many youth find that there is not very much help in their world for learning how to live. One young man expressed his family's hope for him to "be somebody." Being somebody in his world is to avoid jail and be able to support himself and a family. They were not very helpful in figuring out how to do so. He joined an Exploring Post, and he has been able to strategically put together pieces of an ideal and of goals that are based on lifestyles that he sees, lifestyles that he wants to avoid, and images of what life could be like. In his present life he appears to have two lifestyles: One is based in his city neighborhood with one set of friends and his high school. The other lifestyle is in suburbia where his jobs are, where his Exploring Post is, and where another set of friends lives. He has pieced them together in a way that allows him access to an interesting future without rejecting entirely the necessities of his present life. His growth into maturity is more complicated than simply being socialized into a culture or a world of work. For him it is literally "self-creation" and creation of a world. When asked to identify the sources of his values, his ideals, and his hopes, he says, "Myself." For some youth that answer might be disingenuous or developmental, but for him it is probably accurate.

Interviewer:	You're putting pieces together. You're tinkering with all kinds of options and figuring out. . .life is a kind of problem and you're strategizing solutions and paths.
Youth:	Yeah. Like testing myself. I kind of take a little bit from here and there.

"Being himself" is a process of trying things out. "Doing his life" is a process of self-control and self-monitoring. Exploring is where he is the person he is but also where he is trying out the lifestyle of the person he wants to be.

Spirituality as an Educational Ideology

In sum, how do the stories from these youth about their experience in Exploring illustrate spirituality? With other youth and with adults, youth reflect on the meaning of their experiences, exercising a kind of discernment. They think about who they are and who they want to be, and they are invited to commit to and learn from

purposeful and meaningful experience, typically in service to others. The meaningfulness is created, in part, by encounters with ideas and purposes that transcend their own experience and are time-tested and proven worthy and interesting. These opportunities invite youth to accept responsibility for themselves and for others, and implicit in these are embedded values. These expectations are grounded in a concrete praxis. For example, an emergency medical service is a kind of craft in which there is an important and specific expertise that takes some time to acquire. There are also important expectations, for reasons of efficiency and reasons of maintaining relationships, for how members treat each other and how they care for equipment and for patients. There are expectations for planning and orderliness related to pre-emergency preparation and post-emergency wrap up. EMS workers know exactly what is negotiable and what is not. The consequences of mistakes in care are serious, and discipline about the work is crucial. At the same time, EMS workers are known for being friendly, for protecting each other, and for their sense of humor, albeit sometimes dark. They look out for each other. Moreover, the practice of EMS associated with expectations to use those skills to help and protect others and for the public good. Emergency workers frequently volunteer their time. There is, then, a kind of craft subculture, and this subculture is shared with young people: It becomes a calling that helps shape the identity, the development, and the practice of young people.

Thus, the practice of EMS is a concrete horizon that also serves as a horizon against which youth can measure themselves, in thought and action. Self-transcendence, responsibility, and authenticity are anchored in a specific, local world in which young people learn to "become themselves," to choose who they are and to what and whom they will commit. In so doing they are participating in a kind of conversion experience that is "ontic," as Lonergan (1978) puts it: "The convert apprehends differently, values differently, relates differently because he [or she] has become different. The new apprehension is not so much a new statement or a new set of statements, but rather new meanings that attach to almost any statement" (p. 13).

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Chapter 24
Coming of Age as a Spiritual Task in Adolescence

Daniel G. Scott

Abstract This chapter offers a framework for understanding expressions of spiritual development in the behaviours and experiences of young adolescents (aged 10–15). Drawing loosely on the wisdom and models of rites of passage traditions, links are made between the deliberate communal coming of age ceremonial processes and the personal experiences of contemporary adolescents who are often left to accomplish the same developmental tasks in peer groups or in individual processes. Rites of passage included a deliberate acknowledgement of their spiritual significance and specific tasks, activities and means to insure appropriate spiritual education in a coming of age process. The communal absence of these rites now does not diminish adolescent attempts to come of age in spiritual terms.

Introduction

In grappling with the nature of spiritual development across the early stages of a life journey it is useful to acknowledge that there are and have been a variety of cultural models to consider. Contemporary society is not the first to be concerned with the maturation processes of the young and the implications for and impact on culture. Many societies have evolved ways of assisting the young to become adults in the hope of preserving and passing on their way of life, beliefs, value structures, cultural knowledge and skills. As is pointed out in the literature on rites of passage (Eliade, 1958; Blos, 1979; Gutterridge, 1979; Mahdi, Foster, & Little, 1987), one of the acknowledged tasks in a culturally constructed and deliberate coming of age process is the passing on of adult values. It would appear (Raphael, 1988) that the primary cultural goal is to insure the formation of successful adults and it is understood that having an informed[1] value system is critical.

It appears that cultures that use coming of age ceremonies understand that the task of adult making requires the whole community to be involved. One can only make an adult with the support of mentors, elders, peers and families engaged in

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a public process. Becoming an adult is a change of social status that brings with it new responsibilities, roles and privileges. Becoming an adult requires not only that the person coming of age have an altered sense of place and status in the social hierarchy but also that his or her home community marks the border crossing into adulthood accepting, acknowledging and celebrating his or her new status.

The communal aspect of coming of age is paralleled in other cultural rites of passage. One of the most persistently practiced rites of passage is the celebration of marriage in which some form of communal ceremony acknowledges the formation of a long-term couple that brings together two (or more) families into new relationships. In contemporary culture where public rituals around births, deaths and marriage are less common, there are a number of legal structures now in place to protect partners involved in longer term couple relationships if public declarations or communal ceremonies have not happened. For example, common law unions are now legally sanctioned based on a time period of shared living to provide personal and legal protective structures regardless of public ceremony. The absence of public declaration and acknowledgement are now covered by different social processes so that the status change of being coupled is still recognized. Communal status still matters to cultures.

In addition to a public ceremony providing a basis for the shared recognition of new status, the rituals that are part of such declarations usually contain some form of spiritual or religious invocation. The blessings of marriage, funeral rites, infant baptisms, graduation exercises and other initiation ceremonies often include prayers, appeals to the Divine, or an acknowledgment of obligations and connections beyond the self. The obligations being established extend beyond the assembled community to the larger society and may include recognizing the presence of ancestors or a call to responsibility for the care of future generations. Some sense of the spiritual is present in ritual and ceremonial life regardless of the form it takes, the language used or the degree of deliberate spiritual consciousness that is part of constructing the ceremonial experience.

As an academic who frequently attends graduation ceremonies at a secular university, it is fascinating to note the number of symbols and practices that have spiritual history and significance that are used in convocation. They include a chaplain's prayer, the swearing of an oath and the wearing of special vestments to mark the significance of university graduation. Passage is being marked in a public declaration of achievement that indicates a shift in status and communal responsibility. Values are being underlined and reinforced in a ceremonial way that consciously or unconsciously duplicates traditional spiritual practices and has spiritual implications. Universities are maintaining a long tradition of using public ceremony—a rite of passage—to affirm their beliefs and the significance of their place in shaping communal life.

As a scholar curious about spiritual formation and development I am interested in the underlying spiritual potency of such ceremonies and our cultural interest in maintaining them. We continue to carry some sense of the importance of acknowledging passage in public ceremony but we seem to have set aside both the need for a deliberate cultural coming of age ceremonial process and the spiritual affect of rites

of passage on human development. Let me turn now to the language of spirituality and spiritual development to clarify my approach.

Spiritual Development: Several Clarifications

It is difficult to speak definitively about spiritual development as it is one aspect of the human maturation process that has not been extensively studied and for which there is neither a strong and commonly acknowledged theoretical base nor a commonly accepted structural model. We do not have a shared understanding of how the spiritual develops in concert with other developmental processes. It is easy to witness and study the processes of physical development as infants become toddlers, young children, early adolescents, teenagers, adults, middle aged, older adults and seniors. We have established normative ranges of physical development, recognized types of developmental delays, and studied nutritional, cultural and social impacts on physical maturation. We have robust theories about cognitive development and models of emotional and social development. Our understanding of spiritual formation is much more tenuous.

It is important for me to declare that I see life span development as a complex matter. In spite of a tendency to divide areas of human development into discrete categories with linear progression through steps or stages, the lived experience of development is not tidy and often not linear. There is complex interplay amongst social, emotional, cognitive, physical and spiritual developmental processes. No one area of development happens in isolation and the rate of development varies from one person to another and the personal pace of areas of development can also be irregular. An adolescent who is a late physical developer, not achieving puberty or adult body size until 14 or 15 years of age may have had a much earlier cognitive or spiritual development. And similarly someone at 12 years of age who has an adult body may not have matured socially or emotionally. I believe development has a cyclical nature with early stages being repeated or reviewed especially at major points of transition. For example, during the coming of age period adolescents may repeat some of the processes that Erikson (in Berger, 1988) identifies as earlier life tasks. Issues of trust and mistrust, autonomy and doubt, initiative and guilt and industry and inferiority may all be part of establishing identity and intimacy and require reworking to move on. As Maslow (1970) recognized near the end of his life transcendence and self-actualization could happen in a peak experience that did not require all of the other stages of his own hierarchy of needs to be met (see also Chapter 25).

It may be possible to identify the characteristics of the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of children based on common experiences and acknowledged signs of development formulated through our studies over the last century. We do not have the same signposts or markers of spiritual development or formation, much less than any agreed insight into the spiritual experiences of children and youth. What is the spiritual life of infants or children like in their early

years? What markers might we recognize? Is spiritual development a stage process moving from one milestone to another? Is it linear or cyclical? Are there experiences or behaviours that we could recognize and classify as spiritual? How do we explain or understand the peak, mystical or spiritual experiences of children (Robinson, 1983; Coles, 1990; Hoffman, 1992; Scott, 2004; Hart, 2003)? Is the spiritual capacity of a child merely a younger and less developed version of adult capacity? Is the formation of a spirituality a similar process throughout the life journey? What is the process of moving from an immature to a mature spirituality? Is there a parallel process to physical puberty that is a dramatic shift in capacity, "shape" and potential? What are the differences or similarities between a child's spiritual capacities and those of an adult? I am not pretending that this chapter or any other in this book can answer all these questions but it is important to be clear that we are working in a context where there are many questions that need to be asked in the process of understanding spiritual development. This chapter is focused on the shift from child to adult spiritual experience and expression and is written with some of the questions about that transition in mind.

The reader will note that I am using a number of terms: spiritual development, spiritual formation, spiritual life and spirituality. Each of these terms has distinct implications that are important and, in my use, all are based on the following primary assumption: being human is being spiritual in the same way that being human is being physical, emotional, social or intellectual. The spiritual is a part of the nature of our character/personalities and beingness as humans. I assume that the spiritual is a dynamic part of our lives that changes and matures as we do in all our capacities as we age. How this dynamic functions in our lives, the processes used or the forms and stages it takes are not clear.

I use the terms listed above with deliberate intent. I use "spiritual development" because it suggests that the spiritual is part of the larger conversation on human and life span development. I am also aware that spiritual development is now beginning to be mentioned in life span developmental textbooks used in university and college courses. In the context of my home province (British Columbia) the provincial school curriculum for First Nations (Indigenous) students includes spirituality as a recognized theme of the curriculum, but curiously enough it is not part of the acknowledged themes in the mainstream curriculum.

I use "spiritual formation" as it links to the rites of passage literature and some traditions of religious education that see the spiritual as being about giving shape and form to a person through the shaping of values, meaning and inner life. I use this term also to counter the conservative idea of development as a step-by-step or stage process that moves gradually from one level to a higher level, each stage built on the accomplishments of the previous stage. I am suggesting by using spiritual formation that the human spirit is malleable and can be formed/re-formed over a life span or life journey, particularly at transitional moments.

I use "spiritual life" to imply that the spiritual is grounded in lived experience. It is not merely a concept or a set of beliefs, values or claims but is grounded in and played out experientially, that is, the spiritual is best noticed in how a life is being lived. It implies a "way"—a way of living and acting that expresses or enacts a sense

of meaning, purpose and lived values. One of the challenges of spiritual life as lived is the maintenance of congruency between how one is living life and the beliefs and values that are being espoused. I also intend to suggest that the spiritual is other than being. In addition to the embodiment of values it includes who one is becoming and how that becoming is engaged. The process of being shaped and "in-formed" goes on. The work of making a self (or more accurately selves) is unfinished business and requires a number of life transitions or passages.

Lastly, I use "spirituality" because it is currently being taken up in a wide range of areas, including popular media and literature. In my view, it is the least satisfactory term in its imprecision but I use it occasionally to connect what I am writing to the larger cultural discourse. On the one hand, it is a useful term in that it implies a link to other descriptors of human experience that end in "ity": emotionality, sexuality, personality and physicality. All these words suggest a human quality that takes particular form or shape. On the other hand, I dislike the term because it has become a catch-all descriptor for almost anything that suggests beliefs, feelings, mystery, religion, esoteric practices, mystical and unusual experiences or claims. In this chapter, I intend to stay within the boundaries of development in using spirituality. It suggests some quality of embodied spiritual expression in the same way that sexuality is *the state of being sexual; involvement or interest in sexual activity; or sexual appeal or potency* (Encarta® World English Dictionary, 1999). Thus spirituality is the state of being or quality of being spiritual, or involvement in/interest in spiritual activity or spiritual strength, energy or attractiveness.

Coming of Age as Cultural Model

In assessing the mechanisms of coming of age cultural ceremonies and processes I will be generalizing from a number of examples but my goal in this section is to establish the spiritual and developmental significance of the most common practices in coming of age rituals. There are widespread variations across cultures and religions in marking the transition from being a child in a community to being/becoming an adult in the community.

The most recognizable vestiges of coming of age ceremonies remain in some religious communities in which children go through a period of preparation and study to learn the creeds, sacred texts or language of the sacred texts and then are presented in a confirmation, bar/bat mitzvah, baptism or other ceremony to mark the shift to full adult status in the community. This normally allows the child, now adult, to take part in the full ceremonial life of the community and in some cases to qualify for adult political and ceremonial roles. High school graduation ceremonies are the most common secular cultural practice that duplicates the techniques of rites of passage to mark changes in status (see Markstrom, Berman, Sabino, & Turner, 1998). I begin with these potentially familiar ceremonies in order to point out a number of features that have spiritual and developmental significance beyond deliberate religious instruction. It is important to acknowledge that these ceremonial practices

have long and ancient lineages and therefore carry some of the main characteristics of coming of age rites of passage and traditional developmental knowledge expressed in cultural practices.

First, coming of age ceremonies are communal and very much a part of the ongoing life cycle of a community. The adult community has a role to play in welcoming and accepting new members and the very act of inclusion is a form of renewal for the community. New members mean new vitality and longer term survival for the community. Rites of passage are the ways of preserving a community and its values and form. They have an essentially conserving function. At the core of coming of age rituals is the passing on of adult values and beliefs (see Mahdi et al., 1987). In religious settings, the instruction is meant to instil the central beliefs at the heart of the community and to assure the community that the child has learned them. The public ceremony celebrates the learning and acknowledges ritually the passage to the new status, with the taking up of adult responsibilities in the community. The new adult, as a result of instruction, knows what is central to the community, what matters most in belonging and has through the ceremony, acknowledged his or her acceptance of and dedication to those values. Simultaneously, the community has recognized the new status of its new members and welcomed them into their adult roles and responsibilities.

The rite of passage, therefore, accomplishes several major developmental tasks. It provides the new adult with a strong sense of belonging through being welcomed and embraced. It also gives the new adult an inner basis or structure for further identity development and personal maturation. He or she has a home or base, a sense of meaning and values that are affirmed and supported and a site for an adult role that is acknowledged and celebrated. These developmental accomplishments are grounded in spiritual assumptions that are played out in rites, symbols and intends to create healthy relationships across the generations. The child is now an adult and relates to everyone in the community, including his or her parents as an adult. The whole life of the new adult is being woven into the community.

Second, the journey into adult life is usually done in a cohort or peer group process. The instruction is conducted by recognized community leaders, teachers or elders (a term still used in some religious communities) and the peer group goes through the process together, including the culminating ceremonial celebration. There is usually some kind of exam or public test to demonstrate that the required new knowledge or skills have been learned. For example, a Jewish child reads or recites from the Torah in a synagogue setting, while a Christian child may be required to pass a catechetical exam or be able to recite a creed, make a public confession or witness in an act of adult baptism. These kinds of tests have many parallels in traditional coming of age ceremonies where they take a variety of forms including periods of fasting, vision quests or being obliged to live outside the community and its normal standards. There is a wonderful account in *The Long Walk to Freedom*, the biography of Nelson Mandela, who with his peer cohort steal a pig and feast on it during their time outside of the community during their coming of age process.

We can see vestiges of the physical testing common to coming of age ceremonies in the hazing practices used in initiations to clubs, teams or fraternities. Belonging is not automatic in the ritual world and requires deliberate acts to mark passage and inclusion. Thus, a rite of passage provides both a strong sense of a larger community with traditions that transcend the present and, at the same time, gives the new adult a sense of achievement, having endured tests that also work to strengthen his or her sense of identity, achievement, industry and skill in affirming a new adult self.

Third, the process marks a clear border crossing. The child is declared a full member of the community, ready to take on adult life. It is not a half measure. The advantages of such a clear boundary between stages of life are many. The clarity built into a coming of age process makes the new status an emotional certainty as well as a witnessed public and social certainty. The former child knows what the expectations of the community are and they know that the child is now someone who can and will take up adult roles, tasks and responsibilities.

An example of the kind of certainty that occurs in a rite of passage is seen in Ann Cameron's (1981, in Mahdi et al., 1987) account of a Nootka girl in a coming of age passage who following a period of preparation is taken out in the ocean in a dugout canoe and must swim to shore following a "special chant" and "a special prayer".[2] The girl emerges from her ritual swim from offshore to the beach and describes her experience:

> The people would watch for you …and when they finally saw you they'd start to sing a victory song about how a girl went for a swim and a woman came home and you'd make it to the beach …And after that you were a woman and if you wanted to marry up with someone you could, and if you wanted to have children, you could, because you'd be able to take care of them the proper way (as cited in Sullwold, 1987, p. 115).

The assumption that the passage process has prepared this young woman for adult life is explicit in this account. One benefit of demarcating the end of a passage process is that it gives certainty to all involved and prevents the new adult from the mixed messages of being an adult yet still being treated and related to as a child. In some Indigenous communities, passage rites would recognize the change of status through a naming ceremony that would bestow a new name on the person to indicate their new responsibilities or new identity in the community. A similar practice has been used in Christian religious traditions where adult converts would receive a new Christian name when being received as full members of the community.[3] The important insight here is that it prevents an undermining of steps forward in a life journey. Having begun a new life one is provided with as many affirmations as possible to move on.

One of the difficulties of contemporary culture where such clear demarcations are lacking is the confusion that comes in a prolonged adolescence of mixed messages and muddled contexts where expectations shift from expectations to be and behave as an adult in one setting and in the next to being treated as a child. Perpetual adolescence is not a goal. There is concern that having left childhood and being between childhood and adulthood is a dangerous time spiritually. It is a time marked by uncertainty. It is vital to move through the transitional period to the next stage of

life. Having shed the roles and mores of childhood the not yet adult is vulnerable to being shaped by social and spiritual influences. Rites of passage practices recognize that a shift in identity to a new status is happening and establishing that identity is a communal task. A new personal identity is being formed and such delicate human work requires support, affirmation and recognition. It also requires guides or elders who can offer protection, advice and education as needed in the process.

Victor Turner (1967, reprinted in Mahdi et al., 1987), drawing on Arnold van Gennep's earlier work, explores in detail the middle or liminal stage of the three-stage process of a rite of passage. The liminal period, the time between the leaving of one stage of life and entry into the new status and role is seen as one of vulnerability and fluidity. It is dangerous because the neophyte is malleable to being shaped, to being formed in terms of values and meaning. Turner notes that the learning or "arcane knowledge . . .obtained in the liminal period is felt to change the inmost nature of the neophyte, impressing him [sic] as seal impresses wax, with the characteristics of his new state. It is not a mere acquisition of knowledge, but a change in being" (Mahdi et al., p. 11). Obviously, the nature and quality of the imprinting is socially and culturally critical and so the deliberate care is taken to manage passage processes. It is also spiritually significant as the shaping process gives form to the way a life is to be lived, establishing patterns, core beliefs and character.

The re-shaping and re-forming of a human being from one form, that of a child, to that of an adult that occurs during coming of age is both a personal and communal responsibility. It is recognized that as the physical body changes through puberty and sexual maturation, the inner person is shaped into a new person in the same time period. This is spiritual and even sacred work that requires care, education and nurture. It is not left to a child to accomplish this passage on his or her own: too much is at stake, both the success of the child in becoming an adult and the wellbeing of the community in birthing a new adult.

The wisdom of the rites of passage process is that in attending to communal needs the structure also attends to the developmental needs of the young person supporting the transition and providing guidance, encouragement and limit testing to ensure that appropriate values are imparted, a new and viable identity is formed, and a person has a recognized role and life direction in their community that is valued and respected.

Adolescent Experience: The Spiritual as Lived Experience

I want now to turn to adolescent experience in the contemporary context and see how the work of becoming adults is happening. My interest is to explore what in adolescent behaviour might indicate attempts to accomplish the tasks that are addressed in a coming of age rite of passage. The developmental tasks that were consciously or unconsciously embedded in rites of passage that formed an adult still need to be accomplished. Establishing one's cultural, sexual, vocational and personal identity can only be achieved in a social and cultural context. How then does contemporary

society provide mechanisms to support passage to a new self? What in cultural processes address the inner or spiritual tasks that give a liveable form to a young man or woman so that they can take initiative, experience autonomy, enter relationships with trust and be willing to take up tasks to benefit their own context?

One of the anomalies in contemporary culture is the separation of physical maturation from a recognized beginning to adult life. Although we have experienced a gradual decline in the age of the onset of puberty, we have simultaneously delayed the markers of adult life. In Ann Cameron's account, the young Nootka women who has completed her rite of passage is ready to take on the tasks and roles of a adult woman in her culture. She is not asked to delay adult responsibility, relationships or sexuality for educational or financial reasons until a decade or more after becoming an adult physically. The idea of a prolonged adolescence is a recent cultural phenomena. In terms of rites of passage it means we have taken the liminal time, the dangerous middle period and stretched it out, leaving a large cohort of young people in a state of being neither children nor adults subject to a lengthy period of uncertainty. The uncertainty may take many external forms but the inner spiritual formational process is, for me, a central concern. To accept that rites of passage contain some developmental wisdom means accepting that we may be creating an extended period of spiritual vulnerability for our own children by leaving them in a period of spiritual malleability through delayed maturity, that has no evident conclusion or settling of identity. This does not imply that identity is suddenly frozen or fixed forever. New transitions/passages will occur. Becoming a parent, for instance, is another identity and form transition.

If the border between child and adult life has lost definition, thinned out over years, there will clearly be conflict and confusion about what is adult, when it should occur and who has responsibility for it. One of my concerns is recognizing how much earlier than expected the becoming adult process may be happening. To return to the examples provided by religious communities, their initiation ceremonies have traditionally happened between the ages of 12 and 15 years. This young adolescent period was recognized as a critical spiritual time for the inner formational process that would create the adult value shape for the rest of life.

Younger adolescents are still engaged in the inner and personal work of coming of age regardless of their cultural context. If they are entering physical puberty at earlier ages it may be that for some of them other developmental tasks are also beginning earlier. They may be leaving childhood and entering the vulnerable liminal stage sooner than is recognized. In conjunction with their emotional and cognitive development, young adolescent behaviour contains markers that have spiritual significance and indicate attempts to accomplish passage.

The Markers of Passage

The sense of wonderso often celebrated as a marker of spirituality (Hart, 2003) may take a different turn in the early adolescent years. As cognitive skills develop wonder

can turn into wondering expressed as questioning and doubts. The beliefs of childhood learned at home begin to be doubted and set aside. Young adolescents go on a search for new beliefs, interpretations of life, meaning and perspectives to address the questions arising for them from the ideas they are experiencing with their new cognitive abilities. Their peer group becomes an important source of information, ideas and models to follow and imitate. Popular culture, through a wide range of media, offers many options and opportunities. In a rite of passage the cohort/peer group would be deliberately assembled and provided with forms and structures, mentors and elders to guide the questioning and provide direction amidst the uncertainty of leaving the simplicity and certainty of childhood ideas and beliefs. The business of acquiring adult beliefs and values was not seen as individual work, but as a communal process that had communal significance. There are clearly trade-offs between the differing approaches. A rite of passage insures that traditional values are more likely to be imparted and a way of life preserved while an individual process may lead to more independence and innovative thinking. Over time, however, there is some danger that communal values would be compromised as they would not be shared in common or deliberately imprinted in successive new generations.

Young adolescents, who are experiencing a combination of new cognitive abilities, first time social and emotional experiences and spiritual sensitivity, can become highly critical of their familial contexts because their capacities may provide them with incisive insights about the foibles, gaps and contradictions of their home context and its practices. The acuity of their perception, which is part of normal developmental processes, was integrated and focused through the visionary processes of a supervised rite of passage. Vision quests, extended fasts, deliberate periods of isolation, solo challenges and even the use of biochemical stimulants to encourage visionary experiences are part of coming of age practices that are directed by experienced mentors who not only prepare the participants but act as guides and can lead youth to insights for their own lives and for the community. An attraction to stimulants and substances that alter or extend perception has become a danger for adolescents in contemporary culture. It is hard for us now severed from spiritual history and traditions to acknowledge that mystical experiences may be an important part of the developmental and formational process. We know that those experiences can be dangerous and our urge is to prevent them rather than providing a communally sanctioned and directed process. It is also difficult for us to see in the midst of cultural concern about substance use and abuse that adolescents may be seeking something that has been occluded from their life processes. Their self-directed attempts for visionary experience may have some inner necessity for them. The risks entailed are a complex cultural issue as well as a spiritual danger.

Berger (1988) describes the tension of industry versus inferiority that Erikson has identified as a developmental task of late childhood and early adolescence, as learning to be productive and competent. The task of having a felt sense of accomplishment as well as a sense of purpose is built into the tests of rites of passage as I mentioned above. To succeed in the tests of a cultural ceremony comes with acknowledgement, celebration and a change of status. Through a rite of passage a young person has a clear sense of their role and task in culture. Their specific

talents may be recognized and affirmed. One of the struggles for contemporary adolescents is coming to a sense of purposeful living in a context of a culture that may delay for years the taking up of a life purpose or vocation. The delay is not based on the needs or processes of human development but rather on economic and cultural needs to delay maturation. Media culture, occasionally, celebrates what are considered to be exceptional young adolescents who catch a glimpse of a challenge or need in society and overcome astonishing barriers to follow a sense of vocation by raising funds for charity, volunteering or performing a public service. There are two Canadian examples: visit Ryan's Well Foundation at www.ryanswell.ca for an example of a young person who found a focus of purpose early and had support to stay with his vision. Similarly Craig Kielburger's *Free the Children* begun when he was 12 years old in response to a story about child labour. In 2006, Keilburger won the World Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child, also known as the Children's Nobel Prize.

A desire for purpose and the meaning it gives remain critical for development and their deferral has spiritual developmental implications. A life without purpose is a life in spiritual danger even without the recognition that purpose matters early in the journey of maturation. To defer establishing a sense of meaning and value until later in life risks leaving adolescents in the dangers of the liminal state with no sense of direction or reason to live. Feeling good about one's self needs to be rooted in mattering for the community. This is difficult to accomplish on one's own and so the peer culture and its acknowledgements become the site for meaning making rather than the whole of society. Purposelessness becomes a danger. The developmental task of industry versus inferiority has become a primarily personal task addressed as an issue of self-esteem with an emphasis on overcoming inferiority. However, feeling good about one's self is difficult without an experience of one's life making a difference in and to a context or without tasks that matter to one's community. This is the challenge of vocation: a spiritual task of meaning and purpose whose lack does produce inferiority, purposelessness and their emotional, social, psychological and spiritual difficulties.

In the movement from childhood to adulthood there is loss. Childhood and its innocence are being left behind. So are its developmental accomplishments of trust, autonomy and initiative. There is a necessary recapitulation of these developmental tasks that must accompany the move through liminal space into the first stages of adult life and the formation of new adult identity. A broad array of new choices, feelings, ideas and decisions present themselves and a new orientation to them must be established. Facing them requires inner work, the development of personal strength rooted in a sense of personal wellbeing and integrity. Coming of age is hard work.

I see intense adolescent insights and ability to doubt and question as expressions of developing spirituality. Catching a personal vision of life is a spiritual task that integrates new cognitive and emotional capacities into a coherent form. Seeing into and seeing through can also be a visionary seeing beyond that is part of the spiritual astuteness evident in young adolescents. These gifts of insight may not be valued as they may be expressed as disdain, criticism, resistance to norms or disappointment with adult life and roles. Carol Gilligan's (2002) *The Birth of Pleasure* explores

some of the struggle adolescent girls have in becoming women when they see their primary role models as having compromised themselves in order to take up societal tasks, roles and relationships. The losses they see in the adult women in their lives can create a loss of self and they may need female mentors who can help them negotiate the difficult passage into adult life that does not require them to abandon themselves to succeed. Gilligan (1982) also speaks to girls' work of coming to a different voice as adolescent developmental work. A rite of passage aims to provide a sustainable basis for adult identity that incorporates the insight, sense of purpose and nascent identity taking shape in the transition from child to adult.

Voice—coming to voice, owning voice and giving voice are part of the developmental work during coming of age. Speaking of oneself and for oneself is necessary if one is to establish adult autonomy, identity, claim initiative and move into intimacy. A child lives in a world of external adult authorities such as parents, grandparents and teachers. Children are imitators and learn through modelling and copying. They acquire language and the mores and concepts that accompany their mother and father tongues. The beliefs and ways of thinking that are part of having acquired a language come under review at adolescence. In the early stages of becoming adult there is a necessary movement from a reliance on the external (usually adult) authorities of childhood to an internal authority that is centred in one's own identity. This requires that adolescents become able to represent themselves and own their personal beliefs and values. Accepting and parroting the authority of others is no longer sufficient or sustaining. The risk of speaking for oneself is the work of coming to voice. Inferiority, shame, doubt and guilt can lead to silence and reticence. Encouragement and support are required to nurture the delicate formation of voice. First tries may be clumsy and awkward. It may be necessary to challenge and test the ideas of new adults so that they can hone their skills of articulation, thinking and expression. The values taking shape must be good for the life of the community and be forged in dialogue with others.

The religious ceremonies that require public voicing of adult beliefs are a ceremonial recognition of the key role of voice in marking adult status and capacity. A congruency between the inner work of coming to one's voice and self and the external voicing of meaning, insight and purpose in a communal context is necessary for adulthood. In recapitulating earlier developmental work a young adult must shape personal and moral values of their own and make choices in a newly developing voice. She/he needs to claim beliefs based on and sustained by inner authority to underpin their stances, limits, questions, concerns and doubts.

Voice may take a variety of forms. I use the term with a double sense of both speaking/representing oneself and a more metaphoric sense of expressing the self through forms such as music, art, sport, politics, religion or social concerns. (See Kathleen Philips, 2007, for an example of visual art as coming to voice.)

I have now arrived at one of the key accomplishments of rites of passage: their ability to impart a sense of belonging. All of the tasks that we identify as developmental work are accomplished in the context of other people and sustained by families, peers and communities. We tend to see them as personal and individual work which is only partially true. During the uncertainty of coming of age and

the liminal, in between time, belonging and having a felt sense of belonging are critically necessary. In order to emerge from the liminal stage and enter the third phase of the passage process it is vital to be embraced by and welcomed into a community. There must be a community that welcomes the person who is becoming an adult to create home and belonging. This person is not the same as the child who once lived there but someone new and he or she needs to be embraced as new to affirm acceptance and establish belonging.

This is not a slight matter as the new-born adult, not unlike a new-born child, requires a tangible inclusion that gives a felt sense of belonging. I use the somewhat awkward phrase "being belonged" to underline how important it is for the belonging to be known and felt by a young adult. A new baby needs to be held as being held provides, among other things, a sense of security. Being held by a community is also necessary for a new adult. Rites of passage with ritual and ceremonial actions, elders and guides and the formation of cohorts and peer processes, insure belonging and support throughout entry into adult life. They have an experiential wisdom that accepts that being a new adult is an equivalent shift as that from inside the womb to life in the world. Coming of age, a child leaves the womb of the family and the familiar world of childhood to being in the much larger and unknown adult world. It is very difficult to accomplish on one's own and being left on one's own is spiritually unsafe.

I think in communities where rites of passage have faded in importance it is in part because the community has gradually lost its willingness to grant full adult status through a rite of passage. One of my concerns is that the compounding dangers that arise in an unsuccessful coming of age will almost guarantee that the capacity to function as useful or successful adults in a culture and for that culture will be jeopardized. Lives will be marked by the collapse of developmental achievements that Erikson saw as progressing throughout the life journey. Mistrust of others, shame and self-doubt, inferiority, a sense of failure and guilt and role confusion are not a good foundation for adult life and can lead to disengagement, despair, depression and acting out behaviours. We criminalize some of these behaviours, diagnose others while ignoring the underlying spiritual vacuum and psychoemotional traumas that shape them. Aberrant behaviours may be attempts to establish identity or belonging, or create an acceptable sense of place or achievement.

In some coming of age practices living outside the community and its norms is a strategy used to offer an experience of breaking the rules in order to understand the value of living within them. A controlled marginal experience provides a perspective on community life that makes inclusion attractive. It insures that being welcomed into the community mattered emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. Being forced to temporarily live apart from family and community is not a form of abandonment but rather is a process that is structured and monitored as a learning time. It provides a time apart to focus on establishing an adult identity, honing a vision for life with a sense of purpose and nurturing the formation of an inner moral and spiritual authority. Structured rites of passage are able to use the unsettling energy and attitudinal shifts of the developmental process to shape adults who can succeed in their adult lives. The community provides mentors to help the neophytes focus

their insight and support the identities coming to be in their passage into adulthood. A time and space for reflecting on life, meaning, purpose and identity are repeated in the practices of solitude, retreat and meditation that are common across religious and spiritual traditions.

If a culture does not attend to inner spiritual development at coming of age, it will have to deal with the chaos and confusion that the absence produces. I turn again to the trajectory of development that Erikson suggests. If adolescence is marked by identity struggles to clarify vocation, sexual and cultural identity and roles, then the work ahead in adult life is also at stake. Adult intimacy requires both identity and inner authority to establish and sustain relationships. The formational work that takes place in coming of age, by providing the inner shape where the spiritual qualities of voice and vision, the capacity to wonder and liveable values are nested, make intimacy possible.

Similarly, generativity is based on having a sense of vocational purpose and life goals that give meaning to one's work and service in a community. Being ready to take on family life and social responsibilities requires confidence, initiative and autonomy. The recapitulation of these developmental tasks during coming of age prepares the way for and prefigures adult development. Integrity grows out of having the capacity for reflection and reconsideration but it also requires purpose, belonging and a vocational direction. The journey towards maturity that assesses life as meaningful and of worth depends on having lived an engaged and successful life along the way. As I have pointed out above, it is not something one does alone but with others and for others in a community. The village needed to raise a child is required over and over in the developmental journey, especially at points of passage.

But why am I claiming that the developmental tasks and transitional processes based in coming of age rites of passage are spiritual? What makes then spiritual? The wisdom that underlies a rite of passage is that it addresses the whole person through actions that are both functional and symbolic. In doing so it provides a process of integration that addresses the whole person in a communal context. There is a concern for relationships and connections to the self, beyond the self to others, to the presence of mystery in life and to the living context of those in passage. Attention is being paid to the inner work and the malleable state of meaning, values and purpose at points of passage while not ignoring the practical implications of coming of age. By invoking mystery and recognizing that ceremonial practices impart and affirm meaning, a coming of age rite of passage connects neophytes to their community and to their own life journey. The experiential nature of the activities ground each member of the community in a common orientation. At the heart of the process are a respect for relationships, context and an assumption of connection and wholeness both personally and communally. These spiritual qualities are not in isolation but are part of a matrix of developmental processes that include social, emotional, psychological, physical and cognitive needs. The spiritual serves an integrative role as the site of shape taking where values such as inclusion, respect, responsibility and integrity can evolve.

Although there may be traces of this wisdom in some cultural ceremonies like graduations and various membership practices it appears that we are not collectively

addressing the needs of younger adolescents to be embraced by a deliberate process that would allow them to address the developmental challenges of coming of age in ways that would affirm them, give them a sense of belonging and set in motion values that would serve them and their home cultures. To ignore spiritual development as an important piece of maturation from the beginning of the process is to leave far too many young people in danger of missing key aspects of human development that they need to succeed.

Notes

1. There is a double meaning for me in informed: the idea of having information or knowledge but also in-formed or inwardly formed, that is, having taken on a integrated internal form that is viable and useable.
2. This ceremony is akin to a baptismal rite with the risk of a swim in open ocean waters as a final test part of the ceremony. Prayers and songs, special garments, immersion and re-birth are all included.
3. A practice seen in *The Acts of the Apostles* when Saul who has been persecuting the early church converts to become a disciple of the Christian way and changes his name to Paul.

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Chapter 25
Youthful Peak Experiences in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Implications for Educators and Counselors

Edward Hoffman and Fernando A. Ortiz

Abstract Since Abraham Maslow's death in 1970, his concept of peak experience has enlarged our understanding of human spirituality. It has also influenced a host of fields ranging from personality theory to education, health care, organizational psychology, and counseling. Though Maslow contended that children and teens undergo peak experiences, he never explored this topic systematically.

In this chapter, the authors advance a new theoretical model related to youthful peak-experience. This model has specific ramifications for both education and counseling. In presenting this perspective, they draw heavily upon cross-cultural studies conducted by international collaborators in Asia, South America, and North America.

Introduction

Educators and allied professionals today are increasingly recognizing the importance of spirituality in nurturing children's full development. Though such founders of modern psychology as William James had a strong interest in transcendent aspects of human experience, this view receded decisively with the rise of Freudian thought. In contrast, Freud's two major associates—Alfred Adler and Carl Jung—both regarded spiritual development as basic for inner health and societal wellbeing. Though promulgating very different psychological systems, Adler and Jung each offered compelling ideas for raising and educating children with greater spiritual awareness. However, these ideas had little impact on mainstream approaches for many decades.

It was not until Abraham Maslow articulated a new, inspiring vision of human potential based on his concept of self-actualization that the intellectual tide began to shift in the 1960s. Especially among educators and counselors interested in fostering creativity, Maslow's concept of *peak experiences*—moments of intense joy,

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fulfillment, and meaning—had strong resonance. For the existence of peaks seemed to bridge the seeming gap between the spiritual and mundane, religious and secular, dimensions of human existence.

Unfortunately, Maslow died in 1970 before embarking on organized research on peak experiences and no one of comparable intellectual stature and influence came to sustain systematically this body of inquiry. As the *zeitgeist* shifted, education involving "new frontiers" of growth and learning was no longer regarded with excitement but with suspicion. New names, such as "transpersonal education" and "confluent education" occasionally arose, but the field remained sidetracked. Nevertheless, professional inquiry into early peaks never disappeared completely, and in recent years, it has regained attention with the rapid growth of the positive psychology movement and strength-based counseling.

In this chapter, our aim is threefold: (1) to trace the evolution of this concept in modern psychology; (2) to review relevant empirical research; and (3) to highlight its importance for all those professionally interested in fostering greater spiritual development in today's youth.

Modern Psychology and Youthful Spirituality

The father of modern personality theory, Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), was highly antagonistic toward the entire subject of spirituality. As a proud rationalist, Freud regarded childhood as a time in which our lowest, most animalistic impulses are strongest. For Freud, the infant and toddler are nearly all "id"—that is, seething with instinctual drives for self-gratification. He saw the preschool years as dominated by incestuous longings that ultimately require strict inner suppression. It is hard to imagine a more negative depiction of childhood.

Though Freud's former protégés, Alfred Adler and Carl Jung, both valued religious sentiment, neither said much about childhood spirituality. Even William James, who, as founder of American psychology possessed a keen interest in religious experience, never really turned his attention toward the early years. This widespread lack of professional interest persisted for over 50 years, until in the 1960s, there arose a glimmer of professional attention to this evocative topic generated by Abraham Maslow (1908–1970), who had helped foster the new movements of humanistic and then transpersonal psychology.

In the mid-1940s, Maslow was developing his theoretical approach to studying emotionally healthy people—those whom he called "self-actualizing." Much to Maslow's initial surprise, he found that such persons reported having transcendental moments of joy in their day-to-day lives. These moments often possessed mystical qualities, as individuals described them in phrases similar to that of history's great saints and sages.

This finding was both unexpected and compelling but committed to scientific method, Maslow persisted in careful investigation. Finally, in 1956, he felt ready to share his findings with colleagues. Fearful of rejection of his unorthodox paper, he

did not submit it for formal publication but read it aloud at the American Psychological Association's annual convention that year. Titling his address, "Cognition of Being in the Peak Experiences," Maslow (1959) began by asserting that

> Self-actualizing people, those who have come to a high level of maturation, health, and self-fulfillment, have so much to teach us that sometimes they seem almost like a different breed of human beings. But because it is so new, the exploration of the highest reaches of human nature and of its ultimate possibilities . . . is a difficult and tortuous task (p. 43).

Maslow went on to describe nearly 20 common features of the peak experience, which he linked to superb mental health. Based on phenomenological reports, these features included great happiness, feelings of wonder and awe, temporary disorientation with respect to time and space, and a complete though momentary loss of fear and defense before the grandeur of the cosmos. Typically, no one peak experience described by respondents had all the features.

To what extent do such peaks reflect genuine perceptions of the world, and not merely the regressive fantasies that Sigmund Freud and his supporters had pronounced them to be? Maslow (1959) answered this question by asserting

> If self-actualizing people can and do perceive reality more efficiently, fully, and with less motivational contamination than others do, then we may possibly use them as biological assays. Through their greater sensitivity and perception, we may get a better report of what reality is like . . . just as canaries can be used to detect gas in mines before less sensitive creatures can (p. 64).
>
> Finally, and perhaps constituting the most important aspect of his presentation, Maslow argued that peak experiences often leave profound and transformative effects in their wake, "Generally, the person is more apt to feel that life. . .is worthwhile, even if it is usually drab, pedestrian, painful, or ungratifying, since beauty, truth, and meaningfulness have been demonstrated. . .to exist" (p. 65).

Such conversion experiences, Maslow (1959) declared, "are of course plentifully recorded in human history but so far as I know have never received the attention of psychologists or psychiatrists" (p. 66). He called for further study into this highly intriguing but little understood phenomenon of healthy emotional functioning.

During the tumultuous years of the 1960s, Maslow devoted considerable attention to the topic of peak experience. Relying on the phenomenological reports of several hundred college students and colleagues, he became convinced of two key findings. First, that ordinary people may undergo genuine peaks in seemingly commonplace circumstances; while waiting for a bus on a sunlit street or preparing dinner for one's family. Maslow found it astounding that some of his own students unknowingly described their peak experiences in language of rapture similar to those of history's revered spiritual teachers. The implication was clear: We need not be great religious mystics or even practitioners to undergo an unforgettable epiphany in daily living.

Nor, as Maslow (1970) concluded, is it necessary to meditate in a Tibetan monastery or travel exotically to gain such a wondrous encounter. As he poetically remarked in *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*, "The great lesson from the true mystics . . . (is that) the sacred is in the ordinary, that it is to be found in one's daily life, in one's neighbors, friends, and family, in one's backyard" (p. x).

Maslow became sure that the more emotionally healthy we are, the greater the likelihood of a peak experience and also the more frequent such episodes in the stream of day-to-day events. For example, in exploratory findings relevant to organizational psychology, Maslow found that highly creative people appeared to undergo more frequent peaks—that is, moments of joy and fulfillment—than their less innovative co-workers.

The birth of Maslow's first grandchild in 1968 greatly awakened his interest in early development. He became convinced that even young children have the capacity for epiphanies and numinous moments, but lack the verbal means to articulate these. Maslow increasingly argued (Maslow 1968a/1971, 1968b/1971) that contemporary education vitally needed to incorporate peak experiences into both its philosophy and teaching methods—related to the goal of helping students to self-actualize. He hoped to begin systematic research on childhood peaks once his serious heart condition improved but died in 1970 before starting systematic exploration.

Exploring the Peaks of Childhood

More than a decade elapsed after Maslow's death before the emergence of a published study concerning childhood peak experience. The contributions of Robinson (1983) and Armstrong (1984) were largely theoretical and conceptual. Both argued that children are indeed capable of numinous and ecstatic experiences, though their weak language skills may hamper research into such phenomena. Likewise, both investigators noted that religious history presents many examples of childhood epiphanies associated with celebrated mystics and visionaries. Not surprisingly, both called for expanded research into this relatively unexplored realm of youthful experience.

Luber (1986) conducted a study of peak experiences among 144 children and adolescents to discover: (a) what types of questioning elicit accounts of true peak experiences, (b) what can be rated as true peak experiences for children and adolescents, (c) how they describe their true peak experiences, and (d) what are the characteristics of true peaks. A true peak experience was defined as one that strictly follows Maslow's criteria for a peak experience.

These experiences were scored into five categories: (1) happiest, or feeling pleasure or gladness, (2) proudest, or having a strong sense of satisfaction in a person or thing, (3) plateau, based on Maslow's definition as "serene and calm . . . response to the miraculous, the awesome, the sacralized and the Unitive", (4) pre-peak, or feelings not quite transcendent, but more than merely happy or proud; that is, intense feelings in which youngsters had difficulty containing their excitement, and, this was usually the precursor to a (5) transcendent, peak experience of intense joy.

The results showed that youngsters from 9 to 16 years recounted few true peak experiences. The "triggers" included achievement, being with family, traveling, helping another, being with animals or pets, feeling more mature, socializing with others, and being with nature. Did peak experiences lead to positive personal

change? Definitely so, for participants reported such benefits as gaining a greater appreciation of people, places, and/or living things after their experience, as well as enhanced self-esteem, greater happiness, knowledge, eagerness to learn, physical energy, and pleasant memories.

Coles (1990) and his associates interviewed approximately 500 children aged 6 through 13 in the United States, Central and South America, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The goal was to learn "that exquisitely private sense of things that nurtures their spirituality" (pp. 36–37). Using a phenomenological approach, Coles (1990) found that dreams, prayer, and especially intellectual musing in response to formal religious lessons comprised sources of spiritual nurturance identified by his youthful respondents. Coles (1990) made no attempt to categorize or provide a typology of childhood spiritual experiences.

Tamminen (1994) investigated religious experiences among nearly 3,000 Finnish children and adolescents from two viewpoints: reported experiences of God's closeness and guidance. Almost 95% of respondents belonged to the Lutheran Church and had been involved in religious education. Except for first graders, who were interviewed directly, participants responded mainly to written materials provided by outside researchers in classroom settings. Seven categories were established concerning the reported experience of God's presence: (1) emergencies, involving a crisis, personal illness or another's illness, sadness or bereavement; (2) loneliness or fear; (3) devotional and Church situations including prayer and meditation ; (4) school and religious education including school curriculum and class prayer; (5) joy and happiness; (6) moral action; and (7) nature and the outdoors.

Intriguingly, the category of emergencies—particularly involving illness or bereavement—was by far the greatest "trigger" for the reported experience of God's presence, followed, respectively, by the categories of loneliness and fear and devotional and Church situations; the latter's subcategories most frequently encompassed prayer and meditation. Relatively, few participants linked an experience of God's presence to moments of joy and happiness or moral action, and even fewer to nature and outdoors encounters. Tamminen (1994) found this latter finding "surprising (but) it is possible that many more pupils experienced God's presence in nature than reported it; such situations may not have been felt strongly enough to be immediately recalled in the study" (p. 74). Though Tamminen (1994) did not develop this point, it is eminently possible that her participants' strong linkage of numinous experience with acute emotional distress rather than joy mirrored the content of their Lutheran training.

Tamminen (1994) also found significant gender differences. Girls, in almost all grades, reported experiences of God's nearness and guidance more often than did boys. Both in the quantity and quality of religious experience, girls were religiously more committed. Interestingly, gender differences were more striking with regard to actual religious experiences than to beliefs.

Hoffman (1992, 1998) obtained more than 250 retrospective reports of adult men and women who responded to an "authors' query" placed in dozens of newspapers and magazines throughout North America and western Europe including Britain, Denmark, and Germany. Respondents ranged in age from 16 years to over 80 years.

More than two-thirds were women. The majority of the respondents was in their twenties and thirties, and had at least some college education.

Based on their reports, which supported Maslow's view that childhood peaks exist and can be studied empirically, Hoffman (1992, 1998) established a typology of eight more or less distinct categories of youthful epiphanies:

1) Uplifting experiences involving nature. These could be identified as relating either to nature's scenic grandeur or to its "backyard" intimacy.
2) Near-death or health-crisis episodes.
3) Peak moments during intense and personalized prayer.
4) Exalted perceptions in formal religious settings.
5) Spontaneous moments of bliss or ecstasy triggered by esthetic delight.
6) Profound musings about self-identity, life and death, and related topics.
7) Uncanny perceptions such as involving vision or bodily kinesthetics.
8) Unforgettable dreams.

Scott (2004) studied childhood peaks as reported, retrospectively, by a sample of 22 adults, the majority of whom were Canadian women. Like those in Hoffman's study (1992, 1998), Scott's sample comprised volunteers responding to a researcher's call for information. Their retrospective reports frequently described childhood peaks of great joy, clarity, unity with the world around them, and contact with "something beyond the self that has acted on/in their lives" (p. 15).

In two separate studies conducted in Japan, Hoffman (2003) and Hoffman and Muramoto (2007) explored youthful peak experiences among non-Westerners. Hoffman (2003) obtained 84 retrospective reports from 65 undergraduates at Bukkyo University of a peak occurring before the age of 14. Participants were predominantly women majoring in education. The results suggested that Maslow's concept of childhood peak experience had cross-cultural validity and resonance. Also, similar to their Western counterparts in Hoffman's prior (1992, 1998) study, Japanese participants often recalled childhood peaks involving nature, and to a lesser extent, esthetic delight. But three new categories also emerged pertaining to (1) skill mastery, such as learning to ride a bicycle for the first time; (2) external achievement, such as winning a scholastic competition; and (3) interpersonal joy, such as feeling intense filial affection or group camaraderie.

Significantly, too, retrospective Japanese youthful peaks in general involved classmates, friends, parents, and siblings (example: "When our volleyball team won the tournament" or "When my friend and I sang a duet") to a strikingly greater extent than did North American childhood peaks—which tended to be individualistic.

Hoffman and Muramoto (2007) obtained 56 retrospective reports from 51 students and faculty at Ritsumeikan University. Participants were predominantly graduate women majoring in human services. Similar to their Bukkyo University counterparts, they frequently reported retrospective peaks involving interpersonal joy—which indeed constituted their *single most mentioned category*.

In seeking to explain this compelling finding, Hoffman and Muramoto (2007) discussed the well-known role of social harmony and cohesiveness in Japan culture and personality development. They also noted an important possible link between

vocational interest and youthful peak experience, in that participants were overwhelmingly adults (average age of 33) training for a human services career—which presumably attracts persons who are most fulfilled vocationally by interpersonal relations.

Cross-Cultural Research in Progress

Beginning in 2005, Hoffman initiated several collaborative cross-cultural studies of youthful peak experiences. These encompassed retrospective reports by college students in Canada, Hong Kong, Mexico, Norway, and Turkey. In each study, the brief questionnaire developed by Hoffman (2003) was administered. For the Mexican, Norwegian, Hong Kong, and Turkish samples, the questionnaire was first translated into the dominant national language and then back translated independently to ensure accuracy before administration to students. Data collection has now been completed in three countries: Canada, Mexico, and Norway, but results have not yet been published. Data collection is currently ongoing in Hong Kong and Turkey. In addition, data collection involving retrospective youthful peak experiences among Singapore adults was initiated and recently completed. Smaller, pilot inquiries were also undertaken among college students in Venezuela and adults in China.

To our knowledge, these studies collectively represent the most significant cross-cultural investigation of youthful peak experiences ever conducted. For the Hong Kong, Mexican, and Turkish samples, they also represent the first empirical assessments of peak experiences at any age ever undertaken in their particular countries. Because these various investigations yet remain unpublished, we are presenting them in summary form. While conceptually intriguing, the findings are likewise offered tentatively.

Canada

Hoffman and Scott (2008) explored retrospective peak reported by 39 students at a large Northwestern Canadian University. In the fall of 2005, Scott visited two graduate courses in the Faculty of Education and four undergraduate courses in the School of Child & Youth Care, and briefly explained the focus of the study. In only one undergraduate course did the faculty member allow class time for students to respond to the questionnaire. For the other five courses, students completed the questionnaire after class. In all cases participation in the study was voluntary.

Approximately 150 students heard Scott's presentations. The 39 completed questionnaires was a return rate of 26%. In general terms, the gender distribution of the participants reflected that of the six classes, in which the vast majority of students were women. All of the responses were found to be relevant and usable. Because one participant reported two separate youthful peak experiences, the total number of scorable responses was 40. Ninety-seven percent of participants who identified their

Table 25.1 Types of childhood peak experience

Category of peak	Example
Interpersonal joy	Singing with my family during Christmas time
Philosophical musing	Though my relative died, I knew a connection would still continue
Nature encounter	Exploring the forest near my neighborhood
Skill mastery	Making a castle out of wooden blocks in kindergarten
Materialism	Receiving pink pants for my birthday
Esthetic bliss	Performing a musical show in my backyard
External achievement	Winning the school district's basketball Championship
Uncanny perception	Seeing a UFO

gender were women. Thirty-eight participants reported their ages, which ranged from 20 through 52 years old, with a mean age of 28.3 years. Thirty-eight identified their ethnicity by country of birth: 31 were Canadian, two were First Nations, and there was one each from diverse countries internationally. Several participants indicated Métis heritage; that is, mixed-race European and First Nations.

Table 25.1 presents the eight categories of youthful peak experience reported by participants in this sample, and provides an example drawn from their responses. Table 25.2 specifies the frequencies for the varying types of childhood peak experience that participants described.

As indicated, interpersonal joy accounted for more than 50% of all responses. Ranked in order of frequency, the next three comprised—10% each—philosophical musing, nature encounter, and skill mastery. Relatively few responses involved peaks related to esthetic bliss, external achievement, or uncanny perception. No responses involved the previously established categories of exalted perceptions in formal religious settings, personalized prayer, near-death experiences, recovery from health crisis or accident, or unforgettable dream.

It should be noted that Hoffman and Scott (2008) established an additional category of youthful peak experience, which they termed materialism: involving feelings of great happiness from receiving a material gift, such as for one's birthday or a holiday. Based on participants' reports, the authors suggested that typically the

Table 25.2 Reported frequencies of peak experience ($N = 40$)

Category of peak experience	Number	Percentage (%)
Interpersonal joy	20	50.0
Philosophical musing	4	10.0
Nature encounter	4	10.0
Skill mastery	4	10.0
Materialism	3	7.5
Esthetic bliss	2	5.0
External achievement	2	5.0
Uncanny perception	1	2.5

joy stemmed not only from acquiring a desirable material object, but from what it represented: interest and caring from a family member or other adult important to the child.

Mexico

A total of 99 students at the Centro de Enseñanza Técnica y Superior (CETYS) located in Tijuana, Mexico, provided complete data. Data were collected by the second author of this chapter and by Dr. Miguel Guzmán, faculty psychologist at CETYS. Undergraduate students from all levels (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) and a variety of major fields of study (58 psychology, 15 accounting, 13 business administration, 5 architecture, 4 education, 2 engineering, 1 dentistry, and 1 computer science) were sampled. The sample was ethnically homogenous, predominantly from middle-class Catholic families, and everyone reported having been born in Mexico. The sample encompassed a relatively balanced gender ratio (58 women, 41 men). The mean age for females was 20.8 years (range 16–26) and for males 18.8 years (range 16–29).

Participants were recruited from five introductory psychology sections, each comprising approximately 20 students, producing almost perfect compliance. Participants were given the entire class time—about 50 min—to complete the questionnaire developed by Hoffman (2003) in Spanish translation. The narratives were subsequently translated into English by Ortiz

The two authors coded the responses independently using system developed by Hoffman and Scott (2008) and achieved a high level of inter-coder agreement (100%) across all of the peak experience coding categories. Minor coding disagreements (fewer than five protocols) were attributed to ambiguous descriptions provided by participants and were resolved by examining the definitions of the categories. Based on participants' responses, we also established a new category of youthful peak experience: developmental landmark. These encompassed moments of joy from attaining a new stage of personal growth and identity.

Table 25.3 presents the varying types of childhood peak experiences found in this Mexican sample and provides an example of each.

Table 25.4 shows the raw proportions of each peak experience category in the Mexican sample. Clearly, interpersonal joy was named most frequently in this sample as a source of youthful peak experience, nearly four times more prevalent than the second highest frequency, involving external achievement. Relatively small, similar percentages concerned peaks of esthetics, materialism, and skill mastery. Peak experiences involving nature accounted for only 4.8% of the overall reports and one participant identified a peak relating to recovery from a motorcycle accident. No responses involved the five previously established categories of philosophical musing, exalted perceptions in formal religious setting, personalized prayer, near-death experience, or unforgettable dream.

Gender differences were noteworthy in several respects. Females reported peaks of interpersonal joy (56%) and esthetic bliss (13%) more often than did males

Table 25.3 Types of Mexican peak experience

Category of peak	Example
Interpersonal joy	Celebrating Christmas at home with family and many relatives
External achievement	Graduation from elementary school and getting awards
Developmental landmark	Traveling abroad for the first time
Nature encounter	Visiting the foothills of the volcano Popocatepetl
Esthetic bliss	Developing a passion for dancing
Skill mastery	Learning to ride a bicycle without training wheels
Materialism	Getting a coveted toy motorcycle for my birthday
Recovery from health crisis or accident	Falling off a motorcycle without suffering major injury

(42 and 5%, respectively), who were much more likely to report a developmental landmark (15% compared to 1%) as a peak experience.

Norway

Dr. Valentina Iversen of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology directed the study in Norway. An associate professor in the Department of Neuroscience, she visited seven undergraduate classes at a teacher's college and five undergraduate classes at a college for health and social workers. After explaining the purpose of the study, she distributed Hoffman's (2003) questionnaire translated into Norwegian. Participation was voluntary, and approximately 30 min was allocated for completion. A total of 360 students received the questionnaire and 310 were completed, for a response rate of 86.3%. One completed questionnaire was not usable, yielding a number of 309 for data analysis.

The sample was highly homogeneous: 95% of the participants were born in Norway as were their fathers, whereas 94% of the mothers were Norwegian by birth. The sample's mean age was 23.6 years (range 19–45 years). They encompassed

Table 25.4 Reported frequencies of peak experience ($N = 124$)

Category of peak experience	Number	Percentage (%)
Interpersonal joy	61	49.2
External achievement	16	13.0
Esthetics	11	8.9
Developmental landmark	10	8.1
Materialism	10	8.1
Skill mastery	9	7.3
Nature	6	4.85
Recovery from illness or accident	1	0.9

Table 25.5 Types of Norwegian peak experience

Category of peak	Example
Interpersonal joy	Becoming an older sister again
Developmental landmark	Far traveling alone for the first time
Nature encounter	When I got a parakeet, my first pet
External achievement	Winning a skiing competition
Materialism	Getting a new bike for my birthday
Skill mastery	Climbing a tall chestnut tree
Esthetic bliss	Writing a poem during my parents' divorce
Near-death experience	Surviving a storm in a small boat off Greenland
Recovery from health crisis or accident	Recovering from appendicitis surgery

257 females and 52 males. In terms of college majors, 47.6% were in education, 25.6% in nursing, 15.2% in social work, and 11.7% in physical therapy. At both colleges, the overwhelming majority of students came from middle-class, Christian backgrounds. Most lived in apartments near campus, with smaller percentages, respectively, living in student housing or with their parents.

The 309 reports encompassed nine categories, but over 93% involved just five categories: interpersonal joy, developmental landmark, nature, external achievement, materialism, and skill mastery. There was not a single report involving any of these five categories: unforgettable dream, uncanny perception, philosophical musing, personalized prayer, or exalted perception in a religious setting.

As Table 25.6 indicates, interpersonal joy accounted for 45% of the reported peaks and represented the most prevalent category. This result parallels the result among both Canadian and Mexican samples, which likewise involved students predominantly planning careers in the human services or health-care fields. The relatively high percentage of Norwegian students identifying a developmental landmark as their peak may reflect unique facets of Norwegian culture related to the individuation process; for example, many Norwegians in their late teens move away from their parents and travel abroad without them as a way to develop their independence. As expected, peaks involving either nature or external achievement peaks were relatively high, too. Perhaps reflecting the participants' college majors—which did

Table 25.6 Reported frequencies of peak experience ($N = 309$)

Category of peak experience	Number	Percentage (%)
Interpersonal joy	139	45.0
Developmental landmark	48	15.5
Nature encounter	43	13.9
External achievement	39	12.6
Materialism	21	6.8
Skill mastery	9	2.9
Esthetic bliss	5	1.6
Recovery from health crisis or accident	4	1.3
Near-death experience	1	0.3

not include such fields as music, art, film, creative writing, and theater arts—peak experiences involving esthetics were infrequent.

Among the four college majors, there was very little variation with regard to the frequency of specific peaks reported. This may be due to the fact all the majors involved care giving either educationally, emotionally, or bodily—as opposed to, say, engineering, architecture, or accounting. Interestingly, the females reported that their youthful peak experience exerted a greater life impact than did the males. For example, whereas 9.8% of the males reported that their youthful peak experience affected their life "not at all," only 1 of the 257 female participants reported so. And while 53.8% of the females indicated that their youthful peak experience had impacted their lives "intensely" or "very intensely," this was true for only 37.2% of the males.

Singapore

Philip Ang, a senior counselor with the Tampines Family Service Center in Singapore, directed an exploratory study in his country. He obtained a convenience sample of 40 adults, all but one of whom was born in Singapore. Because English is taught to virtually all students in Singapore schools, Hoffman's (2003) questionnaire did not require translation.

The sample comprised 20 males and 20 females. The mean age of the males was 32.1 years and ranged from 22 to 67 years. The mean age of the females was 34.2 years and ranged from 24 to 63 years. The majority of respondents were employed in human services such as counseling and social work, but numerous other occupations from accounting and engineering to information technology and interior design were represented.

As Table 25.8 indicates, the categories of interpersonal joy and external achievement were tied for the most frequent type of youthful peak at 30% each. Peaks

Table 25.7 Types of Singapore peak experience

Category of peak	Example
Interpersonal joy	Receiving encouragement from my teacher
Nature encounter	Enjoying the sunshine as I sat at a windowsill
Esthetic bliss	Starting to draw pictures when I was 11
External achievement	When I was appointed student counselor in school
Skill mastery	Becoming successful in long-distance running
Materialism	Receiving a tailor-made dress for my birthday
Developmental landmark	When I became an apprentice at age 13
Personalized prayer	Saying the "Sinner's Prayer" at Christian camp
Exalted perception in religious setting	When I was baptized at the age of 8
Recovery from health crisis or accident	Recovering from dental surgery

Table 25.8 Reported frequencies of peak experience ($N = 40$)

Category of peak experience	Number	Percentage (%)
Interpersonal joy	12	30.0
External achievement	12	30.0
Materialism	5	12.5
Esthetic bliss	2	5.0
Developmental landmark	2	5.0
Personalized prayer	2	5.0
Exalted perception in religious setting	2	5.0
Nature encounter	1	2.5
Skill mastery	1	2.5
Recovery from health crisis or accident	1	2.5

involving materialism were also fairly prevalent at 12.5% and were typically associated with being the recipient of adult affection and kindness. All other named categories of childhood peak generated small percentages: these involved moments of esthetic delight, developmental landmarks, personalized prayer, exalted perceptions in religious settings, nature encounters, skill mastery, and recovery from health crisis or accident. None of the sample reported a peak involving the categories of philosophical musing, near-death experience, uncanny perception, or unforgettable dream. Interestingly, the two categories of personalized prayer and exalted perception in religious setting accounted for 10% of youthful peak reports, whereas none were identified in our Canada, Mexican, and Norwegian samples.

Venezuela

In the Venezuelan study, we wished to extend our investigations of youthful peak experiences into other Latin-American countries to examine the cross-cultural configuration of early peaks in another collectivistic culture. Venezuela is similar to other Latin-American countries (Hofstede, 1980). Hofstede (2001) ranked 53 cultures along four value-based dimensions (power distance, individualism–collectivism, masculinity–femininity, uncertainty–avoidance) and found that Venezuela ranked 12 on collectivism, compared to other Latin countries (average of 21), indicating that this culture is strongly collectivistic with close long-term commitment to groups (family and extended relationships).

Other cross-cultural indexes, for example, social axioms (Bond et al. 2004) have also shown Venezuela to be comparable to other Latin-American countries. Assuming that culture impacts youthful peak experiences, we have expected to find similarities as well differences in peak experiences among Venezuelan youth.

Data collection is currently ongoing, conducted by Vanessa Dos Santos, our research assistant at Universidad Metropolitina in Caracas. Hoffman's (2003) questionnaire was used in Spanish translation. Based on a convenience sample comprising Venezuelan college students and employed professionals, 20 reports have been received to date via e-mail. Our preliminary results confirm the existence of

comparable peak experiences that fit the 13-category typology. Content analysis of the experiences reveals a similar structure in range of emotions expressed (joy, bliss, happiness), specific values mentioned (familism, collectivism, personal growth), and meaningful vividness of the event. For example, a 19-year-old female majoring in psychology reported this experience of interpersonal joy:

> When I was about 7 years old, my parents had a fight and they were on the verge of getting divorced. It was the worst when they shared that with me—but after a few weeks of separation, they reconciled and we all went together on a trip for a week: the *whole family* together. Knowing that all of us were going to be together made me feel extremely happy. I still remember the trip as if it was yesterday and I still remember how I felt. It was one of the best weeks of my life.

And a 25-year-old male studying graphic design recounted this peak involving esthetics:

> When I was 13, my mother enrolled me in classes of graphic design with a well-known artist. I used to like painting but didn't have much experience. The classes made me decide my vocation and I consider it as having a very strong influence on my attitude toward life. I'm now studying graphic design at the university.

Discussion

In this chapter, our aim has been to review the historical development and significance of the concept of youthful peak experience, within humanistic and positive psychology, to describe recent cross-cultural empirical research and to discuss educational considerations of early peak experiences.

Contemporary theories and models of psychology are heavily loaded with medical and deficit-based constructs like trauma, symptoms, syndrome, pathology, dysfunction, disability, illness, diagnosis, treatment, doctor, patient, clinic, and clinician. In contrast to the pathology-oriented and medically oriented clinical psychology, Maslow and the humanistic movement in psychology introduced a paradigmatic shift with the introduction of peak experiences. He introduced the term "positive psychology" in his book *Motivation and Personality* (1954). We intend this chapter to advance Maslow's vision and the tenets of positive psychology with its more optimistic and appreciative perspective regarding human meaning, potential, motives, and capabilities (Duckworth, Steen, & Seligman, 2005).

Cross-Cultural Considerations

Distinct youth peak experiences were identified in all of the cultures so far studied and replicability of most of the Hoffman (1992, 1998) peak experience categories across cultures was good. These results indicate that peak experiences meaningfully cohere around 8–13 categories. The salience of some peak experiences should be noted. Interpersonal joy, for example, emerged as a meaningfully powerful experience in all cultures. Happiness gained from nature and esthetics were other salient

constituents of early peaks. Experiences of intense surprise elicited by crisis (death, accidents) were also vividly recalled.

Theoretically, these results are consistent with empirical research on the universal structure of the affective domain (Izard, 1977; Plutchik, 1980). For example, Izard (1977) has shown the existence of 10 basic and universal emotions: interest, surprise, joy, distress, fear, shame, contempt, disgust, anger, and guilt. Proponents of the evolutionary biological perspective propose that these basic emotions have adaptive significance and will be universal across cultures. A careful content analysis of the obtained cross-cultural data clearly reveals the emergence, in different degrees of intensity and relevance, of these basic 10 emotions in recalled peak experiences.

These particularly universally salient peak experiences also have their own cultural "flavors and geographies." Exploring "the forest" near a neighborhood was identified as a meaningful nature encounter in Canada, winning a "skiing" competition as an unforgettable external achievement in Norway and hitting a *piñata* in Mexico as an interpersonally joyous experience, to name just a few. One could posit that the salience of these peak experiences may be related to what is culturally desirable and valued in these respective cultures.

Many of the Mexican respondents in this study, for example, reported interpersonal joy as involving togetherness with their family (often extended family) or with someone special to them. They reported feelings of interconnectedness as in the words of one female participant:

> My parents celebrated my birthday when I was 8. We had a party at the garden with my grandparents, with *piñatas* and many other people, with games, and seeing all of my family together made me very happy and cheerful. This experience of being with my family has impacted me and motivated me to continue fighting for family unity.

From such narratives, it is clear that many Mexican youth felt that being with family, friends, and acquaintances gave them a sense of purpose and positive feeling. Mexican students recounted a variety of ways in which such interpersonally joyous experiences affected their lives. Many believed that their peak experience instilled ideals, an appreciation for others, love and care for family, and fostered enduring friendships.

This is consistent with the view that Latinos, particularly Mexican and Mexican-Americans, define themselves primarily through relational, interpersonal, collectivistic, sociocentric, and interdependent self-construals, in contrast to more individualistic or idiocentric conceptions of self found in other cultures (Hofstede, 1980, 2001). Diaz-Loving and Draguns (1999) have also noted the strong affective and joyous bonds within Mexican family; the affective foundation underlying long-term commitment and reciprocal obligations with friends (see also Diaz-Guerrero & Szalay, 1991).

Analysis of interpersonal peak experience and its frequent reference to the collective and family may also be understood from the perspective of *familismo*, which refers to the cohesiveness, mutual loyalty, and reciprocity found in immediate and extended Latino families (Carlo, Koller, Raffaelli, & de Guzman, 2007). "La familia viene primero" (family comes first) is a joyous shared sentiment and appropriately

describes the content of this interpersonal joy peak experience. Consistent with *familismo*, *personalismo* is another highly valued cultural dimension and it refers to the preference to establish joyous, warm, and friendly interpersonal relationships (Diaz-Guerrero, 1987, 1993).

Several Mexican youth noted that an external achievement was tremendously impactful for them; examples included earning an academic acknowledgment or being recognized for a certain skill. A male participant reported

> Graduating from elementary school and earning achievement awards for which I put a lot of effort for a long time gave me a profound sense of pride. I also made my parents feel very proud and got acknowledged by my peers. It taught me to fight for my ideals to accept the way I am and to appreciate my parents as part of my life.

External achievements had a strong effect on these youths' psyches and it provided them with an enduring, high sense of internal locus of control, optimism, perseverance, discipline, and motivation. Some of the external achievement peaks also had an interpersonal content. Accomplishments occurred in the context of family, friends, and acquaintances, often in a spirit of cooperation and camaraderie (Kagan, Zahn, & Gealy, 1977; Okagaki, Frensch, & Dodson, 1996; Stevenson, Chen, & Uttal, 1990). In their study on achievement, Diaz-Loving, Andrade Palos and La Rosa (1989) concluded that in addition to the conceptual definition of achievement as comprising mastery, work, and competition, usually found in individualistic cultures, the Mexican operationalization of this experience—especially among children—comprises cooperation, abnegation and affiliative obedience.

Several students reported reaching defining and significant events in their lives. In addition to the commonly shared rites of passage found in other cultures (birth, ceremonies making the transition from puberty into adulthood), these students reported other important benchmarks. A male student recalled

> The day I turned 13 was a great experience in my life because I felt like I was becoming an adolescent and I felt like the oldest among my cousins, and this was a cool experience.

All of these developmental landmarks indicate transitions from one horizon to another and herald opportunities for personal growth and new responsibilities. For instance, one student reported that, "I realized that I was going to have new obligations and rules. Also, I learned that I was entering a new level of education and a new school with new friends." Consistent with culturally common developmental transitions (e.g., from boyhood to adolescence, Lara-Tapia & Gómez-Alegría, 1991), a content analysis of the responses reveals that several of the developmental marks among these Mexican male respondents have a tone of "machismo," with males boasting of minor conquests of the opposite sex, learning to drink alcohol, drive a car, and feeling emancipated to go to bars for the first time.

Japanese findings (Hoffman, 2003; Hoffman & Muramoto, 2007) on the salience of interpersonal joy and relatedness, social harmony and cohesiveness, and the collectivistic content of peaks involving classmates, friends, parents, and siblings can also be understood from the perspective of culturally relevant values and constructs. Most likely these intense interpersonal experiences among Japanese youth can be best understood from the perspective of the widely researched Japanese

cultural concept of *amae* (Okonogi, 1992; Vereijken, Riksen-Walraven, & van Lieshout, 1997).

While there is no direct translation of *amae* into English, it has been described as "the strong desire to maintain lasting social bonds with peers and significant others" (Onuoha & Munakata, 2005, p. 397), and a "desire for physical and emotional closeness . . ." (Behrens, 2004, p. 11). To better understand the interpersonal dynamics of Japanese youths' peak experiences in the context of *amae*, this behavioral description by Niiya, Ellsworth, & Yamaguchi (2006) appears useful:

> *Amae* is best understood by Westerners in the mother–child relationship. A 6-year-old child climbing on the knees of her mother and asking her to read a storybook while the mother is working on the computer would be a typical example of *amae*. The child experiences a sweet sensation of being taken care of, while the mother feels needed and trusted. Although the prototype of *amae* occurs in the mother–child relationship, in Japan *amae* also commonly occurs between adults (e.g., in friendships, romantic relationships) (p. 279).

Doi (1973) called *amae* "a key concept for the understanding not only of the psychological makeup of the individual Japanese but of the structure of Japanese society as a whole" (p. 28).

Educational Implications

Recently, several authors have advanced the position that educational processes should be based on a holistic (Schlarb, 2007; Taggart, 2001) and culturally sensitive approach (Garcia, Skutnabb-Kangas, & Torres-Guzman, 2006). Such an outlook parallels today's growing emphasis on strength-based counseling (Seligman et al., 2005; Smith, 2006a, 2006b) in place of focusing on client weaknesses, flaws, and pathology. According to the holistic perspective, all children develop emotionally, socially, morally, and spiritually, as well as cognitively and physically (McLaughlin, 1996; Miller, 1991; SCAA, 1995). As Kirk (2000) suggested, the holistic approach acknowledges and fosters such culturally undervalued ways of knowing as imagination and intuition—sources of innovation and creativity. Lealman (1991) advocated the need to integrate the spiritual dimension in the classroom as a means of preventing emotional and social problems among adolescents. Lawson (1996) asserted that the development of the spiritual dimension nurtures a sense of connectedness with self and with others, and a sense of interdependence and social responsibility needed in our competitive and fragmented society.

We believe that peak experiences can be creatively and effectively promoted and utilized in a comprehensive and interculturally rich curriculum (Munkachy, 1974). We concur with Dunlap's (2002, p. 185) criticism of schools for not validating and using peak experiences; she has called on teachers "to acknowledge personal growth rather than focusing on achievement." In their educational approach of multiliteracies pedagogy, Garcia et al. (2006, p. 64) have similarly called for the "power of technology to amplify and enhance the peak experience."

The recent scholarly discussion in England to promote children's moral and spiritual development provides a viable conceptual framework for the incorporation of peak experiences into educational curriculum (SCAA, 1995). Consider, for example, the following views regarding the aspects of spiritual development:

> A sense of awe, wonder and mystery—being inspired by the natural world, mystery or human achievement (SCAA, 1995, p. 9).
>
> Experiencing feelings of transcendence—feelings which may give rise to belief in the existence of a divine being or the belief that one's inner resources provide the ability to rise above everyday experiences. (SCAA, 1995, p. 9).
>
> Tuning ... the kind of awareness which arises in heightened aesthetic experience, for example, when listening to music ... Apparently more ordinary events in a child's life could promote a similar sense of unity, for example through an intense sense of belonging, experienced at a family celebration (Nye & Hay, 1996, p. 148).
>
> Educationalists think they understand what is implied by the development of the intellect because cognitive concerns have controlled the curriculum for so long (Nye & Hay, 1996, p. 144)

These quotations highlight a significant emerging challenge to traditional pedagogy and child psychology. Certainly, an overemphasis on cognitively focused education and the mere acquisition of conceptual knowledge disregards children's moral and spiritual development. The humanistic perspective eloquently argued by Maslow (1968a, 1968b) suggests that virtually all children have the capacity for peak experiences and these can be constructively and suitably integrated in educational experiences.

Some Thoughts on Future Research

Space does not allow an extensive discussion of future research possibilities. A possible limitation of the studies reviewed in this chapter is the overreliance on phenomenological methods of uncertain objectivity, reliability, and validity. Relying heavily on the subjective impressions and free recollections of respondents may also limit cross-cultural comparisons. We believe that future research can benefit from a blend of qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

From a cross-cultural perspective on the structure and measurement of youthful peak experiences, perhaps the highest priority is to integrate the many categories that have been identified into a consensus taxonomy or typology and relate them to other spiritual dimensions, especially, spiritual categories found in children and adolescents in cross-cultural samples. Similarly, youthful peak experiences could be systematically related to well-established developmental models (Erikson, Piaget), personality dimensions, and measures of values (Schwartz Values Inventory).

A logical extension of the current cross-cultural investigations with convenient samples would be to conduct further research with purposive sampling strategies, for example, by purposefully comparing cultures on specific cultural dimensions (collectivism, individualism, and social axioms). Self-ratings on large and representative samples can be factor analyzed to derive an arguably comprehensive set of cultures

and their youthful peak-experience taxonomies. Additional priorities for research include: (a) structural replication of early peak-experience categories assessed by valid and reliable instruments; (b) further elaboration of the nomological networks (e.g., behavioral correlates) of early peak experiences; (c) systematic comparisons of the youthful peak experiences identified using alternative methodological methods; and (d) intracultural studies, which address both the diversity and change of these experiences within given cultures.

Evolutionary theorists view certain universal human experiences as having evolved to solve adaptive problems of group living. The study of peak experiences from an evolutionary and psychological perspective seems a fertile area of research. For example, one could posit that, given our preliminary evidence suggesting the existence of universal and cross-cultural peak-experience categories, interpersonal joy may be related to the adaptive development of a "motivational system," which gets triggered by specific types of stimulation (e.g., the smell of a flower, the happiness of a child in close, intimate contact with its mother). Thus, future research can explore (a) the underlying psychological and motivational mechanisms of universal peak experiences and (b) the heritability evidence of characteriological and maturational trends of early peaks.

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Chapter 26
Peak Experiences Explored Through Literature

Ann M. Trousdale

Abstract A sense of connection with the natural world is an often-noted aspect of children's spirituality (Nye, 1998; Hart, 2003); it is in the natural world that many children report having "peak experiences" of peace, oneness, and timelessness (Schlarb, 2004). Yet encounter with the natural world is increasingly rare for many children today.

While direct, sustained experience with nature is most likely to provide such moments, literature offers a means by which children may find desire for such encounters quickened, or find confirmation for such instincts or experiences. This chapter discusses works of literature, ranging from picture books for young children to young adult novels which feature relationship with the natural world. Themes include a sense of awe and wonder at the natural world; the healing and restorative qualities of nature; a journey into the heart and rhythm of nature, including challenges of the untamed natural world; deeper understanding of oneself, of others and of the Divine through relationship with the natural world; and concern for the wellbeing of the earth and its inhabitants.

Introduction

Moments of awe and wonder, of connectedness with the natural world and of transcendence are often-noted aspects of children's spirituality. Craig Schlarb (2004) found that children's "peak experiences" frequently occur in natural surroundings, involving a sense of unity with the natural world, of timelessness, and a sense of peace. Similarly, one of the patterns that emerged in Tobin Hart's (2003) research into children's spirituality were experiences in the natural world involving "feelings of awe, connection, joy, insight, and deep sense of reverence and love," moments which may "open so far and deep that we find unity and ecstasy" (p. 48). In earlier research, Rebecca Nye (Hay with Nye, 1998) describes the core of children's

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spirituality as "relational consciousness" (pp. 112–113). She noted four different types of "core categories" of such consciousness: child–God consciousness, child–people consciousness, child–self consciousness, and child–world consciousness (by which she means the natural world). Such research confirms Dwayne Huebner's earlier insights. In 1959, Huebner was writing of human beings' innate capacity for wonder, a capacity for marvel, a sense of mystery, of awe, of encountering the natural world in such a way that "the two of you are in relationship, participating in life together, journeying down through time, side by side, together, yet apart" (1959/1999, p. 5).

It is, of course, direct, sustained experience with nature that is most likely to provide such moments; but many children's lives today are disconnected from the natural world; they have little opportunity to experience such a transcending sense of awe and wonder, of connectedness with nature. This is the case with many inner-city children whose world is made mostly of concrete and brick, polluted with incessant noise and noxious air; but it is also the case with many children from suburban settings whose sense of connectedness lies primarily with electronic keyboards and remote control devices.

There is another way to experience this connectedness, or quicken a desire for closer connection, or perhaps to confirm experiences that the child has indeed known, and that is through the vicarious experience that literature provides. There are excellent literary works that evoke a sense of wonder, of awe, of transcendence, of the healing, and restorative powers of nature. The pull of the natural world can also derive from its wildness, its unpredictability, its other-than-human direction and purpose. The challenge of relinquishing an illusion of mastery, a willingness to enter the rhythm of untamed nature and to learn from it, can also prove to be an occasion for experiences of extraordinary beauty and unity. In this chapter, I provide an overview and discussion of a sampling of such books ranging from picture books for young children to novels appropriate for young adults.

Connection, Healing, and Restoration

Perhaps the first children's book in the Western European tradition that explores the healing and restorative qualities of nature is Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The secret garden* (1911). In this classic story, Mary Lennox, orphaned in faraway India, is sent to her widowed uncle's estate in Yorkshire. Mary—plain, sour, and self-centered—discovers in the house a crippled, sickly boy who is convinced he is soon to die. It is Colin, Mary's cousin. Querulous and self-pitying, the boy reminds Mary somewhat of herself.

On the grounds of the estate she meets Dickon, a charming and engaging boy whose older sister is a servant in the household. Dickon is joyfully at home on the moorlands; he fascinates Mary because he can communicate with animals.

One day Mary discovers a buried key that opens the door to a secret garden, abandoned for 10 years, ever since Colin's mother died of a fall there. Mary opens

the door to discover a tangle of overgrown plants but on looking more closely she sees "sharp little pale green points" making their way out of the earth. "'It isn't quite a dead garden,' she cried out softly to herself. 'Even if the roses are dead, there are other things alive'" (p. 96). She takes a stick and begins to clear a way for the young shoots to grow. The garden is the first thing that has engaged her interest in all her young life, the first thing that has called her outside her self-preoccupation, to consider the welfare of any other living thing. In the garden Mary learns to care for something other than herself.

Mary and Dickon bring Colin, in his wheel chair, to the garden. It has a similarly transformative effect on Colin. He takes in the beauty and mystery of the place and is transformed before Mary and Dickon's eyes. "I shall get well! I shall get well!" he cries out. "Mary! Dickon! I shall get well! And I shall live forever and ever and ever!" (p. 255).

The children sense a "moreness" a presence of something "other" in the garden. Initially "magic" is the only word they know to describe it. As Colin says, "Even if it isn't real Magic, we can pretend it is. *Something* is there–*something*!" (282).

One day Colin looks at his hand holding the trowel, stands up, and realizes he is well. He wants to shout out "something thankful, joyful." At Colin's urge Dickon sings the Doxology, beginning "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." Colin finds that the song of praise to God expresses "just what I mean when I want to shout out that I am thankful to the Magic . . . Perhaps they are both the same thing. How can we know the exact names of everything? Sing it again, Dickon. Let us try, Mary. I want to sing it too. It's my song. How does it begin? 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow'?" (p. 329).

The secret garden reflects the highly structured British class system of the early twentieth century and does not challenge the implicit social and economic inequity. But it presents the healing and restorative qualities of nature as equally present despite boundaries of class, of culture, of gender, and of time and space. The children's peak experiences in this book include their being caught up in the mystery of life, the wonder of communicating with animals, an impulse to care for something other than oneself, and a transcending sense of gratitude and joy in living.

Molly Bang also explores the restorative qualities of nature in *When Sophie gets angry–really, really angry* (1999). In this picture book for younger children, Sophie becomes angry when she must relinquish a toy she has been playing with to her sister. Her anger mounts to an uncontrollable rage and she runs and runs to a special tree. She climbs it and there "[s]he feels the breeze blow her hair. She watches the water and the waves" until "the wide world comforts her." Her equanimity restored, she climbs down the tree and returns home, where her family is waiting for her and "everything's back together again" (pages not numbered). Here the peak experience is not one of a heightened sense of ecstasy or discovery but rather one of peace, of unity, a gaining of perspective.

Communion with the natural world may inspire a deeper understanding of one's place in the wider universe, but it can also provide opportunity for communal bonding with other human beings. In Paul Fleischman's *Seedfolks* (1997) a group of lonely, alienated city dwellers find delight, meaning, and purpose for their lives as

well as community with others through a garden that they develop on a blighted urban lot. The story is told through the perspectives of some 13 residents of the neighborhood.

Kim is a young Chinese immigrant who never knew her father, a farmer, who died before she was born. She knows that her father's spirit hovers overhead, but how is he to recognize her? She takes some dried beans, clears a small area in the lot, buries and waters them. "He would watch my beans break ground and spread, and would notice with pleasure their pods growing plump. He would see my patience and my hard work. I would show him that I could raise plants, as he had. I would show him that I was his daughter" (p. 3).

Gradually other residents in the neighborhood clear spaces for gardens: Tio Juan, an elderly Guatemalan immigrant, also a farmer, who seemed to have no knowledge or expertise that was useful in this American city; Sae Young, a Korean immigrant who had isolated herself in her apartment after being robbed and beaten; Mr. Myles, a stroke victim whose interest in the world has all but left him; Maricela, a pregnant 16-year-old Mexican immigrant, and all the others find new meaning for their lives through the garden. And they discover community.

They begin by working alone in their little staked-out plots, initially avoiding contact but gradually beginning to speak to one another or help one another out, until one day a rain shower drives them all under the shelter of a store overhang. As Nora, who cares for Mr. Myles, says,

> Then our solitary status ended . . . The small dry space forced us together. In fifteen minutes we'd met them all and soon knew the whole band of regulars.
> Most were old. Many grew plants from their native lands . . . Yet we were all subject to the same weather and pests, the same neighborhood, and the same parental emotions toward our plants. If we happened to miss two or three days, people stopped by on our return to ask about Mr. Myles' health. We, like our seeds, were now planted in the garden (pp. 49–50).

Amir, an Indian immigrant, reports that one day he and two other men working in the garden heard a woman screaming down the block. A man with a knife had taken her purse. Amir and the two other men ran after him and caught him. Royce, one of the gardeners, held the thief to a wall with his pitchfork until the police arrived. Amir reflects, "Not one of us had ever chased a criminal before. And most likely we wouldn't have except near the garden. There, you felt part of a community" (p. 60).

The peak experiences in this book tend to be gradual, cumulative. As Sae Young, an isolated widowed, childless Korean immigrant notes,

> Very hot and humid in July. Most people come early in evening, after work, when air is cool. People watering and pulling weeds. Even if don't talk to anyone, sound of people working together almost like conversation, all around. People visit friends. I listen to voices. Feel very safe. Then man walk over and ask about peppers. I grow hot peppers, like in Korea. First time that someone talk to me. I was so glad, have trouble talking (p. 38).

Later, seeing that people are having trouble getting water from the communal rain barrel into their individual containers, Sae

quick go to store. Buy three funnels to make much easier filling containers. I put one by each garbage can. That day I see man use my funnel. Then woman. Then many people. Feel very glad inside. Feel part of garden. Almost like family (p. 39).

Owl moon (Yolen, 1987), a picture book for young children, portrays a sense of wonder and connection with nature afforded by both beauty and potential danger of the natural world. Late one snowy, moonlit winter night a young girl goes into the woods with her father hoping to spot an owl. It is both the fauna and the flora of the forest that are to captivate the child, even in the presence of fear:

We went into the woods.
The shadows
were the blackest things
I had ever seen.
They stained the white snow.
My mouth felt furry,
for the scarf over it
was wet and warm.
I didn't ask
what kinds of things
hide behind black trees
in the middle of the night.
When you go owling
you have to be brave.
            (pages not numbered)

John Schoenherr's illustrations contribute to the child's growing sense of awe as the story proceeds. The father calls for an owl several times, "Whoo-Whoo-who-who-who-who-whooooooo," and finally as they reach a meadow an echo comes back. The father and the owl continue to call back and forth and then suddenly an owl lifts off a tree branch, comes straight toward the child and her father, and lands on a branch just above them. Again, Schoenherr captures the transcendence of the moment, expressed through Yolen's poetic language:

For one minute,
three minutes,
maybe even a hundred minutes,
We stared at one another
        (pages not numbered)

   The moment holds,

Then the owl
pumped its great wings
and lifted off the branch
like a shadow
without sound
It flew back into the forest.
            (pages not numbered)

The child has been so taken up by the experience that she is silent on the way home:

When you go owling
you don't need words
or warm
or anything but hope.
      (pages not numbered)

According to Huebner (1959/1999), one of the factors in our suppression or underdevelopment of the capacity for oneness with the natural world is the tendency to make of everything an object rather than a subject with which we communicate: "an over-emphasis on experience, with a resulting I-It attitude, to the neglect of relationship and the corresponding I-Thou attitude" (p. 5). The potential for an I–Thou relationship is explored in Byrd Baylor and Peter Parnall's *The other way to listen* (1978). In this picture book, an elder teaches a child to listen for the wisdom of the natural world—to hear the corn singing, wildflower seeds bursting open, a rock murmuring good things to a lizard—to "everything being right" (pages not numbered). The elder instructs the child that one must get to know one thing as well as one can, starting with something small; to respect whatever one is with, and not be afraid to learn even from bugs or sand. This takes a very long time, but finally one morning the child goes out to sing, "Hello, hello, hello" to the hills and hears the hills singing in response. *The other way to listen* suggests that a child may discover not only a connection, but a reciprocity with the natural world, a sense that the world itself is "waiting with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God," as St. Paul wrote in Romans 8:19. Peak experiences with nature may take time, and patience, and a cultivation of openness and receptivity.

The capacity of the natural world to speak or find expression is captured in Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha* (1922). The novel originally attracted an adult audience, but in recent years it has been recognized as appropriate for a young adult audience as well. The story is set in India. After years of physical and spiritual wanderings that do not lead to happiness, Siddhartha comes to live beside a river and finds there the sense of completion he has been seeking. Speaking in many voices, the river mediates to Siddhartha the sacred oneness of life. At times laughing and at other times lamenting with a sorrowful voice, the river passes through the seasons of the year and of the heart. It is in reflecting on the cycles of the water, from vapor to rain to source to brook to river, that Siddhartha comes to terms with his own life cycles and finds completion in his own sacred journey toward the divine.

In Gary Paulsen's Young Adult novel *The island* (1988), teenager Wil Neuton discovers a profound sense of identity with the natural world when he goes to live alone on an island in a lake in Northern Wisconsin. Wil begins to draw what he sees, to write about it, to dance with the heron, to swim with the fish, and to meditate. Reflecting on this process, Wil explains, "I could see the heron in all the things the heron was, without seeing the heron at all, and it changed me, made me look at all things that way, made me see in a new way and, finally, made me look at myself in

that new way" (pp. 52–53). Susan, a girl who lives nearby, understands what Wil is about on the island and helps him manage his life there. She comes to the island one day and, so much are these young people caught in the innocence and purity of the place, that they swim nude, with no sense of shame or sexual interest in one another. When his family urge him to leave the island he responds, ". . .I know that if I leave here, if I go back without learning more, I will somehow lose what I am, and I don't want to do that. I don't ever want to do that" (p. 116).

In revealing this deeply sensitive potential in Wil, Paulsen cuts across male stereotypes, for Wil is not a bookworm, an intellectual, or an effete: he is a tall, muscular, athletic kid—one who draws, journals, dances, and communes with nature. In *The island* Paulsen presents an almost idyllic view of nature; violence and destructiveness come to the island only at the end of the book in the arrival of the school bully who is jealous of Wil and Susan's friendship. In *Hatchet* (1987) and its sequels, Paulsen explores more fully the challenges of survival in the untamed natural world.

Challenges: The Untamed Natural World

In the initial book, 13-year-old Brian Robeson, a boy who lives in a city, is on his way to visit his father in Canada. The pilot of the small plane in which he is flying suffers a heart attack and the plane crashes in a lake, leaving Brian on his own to survive in the wilderness with only a hatchet and the clothes he is wearing. Brian quickly learns to observe the natural world carefully in order to make a shelter, find food, and keep himself safe from potentially destructive natural elements. In his 54 days in the wilderness, Brian encounters danger from bears, moose, a porcupine, wolves, smothering hoards of mosquitoes, thunderstorms, and, finally, a tornado that destroys his shelter. But even in the midst of the most difficult challenges, Brian experiences moments of transcendence, of unity, of ecstasy at the beauty of the world and its creatures. In one episode, he has just escaped stepping between a mother bear and her cub (and almost certain death) when he looks up and sees a wolf on a nearby hill.

> "The wolf claimed all that was below him as his own, took Brian as his own. Brian looked back and for a moment felt afraid because the wolf was so . . . so right. He knew Brian, knew him and owned him and chose not to do anything to him. But the fear moved then, moved away, and Brian knew the wolf for what it was–another part of the woods, another part of it all. Brian relaxed the tension on the spear in his hand, settled the bow in his other hand from where it had started to come up. He knew the wolf now, as the wolf knew him, and he nodded to it, nodded and smiled" (pp. 114–115).

In another episode as Brian struggles to come to terms with the destruction wrought by the tornado, he has a profound experience of the beauty of the natural world. He looks over at the lake and sees "[t]here was great beauty here–almost unbelievable beauty. The sun exploded the sky, just blew it up with the setting color, and that color came down into the water of the lake, lit the trees. Amazing beauty and he wished he could share it with somebody and say, "Look there, and over there, and see that . . ." (p. 158).

The tornado that destroys his shelter also stirs up the lake to reveal the tail of the plane, where Brian finds the plane's survival pack intact. He brings the pack back to his shelter and inadvertently turns on the emergency transmitter, thinking it is a radio. Its signal brings about his ultimate rescue.

Brian's time in the wilderness has a life-changing effect. He has to let go of the person he was and become a new person. One day, when a plane flies over and does not spot him, Brian goes into a deep depression and tries to end his life by cutting himself with the hatchet. The next morning he awakens, sees the blood and "hated what he had done to himself." He has a kind of rebirth. He realizes that he is not the same that "the disappointment cut him down and made him new. He was not the same and would never be again like he had been" (pp. 116–117).

Paulsen received thousands of letters from readers asking about Brian's subsequent life. Three sequels followed, *The river* (1991), *Brian's winter* (1996), and *Brian's return* (1999).

Brian's winter offers an alternate ending to *Hatchet*. Paulsen says that he wrote *Brian's winter* in response to readers wanting to know what would have happened to Brian had he not been rescued when he was and had to survive a winter. The resulting book is a sheer survival story, punctuated by few moments of ecstasy or awe. There is one episode, however, in which Paulsen works to counteract any sentimentalized notion of nature, when Brian witnesses a pack of wolves bringing down a moose. Brian sees the moose's attempts to fight off the wolves, which attack the animal from the side, aiming at the bull's back legs and rear end. They pull at the hamstrings and cut the back legs until the moose is not able to stand. As he caves in the wolves began tearing at his rear end, eating him while he still lives, trying to pull himself away with his front legs. That night, sitting by his fire, Brian wonders

> How it could be so horrible–how nature could let an animal suffer the way the moose had suffered.

The wolves were just being natural and he understood the need to kill–he himself would die if he did not kill.

> But so slowly . . . (p. 122).

As winter is coming to an end, Brian finds a Cree trapping family, the Smallhorns, and is taken back to civilization in the plane that periodically brings them supplies.

In *The river* (1991) and *Brian's return* (1999) it is clear that Brian's experience has changed him in a radical way; the pull of the wilderness is strong, and Brian finds he has little tolerance for an urban life filled with the noise of car horns, sirens, television, and talking, with shopping malls and bicycles and video games. He tries to fit into urban teenage life, but feels more and more disengaged and distant– different.

Brian has gained notoriety, but people do not understand what he had experienced; news articles about him declare, "Boy conquers savage wilderness" or "Learns to beat nature" (*Brian's return*, p. 4.) Indeed, even the flyleaf of *The river* says that in the book Paulsen describes "the horrifying adventure that pits a boy against nature for the second time in his life."

"It wasn't that way", muses Brian in *Brian's return*. "Had never been that way. Brian hadn't conquered anything. Nature had whipped him, not the other way around; had beaten him down and pounded the stupidity out of his brain until he had been forced to bend, forced to give, forced to learn to survive. He had learned the most important fact of all, and that one that is so hard for many to understand or believe: Man proposes, nature disposes. He hadn't conquered nature at all–he had become part of it. And it had become part of him, maybe *all* of him" (p. 4).

In *The river* he returns to the wilderness with a government psychologist who wants to study the survival techniques that Brian learned. The psychologist is hit by lightning and goes into a coma; and it is up to Brian to rescue them both. Brian's subsequent focus is on getting the man back to civilization for medical treatment. It is in the final book of the series, *Brian's return* (1999) that relationship with the natural world is most fully explored.

In this story, Brian, back at home with his mother in the city, reacts to a bully's attack by reverting to pure animal instinct. He has to be pulled off the boy, whom he is beating senseless, and is referred to a counselor. The counselor understands Brian's crisis and advises him that he must return to the woods for his "mental health," to find what he "left there" (p. 33). Once he is in the wilderness again, he is immediately "taken by a peace he had not known for a long time" (p. 1). In relinquishing himself to the natural world, in committing himself to his oneness with it, Brian experiences one "peak experience" after another.

Brian's experience resonates with but goes a step further than the journey Huebner (1959/1999) describes, in which the human being and the natural world "are in relationship, participating in life together, journeying down through time, side by side, together, yet apart (p. 5). Brian's journey is into the heart and rhythm of the natural world, a relationship of union, not "apartness." In this book, Brian has been careful not to take too much equipment with him, lest he "lose what he had found, the beauty, the connection with the wild that had come into him" (p. 54). He finds that "no matter what he *thought* would happen, nature would do what it wanted to do. He had to be part of it, part of what it was really like, not what he or some other person thought it should be like" (p. 83).

As with many of these books, connection with the natural world involves other kinds of connection as well. In Bryan's experience in the wilderness, all four types of children's relational consciousness found by Nye (Hay with Nye, 1998) are manifest in varying degrees: child–God consciousness, child–people consciousness, child–world consciousness, and child–self consciousness.

Brian's time in the wilderness seems to open him to a sense of a divine presence beyond the material world. In *The river* (1991) it reveals itself through his spontaneous uttering of prayers of gratitude and prayers for deliverance. In *Brian's return* (1999) this sense is articulated more distinctly. Early in the story, when the counselor asks Brian to describe to him "one thing" about being in the woods, Brian chooses one particularly dramatic sunset. "It made him believe, made him *know*, that there was something bigger than he was, something bigger than everybody, bigger than all" (p. 20).

In *Hatchet*, Brian had experienced a moment of mutual recognition with a wolf; now he enters more deeply into a relationship of oneness. One night he is awakened and goes out into the lake in his canoe. He hears a loon call, and then, very close, a wolf howls, "[l]ong, sweet, and sad and happy and frightening and joyful all at once, a keening howl that started high and dropped low and ended almost hoarse." Brian answers the howl, waits, and the wolf answers. They go back and forth three more times, Brian matching and harmonizing with the wolf's call, until "they sang together that way, four more songs, a duet, boy and wolf in the moonlight, singing to beauty until at last the wolf grew tired of it and quieted." Brian returns to his campsite but does not sleep, thinking of the experience of oneness with the wolf, "Brian and the wolf mixed, Brian-wolf, wolf-Brian" (pp. 87–88).

On another occasion Brian is able to communicate his lack of fear and his "evenness" with a bear who had been toying with him as a cat plays with a mouse prior to the kill. Brian reaches his powerful hunter's bow and arrows, holds the bow ready, capable of killing the bear, looks the bear in the eye and speaks to it, "Go away. Go away now." He knows he could release the arrow and kill the bear, but has no need to kill the bear. The animal "hovered for a time," comes to a decision, turns and ambles away (pp. 103–106).

A visit from Billy, a man of the woods, introduces Brian to a spirituality that is reminiscent of Native American sensibilities. Billy too lives in the woods "the old way," without modern weapons, and is closely attuned to the sounds and scents of the life around him. He and Brian understand one another with few words. Billy speaks to Brian of the kind of hunting that gives animals time to prepare to enter "the next world"; of what is "good medicine" and "bad medicine." He introduces Brian to the idea that he has a "medicine animal": the mysterious deer whom Brian has just encountered, which will give him direction. Brian now realizes that, in his confrontation with the bear, it had been "good medicine" he has instinctively waved down from the sky that had protected him.

At the end of the novel, Brian comes to terms with himself and what his experience with nature has meant to his life. He recognizes in Billy what he will likely become: "an old man who looked carved in wood, moving through and with the forest, being of and with the woods, and he decided that it wouldn't be so bad a thing to be" (p. 109). Instead of joining the Smallhorns, which has been his plan, Brian decides to spend more time alone in the wilderness, following his medicine, finding the life that waits for him.

Jean Craighead George's *Julie of the wolves* (1972) is another story of a teenager's survival in the natural world set in the Arctic regions of Alaska. In this novel, deep connection with nature results in a heightened respect for the ecological balance of nature, and the threat that civilization poses to creatures of the wild. Thirteen-year-old Julie's adventure begins when she runs away from an undesirable arranged marriage, planning to make her way to San Francisco, where her pen pal Amy lives, but she soon finds herself lost, hungry, and in danger of dying on the snow-covered tundra of the North Slope. Julie's Eskimo name is Miyax, and that is the name by which she is called during most of the novel.

Miyax's survival depends upon her being accepted and protected by a wolf pack she encounters; and her early "peak experiences" derive from learning to communicate with them. By observing the wolves closely, she learns what certain gestures and sounds mean. She begins to imitate the wolves' signals and when the wolves respond to her, she "clapped her hands and settled down to watch this language of jumps and tumbles, elated that she was at last breaking the wolf code" (p. 23). Later, she succeeds in signaling her good will to the leader of the pack, and when he releases the odor from the glad on the top of his tail, she is "drenched lightly in wolf scent. Miyax was one of the pack" (p. 25).

Julie's growing sense of connectedness with the wolves and the environment and peak moments of joy or wonder come through varied experiences: being given food by the wolves, marveling at the wolves' skill or strength in hunting, finding natural fuel, and witnessing the beauty of the tundra. One evening she thinks of reaching Amy's white house in San Francisco, but the vision she has concocted

> vanished abruptly; for the tundra was even more beautiful–a glistening gold, and its shadows were purple and blue. Lemon-yellow clouds sailed a green sky and every wind-tossed sedge was a silver thread. "Oh," she whispered in awe, and stopped where she was to view the painted earth (p. 123).

The safety and security of an imagined life in San Francisco draw Julie during the first part of her journey, but eventually she comes to see the darker sides of Western European civilization: the wanton killing of the wild animals she has come to love and respect, the vanity and indifference of Western European consumerism, the distancing of oneself from the rhythms of the natural world, the indifference to its welfare.

She comes to see Amaroq, the magnificent leader of the wolf pack, as a surrogate father. A crisis occurs for her when Amaroq is shot and killed by hunters in a plane. Julie witnesses the killing and looks up into the belly of the plane, where she sees "great cities, bridges, radios, school books. . .long highways, TV sets, telephones, and electric lights. Black exhaust enveloped her, and civilization became this monster that snarled across the sky" (p. 141). Seeing Amaroq lying dead in the snow, the men in the cockpit laugh, the plane climbs, banks, and flies away. Julie realizes that the hunters are not going to collect Amaroq's body; they had killed the wolf heedlessly, not even to collect a bounty.

In her grief, Julie kneels at Amaroq's body, removes a carving she has made from her pocket, and holds it over the wolf's body, asking his spirit to enter the totem so that he might be with her forever. She holds the carving until "the pain in her breast grew lighter and she knew the wolf was with her" (p. 147).

When she reaches the village of Kongik, Julie finds her long-lost father, Kapugen, whom she thought was dead. Kapugen has married a Caucasian woman and is accommodating his life to Western civilization. Indeed, he had been the pilot of the plane carrying the hunter who had shot Amaroq. Appalled, Julie leaves the village, intending to return to the wild, to "live with the rhythm of the beasts and the land"

as her ancestors have done (p. 169). However, that night Julie realizes that "the hour of the wolf and the Eskimo is over," and returns to her father's house (p. 169–170).

In the sequel, *Julie* (1994), there are fewer peak experiences portrayed, but other spiritual aspects of Julie's story are expanded. The conflicts in this novel are twofold: Julie struggles to adjust to a westernized life with her father and his wife, Ellen, all the while working to protect her wolves. The pack has followed her and are in danger of being hunted and killed by the villagers.

Julie's arrival seems to act as a corrective to Kapugen's accommodation to Western ways; he begins to remember Eskimo beliefs and traditions and to honor them. He has abandoned the Eskimo understanding of the interdependence of all things and has adopted the "Minnesota law" of his wife's people, which will justify the killing Julie's wolves to protect the village's herd of musk oxen. The oxen, which had once been plentiful, had been hunted to near extinction when guns were brought to Alaska by white people. This herd, a remnant of a once-bountiful species, is the foundation of an "industry" Kapugen has begun to develop in the village.

As Kapugen recovers his Eskimo sensibilities, he discovers that he has been the one responsible for Julie's beloved wolf's death. He asks Julie's forgiveness and names his first child Amaroq, explaining that "[i]t is customary among the Eskimo to give the name of deceased spirit to a baby. Then the baby becomes that one . . . Like the wolf, he will be integrated into the universe" (p. 167).

In another powerful scene, her father, hunting walrus with other hunters, performs the Eskimo ceremony of respect for an animal one has killed. After a silence, Kapugen slits open the walrus' belly, reaches in, takes the heart and carries it to the edge of the sea. "Great Aiviq," he says, "I have borrowed your body. My flesh will be your flesh." He throws the heart into the sea. "I return your spirit to the sea. I give you birth again" (p. 201). This scene is a far cry from his careless shared laughter at the death of Amaroq.

Julie tries to explain to Ellen the Eskimo understanding of the cycles of life, of the Eskimos' relationship to all the animals, and the ecological function of the wolves in nature. Ellen maintains her adherence to the need for the "Minnesota law." Finally, when Julie sees that this approach is not working, she says, "I will stop lecturing and tell you a story" (p. 215). She tells her the story of her experience with the wolves and how the wolves had saved her life. When Julie finishes, Ellen says, "I understand. I was wrong. Please go tell Kapugen I am wrong: The Minnesota law does not work here" (p. 218). But Kapugen has already set the oxen free to live as their ancestors had lived, in natural relationship with the wolves and other animals of the tundra. As the novel ends, a rather tenuous balance between Western and Eskimo ways have been reached.

George makes a subtle but significant point in Julie and Ellen's conversation: all the lecturing Julie could do could not change Ellen's mind; it took a story to do that, to break through the layers of "education" and conditioning that Western European civilization had created. Stories have a capacity to reach children—and adults—on imaginative and affective levels that other kinds of discourse may not.

M. M. Bakhtin (1981) would call the kind of "lecturing" Julie was doing "authoritative" discourse. According to Bakhtin's definition, authoritative discourse is a type of discourse that strives to determine behavior or "ideological interrelations with the world" (p. 342). Authoritative discourse is characterized by distance from oneself, a lack of dialogic possibilities, a lack of play, of "spontaneously creative stylizing variants"; discourse that is static with its own single calcified meaning (pp. 342–343). A second type of discourse is one which Bakhtin describes as having interior persuasiveness. This type of discourse does not necessarily appeal to any external authority but is flexible, with malleable borders. It is contextualized and can be related to one's own life. This type of discourse offers further creative interaction; it is open, unfinished, and capable of further representation. Harold Rosen (1986) describes narrative discourse as having this interior persuasiveness. Julie's narrative discourse has carried an inner persuasiveness that has transformed Ellen's understanding.

A Relationship of Care

The objectification of the natural world has been attributed to many cultural factors: capitalism (Tambiah, 1990); modern science and its resultant mechanistic worldview Toolan, 2001); dualism (Sterling, 2001); industrialism (Worster, 1993); a patriarchal worldview (Diamond & Orenstein, 1990); anthropomorphism (Bowers, 1993). However manifold its causes, a distancing from the natural world and a disruption of a sense of oneness and interdependence with nature not only militate against an important aspect of children's spiritual nature, they lie at the heart of the present ecological crisis (DeMoor, 2004). A capacity for oneness with the universe and a sensitivity to the reciprocity inherent in such a relationship, on the other hand, are foundations for care for the environment and concern for the exploitation of the natural world. Several children's books address such ecological concerns, expressing what might be otherwise framed as authoritative discourse (having a rather clear underlying ideological agenda) but here cast in a narrative frame.

Lynne Cherry sets *The great Kapok tree* (1990) in the Amazon rain forest. In this picture book for young children a man comes into the forest with another man, who directs him to cut down a large Kapok tree and leaves. After a few blows with his ax, the man grows tired, sits down, and falls asleep. The animals who live in the Kapok tree approach him and begin to speak to him not just about the tree as their home but of the interdependence of all of nature. As the bee says, "Senhor, my hive is in this Kapok tree, and I fly from tree to tree and flower to flower collecting pollen. In this way I pollinate the tree and flowers throughout the rain forest. You see, all living things depend on one another" (pages not numbered). The monkeys speak next. They tell the man, "Senhor, we have seen the ways of man. You chop down one tree, then come back for another and another. The roots of these great trees will wither and die, and there will be nothing left to hold the earth in place. When the heavy rains come, the soil will be washed away and the forest will become

a desert." In like manner other creatures who live in the tree or depend upon it speak to the man: a boa constrictor, a tree frog, a jaguar, tree porcupines, anteaters, and a three-toed sloth.

Finally a native child murmurs in his ear, "Senhor, when you awake, please look upon us with new eyes." The man awakens. His peak experience, which comes as something of an epiphany, lies in his seeing the world around him anew. He picks up his ax, drops it, and walks out of the forest.

The great Kapok tree illustrates for the young child the interdependence of all living things. A sense of reciprocity between humans and the natural world is subtly enhanced by the fact that in this book nature becomes the teacher of the human being. Cherry's approach is to arouse empathy in the young reader for the endangered animals who depend on the Kapok tree and a balanced ecology for their lives. However, the economic interests that promote the destruction of the rain forest are not directly addressed or critiqued.

In contrast, Dr. Seuss is unsparing in his depiction of the unrestrained greed that drives such exploitation in *The Lorax* (1971). Here children see an idyllic, peaceful, ecologically balanced world turned into a barren, toxic wasteland when the Once-ler arrives and proceeds to cut down the Truffula trees and destroy their entire habitat in order to make a fortune manufacturing Thneeds, objects no one really wants or needs. Throughout the story the Lorax pleads with the Once-ler on behalf of the trees and the animals who depend on the environment to live. The Once-ler is immutable—and self-justifying:

I meant no harm. I most truly did not.
But I had to grow bigger. So bigger I got.
I biggered my factory. I biggered my roads.
I biggered my wagons. I biggered the loads
of the Thneeds I shipped out. I was shipping them forth
to the South! To the East! To the West! To the North!
I went right on biggering. . .selling more Thneeds.
And I biggered my money, which everyone needs.

Finally, when the land is uninhabitable and the factories and workers leave, the Lorax himself departs, uttering one word, "Unless." The Once-ler remains, living alone, finally worrying over what he has done. At last a child appears. The Once-ler remembers the Lorax's last word, "Unless." Finally he understands. He says to the child,

UNLESS someone like you
cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better.
It's not.

He has one last Truffula seed left and he throws it to the child, calling out.

It's a Truffula Seed.
It's the last one of all!

You're in charge of the last of the Truffula Seeds.
And Truffula Trees are what everyone needs.
Plant a new Truffula. Treat it with care.
Give it clean water. And feed it fresh air.
Grow a forest. Protect it from axes that hack.
Then the Lorax
and all of his friends
may come back. (pages not numbered)

Will the child decide to take the seed, take care of the earth, restore balance, harmony—and life itself? The story closes without such an ending; Dr. Seuss leaves it up to the child reader to have the epiphany or not.

Concluding Thoughts

The books included in this sample feature people of different times, different cultures, and different social situations finding awe, wonder, comfort, peace, healing, challenge, wisdom, restoration, unity, and transcendence through communion with the natural world. They portray this aspect of children's relational consciousness not in terms of authoritative discourse but through narrative discourse, discourse with an interior persuasiveness. The beckoning to cultivate and value relationship with the natural world comes through invitation to the child's imagination, the child's compassion, and the child's instinct toward adventure. In many of these stories, relationship with the natural world leads to deeper and more satisfying relationship with other people, with oneself, and with the divine, supporting the whole of the child's spiritual life.

As cultural historian and theologian Thomas Berry (1997) has written,

The child awakens to a universe,
the mind of the child to a world of wonder,
imagination to the world of beauty,
emotions to a world of intimacy.
It takes a universe to make a child
both in outer form and inner spirit.
It takes a universe to educate a child,
a universe to fulfill a child.[1]

Note

1. I am grateful to Emily A. DeMoor for sharing this poem.

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Chapter 27
Developing Spiritual Identity: Retrospective Accounts From Muslim, Jewish, and Christian Exemplars

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Abstract This chapter considers developing spiritual identity in a sample of 45 Muslim, Jewish, and Christian individuals nominated by religious tradition for outstanding maturity. We suggest that developing spiritual identity is amenable to naturalistic study through a heuristic known as psychological realism. Study findings are presented from qualitative coding of retrospective exemplar interviews on identity precepts of *redemption*, *agency*, and *communion*. These findings are supplemented with grounded theory analysis to specify themes related to developmental process in spiritual identity. From this work, we propose that spiritual identity is developmentally understood as commitment consistent with a sense of self to interpersonal behaviors of transcendent, goal-corrected character emphasizing purpose, generativity, and social responsibility.

Introduction

Sayid (pseudonym) is a 32-year-old Sunni Muslim from the San Fernando Valley region of Los Angeles, a neighborhood rich with ethnic and socioeconomic diversity. Sayid came to the United States about 10 years ago to pursue graduate studies in his field of civil engineering. A native of south-central Turkey, Sayid is single and deeply committed to local humanitarian concerns. He became involved in the research project as a nominated exemplar—identified by area Muslims on their own criteria for persons demonstrating exceptional spiritual maturity. The weight of spiritual experience in Sayid's narrative is unmistakable:

> The most important thing is that I'm not alone. I don't feel alone. I know Allah and I know that the world and universe were not created by themselves—there is someone else. Allah is great in the universe. Allah created me and all human beings—people who can do things

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and learn. This vision is the most important thing to me, realizing that I am not alone in the world and I have been given meaning in this life. There is a reason that I am in this world. There is a reason that I am living this life. The reason is that I can learn from Allah to be a respectful human being, trying to follow him and become better educated in Islam. Islam is my preparation for the next life. The next life will not have any end, so this is very important to me.

Sayid's reflection presents a challenge for researchers interested to explore developmental processes associated with spirituality in general, and spiritual identity in particular. The recent bifurcation of religion and spirituality in social science reflects earnest effort to clarify potentially blurred elements of human experience (MacDonald, 2000; Roehlkepartain, Benson, King, & Wagener, 2005; Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999). Wishing to move beyond the scientific study of religion as a structured and institutionalized entity, spirituality offers an individual account of transcendent experience reflecting traits of awe and gratitude. In this sense, spirituality might be understood as "a search for the sacred, a process through which people seek to discourse, to hold on to and, when necessary, transform whatever they hold sacred in their lives" (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Sayid's narrative embraces sacred elements, expounding on spiritual experience through divine presence that offers security and hope. The depth of his reflection suggests that these ideas are firmly embedded in developmental process rather than the result of recent awakening. Yet Sayid seamlessly weaves spirituality into the regimented discipline of his religious practice as a Muslim. Full appreciation of Sayid's spiritual experience requires, at the very least, a basic role for religion as contextual influence. His example would seem to support criticism that attempts to separate religion from spirituality reflect the convenience of Western (particularly North American) interests to the exclusion of non-Western experience (Stifoss-Hanssen, 1999).

Keeping definitional concerns of spirituality squarely in view, this chapter outlines findings from a recent project to understand spiritual identity and its development. Psychological research on spiritual identity is sparse and skewed toward Christian perspectives (Kiesling, Sorell, Montgomery, & Colwell, 2006; Templeton & Eccles, 2005). Specifying the relationship between spirituality and religious practice will require study considering the experiences of non-Western individuals. Accordingly, this study took a naturalistic approach to spiritual identity through comparative study of nominated exemplars from Muslim, Jewish, and Christian contexts. The main goal was to construct a broad understanding of spiritual identity based on the experiences of individuals nominated for outstanding spiritual maturity on criteria established by these same religions. This objective reflected an interest to constrain normative theorizing about the nature of spiritual identity with the actual experiences of people widely recognized as spiritually exceptional, a principle known as *psychological realism* (Flanagan, 1991; Walker & Frimer, 2007; Walker & Pitts, 1998).

The chapter is organized into three sections serving the central study aim. The first section presents a rationale for naturalistic study of spiritual identity in exemplars along with a conceptual overview of identity in the developmental work

of McAdams (Erikson, 1968; McAdams, 1997, 2006). The second section offers findings from qualitative coding of exemplar spiritual experience on McAdams' identity precepts of *redemption*, *agency*, and *communion*. The third section presents a grounded theory strategy designed to unearth themes related to the development of spiritual identity. Outcomes from two methodological moves are integrated toward a core definition of spiritual identity balancing theoretical assumptions with naturalistic observation.

Naturalistic Study of Spiritual Identity

How might we approach the psychological study of developing spiritual identity? The notion of spiritual identity moves the self to center stage. Self psychology is endowed with an illustrious legacy evoking the influential writings of Sigmund Freud. More recent theory maintains that the self is formed on the basis of social reciprocity across a range of developmental variations in time, place, and role (Balswick, King, & Reimer, 2005; Damon & Hart, 1988; Harter, 1999). Core self-understanding or *identity* is constructed through cumulative experiences in relationships. Through childhood this knowledge remains concrete and relatively unsophisticated. Grade school children make straightforward assessments based on immediate, real-world contingencies such as "I am a fast runner" or "I am friendly to new kids in class." Concrete self-understanding becomes conceptually richer through adolescence with the onset of abstract thinking. Assessments might grow to include reflections such as "I am a generous person" or "I am able to help others see the glass half full." The developmental challenge for adolescent identity is for youth to maintain a stable sense of self through a variety of social contexts and requirements (Arnett, 2006; Balswick et al., 2005; Damon & Hart, 1988; Erikson, 1968). Parents of adolescents commonly recognize the challenge through rapid shifts in youth attitudes, affect, and language across contexts such as athletic teams, peers, religious groups, or classroom environment.

Consolidation of identity in adolescence and early adulthood is marked by the capacity for individuals to maintain a core self in spite of situational pressures. Young adults eventually construct an episodic understanding of the self-in-relationships that may include authority figures, romantic attachments, peers, and the divine. Identity reflects a variety of trait and goal-oriented features of self which are experienced between different social contexts and woven into a coherent account. Traits and goals become familiar to an extent that the individual is afforded a framework for constructing an identity narrative; stories which document abstract and concrete aspects of self-understanding (McAdams, 2006; McAdams & Pals, 2006). Identity may be conceptualized as a general developmental achievement, or related to particular aspects of behavior which necessarily reference the self. By way of example, *moral identity* emphasizes a suite of ethical and caring behavior associated with the developing self-in-relationship (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Balswick et al., 2005; Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Reimer & Wade-Stein, 2004; Walker & Frimer,

2007). *Spiritual identity* is a newcomer to research in developmental psychology, with contemporary studies limited to predominantly Protestant Christian samples (Kiesling et al., 2006; Templeton & Eccles, 2005).

Current efforts to pin down a definition of spiritual identity reflect difficulties with parsing individual aspects of identity from social contexts fundamental to the development of self-understanding. Templeton and Eccles (2005) argue that religious identity reflects a *collective* dimension of accepted beliefs shared with others through a particular community. Spiritual identity is defined in terms of *personal* experiences noted in beliefs, values, and behaviors related to the divine. This is similar to a proposal from Kiesling et al. (2006), who conceptualize spiritual identity as "a persistent sense of self that addresses ultimate questions about the nature, purpose, and meaning of life, resulting in behaviors that are consonant with the individual's core values." Both definitions place a premium on individual values in the construction of a spiritual self. Assuming these values to have transcendent qualities (in the sense of being related to ultimate concerns), the developmental character of a highly individualized spiritual identity becomes a tougher sell. Over time, spiritual experience is likely to incorporate categories of transcendent value reflecting a spectrum of relational influences. Parent, peer, and romantic relationships are laden with the freight of values and expectations for conduct which end up in the episodic register of narrative identity. Religious influence may implicitly permeate these relationships, even if removed by degree or generation from formal practice. The identification of spiritual identity with personal values cleanly separable from collective influences may prove difficult in real-world experience.

Challenges with the definitional issue reflect the highly diffuse and abstract nature of spiritual experience. Rather than expend further effort toward a definitive theoretical understanding of spiritual identity, an alternative strategy might utilize a "bottom-up" approach found in parallel research involving behavioral abstractions such as morality (Flanagan, 1991). Because researcher notions of self-referencing spirituality may differ markedly from the experiences of real people, it may be appropriate to begin with everyday conceptions in the interest of definitions that are *psychologically realistic*. Flanagan's proposal is increasingly common in the literature on moral identity development, with study focused on everyday conceptions of ethical maturity in prototype theory and descriptive research on exemplars recognized for exceptional acts of justice, bravery, and caring (Colby & Damon, 1992; Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Hart & Fegley, 1995; Matsuba & Walker, 2004; Narvaez, Lapsley, Hagele, & Lasky, 2007; Reimer & Wade-Stein, 2004; Walker & Frimer, 2007; Walker & Reimer, 2005). In step with this trend, this study adopted the principle of psychological realism into research design with emphasis upon retrospective accounts of spiritual maturity in the experiences of exemplary individuals nominated from Muslim, Jewish, and Christian backgrounds. The project was premised on the identity theory of McAdams with the anticipation that ultimate definitions of spiritual identity would be shaped by real-world experiences of exemplars from different contexts of influence.

What features of identity theory are relevant to comparative religious study of spiritual maturity in nominated exemplars? The work of Dan McAdams at

Northwestern University offers a contemporary account of identity development in social context (McAdams, 1997, 2006; McAdams, Anyidoho, Brown, Huang, Kaplan, & Machado, 2004; McAdams, Diamond, de St. Aubin, & Mansfield, 1997; McAdams & Pals, 2006; McAdams, Reynolds, Lewis, Patten, & Bowman, 2001). McAdams argues that a developmental objective of identity is the establishment of personal legacy framed through contributions to others. This notion of *generativity* might be practically understood through childbirth; a situation where suffering yields a positive outcome in a newborn child along with deepened purpose in the parental vocation. People with generative identities might mentor youth, publish a book, or volunteer with the homeless. Identity maturity is characterized by an episodic understanding of self as an agent of change and goodness across varied social contexts. In the interest of outlining a framework capable of describing generative identity through assessment, McAdams designed the *life narrative interview*, a set of semi-structured questions dealing with developmental history, critical events, life challenges, significant people, potential future, moral conflict, personal ideology, and overall life theme (McAdams, 1997, 2006; Walker & Frimer, 2007).

Life narrative interviews conducted with hundreds of individuals yielded three precepts of mature identity (McAdams, 1997, 2006). The first precept, *redemption*, characterizes life narratives where participants recount the transformation of negative circumstances into something positive. The individual is directly involved in the transformative process, particularly through personal risk in the interest of making the most from situational difficulties. The second precept, *agency*, reflects aspects of power, autonomy, mastery, and achievement. Agency might reflect underlying traits and goals related to accomplishment. This could be aimed at vocation but also include relational and principled actions given to the promotion of human flourishing. The third precept, *communion*, describes identity process given to the formation of community and other relational networks. Communion is most clearly evident through narrative affirming warmth, compassion, and intimacy. Together, these precepts anticipate an understanding of spiritual identity as a personally significant cache of experiences in memory, framed within relational and social contexts that make those experiences meaningful.

This study explored retrospective accounts of narrative spiritual identity in exemplars nominated for exceptional maturity from Muslim, Jewish, and Christian contexts. The main assessment instrument was a version of the life narrative interview. Responses to the interview were content analyzed at two levels. First, McAdams' (1997. 1998) life narrative interview coding scheme was applied to narrative content on precepts of *redemption*, *agency*, and *communion*. The first level of analysis was designed to consider comparative elements of narrative identity in spiritual experience between religious contexts. Second, the same interview responses were independently coded using the grounded theory approach to qualitative study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This analysis offered an opportunity to discern developmental features of spiritual identity and experience that might not be immediately visible through the three precepts of identity outlined in McAdams (1997, 1998). Findings from both analyses were then used to offer definitional insights for spiritual identity in developmental context.

To construct an account of spiritual identity consistent with a principle of psychological realism, three focus groups were convened from Muslim, Jewish, and Christian religions, respectively. Focus groups were comprised of 6–12 leaders and clergy from each religion in the greater Los Angeles area. Leaders were invited from religious groups that were numerically well represented in the region, including Sunni Muslim, Reform Jewish, and Presbyterian Christian religions. Focus groups were conducted in English, asking individuals to identify nomination criteria that reflected spiritual maturity. Focus groups subsequently prioritized criteria, with similar descriptors collapsed into general statements. The resulting list of spiritual nomination criteria included (a) learning and being in continual process, (b) sense of (and acting on) responsibility for one's fellows, (c) sense of one's own faith that informs daily life, (d) God-consciousness, (e) believes in Qur'an/Torah/Bible as word of God and follows it in daily life, (f) lives life intentionally, (g) practices faith (e.g., prayer, fasting, observances, charity, declaration of faith, pilgrimage), (h) promotes peace among all peoples, (i) is actively engaged with God and others, (j) lives a joyful, balanced, and humble life, and (k) is interested in helping others grow spiritually in a quietly contagious manner.

Nomination criteria were provided to Muslim, Jewish, and Christian leaders that participated in the focus groups. Leaders were asked to nominate individuals from within their respective religion that demonstrated strong evidence of nomination criteria for spiritual maturity. Nominated exemplars included several religious leaders but mainly consisted of everyday individuals from area mosques, synagogues, and parishes. Nominated exemplars were contacted and invited to participate in the study. Interested exemplars were mailed consent forms and scheduled for a face-to-face interview. Participants were provided with a $50 honorarium as a token of appreciation for study involvement.

Of 36 exemplars nominated from Reform Jewish leaders and clergy, 15 participated. This sample group averaged 45.0 years of age (SD = 11.2, range = 25–66). The sample self-identified as ethnically Jewish (82.4%), European (11.8%), or Latino/a (5.9%). Level of education included high school completion (5.0%), bachelor's degree (30.0%), master's degree (55.0%), and doctoral degree (10.0%). Out of 27 nominations from Sunni Muslim leaders and clergy, 15 participated. The Muslim sample averaged 34.5 years of age (SD = 11.4, range = 23–79). This sample self-identified as ethnically European (70.6%) or Turkish (29.4%). Level of education included high school completion (5.0%), bachelor's degree (35.0%), master's degree (35.0%), and doctoral degree (25.0%). Of 32 nominations from Presbyterian Christian leaders and clergy, 15 participated. The Christian sample averaged 56.9 years of age (SD = 11.3, range = 33–72). This sample self-identified as ethnically European (80.0%), Latino/a (15.0%), or American Indian (5.0%). Level of education included high school completion (15.0%), trade school or associate's degree (5.0%), bachelor's degree (10.0%), master's degree (50.0%), and doctoral degree (20.0%). Overall, nominated exemplars were well-educated individuals engaged in professional vocations. All exemplars were fluent in the English language.

Life Narrative Coding

The first qualitative review of narrative identity data made use of McAdams' (1997, 1998) coding scheme focused on redemption, agency, and communion. Understood in terms of participant self-understanding through the redirection of difficult situations toward positive outcomes, *redemption* is thematically decomposed into five elements including (a) sacrifice, (b) recovery, (c) growth, (d) learning, and (e) improvement. For this study, a team of three qualitative raters were trained to evaluate exemplar responses using the McAdams (1997, 1998) coding scheme. The McAdams coding manual emphasizes conservative identification of elements on the basis of presence "1" or absence "0." The first three elements of redemption (e.g., sacrifice, recovery, and growth) were not substantively present in exemplar narratives across all three religious contexts. However, the last two redemption elements (e.g., learning and improvement) were substantially represented in participant narrative. *Learning*, or the notion that participants gain wisdom from a negative event, is concerned with instrumental rather than psychological benefit. As an example, "father is dying" might be associated with a redemptive learning outcome in "father gives sage words of advice." Interrater agreement for this element was 93%. *Improvement* relates to the transformation of a bad situation associated with negative emotions to one that is positive in outcome and affective quality. As an example, "terrified of public speaking" might change into an outcome where the participant "improves and becomes an effective speaker." Interrater agreement for this element was 82%.

The redemption/learning element was most strongly affiliated with Christian exemplars (5) with somewhat fewer codes noted for Muslim exemplars (3) and Jewish exemplars (2). This pattern was exactly replicated for the redemption/improvement element, with 5 coded occurrences for Christians as opposed to 3 for Muslims and 2 for Jews. The McAdams coding regimen calls for restraint in making positive code identifications. As a result, these scores suggest that redemptive narrative is well represented in the Christian exemplar group. Within the confines of the coding scheme, notation of a category across one-third of a study sample is considered robust (McAdams, 1998). The prominence of redemption/learning and redemption/improvement in the Christian exemplar sample may reflect developmental and situational processes associated with spiritual identity. Relative to Muslim and Jewish exemplars, Christians report more stories of redemptive significance which reference the self. Redemption is deeply embedded in participant developmental histories, with accounts commonly focused on adolescence and early adulthood. McAdams (2006) suggests that redemption is a prominent feature of identity in the American cultural context, reflecting Judeo-Christian belief systems. This interpretation may require qualification given study findings that, as with Christian exemplars, Jewish exemplars were typically born and raised in the United States. Yet this group did not evince nearly as many redemption codes in identity narratives.

The difference on redemption observed between Christian exemplars with Muslim and Jewish exemplars may reflect particular influences related to religious

context. It is possible that Christian exemplars construct spiritual identity from a vantage analogous to a religious vision of redemption through belief in a messianic divinity (e.g., Jesus Christ). The Christian commitment to redemption through motifs of death and resurrection may provide a frame for identity process which prioritizes personal growth resulting from negative events (learning) with sometimes triumphal accounts of how these events form the basis for positive outcomes (improvement). Yet this basis for spiritual identity process could be overstated given that redemption/learning and redemption/improvement elements are moderately present in Muslim and Jewish exemplar narratives. A measured interpretation concludes that redemption is a noteworthy feature of exemplar spiritual identity, with potentially interesting valuations related to the priorities of particular religious contexts.

As with redemption, the *agency* aspect of power and achievement in narrative identity is supported by smaller elements of focused attention (McAdams, 1997). *Self-mastery* pertains to individual efforts to achieve physical, mental, emotional, or moral strength toward a measurable impact on other people. An example might include the recovering alcoholic's concerted effort to stay sober as a positive influence on his growing children. Interrater agreement for this element was 82%. *Status/victory* invokes work to achieve high status or position resulting in prestige. An example of this element might be a businesswoman's 15-year journey to rise through the ranks of her company to achieve a top management position. Interrater agreement for *status/victory* was 98%. *Achievement/responsibility* suggests self-sufficiency, freedom, and self-control. An example might consist of a college undergraduate's growing efficacy through successful management of a personal budget. Interrater agreement for *achievement/responsibility* was 87%. Finally, *empowerment* captured the notion of accomplishing goals affiliated with standards of excellence in efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness. An example might include the success of a middle-school math teacher through improved student achievement on standardized tests. Interrater agreement for *empowerment* was 89%.

The *self-mastery* element of agency was evenly distributed between spiritual exemplars from different religious contexts. Muslim exemplars were coded for 3 instances of this element, with 2 noted for Jewish exemplars and 3 for Christian exemplars. The *empowerment* element was similarly spread across groups, with 3 coded instances in Muslim exemplar narratives, 1 for Jewish exemplars, and 3 for Christian exemplars. Distribution of these elements in narrative suggests a moderately important place for self-mastery and empowerment in spiritual identity. To an extent, this finding may be an artifact of the nomination criteria for spiritual maturity derived from Muslim, Jewish, and Christian focus groups. Based on the criteria, spiritual exemplars are expected to demonstrate other-oriented maturity which includes personal discipline upholding excellence in attitude and behavior. Nomination criteria loosely reflect an aspect of spiritual leadership in exemplarity which seems well-served by the self-mastery and empowerment elements.

Some disparities were observed in coded outcomes on *status/victory* by religious context. Muslim exemplars scored highest on this agentic element (4), followed by Christian exemplars (2), and Jewish exemplars (0). This came as a surprise given

that educational and vocational achievement between exemplar groups was roughly equivalent. While the element of status/victory is presumably available to all study participants by way of personal achievement, Muslim spiritual exemplars made more powerfully self-referential claims on this dimension than Christian and Jewish exemplars. The disparity became wider for the *achievement/responsibility* element, with coded notation for half the Muslim sample (8) as opposed to Jewish (2) and Christian (2) samples. It could be argued that highly agentic identity is reflected in the spiritual experience of Muslims who recently emigrated and quickly mastered vocational challenges in a foreign setting. But it seems equally plausible that these findings are attributed to the religious context of the Muslim sample. Spiritual identity for this group is potentially associated with values enjoining hard work with personal responsibility. *Status/victory* and *achievement/responsibility* elements were reflected in the developmental histories of Muslim exemplars, implying deep roots for identity processes that long preceded relocation to North America.

The final evaluated identity precept was *communion*. Four elements of communion were considered for exemplar participants. *Love/friendship* pertains to positive emotions experienced in the context of close, interpersonal relationship. An example of this element might be recounted through a mail carrier's friendship with an elderly resident known over years of brief, daily encounter. Interrater agreement for this element was 89%. *Dialogue/sharing* references intimacy through good conversation and mutuality including non-verbal cues. An example of this element might be a "breakthrough" conversation between a mother and her mildly estranged 15-year-old daughter. Interrater agreement for this element was 91%. *Care/support* describes how an individual cares for another or is cared for by another. An example might include a middle-aged woman's commitment to care for her Alzheimer's ravaged father. Interrater agreement for this element was 89%. *Unity/togetherness* is affiliated with a personal sense of harmony or synchronicity with other individuals, groups, or even the world at large. An example of this element might be captured by a former executive's move to non-profit work with the urban poor. Interrater agreement for this element was 91%.

Trends for the communion aspect in exemplar narrative identity were readily noted by religious context. The most pervasive incorporation of communion elements was observed in the narrative identities of Jewish exemplars. Overall, these exemplars evinced moderate to strong references to communal elements in spiritual identity. Jewish exemplars were coded for *love/friendship* (3), *dialogue/sharing* (2), *care/support* (3), and *unity/togetherness* (5). These findings were aligned with qualitative notation that Jewish exemplars identified strongly with family and community. Exemplar spiritual identity routinely referenced ethnic and cultural aspects of Jewishness. Experiences of the divine were framed on relational understanding, reflecting spiritual encounter that was collectively shared. This should not diminish the importance of individual spiritual experience for Jewish exemplars. Nevertheless, these exemplars seem to construct spiritual self-understanding in a way that prioritizes collective values and relational commitments.

Reviewing findings from other religious groups, Muslim exemplars scored high on two of the four elements from the communion motif. Muslim exemplars coded

on *caring/help* (6) and *unity/togetherness* (4). Christian exemplars did not code strongly on communion, with the exception of *love/friendship* (4). Findings from the communion aspect raise noteworthy implications regarding summary understanding of spiritual identity. Of the three religious contexts considered through the study, Christian exemplars were least oriented toward the communion aspect in McAdams' (1997, 1998) scheme. This aligned Christian exemplar self-understanding with spiritual identity definitions emphasizing personal or individual values—an unsurprising outcome given that these definitions were premised upon studies of mostly Christian individuals (Kiesling et al., 2006; Templeton & Eccles, 2005). The prominence of communion in Jewish and Muslim exemplar self-understanding, however, underlines a broader notion of values orientation in spiritual identity. For these exemplars, spiritual experience is interpersonally situated. The divine is known in part on the basis of shared experiences with other Jews and Muslims. In addition, personally significant spiritual experiences precipitate other-oriented behaviors in caring and/or intimacy. The inclusion of non-Western exemplar perspectives in this study suggests that spiritual identity is "collective" as much as "personal," directly reflecting values originating in social and religious contexts.

Grounded Theory Coding

As a complement to the McAdams (1997, 1998) scheme, exemplar response data were analyzed in a second methodological move using grounded theory. Grounded theory is a systematic approach to qualitative data reliant upon first-level coding of *conditions*, *interactions*, *strategies*, and *consequences* (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). First-level codes are applied to identity narrative through a process known as *constant comparison* whereby each code is referenced against all other codes by transcript. This process is continued until reaching a point of *theoretical saturation* or the cessation of new first-level code categories. The resulting list of first-level codes is subsequently applied to remaining interview transcripts. First-level codes are conceptually assessed for overlap and subsequently collapsed into higher-order categories known as *axial codes*. Axial codes are subjected to a similar process of recombination, resulting in themes. For this study, interview data were subjected to grounded theory coding by a single rater to evaluate aspects of spiritual identity potentially residing outside redemption, agency, and communion from the first methodological move.

Grounded theory analysis yielded five themes covering developmental aspects of spiritual identity across Muslim, Jewish, and Christian exemplar data. In order of prominence across the entire data set, themes included (a) *relational consciousness*, (b) *vocational identity*, (c) *stewardship*, (d) *tradition*, and (e) *divine as omnipotent*. We have outlined each theme in detail, offering a definition and brief comment on origins through the coding process. Exemplar quotations provide theme illustration, with summary comment on religious differences and developmental implications toward an improved understanding of spiritual identity. For reasons of space, we are unable to include quotations from all three religious contexts on a given theme.

Theme 1: Relational Consciousness

Spiritual identity narratives revealed a core developmental theme familiar to researchers involved with children's spirituality (Hay & Nye, 1998; Nye & Hay, 1996; Reimer & Furrow, 2001). *Relational consciousness* was defined in this setting as an interrelation of individual, interpersonal, community, and divine relationship that constitute a harmonious whole; particularly through devotion to the divine. The relational consciousness theme was constructed from lower-level codes emphasizing community, relationship, family, group membership, connection, and spiritual communication. In the reflection of a 42-year-old Jewish exemplar:

> It means that I have community. It means that I'm never alone in the world—that not only do I have a system of beliefs; I have a group of people who are committed to me and responsible to me as I am to them. It means I have an obligation to change the world for the better. It also means that I have a relationship with God that is unique. Family! I think for me the focus includes the family unit; the family within the community. For me, I have a looser definition of family . . . for those who are not just my immediate family but those people I'm connected to not only as friends but through the synagogue. You know, this is my extended family. The development of that unit through religious life is something that I think is above and beyond any other part of my spiritual connection.

A 56-year-old Christian exemplar kept her account of relational consciousness succinct:

> I think probably establishing a relationship with God comes first. Everything else flows from that. It's all about establishing and maintaining a relationship with God in daily life.

In the former instance, the relational consciousness theme captured broadly communitarian experiences of spiritual identity reminiscent of communion aspect coding on Jewish exemplars (McAdams, 1997). The relational consciousness theme was also present through Muslim exemplar narratives, although it may be slightly less central to Muslim experience. Consistent with other developmental research, relational consciousness was recounted by exemplars as a significant aspect of spiritual awakening in childhood. These early accounts tended to be somewhat self-centered, characterized by experiences of awe or gratitude that were personalized or involved a few close confidants. With time and development relational consciousness grew to emphasize unity and oneness with the divine, often referencing group membership and solidarity. For those who did not have a strongly religious upbringing, relational consciousness seemed to debut shortly after resolution of core belief systems in early adolescence.

Theme 2: Vocational Identity

Exemplars take their vocations seriously, closely integrating their work with spiritual experience and understanding. We attempted to capture the issue as a function of *vocational identity* or a spiritual calling to divine service that consolidates personal efficacy, purpose, and generativity. Underlying code categories for this theme

included obligation, acceptance of life circumstances, sense of being chosen, guidance, responsibility, and calling. Vocational identity was a touchstone for deeper existential reflection in the narrative of a 35-year-old Muslim woman:

> Why are we here? Why am I the person I am right now? Why am I not somebody different? What is my purpose? Where is the purpose of all things that are created? I find prospective answers to those questions in my spirituality. I think that is the most important part; it really explains why you are created, what your life should be like. What kind of life you should live—what you are supposed to do.

For a 40-year-old Christian exemplar involved in community service, the issues are similar even if the language is different:

> For me, service is a fulfillment of a calling. I can expand on that, but it's like breathing for me because I grew up in the church and that was an expectation for me as a child. I became a Christian at ten and the calling grew from my personal faith journey. It was there in college and still later again—a response to God's grace. Will I accept the calling? To be a Christian means to surrender to God's call in your life, to be God's child and to serve God, however that works out in your life.

Most exemplars reported a deep sense of fulfillment in their present vocations, resolution we would attribute to the consolidation of vocational identity. Vocation became a tangible, visible extension of spiritual commitment and experience. The vocational identity theme was evenly distributed throughout narrative responses from all three religious contexts. Interestingly, the theme did not show up in developmental accounts of early childhood. Vocational identity seems relegated to processes associated with late adolescence and early adulthood. This makes good psychological sense in that vocational concerns tend to be abstract and require sophisticated reflection prior to enaction through behavior. We note that exemplars as a group are unusually invested in vocational projects designed to "make a difference" or otherwise help others flourish.

Theme 3: Stewardship

The remarkable maturity of exemplars interviewed for the study was evident in a deep sense of spiritual responsibility and obligation. We labeled this intuition as *stewardship*—not just in a financial understanding, but where the individual realizes that he/she must consistently live in a manner that attends to the concerns of the divine, the community, other individuals, and the environment. Stewardship was derived from core notions of submission, respect, discipline, love, compassion, grace, honesty, and peacefulness. In the reflection of a 30-year-old Muslim exemplar:

> Well, the words "Islam" and "Muslim" come from the same root. The root of the word means *submission*. You submit to God without questioning what he is asking from you. You just do it, whether it's the daily prayers or wearing the scarf or fasting or giving to charities or visiting Mecca. I am doing it because God wants me to do it. The other meaning of "Muslim" is peace. Peace between people and in the universe; not cutting the tree or destroying the little animal because we believe that every created being has a way of saying

Allah's name. The cat is saying "meow," but actually is saying one of the names of Allah the most compassionate. You try to understand the relationship between the creatures and see the value of each thing in the universe.

Stewardship took a different turn in the account of a 41-year-old Jewish exemplar:

I think there is a saying which Rabbi Hillel made. "If I am for myself only, then what am I? If I'm not for myself, who will be?" Take care of yourself so that you can treat others with honesty, kindness, and compassion.

The stewardship theme was present for exemplars from all three religious contexts, although it was particularly pronounced in Muslim experience. As with the vocational identity theme, stewardship was not developmentally evident until late adolescence when exemplars began to fully differentiate themselves at a spiritual level from parents. Many exemplars made comments to the effect that, when acting responsibly on behalf of others, they were serving as stewards for the divine and the creation. Stewardship grew to become a lifetime mission for exemplars, defining their ongoing behavior and self-understanding on the basis of keeping in step with the divine.

Theme 4: Tradition

The spiritual identity of nominated exemplars was characterized by commitment to religious tradition. The *tradition* theme was variously understood as *hadith* (Muslim), *Torah* (Jewish), or *scripture* (Christian); knowledge handed down through oral or written sources that helped to maintain culture, promote religious practice, and build community. Underlying code categories for this theme included study, worship, ritual, shared language, values, and culture. The tradition theme was present in Christian and Muslim exemplars, with overwhelming prominence in Jewish exemplar narratives. In the reflections of a 36-year-old Jewish exemplar:

The first thing that I think about is my Jewish identity . . . a certain responsibility to history. This is not really a documentary history like the Roman Empire or something, but the idea that I am receiver of ancient tradition passed down from generation to generation. I'm duty bound to honor that tradition and sometimes there are specific ways that I'm duty bound to act and within that way of life comes an opportunity to express my own individuality.

Tradition was similarly evident in the account of a 47-year-old Jewish exemplar involved with the Simon Wiesenthal Center:

It's important for me to be engaged in healing the world and the community—engaged in that tradition, carrying on the tradition, passing on the tradition to my children in a real and meaningful way so that they grasp it.

Tradition was developmentally rich and pervasive. Jewish exemplars recounted moments of instruction from parents on matters of observance, holidays, and kosher laws at very young ages. Interestingly, most of the Jewish exemplars in this study

did not keep kosher at the time of interview. The accoutrements of tradition offered a kind of scaffolding for spiritual identity, with developmental rites of passage that deepen unexpected experiences of the divine. Jewish exemplars related nearly every aspect of personal spiritual experience back to the tradition of their heritage. The tradition theme clearly converged with Jewish prioritization of communion in the McAdams coding section of the study.

Theme 5: Divine as Omnipotent

All exemplar participants noted the power of spiritual experience in general and the divine in particular. The *divine as omnipotent* theme was constituted from belief that the deity possesses ultimate power over the universe and its inhabitants. Far from a cosmic Santa Claus, the divine as omnipotent offers insight on practice of forgiveness, healing, and protection. This theme was often referenced through spiritual understanding of divine presence. Divine as omnipotent was particularly prevalent in Christian exemplar narratives. A 46-year-old Christian exemplar noted:

> I have a better relationship with God now because I feel that God doesn't have to do things the way I want. But I feel that God is at work whether I understand or not what's happening. I don't expect really, I don't expect a lot from God. I think God has given me so much that he doesn't have to do what I think he should.

The divine as omnipotent took a slightly different cast in the account of a 33-year-old Muslim exemplar:

> I think one thing that is most important is that you have to be aware that you are always being watched and kind of behave accordingly. Allah is always watching—if I say something wrong then he knows about it. I think that this forces you to live a more organized life. It's all about the love of God and fear of God. The balance of those two things plus being watched by Allah. You can always maintain that balance. You have to fear God but at the same time you have to know that he loves us and we love him.

The divine as omnipotent theme was found in every section of the interview, often in conjunction with good or bad circumstances. In the main, life's greatest uncertainties seemed associated with a strong spiritual sense of divine omnipotence and agency. Developmentally, this theme was particularly noteworthy in transitional life stages, when exemplars felt they had done something wrong, or while enduring a difficult time. Spiritual identity at this level is reliant upon an ongoing sense of divine foreknowledge and wisdom regarding human affairs. Prayer might be important, not to influence the divine but rather to more fully recognize and affirm divine prerogatives. An outsider might consider this fatalistic, but exemplars routinely reported liberation when basking in the knowledge that the divine was effectively "in charge."

Spiritual Identity Revisited

How might spiritual identity be theoretically constrained given outcomes from naturalistic study of nominated exemplars from Muslim, Jewish, and Christian contexts? Spiritual experience is ubiquitous across cultures and peoples. The propensity for people to use relational language to describe that experience suggests a complex interchange between self and social context in the development of spiritual identity. While exemplars often describe spiritual identity process with language that references the divine as a social "other," we quickly note that their understanding of spirituality also lives beyond what is immediately tangible and visible. Exemplar knowledge of the divine features aspects of self-understanding that incorporate values learned from various social networks along with teachings, holy writings, observances, and pilgrimages. Findings from this study suggest that exemplars incorporate these values into a relational partnership with the divine that powerfully shapes spiritual experiences relevant to self-understanding in identity. The origins of this partnership may be found in earlier (developmental) accounts of human others in social situations, growing to embrace the divine on spiritual terms.

This is reminiscent of a proposal from the great attachment theorist, John Bowlby, who argued that secure children developmentally alter their perceptions of caregivers with a growing appreciation of what things must be like for the parent. On the basis of newly acquired capacity for perspective taking (e.g., theory of mind), children and parents are able to construct shared identities reflecting deeper security in reciprocity and mutual negotiation (Bowlby, 1969). He defined this process in terms of a *goal-corrected partnership*. The prominence of themes like relational consciousness may reflect capacities for perspective taking on the part of exemplars who find security in a spiritual "other" such as the divine. Even if the divine transcends physicality, individuals may through prayer and ritual construct spiritual identity in a goal-corrected sense; a partnership reflecting dynamic give-and-take. Indeed, exemplars from all three religious contexts spoke extensively about their perceptions of the divine's current expectations for behavior, relationships, and vocation. Manifestations of organized religion (e.g., worship, prayer, ritual, observances, and pilgrimage) may further support the development of such a goal-corrected spiritual identity.

In fidelity to the principle of psychological realism central to the study, we offer a definition of spiritual identity on the basis of naturalistic investigation of nominated exemplar experience. Thus, spiritual identity is *commitment consistent with a sense of self to interpersonal behaviors of transcendent, goal-corrected character emphasizing purpose, generativity, and social responsibility*. This definition recognizes the developmental role of human and spiritual "others" in the formation of episodic self-understanding narrative, prioritizing values shared along personal–collective axes of influence. Underlying features of the definition break with the developmental literature to the extent that personal spiritual experience is reframed by contextual influences and shared understanding (Kiesling et al., 2006; Templeton & Eccles, 2005). The definition retains a distinction between religious and spiritual experience—recalling the uniquely sacred dimensions of spirituality which are not

religious, yet reflect religious influences (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Returning to the case study at the beginning of the chapter, Sayid's spiritual identity is richly imbued with the presence of the divine. The depth of this goal-corrected experience is the "glue" which keeps Sayid enjoined with the ritual and practice of Islam.

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Part III
The Spiritual Dimension in Educational Programs and Environments to Promote Holistic Learning and Wellbeing: An Introduction

Marian de Souza

As we have entered a new millennium, there have been several indications of a growing number of children and adolescents that are being afflicted by social and health problems, and mental illness, most commonly depression, is on the rise amongst our young people. For instance, on the Website of *beyondblue*, which is an organization that came into existence in Australia to deal with depression and other related health issues, comes the following statement:

> In Australia, adolescent depression is one of the most frequently reported mental health problems. For many young people, the transition to work, travel, employment or unemployment and, changes in family and school structures and supports can be difficult. *beyondblue*'s youth agenda focuses on preventing depression at different ages in a young person's life, in a range of different environments such as, at school, home or in the community; and is built on strong partnerships, an evidence-based approach and the participation of young people (Retrieved December 21, 2008 from http://www.beyondblue.org.au/index.aspx? link_id=5).

Further evidence is provided by the findings from the annual surveys conducted by Mission Australia[1] into the issues and concerns that affect the wellbeing of young people. In the call for their 2008 survey, there was a recognition that "The range of concerns—from stress and abuse to depression, suicide and body image—also suggest young people are facing increased challenges as they make the transition from adolescence to adulthood" (Retrieved December 21, 2008 from http://www.missionaustralia.com.au/component/search/depression/).

This issue is not restricted to Australia. Many countries around the world have also noted the rising statistics of issues that impact on the wellbeing of their children and young people.[2]

The wellbeing of children and young people, therefore, should be the primary concern of society, and avenues need to be explored where creative strategies can be developed in order to address this issue. One area where significant action may be taken is education. Given that many children spend much of their formative years in formal schooling, learning programs need to be developed that seek to educate the whole child, that is, where the programs and learning environments are designed

to enhance the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of students. Since, I believe, the social and moral aspects of a student's life fall into the realm of one of these four broad areas, it means that the child will be provided with education that nurtures their whole being, thereby allowing each student to develop their individual potential, to become the person they have the capacity to be. This, surely, should be the aim of education in today's world.

However, it has become clear through the writings in this part that many children are not benefiting from the formal educational programs on offer, and school curricula and environments should be examined in order to improve this situation. In particular, recognition needs to be given to spirituality as an innate element of being which, therefore, should have an essential role in the learning process. Spirituality, as it is used here, relates to the relational dimension of being. It is reflected in the connectedness that the individual feels to Self (that is the inner self) and to Other (that is others in their communities, in the world and beyond; ultimately to a Transcendent Other). Spirituality is understood as something much broader than religion. In fact, religion is recognized here as a human construct which provides an avenue to nurture human spirituality, in particular, the relationship of the human person to a Greater Being, often called God. Thus, religiosity refers to the behaviour and practices of an adherent to a particular religion. Therefore, spirituality, in the context it is being used here, allows that a person may be spiritual but not religious. They may be deeply connected to Other in the human world, or to the Earth, but not necessarily to a Transcendent Other or God.

The chapters in this part, then, will explore these concepts further. They will examine the relational nature of spirituality and discuss the implications such an understanding may have for wellbeing. Various theoretical aspects of a holistic approach to teaching and learning will be discussed to investigate how meaning and connectedness may be promoted in classrooms which, in turn, should lead to a development of self-knowledge, resilience, empathy and compassion. As well, attention will be given to the changing consciousness that is emerging at the global level; one which transcends the boundaries of a twentieth-century worldview of education with its emphasis on cognitive learning and compartmentalization. Instead, various contrasting perspectives are investigated in order to offer alternative ways of learning which are grounded in the totality of human experience where the complementarity of the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual dimensions of learning are addressed to nurture the wellbeing of each individual and raise the potential for them to grow into whole persons.

In general, the chapters that follow provide a breadth of ideas. Chapters 28–37 provide a discussion of various perspectives that have implications for pedagogy. These authors have drawn on their own experiences, on Eastern and Western philosophies, on research studies and societal and political influences to inform their writings and to ground their arguments. Chapters 38–41 bring us a perspective from teacher educators. These academics draw on their research and practice to propose ways forward in teacher education that will assist beginning teachers to recognize and address the role of spirituality and wellbeing in education. Chapters 42 and 43 present us with different perspectives on spiritual development as it is represented

in educational documents in Britain, and as it is being applied in practice. We then hear from academics whose work investigates teaching and learning in early childhood and primary education through Chapters 44 and 45. The final Chapters 46–49 examine spirituality, wellbeing and education for young people, particularly in secondary education. The concern of the writers in this part that students, today, should be provided with a credible education system, one which responds to their needs and the needs of the contemporary world, becomes palpable through their discussions.

To begin with, Jennifer Gidley focuses on notions of human consciousness which, she argues, has evolved past the boundaries that have been created by the scientific, reductionist frameworks upon which twentieth-century education was based. Accordingly, she asks two key questions:

– If new postformal ways of thinking are emerging that are complex, dialectical, creative and self-reflective, how is education responding to this?
– Secondly, if the fragility of our current planetary ecological environment can be assisted by fostering wiser, more caring, more life-enhancing, integral, planetary consciousness, how can educators achieve this?

In response to these questions, Gidley provides an extensive literature study to enlighten her discussion and substantiate her proposal of how we may be able to achieve new ways of learning that are more appropriate for today's students.

In the second chapter, Zehavit Gross appropriately discusses the difference between spirituality, religiosity and secularity as these terms are understood today. She argues that there is a need to identify the differences between the three constructs since both religious and secular people can be spiritual. Thus, secularity may be perceived, not as the absence of religion but rather as an entity that encompasses spirituality. In the end, Gross concludes that both religiosity and spirituality are related to the human search for meaning. "They are parallel, equivalent entities and constructs, and not opposites. Both contain a spiritual aspect which is 'located' in a different place within the human capacity". Further she alludes to the fact that in today's world, "sacred", while it is closely linked to spirituality, has a place in both religious and secular spheres and this needs to be recognized.

Jack Miller's contribution provides us with a complementary but different perspective. He contends that in the current educational climate, where there is an obsession on measurement and testing, education has lost its soul. Miller's answer is to inject love back into the teaching and learning process which will restore the soul of education. Citing Christopher Phillip's (2007) who provided a framework for exploring the concept of love through five forms as described by the Greeks: *Storge, Xenia, Philia, Eros* and *Agape*, Miller then scrutinizes each of these concepts and interprets each for its application in the context of the classroom.

The next chapter presents us with an approach to holistic education where spiritual development is an important aspect. Yoshi Nakagawa draws on the thinking of Eastern and Western philosophers to argue that two elements, awareness and compassion, are integral features of spiritual development. He stresses that it is necessary

that both elements are present and integrated into learning programs because they complement one another. In other words, awareness leads to compassion. Both these elements are essential aspects of being and, as such, should be identified and dealt with in education that aims to be holistic.

Continuing on the concept of holistic education, Peter Mudge describes two ways of knowing—kataphatic and apophatic—which he suggests are specifically related to spirituality in education, As well he suggests that most formal education programs today ignore this fact. According to Mudge, the kataphatic way is the visible, measurable aspect while the apophatic way of knowing is hidden and ineffable. Ultimately, Mudge claims that it is when apophatic and kataphatic knowing are acknowledged and addressed in learning programs that they will "stretch students' " understanding and spirituality, and promote integrated growth, holistic knowing and learning, and the wellbeing of children and adolescents.

Focusing on spiritual nurturing in human development and its role in education, Inna Semetsky presents an alternate strategy through the idea of a mythic search for meaning. She declares that myths provide the human person with a universal language which can lead to human development—"a perfect means of communication that would transcend prevailing cultural, religious, and language barriers". In view of this thesis, Semetsky offers an interpretation of the pictorial symbolism contained in the Tarot cards and asserts that they "embody intellectual, moral, and spiritual 'lessons' derived from collective human experiences across times, places and cultures". Consequently, as a system of communication and interpretation, Tarot may provide a way to discover meaning from one's lived experiences. Appropriately used, then, the Tarot can be a useful educational strategy to generate wisdom and human development.

A different perspective is offered by Caroline Smith who emphasizes the need for eco-spirituality to become a part of education. She claims that it is left out of any discussion on education for spirituality and education for sustainability. Smith alludes to three ideas to support her arguments. The first relates to the notion that the human person has an intimate relationship with an evolving universe; that the universe story is the human story. Secondly, human wellbeing cannot be separated from the Earth's wellbeing since we are creatures of the Earth. The third is the recognition that humans are responsible for the significant damage of the Earth's ecosystems through extravagant consumption and an explosion of the population. According to Smith, these three ideas constitute an ecospirituality, an I–Thou relationship with Nature which should be an essential aspect of education programs that aim for the wellbeing of students.

In the next chapter, Joyce E. Bellous recognizes that while spirituality is central to wellbeing, it is easily silenced so that the spiritual needs of children and youth can suffer neglect. Bellous examines the relationship between spiritual confidence and intellectual complexity and argues in favour of religious education which can provide for children a worldview that will inspire spiritual confidence. In turn, this assists children to feel connected within their own world as well as to an Ultimate Other so that they are able to derive some meaning from their life experiences. Bellous proposes that Dreyfus's (2001) model of initiation which identifies seven

stages in a process to mastering complex skills would be a useful pedagogy for religious education that will promote spiritual confidence in children.

A further strategy that is emerging as a valuable exercise in education is mindfulness. Elsa Lau's well-documented study on the topic provides us with excellent reasons as to why it should become part of learning programs to effect healing and wellbeing. Mindfulness is a meditation skill and has been used by various practitioners in the health industry to deal with stress, depression and other mental health problems. It has been the subject of much research in relation to its enhancement of wellbeing. As well, Lau claims that it has also been effective in "enhancing the academic performance of students through a holistic approach by developing the skills of emotional, bodily and interpersonal awareness". Certainly, it is one of the strategies that could be adopted into primary and secondary classrooms in order to help students develop awareness, which, as Nakagawa indicated in Chapter 31, is essential for the cultivation of the quality of compassion.

In light of the ideas that have emerged through the earlier chapters in this part, there are three pertinent questions posed by Jane Erricker in Chapter 38:

1. What is the aim of education if it is not the happiness of young people?
2. What is the aim of government if it is not the happiness of citizens?
3. What is the aim of civilization if it is not the happiness of the human race?

In her chapter, Erricker examines a range of issues and related literature in an attempt to answer these questions. To be sure, there have been many treatises on the subject of happiness and wellbeing in the past. What Erricker does is to securely situate her discussion in the context of education and discuss the links between happiness, spirituality and wellbeing. Drawing on the results of some surveys with first-year university students in teacher education, she makes the point that happiness, for students, is about knowledge which can generate feelings of empowerment. As well, it is about relationships being formed. Ultimately, Erricker questions whether these factors do influence government policies or whether they work from different agendas, ones that do not put the happiness and wellbeing of students at the core of learning programs.

Also pursuing an idea discussed in earlier chapters but situating it in the arena of teacher education, Peter Schreiner asserts that if teacher education programs do not respond to the theoretical implications of holistic education, the latter will remain a well-discussed theory but will not have any real impact on practice. Accordingly, Schreiner provides an extensive review of relevant literature to contextualize his arguments. In particular, he draws on the writings of Paulo Freire, Parker Palmer and Peter Senge in order to propose a way forward towards transformative learning where education may be perceived as a "valuable instrument for transformation". Schreiner cautions that society should not expect education to be the problem solver of societal woes, but that it can contribute to enabling "people to play an active role in a search for a better world, a world that is more whole and a little less fragmented".

According to Roz Sunley, in the next chapter, spirituality "provides a window of opportunity, for both teachers and pupils, to participate in education that refuses to

'chunk down' to accreditation; recognizes personal growth and formation as more than measurable outcomes; and pays some attention to understanding the act of living". Sunley also writes on spirituality and education from a teacher's perspective and emphasizes that the spiritual dimension is central to life; it is the imperative that encourages the individual to look beyond the here and now. She points clearly to the fact that education cannot be restricted to the present but must maintain a vision of the future so that it addresses the "deeper issues that sustain all human beings". Thereby, Sunley provides a coherent argument for addressing spirituality and wellbeing in education.

Also coming to the topic from the perspective of teachers and teaching, Kate Adams expresses concern about the lack of awareness and disinterest amongst many teachers in Britain to engage in learning and teaching that may promote spirituality in their children. Adams provides a concise overview of various documents and policies that pertain to spirituality and education and draws on a wide range of relevant literature to support her stance that spirituality is an important part of children's lives, and it can be made present in learning and teaching across the curriculum. However, like Bellous earlier, she acknowledges the difficulty of identifying spirituality in contemporary Western cultures which contributes to the problem of incorporating it into educational programs effectively.

Jackie Watson also visits the curriculum documents in Britain to ascertain what they propose in the area of spiritual development for British students. She stresses the point that spirituality is but one of a few areas that require action and response from all schools, the others being the moral, social and cultural development of students. Echoing Adam's concern that the very ambiguity of the term, spiritual development, has often led to perplexity when attempts are made to address it, she asks, how can we make sense of this responsibility given the range of worldviews pupils' families may belong to, and the range of spiritual truths children and young people may hold, or reject? She notes that while she is speaking out of a British context, this problem is a global one in today's world. In the end, she draws on the principles of inter-faith dialogue as a way forward to recognizing "the reality of truth and diversity of truth" but which could assist in establishing "an ethical framework for dialogue that safeguards participants' spiritual integrity and wellbeing".

The next three chapters specifically look at spirituality and wellbeing in education for young children. Sheri Leafgren explores the idea that very young children resist the rules and structures in formal educational settings and find the means whereby they "apply their tacit understanding of the workings of the schoolroom in order to subvert the structures keeping them apart". She focuses on children's physical need to connect, to touch, and laments the structured learning environments that do not allow for this to happen. Her study of kindergarten children in the United States led to these observations. As well, she comments on how little children are able to utilize the opportunities provided by moments when they are not being closely supervised, to connect physically and spiritually with other children. Leafgren's findings point to the need for further research to be conducted on the design of learning spaces for young children; ones which will assist in spiritually nurturing them and promoting their wellbeing.

Brendan Hyde concentrates on the theories of spiritual intelligence and discusses the implications these have for a holistic approach to learning. He refers to his research in Australia where children used characteristics of spiritual intelligence to enhance their lives and heighten their sense of wellbeing. He concludes with the contention that "if a key purpose of education is to promote holistic learning, in which both the cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions of learning are addressed, then attention needs to be given to all of the various areas in which learning occurs, including the cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual dimensions".

Jane Bone is the third contributor to this part who focuses on the education of very young children for spirituality and wellbeing. Bone's study was conducted in New Zealand and includes an analysis of the cultural responses to the concept of spirituality from Maori and non-Maori educators. In particular, she identifies themes of *spiritual withness, spiritual in-betweenness* and the *spiritual elsewhere* which provide the basis for a pedagogy of "everyday spirituality". Bone further identifies four principles in the Early Childhood curriculum offered in Wellington, New Zealand: empowerment, holistic development, family and community and relationships which mesh with the strands of wellbeing, belonging, contribution, communication and exploration. She then provides an extensive examination of the potential of these principles, to address the spiritual wellbeing of young children.

Anne Kennedy and Judith Duncan's chapter provides yet another view on addressing the spiritual dimension from teachers' perspectives. Their writing is contextualized by their respective roles in Catholic primary education. They report on the findings of a small research study that highlighted the difficulty teachers had with the concept of spirituality, given the multiple interpretations it provokes in contemporary society. Accordingly, the authors examine the literature to define spirituality as it was used in their study. Citing Neil Darragh they declare spirituality to be "the combinations of beliefs and practices which animate and integrate people's lives". However, they acknowledge the difficulty teachers have in addressing this in a classroom and highlight the point that teachers need to, first, have an awareness of their own spirituality. They also point to a further difficulty which relates time and opportunity to elicit the spiritual potential in different curriculum areas when they are already under pressure to address learning in an overcrowded school curriculum. However, they end on a note of optimism that teachers are creative enough to find ways to nurture the spiritual wellbeing of their students.

The final two chapters from Philip Hughes and Sally Nash provide a useful round up of the ideas in this part. Both authors draw on their own research and the research of others to describe and identify characteristics of young people's spirituality. Hughes refers to three characteristics:

- the strength of belief: the passion and commitment with which beliefs are held and practices are followed;
- the eclecticism with which people put their beliefs and practices together and the extent to which they draw on a range of sources, crossing the boundaries, not only of denomination but also of religion;
- the confidence with which beliefs are held.

He then proceeds to elaborate on the third theme which, he asserts, "has a relationship with wellbeing independent of the relationship between wellbeing and the content of beliefs". This claim was made by Bellous in an earlier chapter and Hughes, then, proposes that a particular aim in education for religion and spirituality ought to be about helping students to affirm students in their beliefs and to help them reach higher levels of attainment in this area.

Sally Nash speaks out of the context of youth ministry. She refers to one of the purposes of youth ministry which is to help young people ask and find answers to questions about themselves which leads to self-knowledge. Further important questions focus on their relationship to others and encourage them to consider the kind of society they want to live in. The particular aspect of Nash's work is that it is generated by an informal educational context so it does present a different perspective to most of the other authors in this part. Nonetheless, she provided a range of useful ideas and activities that can be used in most pedagogical approaches when the nurturing of spirituality and wellbeing are the goal.

In the end, this part has brought together an array of researchers and academic writing out of different cultural and educational contexts but who have demonstrated that the topic of spirituality and wellbeing in education is a concern and an interest for educators across the globe. As such, their discussions, reviews, analyses and proposals provide a useful and beneficial addition to the literature in this area.

Notes

1. Mission Australia is a community service organization that was generated by various City Missions. See the Website: http://www.missionaustralia.com.au/about-mission-australia for more information about their work and the results of their annual surveys into the issues and concerns of young people today.
2. For instance, conducting a Web search using a combination of the words, "young people", "children", "depression" with "American", "British", "European" and "Asian" reveals the concern and/or the action being taken by a number of countries to address the mental health problems, including depression and suicide, that has become evident amongst their children and young people.

Chapter 28
Educating for Evolving Consciousness: Voicing the Emergency for Love, Life and Wisdom

Jennifer M. Gidley

Abstract This chapter takes as its starting point the notion that human consciousness is evolving beyond the boundaries of formal, reductionist modes of thinking. The emergence of new modes of thinking and new knowledge patterns is discussed via discourses that identify postformal reasoning, integral thinking, and planetary consciousness. The chapter explores the theoretical relationships between several themes arising from the evolution of consciousness literature and a diversity of postformal educational approaches. Four core pedagogical values emerge from the intersection between these two clusters: love, life, wisdom, and voice. These core values are elucidated theoretically in relation to *philosophies* of education and practically through examples from the *art* of education. They are offered as pedagogical seeds for evolving consciousness through education in the 21st century.

From Planetary Crisis to Planetary Consciousness

> All of the leading holistic thinkers identify the crisis of our time as an epistemological crisis. We are not arguing against technology as such, or against capitalism in itself. We are saying that underneath our political, social, and economic arrangements, the way modern culture defines and understands reality itself is faulty (Miller, 2006, para. 6)

I fully concur with educational philosopher, Ron Miller, that the crisis of our times is an epistemological crisis. The monoculture that is increasingly dominating the planet is based on a modernist worldview underpinned by *scientific materialism* (Whitehead, 1925). It utilises *formal* thinking to express its associated epistemology of *reductionism*.[1] Its method of enculturation of young people into its worldview is mass formal education based on an Industrial Era factory model of schooling (Gidley, 2001). Over the last decade the reductionist, scientistic, mode of formal thinking has been intensified across the social sciences by a neo-fundamentalist, economic–rationalist backlash against the flourishing of qualitative

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research (Coryn, Schröter, & Scriven, 2005; Denzin, 2005). This has impacted on education particularly through the dominance of the *audit culture* with its obsessive quantitative accountability practices and its agenda of a narrowly defined *science* of education (MacLure, 2006b). Contemporary educational research—at least in the UK, the USA and Australia—is increasingly constrained by this neo-fundamentalist research agenda. My research points to paths beyond these constraints to emergent, *post*formal *philosophies* and *arts* of education that support the evolution of consciousness.

The history of research into the evolution of consciousness and the significant contributions of Rudolf Steiner, Jean Gebser and Ken Wilber to the identification and development of new stage/s or movements of consciousness have been discussed extensively elsewhere (Gidley, 2006, 2007a, 2007b). These researchers claim that human consciousness is evolving beyond the formal, intellectual, abstract mode towards a postformal, integral, more spiritual[2] mode. Steiner (1930/1983) called it *consciousness/spiritual soul*, Gebser (1949/1985) called it *integral-aperspectival* and Wilber (2000a, 2000b) calls it *vision-logic* or *integral*.

Current research also indicates that the monological mode of formal thinking is obsolete and is not capable of taking us through the current planetary crisis. Many contemporary thinkers echo Einstein's[3] thoughts of a century ago that "The significant problems we have cannot be solved at the same level of thinking with which we created them." I have identified three major research threads that point to the emergence of new ways of thinking suggestive of what Gebser (1949/1985) referred to as a new structure of consciousness. These threads are principally represented by the terms *postformal, integral* and *planetary*.

Adult developmental psychologists have been providing empirical and analytic evidence for decades for at least one, and potentially several, stage/s of *postformal* reasoning beyond Piaget's formal operations (Commons & Richards, 2002; Kramer, 1983; Sinnott, 1998). Second, there are a range of *integral* theorists whose work provides a counterbalance to *reductionism* by engaging postformal epistemologies such as transdisciplinarity, complexity, systems theory and *holism*[4] (Braud, 1998; Combs, 2002; Goerner, 2000; Hampson, 2007; László, 2007; Ray, 1996; Wilber, 2001, 2004). Third, contemporary researchers focused on cultural evolution and/or our planetary crisis indicates the need for *planetary* consciousness (Earley, 1997; Gangadean, 2006; Montuori, 1999; Morin & Kern, 1999). Philosopher Edgar Morin is a powerful proponent of the need for complex, ecological and planetary thinking in our times which he calls the *Planetary Era* (Morin, 2001; Morin & Kern, 1999).

Many of the *postformal*, *integral/holistic* and *planetary* researchers point to a growing spiritual awareness. Neurosurgeon and cognitive scientist, Karl Pribram, who developed holonomic brain theory with quantum physicist, David Bohm (1980) also makes this link.

> The type of holism revealed by holography is kin to the holism of the holy, the healthy. The discovery of holography is thus a most important occurrence: For the first time in centuries scientific practice and theory have brought science and the spiritual disciplines into congruence (Pribram, 2006, p. 44).

Postformal features identified by the adult developmental psychologists include complexity, construct-awareness,[5] contextualisation, creativity, dialectics, dialogue, holism, imagination, paradox, pluralism, reflexivity, spirituality, values and wisdom (Arlin, 1999; Cartwright, 2001; Commons, Trudeau, Stein, Richards, & Krause, 1998; Cook-Greuter, 2000; Falcone, 2000; Kegan, 1994; Kohlberg, 1990; Kramer, 1983; Labouvie-Vief, 1992; Riegel, 1973; Sinnott, 1998, 2005). I am using these postformal features as identifiers of what I refer to as *postformal* educational approaches in contrast with *formal*—sometimes called mainstream—education. I am not denying that there are different philosophical streams and methods within formal education. Rather, I am suggesting there is a tacit template that most contemporary schools are based on that comes from the industrial era, because that is the main genealogy of mass school[6] education (Dator, 2000).

The *postformal*, *integral/holistic* and *global/planetary* orientations are not mutually exclusive categories but intimately interconnected. I have coined the conjoined term *postformal–integral–planetary consciousnesss*[7] to cohere threads in the evolution of consciousness research (Gidley, 2007b). The focus of this chapter is the vital significance of this research for education.

From Formal Schools to Postformal–Integral–Planetary Pedagogies

My research has indicated that the initial impulse for Humboldt's implementation of mass public education in Germany was influenced by his collaboration with German idealists and romantics such as Goethe, Hegel, Schelling and Novalis whose work was inspired by the notion of the evolution of consciousness. This was carried forward particularly through Schiller's aesthetic educational principles, while Herbart's pedagogical system influenced the practice. However, after the deaths of these leading German philosophers, by the middle of the 19th century the idealist-romantic educational project was largely hijacked by the gradual influence of the British Industrial Revolution, so that schools increasingly became training grounds to provide fodder for the factories. This factory model of school education was picked up in the USA.

The modernist phase of formal school education is trapped within industrial, mechanistic and technicist metaphors. Its entrenchment hinders the emergence of new consciousness. Formal thinking and educational practices limit cultivation of other ways of knowing in several ways.

- They educate for the past, for forms of consciousness that are becoming outmoded and are no longer adequate for the complexity of 21st century postmodern life on an ailing planet (Gidley, 2007b; Giroux, 1999/2005; Miller, 1993; Morin, 2001; Orr, 1994).
- They privilege one way of knowing (cognitive) over significant others, such as aesthetic, affective, contemplative, imaginative, intuitive, kinaesthetic, musical,

inter- and intra-personal and participatory (Egan, 1997; Gardner, 1996; Hart, 1998; Kessler, 2000a; Nava, 2001; Nielson, 2006; Noddings, 2003; Rose & Kincheloe, 2003; Zajonc, 2006).

- They are grounded in binary logic, privileging the hegemonic side of any pair of binaries, e.g. science over literature, maths over art, intellect over emotion, materialistic over spiritual, order over creativity (Chater, 2006; de Souza, 2006; Finser, 2001; Glazer, 1994; Johnson, 2005; Pridmore, 2004; Subbiondo, 2005).
- They privilege and encourage the transmission of deadening, stale concepts rather than evoking a process of awakening mobile, living thinking (Deleuze & Conley, 1992; St. Pierre, 2004; Whitehead, 1916/1967).
- They support the current regression to scientistic, neo-fundamentalist, educational research styles, linked to positivist performativity and the audit culture—over complex, emergent, qualitative, creative inquiry (Denzin, 2005; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004; Lyotard, 2004; MacLure, 2006b; Montuori, 2006).
- They privilege the economic rationalist business model of *education as commodity* over all other orientations (Giroux, 2001; Morin & Kern, 1999; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004).
- They fragment and compartmentalise knowledge in ways that many young people find meaningless (Eckersley, Cahill, Wierenga, & Wyn, 2007; Gidley, 2005; Miller, 1993).

By contrast, early 20th century educational contributions of Steiner (1909/1965) and Montessori (1916/1964) in Europe, followed by Sri Aurobindo[8] in India, foreshadowed the educational possibilities that might arise once the implications of the evolution of consciousness are acknowledged. A driving force underlying their educational approaches was a notion of the evolution of cosmos and consciousness that embraces more spiritual perspectives. Several contemporary educators have undertaken comparative studies of their approaches (Coulter, 1991; Gidley, 2007a; Marshak, 1997; Miller, 1990).

A plurality of educational alternatives to the factory model has arisen since then and has been discussed elsewhere (Gidley, 2007a, 2008). What I am clustering as postformal alternatives include aesthetic, creative, imaginative, integral, holistic and transformative approaches; critical, postmodern and poststructuralist pedagogies; and approaches which foreground complexity, ecology, futures studies, spirituality and wisdom. The following section distils core values from the plethora of postformal educational possibilities.

I propose that education—at least in much of the Anglophone[9] world—is in a transition from formal to postformal, somewhat lagging behind other socio-cultural shifts arising from postmodern impulses (see Table 28.1).This simple theoretical model is not intended to suggest that there has been a unilinear, or unidimensional, development of culture, politics, consciousness or education. The actual phenomena are more complex, multi-dimensional and recursive.

Table 28.1 Sociocultural, Political, and Educational Phases[1]

	Prehistory to 18th Century	18th–20th Century	20th–21st Century and Beyond
Sociocultural phases	Pre-modern	Modern	Postmodern
Political phases	City-states	Nation-states	Global-planetary
Education phases	*In*formal family/tribal enculturation, or elite tutoring	*Formal* schooling, mass education, factory model	Pluralism of *post*formal pedagogies, integral, planetary sensibility

[1]This table refers primarily to the situation in the so-called developed world. The situation is far more diverse and complex in traditional and non-Western European-based cultures.

Linking evolution of consciousness themes with postformal educational approaches

> The primary crisis on the planet now is a crisis of consciousness, and our global wisdom suggests that humanity is in a painful transformation toward a more healthful integral technology of mind that ushers in a new sustainable global civilization wherein the whole human family may flourish together on our sacred planet (Gangadean, 2006).

Recent research into the evolution of consciousness has organised the literature into themes (Gidley, 2007a, 2007b). This chapter explores the theoretical relationships between four themes that emerged from the evolution of consciousness discourse and the various discourses on emergent postformal[10] educational approaches. Although there is considerable overlap and interpenetration between and among the evolutionary themes and the postformal educational approaches, the latter have been clustered under the evolution of consciousness theme that they appear to most strongly support. Consequently, I would like this clustering to be viewed as a type of *delicate theorising*[11] that has arisen from a postformal research process involving hermeneutic interpretation, not empirical analysis. This *postformal clustering* into themes is to be distinguished from *formal categorisation* into discrete territories as one might see in formal analysis. My attempts to cohere this diverse literature are a step in formulating a complex educational philosophy that supports the evolution of consciousness.

Discourses that Include Notions of Conscious, Active Spiritual Development

This theme includes religious and, particularly, post-traditional and postmodern spiritual approaches that promote active spiritual development (Bouma, 2006; Huston, 2007; Tacey, 2003; Wilber, 2006). While the term *spiritual* is still controversial in continental philosophy (Benedikter, 2005) it is arising in the higher

education landscape in the USA (Scott, 2000; Subbiondo, 2005) through the emergence of contemplative studies programs[12] and active science/spirituality dialogues (Hefner, 1998; Russell, 2002). I propose that evolutionary spiritual approaches are supported by educational styles that emphasise care, contemplation, empathy love and reverence. Such approaches include the spirituality in education movement (de Souza, 2006; Erricker, Ota, & Erricker, 2001; Glazer, 1994; Woods, O'Neill, & Woods, 1997), holistic education and transformative education that engages contemplative pedagogies (Altobello, 2007; Brady, 2007). I cohere these related clusters of evolutionary and educational research under the core value of *pedagogical love*.

Discourses that Resist the Static, Deadening Nature of Formal Thinking and Enact More Mobile, Life-Enhancing, Postformal Thinking

This new thinking is reflected in organic, process-oriented, postmodern and post-structuralist philosophies which emerged last century (Bergson, 1911/1944; Derrida, 2001; Whitehead, 1929/1985). This paralleled the emergence of new science theories such as Einstein's theory of relativity, quantum physics and systems science. The changing consciousness is particularly notable in the shift from simple mechanistic metaphors to life-enhancing, organic metaphors in the new, post-classical, biology theories of chaos, complexity, self-organisation and emergence (Goodenough & Deacon, 2006; Jantsch, 1980; László, 2006; Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1993). I propose that several postformal educational approaches support this movement from *static* concepts to *living* thinking. In particular, imagination is a primary method of bringing concepts to life. Life and its metaphors are also emphasised in pedagogies grounded in ecology, futures thinking, sustainability, complexity and aesthetics. Such approaches nurture vitality and wellbeing. I cohere them under the core value of *pedagogical life*.

Discourses that Identify Increasing Creativity, Complexity and Multi-perspectivity as Movements Towards Wisdom

These include two sub-streams: cultural evolutionary (phylogenetic) and individual developmental (ontogenetic). Both streams explicitly identify the emergence of new stage/s, structures or movements of consciousness. Adult developmental psychologists indicate that postformal features particularly linked to wisdom are creativity, multi-perspectivity and spirituality. The interaction between these features and complexity, paradox and dialectics is not hard to envisage. The contemporary cultural evolution literature—much of which arises from the integral theoretic narratives—often also stresses the planetary dimension of consciousness as a feature of wisdom. There are specific educational theories addressed to the cultivation of wisdom (Falcone, 2000; Hart, 2001a, 2001b; Sternberg, 2001). However, other postformal approaches that are oriented towards creativity and complexity also facilitate the cultivation of wisdom. In addition, education in spirituality and

aesthetics are also linked with wisdom in the literature. I cohere these threads under the core value of *pedagogical wisdom*.

Discourses that Integrate by Crossing Linguistic and Paradigmatic Barriers

There is an evolutionary academic and educational movement beyond fragmentation and disciplinary isolationism and towards more integration—through integral and holistic theories, inter- and transdisciplinarity and dialogic[13] approaches. A challenge that has emerged from the inter- and transdisciplinary literature is the difficulty in communicating across different disciplines, epistemologies and paradigms (Eckersley, Wierenga, & Wyn, 2006; Grigg, Johnston, & Milson, 2003; Nicolescu, 2002). An evolutionary philosophy of education that can overcome this challenge requires tremendous sensitivity to linguistic, cultural and paradigmatic contexts. An important insight of French postmodern/poststructuralist philosophy is awareness of context in terms of how we language the world. Arguably, the *linguistic turn* in philosophy has not yet significantly influenced formal education. I propose that this integrative capacity of *language reflexivity* is supported by postmodern/poststructuralist, aesthetic/poetic and critical/postcolonial pedagogies. I cohere these threads under the core value of *pedagogical voice*.

Postformal–Integral–Planetary Pedagogies for Evolving Consciousness

> And the strength of the thread does not reside in the fact that some fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres[14] (Wittgenstein, 1968, p. 32).

These complexly interwoven theoretical issues contribute to the formulation of an evolutionary *philosophy* of education based on a multitude of fibres of postformal, philosophical, psychological and educational theory. I also include numerous rich, creative examples from my—and others'—teaching experience in the evolving *art* of education. This chapter seeks to reflect the pluralism among the postformal educational approaches that nurture one or more of the qualities that support the evolution of consciousness. My initial endeavour to cohere the diverse evolutionary and educational discourses is an educational philosophy that reflects unity in diversity. The fibres converge into threads and the threads are woven into what I call *postformal–integral–planetary pedagogies* (See Fig. 28.1)

At the intersections between the evolutionary and postformal educational discourses I have identified the following four core values:

- Pedagogical *Love*
- Pedagogical *Life*
- Pedagogical *Wisdom*
- Pedagogical *Voice*
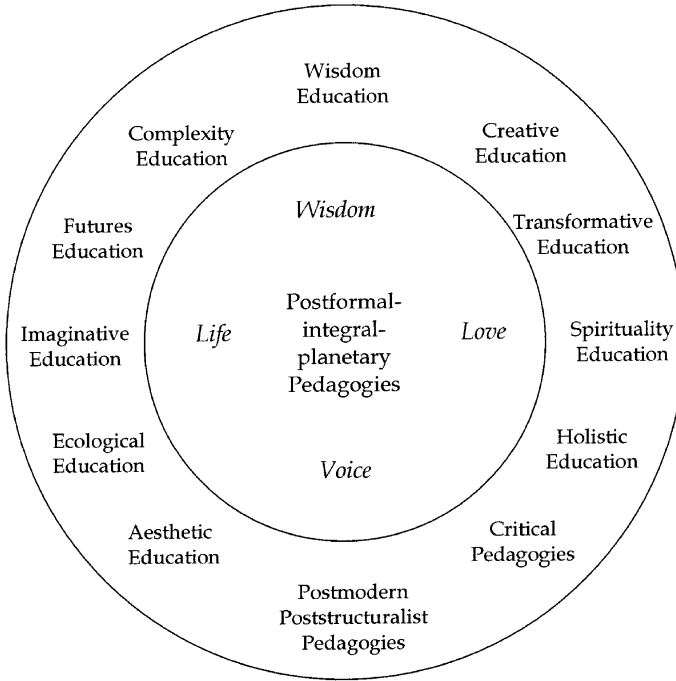
Fig. 28.1 Towards postformal-integral-planetary pedagogies: an educational philosophy nurturing evolution of consciousness

The following four sections each begin with *philosophical perspectives* and then continue with examples from the *art* of education. The philosophical/conceptual component of each section points to historical and theoretical links with the evolution of consciousness discourses, while the more practical component integrates diverse pedagogical experiences. Since these core values are emerging from the complex, dialectical, postformal, integral mindset, they are not mutually exclusive but complexly interconnected. I individualise each to fully honour its particularity and orient readers (even postformal ones) who have their favourite emphasis.

Pedagogical Love

Philosophical Perspectives: The Heart of a Teacher's Gaze

> The word "love" is rarely mentioned in educational circles. The word seems out of place in a world of outcomes, accountability, and standardised tests (J. P. Miller, 2000, p. 31).

And yet love is clearly central to spiritual development in most religious and spiritual traditions. In Christianity, Buddhism and Islam, Love and/or Compassion

are/is central indications of Divinity, Allah, Christ- or Buddha-nature. Steiner gave lectures in 1909 where he explicitly named love and devotion—which he referred to as the two components of reverence—as educative forces for developing the next stage of consciousness.

> Love and devotion are . . . the best educators of the soul in its advances from the Intellectual Soul to the Consciousness Soul . . . But this reverence must be led and guided from a standpoint which never shuts out the light of thought (Steiner, 1930/1983, pp. 61–62).

Alfred North Whitehead (1916/1967), writing a few years after Steiner, affirmed the significance of reverence in his philosophy of education.

> The essence of education is . . . religious [it] . . . inculcates duty and reverence . . . And the foundation of reverence is this perception, that the present holds within itself the complete sum of existence, backwards and forward, that whole amplitude, which is eternity (p. 10).

Whitehead's words are echoed by Gebser's (1949/1985) integral consciousness: "encompassing all time and embracing both man's distant past and his approaching future as a living present" (p. 6).

Several holistic educators speak of love and reverence as touchstones for wisdom (Hart, 2001b; J. P. Miller, 2000; R. Miller, 2000). Developmental psychologists explore wisdom as a feature of postformal thinking (Arlin, 1999; Sinnott, 1994; Sternberg, 2001). Already we are immersed in the complexly interwoven relationship between love and wisdom. If love and reverence are so significant in the spiritually oriented evolutionary discourses, then we might ask, Why is the word *love* so out of place in educational circles?

British educationist, Maggie MacLure (2006c) unpacks the trend to privilege scientific, quantifiable words, such as objectives, outcomes, standards, high-stakes testing, competition, performance and accountability. She links this to "deep-seated fears and anxieties about language and desire to control it". She sees this resistance to the textuality, complexity and diversity of qualitative research in the "evidence-based" agendas of the "audit culture". In this context, words like *love* are likely to create ontological panic in educrats. But the litany of mental health issues among young people suggests we may have pushed them too far (Gidley, 2005). Perhaps new spaces need to be opened up for softer terms, such as love, nurture, respect, reverence, awe, wonder, wellbeing, vulnerability, care, tenderness, openness, trust. If national governments—as is the case now in the UK and Australia—are serious about wellbeing and spirituality in education, the reductionism and quantification in language needs to be challenged to support a transition (Woods & Woods, 2002). As Gebser (1996) said, "our terminology determines to a certain extent the direction of our thought" (p. 84).

Fortunately, in spite of these challenges, the importance of *love* in educational settings is being re-emphasised through terms such as "epistemology of love" (Zajonc, 2006) and "pedagogy of universal love" (Nava, 2001). The term *pedagogical love* has also been used in constructivist educational theory (Hatt, 2005). Other educators refer to aligned notions such as "ethics of care" (Noddings, 2005); "heart of a teacher" (Palmer, 1998); and "deep empathy" (Hart, 2000). Nel Noddings and Parker Palmer both link their notions to teacher *integrity*.

The Art of Pedagogical Love: Being in Love with Learning and Teaching

The practical application of these (r)evolutionary ideas seems a far cry from the performance outcomes required by the audit culture. Yet the love of teachers for their children, for the ideas to be conveyed, and for learning itself can be nurtured and demonstrated in several ways. First, by attending to our own *inner self-development and self-care*.[15] Some examples from my own inner work—as self-care—include

- Study of inspirational teachings and other wisdom literature.
- Artistic classes (voice, movement, painting, drama) to promote flexibility of thought, imagination, inspiration and group spirit.
- Modelling love, by showing care and respect. Children learn most profoundly from what is modelled by the adults closest to them (Marshak, 1997).
- My nightly preparation involved three components: study of the subject material to be introduced; study of its deeper/broader context; and contemplative surrender to being guided by creative inspiration. The latter step in the process invariably provided, as if on cue, new creative inspiration that enriched and enlivened my lessons for the following day.

Secondly, I actively nurtured my relationship with the children in the following ways. Some of these may seem obvious but are rarely found in pre-service manuals.

- Getting to know my students by finding time to speak individually to each one, even if briefly, during each day.
- Making *authentic* eye contact—the beholding of the child with "the teacher's gaze" (Uhrmacher, 1993). Ideally, my gaze held a vision of each child's potential in dialectical relationship with the reality of the moment, lifting their hearts up like flowers to the sun.
- Being fully present, not absent-minded, is important and is referred to in the literature as "teacher presence" (Kessler, 2000a, 2000b; Palmer, 1998).
- Meditative contemplation, regularly, on each individual child, throughout the school year (Steiner, 1982).
- Attention to soul nurture and aesthetic nourishment by creating a beautiful, safe environment, physically, emotionally, psychologically—a "gourmet soul chef" perhaps?
- Long-term commitment to children for several years personalises the learning environment (Eisner, 2000; Marshak, 1997).
- Encouraging partnership and cooperation rather than competition, dominance and bullying (Eisler, 2001; Goerner, 2000).
- Finally, ecological awareness is enhanced by practising care for plants, small animals and other sentient beings (Orr, 1994).

In retrospect, my most interesting lessons were on topics I had to research as they became warmed through with the love for learning I experienced—an advantage of not using textbooks,[16] once you overcome the fear of "not enough time". By honouring the particularity of each lesson through individualised presentation modes one often finds the *extra*ordinary in the ordinary.

Pedagogical Life

Philosophical Perspectives: Imagination as Conceptual Vitality

> A thinking that is fragmenting, detached, and rigid will continue to give us a world that is increasingly broken, alien, and dead. The possibility of a living, harmonious, and meaningful world can only be grasped and realised by a thinking and knowing that are themselves living, whole and engaged (Sloan, 1983, p. xiii).

With these words educational philosopher Douglas Sloan makes an eloquent conceptual bridge between living, integrative thinking and life itself. The term *imagination* can be used disparagingly as meaning inferior to reason—or formal thinking—or to depict complex, higher order forms of thinking. The significant role of imagination in higher order thinking, despite its long history, has been academically marginalised. The dialectical and synthesising nature of imagination was identified in the third century CE in Plotinus's *conceptual imagination*.

Steiner—building on Goethe's *creative imagination* and Schelling's *intellectual imagination*—explicitly linked *Imagination* with the evolution of consciousness (Steiner, 1905/1981). The relationship between imagination and post-mechanistic, organic metaphors in philosophical thinking has foundations in the vitality of Bergson's *élan vital* (Fraser, Kember, & Lury, 2005), Whitehead's *process thinking* (Gare, 1999) and Deleuze's *lines of flight* (St. Pierre, 2004). Philosopher of imagination, Richard Kearney (1998), has researched the major theories of imagination in modern and postmodern European thought. His theory of ethics and *narrative imagination* provides a philosophical foundation for both imagination and narrative in education.

Imagination as I use the term is an *activity* that enables conceptual vitality—it can bring concepts to life. I regard it as a core—if tacit—component in the transitions from formal/rational to postformal/postrational thinking.[17] Postformal educational researchers, Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) claim, "Post-formality is life-affirming as it transcends modernism's disdain and devaluation of the spiritual" (p. 309). I suggest that through *imagination* in our thinking we not only enliven concepts, but we bring the significance of *life* back into centre focus in our *lifeworld*, enhancing vitality and wellbeing.

Sloan's (1983) characterisation of *insight-imagination* best approaches my understanding of imagination. Sloan refers to it as a "higher order of consciousness", noting Bohm's distinction between "the deep act of imagination in insight from what he calls *imaginative fancy*" (p. 144). Sloan continues

> The cultivation of imagination does not mean the rejection of hard, lucid thought. It is, rather, the bringing of thought to life, permeating concepts and abstractions with life-giving images and inner energies through which thinking can penetrate and participate in the fullness of reality (p. 192).

This aligns with Steiner's notion of *imaginal thinking*[18] and Wilber's *vision-logic*. The cultivation of logic and rationality was significant in overcoming the deficiencies of earlier mythic consciousness, e.g. dogma and superstition (Gidley, 2007a). Yet the dominance of narrow instrumental forms of rationality, at the

expense of other faculties, is arguably a psychic prison for children and young people and may jeopardise their conscious evolutionary development as adults. Formal education *trains*[19] children to think in fixed concepts. I suggest that providing children primarily with dry, abstract, intellectual concepts may stunt their potential conceptual development and flexibility by fundamentalising concepts as dogmatic, unchanging *facts*. By contrast, postformal pedagogies that foreground *conceptual imagination* can be forces for *conceptual vitality*. Educating with conceptual vitality allows concepts to breathe and grow with children, so they evolve to meet children's developmental potential. This lays foundations for flexible, complex, process-oriented thinking and a smooth transition to postformal–integral–planetary consciousness at the appropriate developmental moment.

Meanwhile, formal education seems caught within the inertness of formal thinking, as neo-fundamentalist educational reform agendas write more *stale* ideas about *the already said* (Lyotard, 2004). Several philosophers have emphasised the importance of imagination in education (Lyotard, 2004; Nuyen, 1998; Warnock, 1976; Whitehead, 1919). Deleuze challenges us "to bring something to life, to free life from where it is trapped, to trace lines of flight" (cited in St. Pierre, 2004, p. 287).

Could more facility with imagination assist in freeing education from where it is trapped?

The Art of Pedagogical Life: Creating Imaginative "Lines of Flight"

> Education today is filled with broken paradoxes, and with their lifeless results. The great challenge of integrative education is to "think the world together," not apart, so that education can become the life-giving enterprise it was meant to be (Palmer, 2007, Abstract).

There are two aspects to the art of cultivating *pedagogical life*. My primary interest is to promote the under-appreciated notion of bringing concepts to life—to create living thinking—as a way of "thinking the world together". The second aspect, discussed subsequently, honours life through ecological, environmental and sustainability education (Jardine, 1998).

Using imagination to bring concepts to life has been central to Steiner pedagogy for 80 years, as a catalyst for the evolution of consciousness via both individual development and cultural regeneration (Gidley, 1998; Nielson, 2006; Sloan, 1992; Stehlik, 2008). Several contemporary educators emphasise imagination[20] in school education (Egan, 1990; Eisner, 1985; Neville, 1989; Takaya, 2003, July). Others note its epistemological role in awakening higher knowledge and overcoming the dualisms fragmenting higher education (Gidley, 2003, 2006; Leonard & Willis, 2008; McDermott, 2005). Imagination is also a focus of futures education (Gidley, 1998; Gidley, Bateman, & Smith, 2004; Hicks, 1998; Milojevic, 2005).

In practical terms the healthy development of a teacher's imagination can be cultivated through such artistic activities as painting, creative writing, poetry and story telling to increase the likelihood of inspired teaching practice (Gidley, 2003; Leonard & Willis, 2008).

The cultivation of imagination is primarily nurtured in children through creative story telling and "pedagogy permeated with the arts and an aesthetic sensitivity" (Sloan, 1992, p. 47). A diversity of imaginative teaching processes is enacted in Steiner/Waldorf schools. A recent doctoral study focused on this aspect of Steiner pedagogy and provided a worthwhile illumination of the cultivation of imagination in education, through "drama, exploration, storytelling, routine, arts, discussion and empathy" (Nielson, 2006, p. 247). A unique pedagogical process that differentiates Steiner education is that writing is introduced first through pictures and pictograms prior to the abstract Roman alphabet. In my experience this supports evolution of consciousness in a meaningful way so that when children do learn to read the more abstract text they are able to *read for meaning* and thus are less likely to be *functionally illiterate*.[21] For a pictorial overview of the evolution of literacy from Palaeolithic art, see Appendix C (Gidley, 2007b).

Imagination, however, is not of itself positive or negative. Its impact on the child depends on the content. The power of "the image" is well known to the advertising industry, and futures researchers point to its transformative power (Boulding, 1988; Gidley, 1998; Polak, 1973). We live in a global cultural milieu bombarded by pre-packaged images created by corporations to sell their products (Giroux, 2001; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004) and where imagination is cultivated in an unhealthy way through media images of violence and fear. Several researchers critique the damaging effects of overexposure to negative media images (Clouder, Jenkinson, & Large, 2000; Grossman, Degaetano, & Grossman, 1999; Healy, 1998; Marshak, 1997; Pearce, 1992) and call for more critical awareness (Milojevic, 2005; Spina, 2004; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004). Educators can help to balance the impact of negative mass media on children's wellbeing through providing critically reconstructed images of the good, beautiful and true, and by strengthening each child's own "image-making powers" (Sloan, 1992). The healthy effects of such positive imagination on young people's views and visions of the future and empowerment was found among Steiner educated Australian students (Gidley, 1998, 2002).

In addition to cultivating imagination, other kindred ways to affirm and enhance vitality and wellbeing through promoting *pedagogical life* include

- Hand work—central to traditional and indigenous enculturation practices and used pedagogically for a century (Dewey, 1972; Montessori, 1916/1964; Steiner, 1928/1972).
- Imaginative, postformal architecture (Jencks, 1997) and aesthetic interior design.
- Attention to rhythmical, cyclical, organic time vs. fast, mechanical time, to *pace* education more in line with our beings (McGill, 2005). See also Appendix B (Gidley, 2007b) for a postformal–integral–planetary analysis of modernist time conceptions.
- Respect for nature through *ecological imagination* and reverence for life (Jardine, 1998).

In summary, we should not underestimate the beneficial effects of enlivening education as a vital contribution to the resuscitation of an ailing planetary ecosystem.

Pedagogical Wisdom

Philosophical Perspectives: Creatively Integrating Multiplicities

> Postformal thought ... is linked to creative production by virtue of its ... multiple views of reality and its multiple solutions, definitions, parameters, and methods during problem solving ... [also combining] subjective and objective understanding... the same sorts of processes [can be observed] under the rubrics of wisdom (Sinnott, 1998, p. 271).

The notion of *wisdom*—for millennia a central concept in the perennial philosophies (or wisdom traditions)—is a complex, elusive dimension. I propose that wisdom flourishes in contexts of reverence–care–love and life-filled conceptual imagination. *Wisdom* has attracted a resurgence of interest at the philosophical intersections between postformal psychology, education, and spirituality discourses. Perhaps this is not surprising, given the privileging of cognitive over emotional or vital ways of knowing in the Academy. Adult developmental psychologists suggest that wisdom embraces complexity, multi-perspectivality and creativity (Arlin, 1999; Labouvie-Vief, 1992; Sinnott, 1998; Sternberg, 1990, 2001).

Developmental psychologist Robert Sternberg (1998) has proposed a *balance theory*[22] of wisdom arising from his triarchic theory of human intelligence—comprising analytical intelligence, creative intelligence and wisdom as practical intelligence. Psychologist Jan Sinnott (1998) views wisdom as a complex and integrative characteristic of postformal thought, explicitly linking it with spirituality and creativity. Arthur Koestler (1964) foreshadowed the notion of creativity as a postformal feature. He claimed creativity is suppressed by the automatic routines of thought and behaviour that dominate our lives. Recent psychological research suggests that creativity and imagination are declining during childhood—in contrast to most aspects of cognitive development—perhaps lending support to Koestler's theory (Kaufman & Baer, 2006). This has raised the question as to whether it may be the "process of schooling itself, with its focus on the acquisition of knowledge and the production of correct (rather than imaginative) answers, which promotes this decline" (Kaufman & Baer, 2006, p. 1). Kaufman and Baer (2005) characterise creativity as the ability to see things from novel perspectives reinforcing Sternberg's and Sinnott's links between wisdom, creativity, complexity and ability to take multiple perspectives. Sternberg and Sinnott both focus on cultivating wisdom in education. Wisdom educator Caroline Bassett (2005b) proposes three major approaches: "wisdom as cognitive functioning, wisdom associated with various personal attributes, and wisdom understood as exceptional self-development" (Bassett, 2005b, para. 1). She contextualises Sternberg's approach within the first, but omits Sinnott's research. Bassett situates her own work in the third approach,

which she associates with postformal thinking, transformative learning and aesthetics/creativity.

In this complex territory of integrating multiple perspectives, Wilber's integral framework could contribute theoretical coherence to cultivating wisdom in education. But there is a *complex aesthetics* to how this actually works in the art of pedagogical practice (Rose & Kincheloe, 2003; Steiner, 1928/1972). Rose and Kincheloe point to the importance of "complex aesthetics" in developing and integrating the multiple perspectives of postformal thinking:

> As teachers think about the relationship between the aesthetic and the intellectual, they develop pedagogical strategies that encourage engagement . . . This involves the recognition of multiple ways of knowing which assists more students to discover that they are imaginative, creative and smart (p. 46).

Kaufman and Sternberg's (2006) international research on creativity found aesthetic orientation to be a personality trait associated with creativity. This also suggests a role for aesthetic education in cultivating wisdom. Sternberg (2005) pointed to research on wisdom as a balance of cognitive, conative/behavioural and affective[23] human abilities. This has been extended to four wisdom dimensions: discerning (cognitive), respecting (affective), engaging (active) and transforming (reflective) (Bassett, 2005a, p. 7). Through affect, aesthetic education can contribute to wisdom. There is extensive literature on the moral, cultural and integrative value of aesthetic education beginning with Plato (Gidley, 2002). Steiner pedagogy carries the romantic–aesthetic philosophical legacy of Schelling, Goethe and Schiller (1954/1977). Art educators also emphasise the importance of aesthetics in balancing cognicentrism in education (Abbs, 2003; Eisner, 1985; Read, 1943). Through art, drama and movement, students can see the complex paradoxes of "both/and" relationships, not just the binaries of "either/or".

Finally, wisdom is about *waking up*—to our own presence and the presence of others. The complex wisdom embedded in the art of education demands being awake in every moment.[24] As Tobin Hart (2001b) states, "Education for wisdom is not about simply being taught but about *waking up*. Waking up requires a certain kind of energy, certain capacities for taking the world into our consciousness" (p. 10). Steiner (1967), in his 1922 lectures, already indicated this.

> First of all, the teachers must be awakened, and then the teachers must awaken the children and young people . . . what matters is a question of awakening, for evolution has made human beings fall into a sleep that is filled with intellectualistic dreams (pp. 23–28).

The Art of Pedagogical Wisdom: The Many Faces of the Muse[25]

> Good teachers . . . are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave the world for themselves (Palmer, 1998, p. 11).

To counter the prescriptive and somnolent trends, we need more than a model or framework; we need to hear the creative voices of educators who have cultivated pedagogical wisdom as an *art*. Maggie MacLure's (2006b) art is her critical passion.

She claims "Interruptive methods are needed to try to crack ... the inertia coded in the pedagogic encounter" (p. 731). She proposes a *baroque* educational philosophy as a creative way to interrupt and resist closure (Deleuze & Conley, 1992). MacLure (2006c) characterises *baroque* education[26] with such terms as "entangled, disruptive ... artistic, aesthetic and literary". She notes that by utilising "dislocation of time and space ... [and] periodic interruptions of the 'other' " baroque educational philosophy offers "resistance to audit culture ... [and] disrupts closure seeking". I was intrigued to recognise that many of these *baroque* features resemble Steiner education—sometimes regarded as quaintly anachronistic. Yet from MacLure's (2006c) perspective this "defamiliarisation" with the "mythic immediacy of the educational present" is of immense value in moving beyond the "closure-seeking tendencies" of the audit culture. So how might such "left-field" aesthetic approaches as Steiner education or Deleuze's *baroque* philosophy lead to wisdom, postformal thinking or even qualify as "good education"?

What may be most effective in cultivating wisdom in education is utilising complex thinking and creativity to represent knowledge from multiple perspectives while showing their integral interconnectedness through our creative artfulness. This can be assisted by approaches that acknowledge *multiple intelligences* (Gardner, 1996), or *lines* of ability (Wilber, 2004).

In my own pedagogical practice I continually danced between disciplinary emphasis and transdisciplinary contextualisation: conceptually, through imaginative vitality; visually, through a picture or diagram; imaginatively, through the narration of a story, poem, song, dance or role-play; and/or experientially, through handwork, gardening or off-campus excursions. Other ways to enhance wisdom are to ensure children learn critically under-appreciated human values. Cultural pluralism and multilingualism need more educational space in a multicultural global world (de Souza, 2006; Inayatullah, 2002; Milojevic, 2005). Cosmopolitanism as a significant feature of planetary consciousness is discussed in Appendix B (Gidley, 2007b).

Awareness of the value of play in education goes back two centuries to Schiller (1954/1977) and Jean Paul Richter (Pridmore, 2004). Educator Eugene Schwartz (1999) sees play as a foundation for conceptual knowledge. Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) link it to postformalilty. Play can be philosophically grounded by the *jouissance* of poststructuralist word play (Derrida, 2001; Kristeva, 1982) and integral developmental theory (Gordon & Esbjörn-Hargens, 2007). While substantial literature suggests that violent video games have a destructive influence on children (Benoit, 2000; Clouder et al., 2000; Grossman et al., 1999; Healy, 1998; Pearce, 1992) one study contests this (Spina, 2004). As an alternative, non-violent strategy board games could playfully contribute to the development of postformal, complex systems thinking in adolescence.

Perhaps even more subjugated in most education settings are *wellbeing* and *happiness* (Abbs, 2003; Eckersley et al., 2006; Noddings, 2003); *laughter*, *humour* and even *frivolity* (Johnson, 2005; Koestler, 1964/1989; MacLure, 2006a). It is encouraging to see these broader human literacies opening up through the creativity of postformal educational offerings.

Pedagogical Voice

Philosophical Perspectives: Languaging the World of Words and Sound

> The poetics of education . . . calls for the endless acts of cultural reincarnation—acts which enable students to see with new eyes and to speak with new tongues (Abbs, 2003, p. 17).

I am using the term *pedagogical voice* as a broad palette to include *family resemblances*[27] among postformal developments in language and linguistics, speech education, the range of voices of teachers and children, and education in awareness of sound and silence.

Both Steiner and Gebser emphasised the significance of language awareness, poetic expression and creativity as part of the emerging consciousness. The re-integration of philosophy and poetry in western European culture was begun in the late 18th century by English and German romantic philosopher-poets such as William Blake, Schelling, Novalis and the Schlegel brothers (Richards, 2002; Royce, 1892/2001; Steiner, 1914/1973). Contemporary philosophical awareness of how we language the world emerged with the *linguistic turn* (Rorty, 1967). The *linguistic turn* was influenced by Ferdinand De Saussure's *linguistic structuralism* (Matthews, 1996), the *language-games* of Ludwig Wittgenstein's (1968) later *anti-dogmatic* philosophy, and the notion of *metanarratives* by Lyotard (2004). Linguistic consciousness was deepened by French poststructuralists (Deleuze, 1968/1994; Derrida 2001; Foucault, 1986; Kristeva, 1982).

Developmental psychologist Susanne Cook-Greuter (2000) refers to the "construct-aware" stage in which awareness of what she calls "the language habit" arises (p. 235). I use the term *language reflexivity* for this concept. Recent research on the relationship between integral theory and postmodernism explored relationships between Wilber's *vision-logic*, Cook-Greuter's *construct-aware* stage and Derrida's *deconstruction* (Hampson, 2007). Other 20th century thinkers have drawn attention to the developmental significance of reflexivity and creativity in languaging (Abbs, 2003; Barfield, 1985; Gangadean, 1998; Subbiondo, 2003; Thompson, 1998). Evidence of the emergence of new forms of creative languaging is found in the use of neologisms[28] (Derrida, 2001; Gangadean, 1998; St. Pierre, 2004).

Steiner (1926/1986, 1984) wrote extensively about the conscious development of language and speech, and its significance for human evolution. His emphasis on oral as well as written language has remained a core component of Steiner/Waldorf education. He also developed a complex, enlivening movement art called *eurythmy*[29] based on his understanding of how consciousness co-evolves with speech and language (Steiner, 1931/1984). Eurythmy is a largely undiscovered postformal art-form with the potential to enhance higher order consciousness through complex creativity and body–mind integrality. It is enacted artistically with speech or music, or therapeutically. Research into the potential of eurythmy in systems theory has begun (Deijmann, n.d.). It could be philosophically located within the emergent *aesthetic literacies* arising from the critique of *narrow literacies* (Gale, 2005).

In the context of high-stakes testing and performance outcomes *pedagogical voice* and *language reflexivity* are not high on educational agendas. Yet, research suggests that sustained exposure to electronic "voices"—television, computers and electronic games—may impair early speech development (Clouder et al., 2000; Healy, 1998; Pearce, 1992). While not advocating the elimination of the latter, more creative attention to the nuances of the *living word* could facilitate postformal language sensibility at appropriate developmental moments.

The Art of Pedagogical Voice: Silent Spaces and Sensitive Sounds

> On better days we struggle to tear off the tacky film which covers our educational and poetic aspirations, resist the counterfeit version of consciousness and struggle to locate the smothered springs of renewal (Abbs, 2003, p. 1).

What kinds of environments are we providing for our children? In our noise-polluted urban worlds it is a huge challenge to draw conscious attention to sound, let alone begin to refine and educate the delicate senses in relation to it. By contrast, an educational environment where spoken human language is valued over written and electronic voices for young children may provide an antidote. Poems, singing, drama and natural conversation are all vocal methods that can greatly benefit the development of written language. Additional oral methods include chanting, oration, re-telling stories, tongue twisters and word play. Learning a second or third language is invaluable for enhancing sound awareness, and ability to see things from multiple perspectives, not to mention expanding awareness of the cultural *other*.

Consciousness of how we voice ourselves with children also makes space for silence, which can be a very powerful arena for "holding the space". David Jardine points to the importance of cultivating silent spaces in our classrooms.

> We must begin to believe again that silence may be our most articulate response. Silence must become possible again. In the midst of silence, a word, a gesture, a cry, can finally *mean* something, because we can finally hear, finally listen (Jardine, 1998, pp. 30–31).

Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) refer to the respect the Ancient Greeks had for "the lulls of profound silence that periodically spread across a room filled with conversation" perceiving them as representing the presence of Hermes. "By silencing the everyday babble, Hermes allowed the Greeks to tap their imagination, fears, hopes and passions" (p. 304).

In a pedagogical environment where teachers are reflexively conscious of their own language and voice, and respectful of children's voices, the space can be opened for children to voice their hopes and fears, interests and dreams.[30] Recent educational research involves the participation of children's voices in education[31] and research (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2007). Research on non-violent communication may also be relevant in this regard.

The world of sound and tone—which incidentally is carried on the air—is heavily polluted today, just like the particle pollution in the air. How often do urban children hear birds or insects sing, wind whistle, creeks babble or waves break? Attention to sound education has been severely neglected, other than through the obvious formal

process of music education. We can begin with very young children by allowing them to "hear a pin drop", or taking them to environments where they can actively listen to natural sounds. Arguably, a joyful teacher starting a class with a song is far less likely to attract resistance than one who shouts to be heard.

In these times, when so much education has become reduced to *vocational training*, it might be useful to consider that the word *voc*ation—from *voce*—originally meant *spiritual calling*. How are we facilitating the deep listening that might enable children to hear such a calling (Hillman, 1996). While not recommending meditation for children, listening practices, observation of nature and the inner stillness of absorption in a creative activity—e.g. painting, wood carving, weaving—are foundations for stillness, open mindedness and open-heartedness.

In summary, an authentic pedagogical voice may balance the inauthenticity of "voice"-mail, "chat"-rooms and "talking" computers. Educators carry a developmental—even evolutionary—responsibility through our choice of words, our tone of voice, the timing of our silences, our authentic presence and how well we enable children to express theirs.

The Pedagogical Languages[32] of Love, Life and Wisdom

From multiple points of view the times we are living in are highly significant. As a species we have achieved a peak in terms of scientific and technological development, yet the damage we have done to the earth in the process has brought the whole notion of progress into question. Alternatively, the word *progress* could mean a growth and maturing of consciousness and moral/ethical/spiritual values through the nurturing of love, life and wisdom, rather than information acquisition and consumerism which are primarily geared to material progress.

The notion that consciousness is evolving has emerged in spiritual and religious studies, developmental psychology, cultural history and integral theory. New thinking is evident in the new sciences, poststructural philosophy, and integral, holistic, planetary perspectives. The potential impact for formal education is twofold, raising the following key questions. If new postformal ways of thinking are emerging that are complex, dialectical, creative and self-reflective, how is education responding to this? Secondly, if the fragility of our current planetary ecological environment can be assisted by fostering wiser, more caring, more life-enhancing, integral, planetary consciousness, how can educators achieve this? This chapter has brought these challenging issues into the education discourse by planting seeds for postformal–integral–planetary pedagogies. Arising from the intersection of the evolution of consciousness discourse and postformal educational approaches, my educational philosophy distils four core pedagogical values—love, life, wisdom and language/voice. I suggest these are central to education for spirituality, care and wellbeing.

Notes

1. Reductionism in science is the process which involves "starting from wholes and moving 'down' into parts, [in which] one is moving in the opposite direction from the way matters arise" (Goodenough & Deacon, 2006, p. 853).
2. The term *spiritual* is used here to denote ways of thinking not limited by *scientific materialism*, but which acknowledges there is more to life than matter, without necessarily subscribing to a particular religion.
3. Although this quote is well known, oft-cited and always attributed to Einstein, I have not been able—in spite of numerous searches—to uncover its source.
4. Holism has often been taken as the thesis that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. http://plato.stanford.edu/cgi-bin/encyclopedia/archinfo.cgi Holistic/integral/unitive consciousness is identified as a feature of postformal thinking (Gidley, 2006, 2007a, 2007b).
5. *Construct-aware* is a term used by Cook-Greuter (2000) to refer to the ability to become aware of one's language habits and to consciously move beyond them so that we are self-reflexively conscious of our own language. I introduce the term *language reflexivity* as an alternative to construct awareness, with similar intent.
6. The university template is different as its genealogy is arguably more connected to the monastery template.
7. Even within theoretical frameworks that purport to be *the most holistic* or *the most integral*, there can be a shadow of competitiveness or even elitism, where proponents of one version either undermine or do not adequately reference others of slightly different persuasion. My interest is *integration* of integral and other postformal and planetary approaches to begin philosophical coherence. My approach *reflects* on itself and includes the particularities of other integral approaches—not to imply either a competitive, hierarchical, *one-upmanship* or a horizontal relativism.
8. Sri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy was pedagogically developed through his spiritual collaborator, *The Mother*.
9. I am not sufficiently informed to comment on the trends in European and other non-Anglo nations, except that in the so-called developing world, there is a strong, modernist, political and economic movement to transplant the formal factory model of schooling into these diverse cultures. There is also a postcolonial critique of this neo-colonialist agenda (Gidley, 2001; Inayatullah, 2002; Jain & Jain, 2003; Jain, Miller, & Jain, 2001; Visser, 2000).
10. I use *postformal* to refer to the pedagogical approaches pointing beyond the factory model of *formal* education.
11. I coin the term *delicate theorising* in reference to Goethe's *delicate empiricism* (Holdrege, 2005; Robbins, 2006).
12. Contemplative studies programs have been developed at Brown University http://www.brown.edu/Faculty/Contemplative_Studies_Initiative/courses.html and *The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society* http://www.contemplativemind.org/about/history.html
13. See. for example. the *Global Dialogue Institute* http://global-dialogue.com/
14. I acknowledge that I came across this quote from Wittgenstein in the book *To Dwell with a Boundless Heart: Essays in Curriculum Theory, Hermeneutics, and the Ecological Imagination* (Jardine, 1998, p. 25).
15. Foucault (2005) pointed out that *self-care* was part of the spiritual path to knowledge for approximately two millennia until the Cartesian split of spirituality and philosophy.
16. Most Steiner schools do not encourage teachers to use textbooks, but rather to research and individualise the content aspect of lessons through their own imagination and creativity.
17. Although not strongly emphasised in the postformal adult development literature, *imagination* is linked with postformal development by some researchers (Bassett, 2005b; Cook-Greuter, 2000; Sinnott, 2005).
18. The term *imaginal thinking* was used by Steiner in 1917 to represent a conscious activation of a higher faculty of imagination conjointly with the concept-forming thinking mind to create

living concepts. "I have applied the term 'imaginal' to representations that are apprehended by the psyche as living" (Steiner, 1970, p. 39). The term *imaginal* has re-emerged in contemporary educational writing, based on the work of Jungian psychologist James Hillman and others. It is referred to as a "pre-analytical mode of knowing and being" (Willis, 2004, p. 8 of 13) in contrast with Steiner's post-rational intent.

19. The term *training* in educational settings is a behaviourist metaphor. Although it has been used in an integral education context to distinguish three elements of an integral curriculum: "content, training and inquiry" (Ferrer, Romero, & Albareda, 2005, pp. 307–308), my preference is for non-behaviourist terms.

20. Kieran Egan's *Imaginative Education Research Group* based in Vancouver has created a community of scholars, educators and researchers focusing on this vital aspect of educational transformation. www.ierg.net

21. Functional illiteracy refers to being able to read the words in a text but not understand the meaning and/or be able to apply it to everyday life. According to a support group for literacy in Tucson, Arizona, "In the USA 40–44 million (21–23% of adults) are functionally illiterate. Among young adults, illiteracy is increasing." http://www.lovetoread.org/dev/literacy.html Further research is needed to establish the veracity of this claim.

22. Sternberg's balance theory is a complex theory and it is beyond the scope of this chapter to elaborate.

23. This echoes Pestalozzi's and Steiner's emphasis on balancing head, heart and hands in education.

24. There are emergent global initiatives directed towards wisdom, such as the *World Wisdom Council* http://www.wisdompage.com/worldwisdomcouncil.html and the Wisdom Institute http://www.wisdominst.org/wisdom.htm

25. I have gratefully borrowed and adapted this phrase from the book *Creativity across domains: Faces of the muse* (Kaufman & Baer, 2005).

26. These terms were taken from notes I took at a conference presentation (MacLure, 2006c).

27. *Family resemblances* were used by Wittgenstein (1968) to refer to the "complicated network of similarities, overlapping and criss-crossing" found in different word uses and meanings (p. 32).

28. The term *nanotextology* was playfully utilised to refer to construct-awareness of each word (Hampson, 2007).

29. The term *eurythmy* means beautiful or harmonious rhythm from Greek roots *eu-* "well" + *rhythmos* "rhythm." http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=eurythmic Eurythmy brings together "form, movement and language [which] all *sound* the essential nature of the world in different ways." http://eurythmy.org/abeurp1.html

30. The *Centre for Children and Young People* (CCYP) at Southern Cross University, where I am undertaking this research, emphasises children's voices as a significant component of its mission, through the participation of children and young people in research (e.g. *The Young People: Big Voice* Project) http://ccyp.scu.edu.au/index.php

31. The honouring of children's voices in education is in line with the UNESCO project *Education for All through Voices of Children* http://www.unesco.kz/education/efa/booklet_voice.pdf

32. *Pedagogical language* has been referred to as a pathic principle in learning, including "presence, relational perspectives, tact" referred to as "pre-reflective, pre-theoretic, pre-linguistic and non-cognitive" (van Manen & Shuying, 2002). This is a complex area in which some researchers would call these postformal.

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Chapter 29
A Quest for the Realm of Spirituality

Zehavit Gross

Abstract The aim of this chapter is to analyze through the RSTM typological model the location of the realm of spirituality and assess its character. The basic assumption of this model is that both religiosity and secularity are types of search for meaning. They are parallel, equivalent entities and constructs, and not opposites. Both contain a spiritual aspect which is "located" in a different place within the human capacity. Spirituality in this regard is engaged with the loftier functional side of life.

Spirituality is an expression of human longing to approach a supreme entity or power situated beyond human control and grasp, thereby expressing the existential uniqueness of humans our animals. Spirituality is realized in abstract aspects of human life that constitute part of one's existential secular or religious being. The formal character of human spirituality is derived from one's mode of existence ("having" or "being") and the structure of one's religious or secular world (heritable or conceptual). As such, human spirituality has two fundamental patterns of manifestation: Instrumental and existential.

In the heritable dimension, spirituality is an occasional, fleeting event (associated with one parameter – emotional transcendence), whereas in the conceptual dimension, spirituality is a central, permanent, immanent component of existence, constituting part of one's definition of self (associated with four parameters – explorative, literacy, autonomy and autarchic legitimacy). Delineation of these parameters and determination of their location render spirituality a concrete, measurable and quantifiable value.

The basic assumption of this model is that both religiosity and secularity are types of search for meaning. They are parallel, equivalent entities and constructs, and not opposites. Both contain a spiritual aspect which is "located" in a different place within the human capacity. Spirituality in this regard is engaged with the loftier functional side of life.

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Introduction

The recent increase in articles and studies on spirituality may well be a conse-
quence of diffuse and one-dimensional definitions of religious and secular concepts
in the modern world.[1] Spirituality can be seen as an expression of human longing
to approach a supreme entity or power situated beyond human control and grasp,
thereby expressing the existential uniqueness of humans over animals. Spirituality
is realized in abstract aspects of human life that constitute part of one's existential
secular or religious being. Spirituality is thus largely associated with the connection
between the human and the sublime, between the concrete and the abstract. It con-
stitutes parts of one's existential secular or religious being, yet, exists apart from
and beyond it. In this chapter, spirituality is considered a construct distinct from
religiosity and secularity, yet it exists in the definitions of both. In order to better
understand the unique place of the realm of spirituality, there is a need to reconstruct
the definitions of religiosity and secularism and, from them, to elicit those distinct
terms that define spirituality.

God is the focus of religion and perceived in monotheistic faiths as abstract.
One key question concerning religion is the relationship between the material and
the spiritual—a question immanently linked with the conception of God in general
and the definition of spirituality in particular. Studies that deal with religiosity have
mainly focused on behavioral aspects as its manifestations. These aspects are mate-
rially linked; even if based on spirituality, they provide access to tangible, empirical
parameters whose immediate result is an impressive yield of quantitative studies.
Focus on behavior clearly limits the scope of religiosity as a concept, leaving
uncharted territory in the human spiritual world that defies positivistic definition.
Moreover, it gives rise to a monolithic system of dichotomous definitions in which
one who does not conform to the behavioral patterns labeled "religious" is defined as
"secular" and vice versa. Modern society, however, endorses differentiation. In the
traditional world, every phenomenon derives from a monistic and unchallengeable
source of authority, whereas contemporary society is aware of the potential existence
of different phenomena derived from numerous, varied, and pluralistic sources of
authority. As such, religious definitions, too, must embody extensive differentiation
to accommodate the changing needs of different potential populations.

Spirituality is manifested in moments of deviation and departure from the accep-
ted, routine, "objective" behavioral system when one bonds with some kind of
Supreme Being. It is situated in the "subjective" realm that wonders about and
inquires into the nature of the secular or religious outlook that a person adopts and
the source of authority from which it is derived.

Thus, the role of spirituality in life should focus on a new definition of religiosity
that delineates the typological "geographic location" or realm of spirituality and
its correlation with various manifestations of religion. Identification of this psy-
chophysical location can establish a foundation for concrete research and provide
a deeper understanding of spirituality and religion alike. This study maintains that
spirituality may be manifested among religious and secular people alike, thereby

demanding a redefinition of the concept of secularity, not as the absence of religion but rather as an independent entity that embodies various realms of spirituality.

Spirituality in the Literature

Most research on spirituality was conducted in the fields of psychology and sociology of religion and was based on empirical studies. Only a small part of this research addresses the philosophical aspect (Sheridan, 1986; Alexander, 2001) or contributes to the construction of a conceptual theoretical framework (Poll & Smith, 2003; Smith, 2003). Spirituality is one of the ways in which people construct knowledge and meaning; spiritual identity is regarded as the framework within which the ultimate questions of life are meditated (Stewart, 2002). Indeed, spirituality is regarded in the literature as a universal human capacity that is mainly related to wellbeing (Wong-McDonald & Gorsuch, 2000; Weber & Cummings, 2003). This takes on a broader meaning when spirituality is examined in the context of the relatively new branch of psychology known as positive psychology. The aim of positive psychology is to transform psychology from a preoccupation with repairing the bad things in life, to an emphasis on a salutogenic perspective of human existence (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Spirituality is related to hope and happiness (Bridges & Moore, 2002) and therefore can be seen as an integral part of positive psychology.

Research that explores the difference between spirituality and religiosity is sometimes based on the underlying assumption that being religious and being spiritual are distinctive and exclusive entities (Pargament, 1999a; Hill & Pargament, 2003). However, some researchers view spirituality as an integral part of religiosity (Benson, 1997; Gordon et al., 2002; Smith, 2003), and others consider spirituality and religiosity synonymous (Halford, 1999; Ahmadi Lewin, 2001). Spirituality has traditionally been mainly associated with conventional measures of religiosity like closeness to God, institutional beliefs, and religious practices. This may explain why several scholars found that the most spiritual are, by a variety of measures, those who are also the most religious (Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Scott, 2001). In contrast, other scholars found that most of those who view themselves as "spiritual" do so by default; they are less religious rather than more spiritual (Marler & Hadaway, 2002). Much research on spirituality is based on Fowler's (1981) stage theory of faith development, which rests on cognitive psychology. Fowler's theory was intended to describe religious development, but was subsequently adopted by researchers in the field of spirituality because no other theories were available. However, adopting a theory from research on religiosity again assumes that religiosity is identical to spirituality.

Spirituality epitomizes post-modernity. In a post-modernist era, where sorrow, despair, alienation, and depression dominate, spirituality can shed new light and convey a new message. What characterizes the post-modern era is the disappointment with rationalism and the preference for the contextual cultural factor over the rational. The expansion of research on spirituality seems to be a direct outcome of the secularization process in the post-modern era, accompanied by the revival of

the privatization and individualization of religiosity (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler & Tipton, 1985). Scholars have found that spirituality is connected to the affective, the rational, the cognitive, and the unconscious symbolic domains (Roof, 2000; Hill & Pargament, 2003; Smith, Denton, Faris & Regnerus, 2002; Smith, 2003).

The spirituality movement is often viewed as part of a "sociocultural trend toward deinstitutionalization and individualization" (Pargament, 1999a, p. 7). The deconstructionist trend of the meta-narrative and differentiation processes creates fundamental changes in the scope of religiosity. The trend toward spirituality seems to challenge the coherence of religiosity and to create anxiety among researchers and educators, especially in America (Roof, 2000; Cimino & Lattin, 1998; Marler & Hadaway, 2002). Peter Berger (1979) has stated that pluralism is a threat to religiosity (pp. 3–11). Pargament (1999a) claims that the spiritual movement may be seen as a sign that "something is missing in the way religion is currently defined and practiced" (pp. 6–7).

If spirituality is a product of secularization, then the essence of spirituality seems to lie in secularism rather than in religiosity. And if secularism is viewed as the opposite pole to religiosity on a continuum; i.e., less religious means more secular (Bruce, 2002), then additional dimensions (beyond an absence of religiosity) are needed to conceptualize secularity. Moreover, perhaps if attention is given to the parameters for measuring secularity, this will open a new way to better understanding spirituality in the modern era.

Religiosity and Secularity

This study proposes a typological model for assessing secularity and religiosity that adds two dimensions—conceptual (intellectualized) and heritable (socialized)—to the religious/secular distinction applied in research to date (Gross, 1999). These new dimensions describe the manner in which people structure, and perceive the significance of their religious or secular worlds. The conceptual dimension refers to religiosity or secularity that is the consequence of an overall intellectual outlook, including opinions and views relating to all aspects of human life, while the heritable (socialized) dimension refers to religiosity or secularity that originates in the family environment that shapes initial personality, behavior patterns, emotions, and experiences. Such religiosity/secularity is transmitted through a process of primary socialization that becomes an integral part of the individual's being.

The eight permutations of religiosity/secularity and conceptual/heritable yield eight basic theoretical categories: Four religious categories—heritable, conceptual, integrative (both conceptual and heritable), and unfocused (neither conceptual nor heritable)—and four parallel secular categories, as shown in Fig. 29.1.

Each dimension can be analyzed through a number of parameters, some of which are identical for religious and secular people, and some of which are different (see Table 29.1).

Conceptual parameters are intellectualized and include the following:
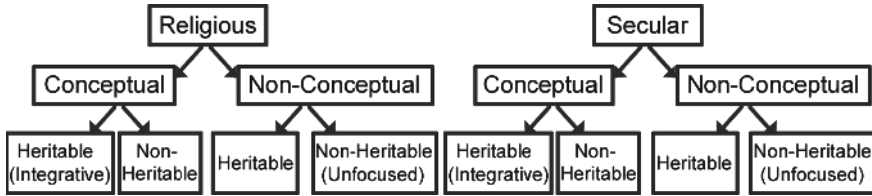
Fig. 29.1 A religious-secular typological model (RSTM)

- Anthropocentrism (secularity)—human beings are the source of authority for their own behavior
- Theocentrism (religiosity)—the divine entity is the source of authority for all human activity
- Rationalism—basing one's religious or secular outlook on cognitive foundations (reason and logic)
- Literacy—the need for study and scholastics, and the role of knowledge as part of one's secular or religious identity
- Explorative—the human need for inquiry; a search for meaning mainly through questions and contemplation
- Autonomy (secularity)—freedom from control or influence of another or others; independent control of self
- Autarchic legitimacy (secularity)—validating secularity based on a subjective, personal conception not biased by any external criteria
- Ritualism (religiosity)—conducting religious ceremonies as a result of a cognitive decision

Heritable parameters are socialized and include the following:

- Circumstance—contingency: one's religious or secular self-definition originating in having been born into a religious or a secular family
- Routine—activities that people are accustomed to carrying out that become an integral part of their behavior

Table 29.1 Parameters of conceptual and heritable dimensions in the religious/secular context

Conceptual		Heritable	
Secular	Religious	Religious	Secular
1. Anthropocentrism	1. Theocentrism	1. Circumstance	1. Circumstance
2. Rationalism	2. Rationalism	2. Routine	2. Routine
3. Literacy	3. Literacy	3. Inertia	3. Inertia
4. Explorative	4. Explorative	4. Vitality	4. Vitality
5. Autonomy	5. Ritualism (cognitive)	5. Ritualism (affective)	
6. Autarchic legitimacy		6. Voluntarism	5. Voluntarism
		7. Selectivity	
		8. Antiquity	
		9. Emotional transcendence	

- Inertia—remaining religious or secular due to perseverance rather than rethinking
- Vitality—activities undertaken out of vital need as part of the will to live
- Ritualism (religiosity)—conducting religious ceremonies as a result of an affective decision
- Voluntarism—acting in concurrence with tradition not because of being ordered to but willingly because of being used to it
- Selectivity (religiosity)—practising certain traditions and not others, in keeping with the family heritage
- Antiquity (religiosity)—religious behavior that links the believer with previous generations
- Emotional transcendence (religiosity)—the key motivating factor for religious behavior is a deep-rooted emotion that causes a transcendental spiritual uplift

Conceptual and heritable parameters are evident in both the religious and secular worlds. The principal difference between them lies in their content and source of authority rather than in the kind of thought or action. Through the conceptual and heritable dimensions, one may not only define religiosity or secularity but also assess their respective mechanisms. This may help to answer the question of whether there are basic, consistent, recurring behavioral patterns that differentiate distinct groups of human beings, irrespective of the activities in which they are engaged.

Human Behavioral Patterns

The attempt to identify consistent behavioral patterns among people was a concern of psychologist Erich Fromm. Following Marcel, Tillich and Staehelin, Fromm (1976) claimed that human behavior, feelings, and thoughts were guided by and contingent on two basic modes of existence: "having" and "being."

"Having" is a basic acquisitive orientation. Wanting to have something expresses a person's need for control and possessiveness, especially—but not exclusively—in the material sphere, but also regarding spiritual possessions (sources of information) and other aspects of life (such as control over human beings and their emotions, etc.). The "having" mode occurs when the "I" of experience is replaced by the "it" of possession (Fromm 1976, pp. 21–22).

"Being," in turn, is the concept of process, activity, and movement (Fromm, 1976, p. 25), a means, a fundamental human orientation toward development of the human personality per se, aspiring to "be" and, thereby, achieving autonomy and self-fulfillment. This basic approach to life reflects a desire to comprehend the meaning and substance of one's inherent potential and that of the world in which one lives and "becomes." This quest for fulfillment and realization—that constitute the culmination of the experience of "being"—is not an autonomous experience but rather engenders a new series of "becoming" events that constitute part of the unending process of human existence. Thus, George Simmel noted that "being"

implies change, that "being is becoming." The "being" mode thus perceives life as process rather than substance.

Western society, as a consumer society, is well aware of the central role and significance of having, but Western philosophy is still seeking the answer to the question "What is being?" (Fromm, 1976, p. 25). "Having" and "being" thus constitute two alternative patterns of human adjustment to oneself and to the cosmos. While "having" expresses an extrinsic tendency toward acquisition of ownership over external resources, enabling one to cope with life in this world, "being" reflects an intrinsic desire to nurture and develop inner personality resources for the same purpose. These two modes parallel the two dimensions of religiosity/secularity presented above (conceptual and heritable), as both express the patterns that typify human adjustment to the universe and basic motivational orientations. Heritable religiosity and secularity suit people with "having" tendencies, as their religiosity/secularity is of an instrumental nature, whereas conceptual religiosity/secularity conforms to the "being" orientation, as it embodies an ideological-fundamental character.

Among the conceptually religious, religion accords significance to life, while the conceptually secular find such significance by adopting a skeptical attitude toward religion. Conceptual religiosity or secularity has a constructivist character that is constantly developing. On the other hand, heritable religiosity/secularity is of a positivistic-empirical objective nature, mandating certain rules of behavior typical of religious or secular people that are transmitted to succeeding generations.

Consequently, it appears that all human beings, secular and religious alike, sense an attachment or emotional bond of some sort (whether transitory or permanent) at some time in their lives with a kind of entity or power that transcends humanity. This formal association with a Supreme Being, that distinguishes human beings from all other entities in the cosmos (animate and inanimate), is accorded significant religious or secular content according to one's beliefs. Obviously, the manner, time, and place of such contact differs according to the type (conceptual or heritable) inherent in one's personality that may manifest either a "having" or a "being" mode. One substantive difference between these modes is manifested in attitude toward and conception of God, as described below.

Mode of Existence and Conception of God

In his essay *The Lonely Man of Faith* (1992), Rabbi J. B. Soloveichik characterizes two opposing human archetypes that exist within each human being, based on the two accounts of the creation of Adam in the Book of Genesis. From these archetypes, one may derive two distinct conceptions of God that conform to "having" and "being," respectively, and to the typological dimensions of conceptual/heritable religiosity/secularity.

There are two accounts of the creation of Adam in the Book of Genesis [1:26–29 and 2:7–16]. Various scholars have attempted to explain the reasons for this repetition and the dialectics between these two stories. Many Bible critics view the

double account as proof that the Bible is based on several different sources assembled by a later editor. Rabbi Soloveichik, in contrast, claims that it reflects the "dual man"—the two modes present in each individual (1992, p. 10).

He calls Adam I the "Man of Majesty," he who rules and conquers the world, whom God ordained to "be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that creepeth upon the earth" [Genesis 1:28]. The Man of Majesty is obligated to use essential resources for his subsistence and benefit. The existential religious question that concerns his conscience is "How does the cosmos function?" (Soloveichik, 1992, p. 13). As such, he explores the laws of nature and exploits them to rule and constantly reshape the universe. He is "overwhelmed by one quest, namely, to harness and dominate the elemental natural forces and to put them at his disposal" (p. 14). Even his fundamental question is not asked for its own sake, not nurtured by pure intellectual curiosity, but rather posed to determine the practical consequences, fulfilling "the selfish desire . . . to better his own position in relation to his environment" (p. 14). His basic approach to the world is instrumental-utilitarian and pragmatic, thereby ensuring his status in the world and protecting his own interests.

Adam II is the "Man of Humility" or "Man of Faith," motivated by a constant quest to understand the cosmos, relentlessly attempting to assess its nature. He "explores not the scientific abstract universe but the irresistibly fascinating qualitative world where he establishes an intimate relation with God" (Soloveichik, 1992, p. 23). Adam II is not expected to rule the world but to accept its realities as they are, to work the land and protect it. His function entails a constant search for insight into the character and nature of the universe. According to Rabbi Soloveichik, the quest of Adam I is "for power and control thus making him ask functional "how" questions . . . Adam the second does not apply the functional method invented by Adam the first . . . instead he wants to understand the living "given" world into which he has been cast" (pp. 21–22). While Adam I is concerned with the question per se, Adam II is interested in its practical implications. The story of Adam I uses the name "Elohim" for God, expressing power and control: "And God (Elohim) said 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness' . . ." [Genesis 1:26]. In the second story, the tetragrammaton (YHWH—a form of the Hebrew root meaning "to be") appears as well: "Then the Lord God (YHWH Elohim) formed man of the dust of the ground . . ." [Genesis 2:7], expressing the essence and function of human beings, who are ordained to approach and cling to God and to "become" by understanding His nature. While Adam I considered the quantitative, organic features of the world, Adam II addressed its qualitative, cosmic aspects.

Rabbi Soloveichik's description of Adam I resembles that of one who manifests the "having" mode of existence, with an external motivational nature and a transcendent conception, as his attempt at understanding how the cosmos functions expresses his desire for insight, serving only as a means of achieving a perceived loftier objective, namely, mastery of the cosmos. Adam II, in turn, appears to conform to the "being" mode, with an intrinsic motivational nature, as he seeks to understand the cosmos to become a part of it, perceiving such understanding as

the loftiest objective of human existence on earth. In other words, he wants to experience the world and thereby experience God, coalescing with the immanent God who resides within him so that he can understand the meaning and nature of God and the cosmos alike.

Fishman (1996) claims that this dichotomy between the two types propounded by Rabbi Soloveichik had previously been posited by sociologists Max Weber and Peter Berger. Weber claims that Adam's refusal to accept the deficiencies of his world leads him to adopt and develop two alternative conceptions of redemption motivated by different conceptions of God (Schluchter, 1989, p. 128). The first is guided by the ethos of mastery of the universe, focusing on the concept of transcendence. It maintains that God created the cosmos, exists separately from it, and demands that human beings serve Him as a tool for reshaping it. The alternative approach aims at redemption by seeking harmony with the cosmos. Its focal concept is immanence, according to which the fundamentals of God are imprinted in human consciousness and in nature (with which human beings are obliged to commune and converge). Fishman maintains that Berger (1981, p. 5) underscored the universal aspects of this dichotomy, claiming that the first type originates in the inner human conflict aroused by a transcendent God, whereas the second is engendered by the immanent God that dwells within human beings (Fishman, 1996, p. 265).[2]

The two types accord religious significance to individuals' personal identities. Differences in their modes of operation apparently derive from the fundamental ethos that motivates each, which is a direct consequence of their tendencies, character and differential conception of God. This approach conforms to that of psychologist Carl Jung, who posited a correlation between the nature and the character of a person's human identity and the manner in which "s/he" perceives God (Jung, 1938; Gross, 2001).

Spirituality, as indicated above, addresses the connection between human beings and a loftier Supreme Power in which all people believe without relating to its (religious or secular) content. This is what differentiates human beings from other entities in the universe. Consequently, conception of God is an aspect of spirituality in its broadest sense, addressing the abstract qualities of human existence and activity (Gross, 2002). It is this spirituality that demands definition and differentiation.

Types of Spirituality: Instrumental and Existential

Inspired by Fromm's conceptual system of modes of human existence—"having" and "being"—and the various human conceptions propounded by Weber, Berger and Soloveichik, correlated with the two respective fundamental conceptions of God (transcendent and immanent), a series of definitions of spirituality can be derived:

Two types of religious or secular spirituality are posited—instrumental and existential. In the former, people seek ways to control the forces and energies of the cosmos. Their goal is to reach a transcendent God situated outside the human realm and to understand how the cosmos functions. As various media are required for

the uplift that leads to the Supreme Being, such people interact with "mediators" affecting the five human senses, through which they attempt a sensory rise "beyond" humanity. Such media, derived from the animate and inanimate worlds, may include candles, incense, oils, icons, sounds, forms, tastes, animals and the like, perceived as having absorbed sanctity or energy and enabling the achievement of emotional transcendence, itself a means of human gratification and fulfillment.

In existential spirituality, the human being is the medium, seeking to commune with an immanent God who resides deep within him/her. S/he learns the secrets of searching for and identifying the inherent spiritual-energetic potential that constitutes the objective of his/her quest. This search and attempt at communion constitute the realm of existential spirituality. No external medium is necessary, as it is located within the soul, the site of human redemption. The act of reflection is the objective, embodying satisfaction, and self-fulfillment.

Religious and secular spirituality differ in content but share a similar formal character or modus operandi (instrumental or experiential), as manifested in a tendency toward the basic heritable or conceptual religious or secular dimensions. Consequently, one may perceive spirituality patterns among the heritably religious/secular that differ from those of their conceptual counterparts. Among the former, spirituality is "situated" at the emergence of the emotional-transcendental parameter, whereas, for the latter, its realm is explorative, literacy, autonomy, and autarchic legitimacy.

Heritable types (both religious and secular) are likely to experience moments of spirituality of an instrumental nature, whether within or outside the context of ritual interaction, in exposure to a sight, sound, scent, taste, or touch. In certain contexts and at certain times, the objects inducing these sensations, with which the person may otherwise be in regular or occasional contact, evoke an emotional experience and a feeling of elevation extending beyond the conventional sensations of ordinary life.

While the heritable type requires concrete, tangible reality for uplift, the conceptual type is concerned with abstract symbols. The latter's spiritual realm embodies enlightened search, deliberation, and examination as an autonomous, conscious act. Conceptual types attempt to understand phenomena and translate them into abstract formulas through which they assess existence. Such formulas deprive the phenomenon of all aspects perceptible by the five senses. It is this feeling that elevates them to heights unattainable and in fact non-existent in the realm of emotional-transcendental experience. Concern with the spiritual thus does not focus on an external symbol but rather on the internal relationship prevailing among various forces within one's personality that create and constitute said symbol. It is this internal interest that induces a lofty spiritual feeling.

As an individualistic person, distanced from the cosmos yet aware of his unlimited powers to seek its meaning, the conceptual type believes in his own autonomous ability to find justification and sources of validation for his insights of self. It is this ability that gives him the sublime feeling (defined as spiritual) of superiority to the animals. This spiritual experience is of a long-term nature, nourished by its own

partial nature: one may never perceive or achieve the whole, as spirituality derives from the quest for detailed knowledge of the formula that sustains the cosmos.

Unlike concrete heritable spirituality, attained through an external spiritual medium, conceptual spirituality is of a visionary nature. It engenders a transcendent dimension in the conceptual type's sensory world and accords reason and meaning to life. The literacy parameter optimizes understanding of such realities. Literacy is achieved by obtaining information. Indeed, some distinction should be made between knowledge as information and knowledge as cognition. Information is an external aggregate of facts received and stored within oneself, through which one learns to cope with the objective world. This, manifestly, extrinsic approach to knowledge characterizes the heritable type, who aspires to accumulate a corpus of knowledge and to use it as power. Such an interpretation would not satisfy the conceptual type, who builds his literacy world on the foundation of facts accumulated and converted to cognition. In this context, knowledge is a state of knowing, a carnal bond with the aggregate of facts, as in the biblical use of the term: "And the man knew Eve his wife . . ." [Genesis 4:1]. This experience gives rise to cognition, the totality of concepts, feelings, and thoughts that comprise a person's spiritual life. The experience of knowing is thus metaphysical, as it extends beyond the instrumental limits of information and aims at assimilation of, and total convergence with, the external world of insights and their endless processing in the internal human spiritual world.

Interaction between external information and internal insight causes a feeling of excitement, uplift and exaltation, inspired by a one-time encounter with the immanent God who created man in His image and likeness and who dwells within the unique inner depths of the individual. This psychological independence (autonomy in the RSTM typology) allows autonomous control systems to operate, consolidating and justifying them through independent sources of validation (autarchic legitimacy). For this reason, literacy is considered a cornerstone of conceptual construction, as the convergence of external information and internal insight generates emotions that embody the very essence of "being" insofar as the self is concerned. This essentially constitutes the deeper meaning of "knowing God" as spiritual intercourse, as an act that leads to refinement, purification and love of God, and the sublime, in its loftiest spiritual sense.

In this context, there may be a kind of religious spirituality that addresses the connection between man and God and all it implies, as well as an ethical-human spirituality that focuses primarily on the values pertaining to relations among human beings, rendering them substantively and existentially different from other animate and inanimate objects. Essentially, ethics are among the most marvelous manifestations that distinguish man from the beasts. They are perceived as a lofty code of behavior and other positive qualities used in building the steps that human beings ascend, toward themselves and thence toward God. In a typological study among secular adolescents in Israel (Gross, 1999), it was found that individuals categorized as conceptually religious or secular considered the moral-human aspect to be the highest human spiritual stage.

Spirituality thus represents the human spirit's universal longing for convergence with the supreme moral entity outside the human realm. Secular types believe that human morality and conscience constitute the uppermost node of the resulting hierarchy, whereas the religious associate it with Divine morality. This longing shows that human beings, by virtue of being superior to the animals, do not view the present, tangible world in which they live as the only manifestation of reality. The difference between heritable and conceptual types is that the former live nearly their entire lives relating exclusively to empirical reality of a functional-utilitarian nature, accurately reflecting their respective personalities. Their outlook is mechanistic, formal, and relative. Moments of uplift, characterized by emotional-transcendental parameters beyond that tangible reality, are limited and exceptional and have no significance to, or effect on, the existential definition of their identity and the shaping of their world. Consequently, such spirituality is of an instrumental nature.

In contrast, the conceptual type lives with an a priori feeling that the workings of the cosmos and the existential identity of every human being exist in the metaphysical world. The tangible world, in turn, is only a means to a higher end of significant life. The significance of the universe is perceived as comprehensible only in an abstract, absolute, and unattainable world, a realm of revelation, enlightenment, and virtue. It is there that existential spirituality resides and achieves significance. One may thus inquire whether the yearnings for this abstract world are intellectual or emotional.

The Realm of Spirituality—Emotional or Intellectual?

As the typological model demonstrates, heritable spirituality resides in emotional transcendence, a feeling inducing a transitory uplift and a desire to achieve and "conquer" some kind of higher metaphysical entity. As such, it usually expresses a fleeting, transitory situation. Conceptual spirituality, in contrast, originates in a rational source and manifests a different modus operandi. According to the RSTM typology, conceptual spirituality is "geographically" situated in the literacy, explorative, autonomy, and autarchic legitimacy parameters. Consequently, it represents an extended existential situation (and not a one-time occurrence as it is for the heritable type) that constitutes part of a person's being.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook claims that a person's spirituality comprises two stages: One analytical-rational and the other synthetic, consisting of the faith required to build and improve one's spiritual world: "After performing its job of assessing each domain, the analytical aspect must leave room for the synthetic one to emerge in the light of the unifying soul, as all knowledge, all sundry spiritual disciplines, will be perceived as different limbs of one well-shaped and powerful body within which one well-shaped, powerful, living and multifaceted soul shines" (Kook, 1985 vol. I, p. 25).

According to Rabbi Kook, spirituality is of cognitive rather than emotional origin. The synthetic stage essentially represents faith in God, leading to unification

of man and God. This harmony is the pinnacle of human spiritual uplift. Intellect creates the form and formula for human beings to establish and develop the emotion and experience of uplift. According to the model proposed in this study, creation of this experiential, emotional harmony with lofty Divine, or human morality can be achieved by the conceptual type (religious or secular alike) only if based on intellect. This enables human beings to aspire toward creating and shaping an ideal world, a world in which all is good and equitable, as a spiritual objective of a logical character.

The quest for wholeness is immanent to the spiritual process. To achieve perfection, it must originate in the innermost depths of the individual, recognizing and respecting his/her legitimate right to uniqueness. Such respect is not a matter of honor—an external respect of a social nature—but rather of dignity. It consists of the demands one sets for others and oneself—not as a social entity but as a person who recognizes the uniqueness that distinguishes one individual from others. This respect is linked to the right to maintain this uniqueness and to shape one's life freely, anchoring and justifying it according to any source of validation whatsoever, even if others believe such justification to be fundamentally erroneous.

These two components, respect and right, are essential to spirituality and provide it with nourishment, as spirituality is a reflection of human freedom and liberation from the fetters of external reality in establishing and channeling one's boundless internal existence. Awareness of this unlimited liberation lifts and exalts human beings by transforming them into creators, partners merging within the very act of Creation.

This experience is achieved, optimally, when an individual is distanced from surrounding society and can experience his individuality to the fullest. The spatial experience accords him the strength through which he assembles and senses the sources of validation that justify such spiritual existence. The resulting awareness yields a sublime feeling engendered by the confrontation of conflicting opposite forces: human liberation vs. enslavement to human intellect and the conceptual system according to which one lives, created by reason and anchored therein.

Conclusions

Spirituality is an expression of human longing to approach a supreme entity or power situated beyond human control and grasp, thereby expressing the existential uniqueness of humans over animals. Spirituality is realized in abstract aspects of human life that constitute part of one's existential secular or religious being. The formal character of human spirituality is derived from one's mode of existence ("having" or "being") and the structure of one's religious or secular world (heritable or conceptual). As such, human spirituality has two fundamental patterns of manifestation: instrumental and existential.

Application of the RSTM typological model determines the location of the realm of spirituality and assesses its character. In the heritable dimension, spirituality is

an occasional, fleeting event (associated with one parameter—emotional transcendence), whereas in the conceptual dimension, spirituality is a central, permanent, immanent component of existence, constituting part of one's definition of self (associated with four parameters—explorative, literacy, autonomy, and autarchic legitimacy). Delineation of these parameters and determination of their location render spirituality a concrete, measurable, and quantifiable value.

The basic assumption of this model is that both religiosity and secularity are types of search for meaning. They are parallel, equivalent entities and constructs, and not opposites. Both contain a spiritual aspect which is "located" in a different place within the human capacity. Spirituality in this regard is engaged with the loftier functional side of life. According to Emmons (1999), spirituality is a "search for meaning, for unity, for connectedness, for transcendence for the higher human potential" (p. 5). It has both a secular and a religious manifestation. Spirituality is connected with the sacred and, in this regard, the main question is what is the scope of the sacred? Is it limited only to the religious domain or can it exist separately within a positive mode in the secular domain? Perhaps, in the modern era, there should be openness and awareness of the fact that the sanctification process has both a religious and a secular manifestation.

Pargament distinguishes between a theory of sanctification and a theology of sanctification (Pargament, 1999b; Hill & Pargament, 2003). The RSTM typology suggests a theory of sanctification because it presents the construct and the relationships among variables. The parameters of the conceptual and heritable dimensions shift the discussion beyond a binary analysis of good and bad. In practice, this is a new way to approach secularism and religiosity as two distinct entities and not as two poles of the same continuum.

Pargament (1999b) raises the "danger of losing the sacred core" of religiosity (p. 37). Are there objective sacred entities or can people ascribe sacredness to entities hence enabling them to have a secular and a religious mode? Are there any commitments that derive from these sacred entities and what is the nature and scope of such commitment? Does the sacred lie within the transcendental or the immanent? Is the traditional God of the religious identical in substance and function to the secular "higher power"? These questions need to be examined in the light of the new approach to spirituality.

It seems to me that spirituality is a positive way of defining the abstract world of human beings in a secular, post-modernist world. When you ask secular people (especially in the US), "Are you religious?" they usually answer, "No, I am spiritual" (Marler & Hadaway, 2002).[3] Spirituality enables secular people to define themselves within a positive framework. From a psychological point of view, defining oneself in negative terms (such as "not religious") makes a person bitter and frustrated. In this regard, spirituality makes the nature of the search for meaning in life inclusive, flexible, diverse, positive, and hopeful.

The proposed theoretical model addresses ideal types that almost never exist in the real world, where most people display tendencies typical of both types. Only on rare occasions does one encounter a "pure-type" manifesting an exclusive tendency in one direction only. Consequently, attention needs to focus on the dominance of

instrumental or existential spirituality rather than the exclusive presence of one tendency. Instrumental types could then be defined as those who reveal characteristics defined as typical of instrumental spirituality with greater frequency or intensity than their colleagues who are defined as existentially spiritual.

This approach demands the translation of theoretical concepts into operational terms to enable the measurement of types of spirituality in different people. Awareness of these two types of spirituality, as well as their location in the human spiritual world, will enable the development of empirical research instruments and educational intervention programs aimed at developing the various spiritual orientations, respecting, and recognizing the legitimacy of each.

Notes

1. Other causes may include various processes recently affecting Western culture and thought, such as awareness that under certain conditions, excessive rationalization may engender inhuman behavior. Changes are also taking place in the scientific world, influenced by epistemological disputes regarding the source of human knowledge and its attendant questions of how knowledge develops and how scientists acquire their knowledge about the universe. One recent trend of this type prefers the constructivist to the positivist approach, according priority to knowledge based on subjective feelings rather than objective logic.
2. This dichotomy is further focused by Rabbi Soloveichik, who maintains that Adam I seeks to know God by means of reality, i.e., that reality constitutes a tool through which human beings discover the workings of the cosmos, while Adam II seeks to know God within reality and discover the meaning of existence in his world.
3. In Israel, they answer "No, I am not religious," an indication that they define secularity as not being religious (Gross, 1999).

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Chapter 30
Education and Eros

John P. Miller

Abstract This chapter explores the meaning of Eros and its relationship to education. The Greek categories of Eros, Xenia, Philia, Storge, and Agape are used a framework for this discussion. Each form is examined and their possible meanings in an educational context.

Up until the modern age, Eros was seen as central to human life. The Greek poet, Hesiod, suggested that Eros was the most ancient of the Gods, and his function was to "coordinate the elements that constitute the universe." Eros was the personification of the forces that bring harmony out of chaos in the universe. Later Eros was linked to human love through the myth of Eros and Psyche. Bringing Eros into our discussions of education can help move the dialogue away from its limited focus on accountability to broader and more inclusive vision.

With its obsession with testing and "standards," education today has become mechanistic and soulless. Len Gougeon (2007) in *Emerson and Eros* writes that Emerson believed that colleges had failed to meet their true mission of developing the soul. For Gougeon this condition continues today as "Colleges themselves bear much of the blame for this failure for, as Emerson warned at Harvard so many years earlier, they address only the head while repressing the soul, the source of the life-sustaining Divine Spirit in humankind" (p. 185). The word soul is never mentioned in visionary statements goal statements of schools and universities.

Octavio Paz (1995) writes:

> Our era rejects the soul and reduces the human mind to a reflex of bodily functions. Thus the concept of the person, a twofold inheritance from Christianity and Greek philosophy is profoundly undermined. The concept of the soul is the basis for the concept of the person, and without a person love regresses to mere eroticism (p. 157).

Paz argues that this rejection of the soul and denial of personhood led to the disasters of the twentieth century and the debasement of civilization. Paz suggests that there is a close connection between the soul, the person, human rights, and love; they are interconnected and form the heart of true community and civilized life.

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In this chapter, I will argue that love is crucial to restoring soul to education. The Greek poet, Hesiod, suggested that Eros was the most ancient of the gods and whose function was to "coordinate the elements that constitute the universe" (cited in Gougeon, p. 7). Eros was the personification of the forces that bring harmony out of chaos in the universe. Later, Eros was linked to human love through the myth of Eros and Psyche.

Emerson used the term in the original sense as he believed that "Eros represents the essential cosmic force, the glue that holds the universe and humanity together" (p. 7). This is expressed in a poem by Emerson:

He heard a voice none else could hear
From centered and from errant sphere.
The quaking earth did quake in rhyme,
Seas ebbed and flowed in epic chime.
In dens of passion, and pits of woe
He saw strong Eros struggling through
To sun the dark and solve the curse,
And beam to bounds of the universe.

<div align="right">(Cited in Gougeon, p. 7)</div>

Emerson saw the poet as the person who helps bring Eros into our world. According to Gougeon, Emerson tended to use Eros interchangeably with "Oversoul," "Reason," "Love," and "God." Emerson saw romantic love as a pathway to Eros or divine love. In his essay, "Love," Emerson wrote:

> For it [love] is a fire that kindling its first embers in the narrow nook of a private bosom, caught from a wandering spark out of another heart, glows and enlarges until it warms and beams upon multitudes of men and women, upon the universal heart of all, and so lifts up the whole world and all nature with it generous flames (Cited in Gougeon, p. 84).

Emerson read and was influenced by Dante who also held a similar vision of divine love. Dante's love of Beatrice led him to Eros or divine love in Paradise. Paradisio concludes with the famous line that it is "love that moves the sun and the other stars." Love or Eros is what animates the cosmos and our place in it.

This view of love at the centre of the universe was also held by Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Gandhi (1999) wrote:

> Scientists tell us that without the presence of the cohesive force among atoms that comprise the globe of ours, it would crumble to pieces and we would cease to exist; and as there is a cohesive force in blind matter so must there be in all things animate, and the name for that cohesive force among animate beings is love.
>   True love is boundless like the ocean and, swelling within one, spreads itself out and, crossing all boundaries and frontiers, envelops the whole world.
>   It is my firm belief that it is love that sustains the earth. There only is life where there is love.
>   The law of love, call it attraction, affinity, cohesion if you like, governs the world (pp. 55–57).

This chapter explores the meaning of Eros and other forms of love and relationship of Eros to education. Eros is seen here as the path to wholeness; wholeness in ourselves and in our relationship to others, the earth and the cosmos.

A helpful way of looking at different forms of love comes from the Greeks: Christopher Phillips (2007) has provided a helpful framework for exploring the concept of love as he uses five forms described by the Greeks: *Storge, Xenia, Philia, Eros* and *Agape*.

Storge

This is the love of family but it can extend to larger groups or tribes. At its most profound level it can be seen as love for the human family as a whole. The Greeks saw this as an instinctive, natural form of love that arises spontaneously. The mother's love for her child is the best example of this instinctive love. Feeling the child in the womb, seeing the new born, and caring for the helpless baby all contribute to this loving warmth that arises in the mother.

When *storge* goes beyond the family, it is termed *ubuntu* in Africa. *Ubuntu* means my wellbeing is the same as the wellbeing of the group or tribe; the two cannot be separated. Another way of saying this: I cannot be all I can be unless I help you become all you can be. Neslon Mandela says that "the spirit of *ubuntu* – that profound African sense that we are human only through the humanity of other human beings – is not a parochial phenomenon but is added globally to our common search for a better world" (cited in Phillips, p. 117). The Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka who won the Nobel prize in 1986 stated that the world can learn much from the indigenous Africans' "capacity for forgive" which is based on a "largeness of spirit" that is rooted in *ubuntu*.

Family love has been used as a metaphor for the classroom. Some teachers refer to creating a community in their classroom so that it is like a family. Waldorf education keeps a group of students and teacher together from Grades 1 to 8 to create what we could call *storge*. In public schools there is a process called *looping* where the teacher stays with a class for 2 or 3 years. Like the Waldorf school this helps create a sense of family in the classroom.

Another method for creating *storge* in the classroom is the classroom circle. The circle has its roots in indigenous cultures; for example, some First Nations people form a circle and pass the talking stick around to give each person a chance to share their thoughts and feelings. Black Elk said this about circles:

Everything the Power of the World does is done in a circle.
 The sky is round, and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours . . . The life (of a person) is a circle from childhood to childhood, and it is in everything where power moves (as cited in Baldwin, p. 80).

The circle can be used in the classroom as well giving each student a chance to speak; it can focus on a specific topic or have an open agenda.

I use the circle in all my classes for telling stories. I find it an exceptionally powerful way to share important student experiences in the classroom. For example, in my spirituality in education class I ask students to share a soulful experience from their own life. As we go around I am always moved by the stories the students tell which have included experiences in nature, illness of a family member, and experiences with the arts.

Baldwin (1994) believes that the circle can be an agent of societal transformation. Baldwin describes a process for adults to participate in what she calls the PeerSpirit Circle. She makes reference to the work of Jeanne Gibbs (1994) who has developed the concept of tribes for use in classrooms. The tribe is a small classroom group of five or six children who work together throughout the school year. Gibbs also uses the large classroom circle to allow students to share events in their lives. Baldwin summarizes the work of Gibbs when she says

> Students in tribes have their contributions and feelings acknowledged throughout the process: they feel safe, they feel loyal, they feel loved and loving. In thousands of classrooms, the tribal community is preparing children to become adult citizens of the circle (p. 159).

The school itself should feel like a family. There is plenty of evidence that small schools are more effective in promoting both academic and social development than large schools. Barker and Gump (1964) spent 3 years studying 13 high schools in eastern Kansas. The schools ranged in size from 40 to 2000 students and Barker focused on how size was related to student participation in athletics, class discussion, and extracurricular activities. In such activities as music, drama, journalism, and student government, participation was highest in the schools with enrolments between 61 and 150. With regard to classroom activities, the bigger school can offer more subjects, but the students in the larger schools participated in fewer and varied classes than the students in smaller schools. In the music classes, which were studied in detail, Barker and Gump found that musical education and experience was more widely distributed in the small school.

There has been further research which supports the finding that in small schools students actually do better academically (Cotton, 1996; Lee & Smith, 1994; Wasley, 2000). In reviewing studies that examine different institutions dealing with children, the World Health Organization (WHO) concludes that institutions should be small, for example, no larger than 100 children. According to WHO, when organizations are larger than this, informal discipline based on personal contact is replaced by impersonal, institutional authority.

In general, North American school systems have focused on consolidation of programs and have moved toward larger schools. For example, in the United States, between 1950 and 1975, the average size of the elementary school rose from 153 to 405 students. At the same time violence and vandalism in schools have skyrocketed. Of course, other factors in society have contributed to the violence in the schools, but it could be argued that the increasing size of the school has contributed to the trend of violence.

Larger schools are usually justified on the basis of economies of scale; that is, savings arise from joint administration and the use of one plant as opposed to several

buildings. However, there are the costs of bussing, larger bureaucracies associated with larger school systems, and the social costs that can come from schools closing in small communities where the school is often integral to the social life of the town. Another supposed advantage of the larger school is efficiency. However, one study in Vermont (Sher, 1977) indicated that the larger schools were often less efficient because the administrations were more isolated from the community and the students. The same study indicated that, in Vermont, six of the top ten schools in percentage of graduates entering college were small schools (with fewer than 60 in the graduating class) and that they were able to produce these results with operating costs, on a per pupil basis, of $225 less than the large schools.

Philia

Philia is the love between friends and also refers to the communal love that binds together a community. In Greece *philia* was essential to the formation of the polis, the basic civic unit. The Greeks saw the self and society as interconnected and *philia* was one of the bonds that facilitated this connection. Phillips (2007) describes what *philia* meant to the Greeks:

> The *philia* cultivated among friends was meant to extend outward in widening circles – to neighbors, members of the community at large, until everyone in the country shared it, creating a sense of solidarity, loyalty, cooperation, and common cause (p. 219).

The Japanese use the term "EN" to describe when two people share a sense of common destiny. There is a mystery behind relationships that is captured by this term as we cannot really know why we feel a bond with one person and not another. Of course, common interests and values bring people together but that usually only partially explains why people can become lifelong friends.

Teachers can sometimes nurture *philia* in classrooms through small group, or cooperative learning. Bonds can develop between students that allow them to work together for a common goal. The film *Paperclips* describes how a classroom of Grade 7 students in Kentucky focused on the holocaust by collecting a paperclip for each person that was lost in the concentration camps. This project led to strong sense of *philia* among the students and teacher. Service learning projects are also ways to creating *philia* among students as they work together toward a common goal.

Xenia

Xenia refers to the love of strangers. This love was inspired by the Greek conception of the gods who they felt intervened in the lives of people. Thus a stranger coming to one's door could be a god in the guise of a person. There was also a practical reason for extending friendship and hospitality to strangers as it created a tradition of reciprocity so that a person traveling might expect the same generosity when he or she went away from home.

Xenia is a central theme in Homer's *Odyssey*. Odysseus traveled for years and often depended on the kindness of strangers to survive during his long ordeal. When

he returned home he did so as a stranger who was not recognized by his wife and her suitors. They believed that he was dead. The suitors had transgressed against *xenia* as they were rude and continued to stay after they were asked to leave. In the end Odysseus killed all the suitors and this, in part, was punishment for not fulfilling their responsibilities toward *xenia*.

Some indigenous peoples such as the Sioux believe that there are really no strangers on the planet as all beings, including the animals, come from the womb of Mother Earth.

Today *global education* attempts to see all beings on the planets as connected and not as strangers. Schools have programs where students write to pen pals in other countries or communicate with them over the Internet. It could be argued that the Internet is helping create McLuhan's global village where there are fewer strangers.

The practice of loving-kindness meditation is a way to practice *xenia* as we send thoughts of wellbeing not only to our friends and family but to all beings on the planet. When students see that all humans want to avoid suffering and seek wellbeing and happiness, then we can feel a connection with all humanity.

The essence of this meditation is to center ourselves first in the heart area and to contact basic warmth there. After connecting with the heart we then attempt to share this warmth and energy with others. For example, one could use the following approach:

May I be well, happy and peaceful.
May my family be well, happy and peaceful.
May my friends be well, happy and peaceful.
May my neighbors be well, happy and peaceful.
May my colleagues be well, happy and peaceful.
May all people that I meet be well, happy and peaceful.
May all beings on this planet be well, happy and peaceful.
May all beings in this universe be well, happy, and peaceful.

This approach starts with those who are emotionally closest to us and then moves out from there. Another approach is to move out geographically.

May I be well, happy and peaceful.
May all beings in this room be well, happy and peaceful.
May all beings in this building be well, happy and peaceful.
May all beings in this neighborhood be well, happy and peaceful.
May all beings in this town or city be well, happy and peaceful.
May all beings in this region be well, happy and peaceful.
May all beings on this continent be well, happy, and peaceful.
May all beings in this hemisphere be well, happy, and peaceful.
May all beings in this planet be well, happy and peaceful.
May all beings everywhere be well, happy and peaceful.

(Cited in Miller, 2006, p. 62)

The words can vary as you can wish for wisdom and compassion in others.

When you are doing loving-kindness, it is also possible to visualize the people that you are sending these thoughts to. I have started my university classes with this exercise for the past 19 years and I find that it has added immeasurably to the tone and feel of the class. I wonder too, how the world would be different if this meditation was done before business and government meetings. It does not require belief in any particular religion but is simply a wish for the wellbeing of others.

Several of my students have used it in their own lives. One student from Ghana likes to practice this when he sees people on the subway or bus: "When I see people around, or when I move in the traffic it gives me the joy to meditate. . .. At times, you see some sad faces when you immediately enter public transit, and you have to meditate and wish them all well."

Another student from Panama also used it in a similar manner. "When I see each person in the subway, I look at them and pray for them. And I see a brother and a sister, and a family everywhere."

A teacher who works with students training to be teachers has attempted to integrate the mindfulness and loving-kindness into his teaching. He says "I'm encouraging my classes to take joy in the tasks that are not necessarily glamorous . . . and the whole loving-kindness notion is that any kind of direction you give is simply a suggestion in a loving way."

Agape

Agape is love with no expectation of any return or reciprocity. Nelson Mandela (1994) practised a form of *agape* in prison as he loved his guards, his oppressors:

> I always knew that deep down in every human heart, there is mercy and generosity. No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than it's opposite. Even in the grimmest times in prison, when my comrades and I were pushed to our limits, I would see a glimmer of humanity in one of the guards, perhaps just for a second, but it was enough to reassure me and keep me going. Man's [sic] goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished (p. 542).

Does *agape* have a role in education? In the film, *Être et Avoir* (To Be and To Have) we can see the teacher's love which approaches agape. This movie shows a teacher in rural France, Georges Lopez, in a small school in his last year of teaching. At first one is struck by the traditional form of teaching he employs; for example, he dictates readings to the students. However, he deals with every situation and students with total attention and care. One student, a girl in Grade 6, Nathalie, is so shy she is almost mute. At the end of the film she is sitting with the teacher on the doorsteps of the school and they are talking about how she will do in the new school next year. He explores her communication difficulties in the most gentle manner and suggests to her that if she wants, she can visit him on Saturdays. The girl is tying to hold back her tears. This is one of the most moving scenes I have seen in any movie much less

a movie about education. Yet it comes from the depth of the teacher's caring about this student. One film reviewer, Rob Thomas, summarizes my own feelings:

> With his university goatee and stern gaze, Lopez at first seems like a strict taskmaster ... But we quickly understand that Lopez is a great teacher in every sense of the word, drawing from infinite reserves of patience and respect as he instructs his pupils, never raising his voice, never talking down to even the youngest student. ... *His teaching is simply one of the purest expressions of love I've ever seen on film* (my italics)
>   (http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/to_be_and_to_have/articles/1238605/)

Lopez's strong loving presence conveys what is really important in teaching. *Agape* cannot be "taught" to students; it must come from the soul of the teacher.

Presence

Ultimately it is the presence of the teacher that can be the most immediate source of love in the classroom. Presence does not mean that the teacher loves each student but that he or she recognizes that each student has a divine spark or soul. This recognition allows teachers to have a deep and abiding respect for the mystery and wonder that lies within each student. It allows us to see how the souls of the teacher and students are connected in a mutually interdependent way.

The Zen Roshi, Shunryu Suzuki, tells a wonderful story about the presence of a teacher (Chadwick, 1999). He was head of a temple in Japan and was looking for a kindergarten teacher for the temple school. He repeatedly tried to convince a woman to take the job but she refused. Finally he said to her "You don't have to do anything, just stand there." When he said that, she accepted the position. He was convinced that her presence alone would make a difference in the lives of the children. Of course, she did not just stand in the classroom but Suzuki-roshi identified this important element in teaching.

Emerson in talking to teachers emphasized the importance of presence in teaching:

> By your own act you teach the beholder how to do the practicable. According to the depth from which you draw your life, such is the depth not only of your strenuous effort, but of your manners and presence. The beautiful nature of the world has here blended your happiness with your power ... Consent yourself to be an organ of your highest thought, and lo! Suddenly you put all men in your debt, and are the fountain of an energy that goes pulsing on with waves of benefit to the borders of society, to the circumference of things (as cited in Jones, p. 227).

One teacher in my class caught how mindfulness enhanced her presence.

> As a teacher, I have become more aware of my students and their feelings in the class. Instead of rushing through the day's events I take the time to enjoy our day's experiences and opportune moments. The students have commented that I seem happier. I do tend to laugh more and I think it is because I am more aware, alert and "present," instead of thinking about what I still need to do (Miller, 1995, p. 22).

Teacher presence is something that is often ignored in the education of teachers despite its importance. It is rarely addressed in pre-service or in-service education. I would argue in conclusion that mindfulness practice is a simple yet powerful way that teachers can enhance their presence. By bringing complete attention to their work teachers can be more effective. "Empowerment" is word often heard and perhaps it is overused but I believe mindfulness practice is one method that is truly empowering.

Eros

This is love that is beyond the individual. King described this love in the following way:

> I have discovered that highest good is love. This principle is at the center of the cosmos. It is the great unifying force of life. When I speak of love, I am speaking of that force which all the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life. Love is the key that unlocks the door which leads to the ultimate reality (as cited in Lin, 2006, p. xxii).

This form of love is something that we participate in. It is beautifully described by David Duncan:

> When small things are done with love it's not a flawed you and me who does them: it's love. I have no faith in any political party, left right, or centrist. I have boundless faith in love. In keeping with this faith, the only spiritually responsible way I know to be citizen, artist, or activist in these strange times is by giving little or no thought to "great things" such as saving the planet, achieving world peace, or stopping neocon greed. Great things tend to be undoable things. Whereas small things, lovingly done, are always within our reach (as cited in Hawken, 2007, p. 188).

As Duncan so poignantly states love is beyond any individual. As teachers we need the same boundless faith. It is what can sustain us through the hard challenges of teaching. Once, in one of my classes, students were asked to pass around a sheet and put their perceptions of what was happening in the class. One student wrote: "There is a lot of love in this room." This love was beyond any individual and was the larger love that Duncan speaks about. Students feel safe and affirmed when this love is present.

In the film, *A Touch of Greatness* which features the teaching of Albert Cullen, there is a reunion of a class of students in Rye, New York that Cullen had taught 40 years earlier. There was only one black student in that class but he said that he felt loved when he was a student in Cullen's classroom. Is not love the ultimate answer to racism? Jonathan Kozol (2007) in his book *Letters to a Young Teacher* believes that we do not need "overblown vocabularies about hegemonic differences" but teachers who through "love and their inherent sensibilities" cross racial divides and find "graciousness and generosity awaiting them" (p. 203). Aldous Huxley who studied with many spiritual teachers, read widely and wrote books on spirituality said that what he learned most of all was simply to "be kind".

King's Beloved Community

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s ultimate vision was the Beloved Community: a community of love and justice. In his earliest writing he referred to it; for example, during the Montgomery bus boycott King wrote that the end is "redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community... a reformed and regenerated human society" (Smith & Zepp, 1998, p. 130). It is also a community based on interrelatedness. King (1968) believed that "We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality" (p. 168). Humans are part of an interconnected whole. Each person owes a debt to others for survival and the existence of society and should be aware that an injustice done to one person or group of people is an injustice to all human beings. King (1967) wrote:

> In a sense all life is interrelated. The agony of the poor impoverishes the rich; the betterment of the poor enriches the rich. We are inevitably our brother's keeper because we are our brother's brother. What affects one directly affects all indirectly (p. 181).

King's (1968) vision was not just one of racial integration but of universal justice for all human beings:

> Let us be dissatisfied until rat-infested, vermin-filled slums will be a thing of a dark past and every family have a decent sanitary house in which to live. Let us be dissatisfied until the empty stomachs of Mississippi are filled and the idle industries of Appalachia are revitalized ... Let us be dissatisfied until our brothers of the Third world – Asia, Africa and Latin America — will be no longer be the victim of imperialist exploitation, but will be lifted from the long night of poverty, illiteracy and disease (pp. 110–111).

Before he died, King spoke against the Vietnam War and poverty in the United States and these concerns came from the broader sense of social justice. His objections to the Vietnam War led to his alienation from President Lyndon Johnson who had previously supported King's civil rights work. Smith and Zepp (1998) wrote:

> King could not envision the Beloved Community apart from the alleviation of economic inequity and the achievement of economic justice ... King's version of the Beloved Community included all races, all classes, all ethnic groups, all nations and all religions (p. 136).

King's vision of the Beloved Community was also expressed in his famous "I have a Dream" speech in 1968.

The way to realize the Beloved Community is through non-violence. Non-violence for King was not just a strategy for change but a way of life rooted in love. In contrast, violence is based on hatred and usually leads to more violence. Only non-violence can stop this vicious cycle. This love and awareness must start from within the person. Although King was committed to non-violence as a way of life, he did not expect that everyone involved in the civil rights would commit themselves in this manner. It is acceptable to King for people to focus more on non-violence as a tactic. Although King himself was always committed to non-violence, he did not see it as a passive strategy and toward the end of his life he saw the need for aggressive forms of non-violence to awaken the country. He (1968) talked about "dislocating the functioning of a city without destroying it" (King, 1968, p. 337).

King's commitment to non-violence can be traced back to Gandhi, Tolstoy, Thoreau and Emerson. They all believed that the person must connect with the "infinite within" or what Christ called the "Kingdom of God within." Out of this connection arises love and justice. Gougeon (2007) concludes "Like Aristotle's 'concord,' such love is not only the glue that holds all of society together, but it is also the source of all social justice" (p. 177). This sentence catches the essence of the Beloved Community as it must contain both love and justice. Without love, the community becomes legalistic and lacking in human warmth, without justice the community loses its sense of purpose and destiny. One of King's book is entitled *Strength to Love* and indeed, love requires courage. To engage in non-violence and to trust in the ultimate power of love means trusting in the mystery of *Eros*.

Don Miguel Ruiz (2004) who is a carrier of indigenous Mexican wisdom in the Toltec tradition writes about love that is a beautiful expression of *Eros* and provides a conclusion to this chapter:

> ... to love is the greatest experience that any of us can have. To experience love is to experience God; it is to experience heaven right here and now. We see love coming from everywhere ... from the trees, from the flowers, from the clouds, from people, from everything. At a certain point we are simply in ecstasy, and there are no words to explain it because there are no agreements yet about how to explain it.
>
> What we call love is something that is so generic that it's not even what love really is. Love is much more than words can describe. AS I said before, we cannot really talk about the truth we need to experience truth. The same is true of love. The only way to really know love is to experience love to have the courage to jump into the ocean of love and perceive it in it totality (pp. 183–184).

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Chapter 31
Awareness and Compassion for the Education of Enlightenment

Yoshiharu Nakagawa

Abstract This chapter explores awareness and compassion as essential elements in spiritual cultivation. Of the education of awareness, it describes the ideas of Aldous Huxley and J. Krishnamurti as well as the Buddha's teachings on mindfulness. The practice of awareness would reveal a holistic experience and multiple dimensions of reality. This chapter briefly describes the author's view of 'the five dimensions of reality' that inlude dimensions from the surface to the deepest, infinite reality. Drawing on Eastern perspectives, it explains that 'pure awareness' is identical with infinite reality and that 'great compassion' emerges as a manifestation of pure awareness. In additional, as for cultivating compassions, this chapter explores such concepts as the Four Immeasurable Minds, *bodhichitta*, and *bodhisattva*, and also the mind training called *lojong* in Tibetan Buddhism. Finally, it suggests a vision of 'the education of enlightenment,' in which both awareness and compassion are of central importance.

Awareness and Compassion as Spiritual Qualities

Awareness and compassion are two of the most important spiritual qualities for holistic education. In fact, holistic educators have already recognized them as essential elements not only in a holistic curriculum but also in teacher education. For example, when discussing "timeless learning," John Miller (2006) highlighted awareness and compassion in his *Educating for Wisdom and Compassion*.

Awareness as a spiritual quality is a way of noticing what is actually going on at the present moment without distortion or judgment of the mind's projections. Of this "awareness" Charles Tart (1994) remarks, "I can summarize the essence of the higher spiritual paths simply by saying, Be openly aware of everything, all the time. As a result of this constant and deepening mindfulness, everything else will follow" (pp. 25–26). To be aware is the basic way of self-inquiry into the inner realms of the self. It solves existential problems by shedding a clear light on their very roots. Also,

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practitioners have shown us that the practice of awareness is effective in dealing with mental or physical problems. Furthermore, by increasing awareness we can gain insight and understanding into the true nature of reality. At the culmination of this understanding, we can be awakened to ultimate reality and this experience is usually called "enlightenment."

Compassion is also fundamental for all beings to live together with peace and happiness. This spiritual quality involves having an altruistic attitude toward others, that is, warm feelings for them; being actively concerned with relieving pain and suffering of others and with benefiting their welfare. Given the present situation in society and in education which is producing more conflicts and sufferings by reinforcing the students to be more competitive, it is imperative for people to develop compassion. On this point, His Holiness the Dalai Lama (1999) recommended the cultivation of "the essential human values: a warm heart, a sense of caring for one another" (p. 88). Referring to these values, the Dalai Lama addressed the first Spirituality in Education Conference held at The Naropa University in 1997:

> Through education we can explain to our brothers, sisters and especially the young children that there is a secret treasure that we all have – whether educated or uneducated, rich or poor, this race or that race, of this culture or that culture: we are human beings. We have tremendous potential. The potentials for kindness, compassion and inner peace. Then, we can try to teach or promote the basic human values that I call secular ethics (p. 90).

We have the seeds of awareness and compassion as latent human potentialities that can be actualized by each of us. In this chapter I will introduce a conceptual framework for holistic learning that embraces awareness and compassion as its essential components. Since my approach to holistic education has been based on studies in Eastern thought (see Nakagawa, 2000, 2006, 2008), I will continue to draw on them for this endeavor and I will focus especially on Buddhist ideas.

Aldous Huxley's Ideas on the Education of Awareness

First, let's look at ideas of education presented by Aldous Huxley and Jiddu Krishnamurti, for they provided remarkable thoughts on "the education of awareness." It is less known that Aldous Huxley, a great novelist and thinker of twentieth century, developed a pioneering model of holistic education involving both Eastern and Western ways (see Nakagawa, 2002). In an article on the Alexander Technique which originally appeared in 1941, Huxley (1978) combined Alexander's somatic (body–mind) technique with the mystics' approach to enlightenment, thereby conceiving a totally new type of education. The following statement is still relevant to the education of awareness:

> Be that as it may, the fact remains that Alexander's technique for the conscious mastery of the primary control is now available, and that it can be combined in the most fruitful way with the technique of the mystics for transcending personality through increasing awareness

of ultimate reality. It is now possible to conceive of a totally new type of education affecting the entire range of human activity, from the physiological, through the intellectual, moral, and practical, to the spiritual – an education which, by teaching them the proper use of the self, would preserve children and adults from most of the diseases and evil habits that now afflict them; an education whose training in inhibition and conscious control would provide men and women with the psychophysical means for behaving rationally and morally; an education which in its upper reaches, would make possible the experience of ultimate reality (p. 152).

Here, Huxley describes a framework of the education of awareness that starts from the elemental level to the highest level. The Alexander Technique is a body–mind integration developed by F. M. Alexander in the early twentieth century, a technique of conscious control of the psycho-physical organism. Huxley himself used this technique for improving his health problem. In addition, it is to be noted that John Dewey also learned this technique and celebrated it as a central contribution to education. Dewey (1932/1984) went so far as to say, "It [the technique of Mr. Alexander] provides therefore the conditions for the central direction of all special educational processes. It bears the same relation to education that education itself bears to all other human activities" (p. xix). In its important aspect the Alexander Technique is not a therapy or a remedy but a "constructive education" (Dewey) that teaches elementary awareness. In this way, cultivating elementary awareness at the body–mind level serves as the basis for the further evolution of awareness that spiritual practices aim to realize.

Later, Huxley (1956) introduced ideas of "nonverbal humanities" that include both body–mind and contemplative trainings from East and West (pp. 19–38). Unlike the conventional humanities that heavily rely on the trainings of verbal faculties, the nonverbal humanities would explore the nonverbal aspects of the deeper layers of the self, which Huxley called the "not-selves." The methods of the nonverbal humanities would largely encompass trainings of awareness such as the Alexander Technique, Gestalt Therapy, Zen, yoga, Shiva's Tantra, and the approaches of Meister Eckhart and Krishnamurti.

Huxley (1962) described the nonverbal humanities in his last novel, *Island*, which is still viewed as a great contribution to holistic education. For example, the novel describes a class of botany in which conceptual learning is bridged to a lesson of receptive perception. A flower is first looked at in the analytical and scientific manner. Then after listening to a story about Mahakasyapa's smiling when looking at a flower showed by the Buddha, a famous story regarding the origin of Zen (see Cleary, 1993a, p. 33), students are asked to see the flower with an alert passive awareness. A teacher gives instruction as follows:

So we tell the boys and girls to stop thinking and just look. "But don't look analytically," we tell them, "Don't look as scientists, even as gardeners. Liberate yourselves from everything you know and look with complete innocence at this infinitely improbable thing before you. Look at it as though you'd never seen anything of the kind before, as though it had no name and belonged to no recognizable class. Look at it alertly but passively, receptively, without labelling or judging or comparing. And as you look at it, inhale its mystery, breathe in the spirit of sense, the smell of the wisdom of the other shore" (pp. 217–218).

The point Huxley has made here is to join trainings in analysis and awareness, for both trainings are indispensable in developing the fullest perception.

With the concepts of the "not-selves," Huxley (1956) offered a multidimensional view of a human being to describe not only the conscious self but also the deeper realms hidden beneath the self: "Every human being is a conscious self; but, below the threshold of consciousness every human being is also a not-self – or, more precisely, he is five or six merging but clearly distinguishable not-selves" (pp. 16–17). Under the "conscious self" there is the subconscious "personal not-self" comprised of habits, conditioned reflexes, repressed impulses, past memories, and other personal experiences. Beneath the personal not-self, there exists the dimension of so-called "vegetative soul" in charge of the physiological functions of the body. Next one is the not-self who inhabits the world of inspiration and derives wisdom from there. Beyond this, the next not-self dwells in the symbolic realm of Jung's archetypes. Then the next one is the dimension of the "mysterious not-self" that has visionary experiences of celestial planes. And finally, the "universal Not-Self" is the ultimate dimension of the not-self that transcends all the rest but is immanent in everything (see Huxley, 1956, pp. 17–18).

Usually the conscious self and the subconscious personal not-self interfere with the proper functioning of the deeper layers of the not-selves. The "nonverbal humanities" would dissolve this obstruction to recover the functioning of the deeper not-selves. Furthermore, Huxley believed that to know the "universal Not-Self" is the consummation of human life and the ultimate purpose of individual existence. From his ideas we can see that the practice worth doing for this end is awareness, and to enhance awareness in every aspect of living is the key element of spiritual cultivation. In *Island*, Huxley (1962) called this practice "the yoga of everyday living":

> It's through awareness, complete and constant awareness, that we transform it [concrete materialism] into concrete spirituality. Be fully aware of what you're doing, and work becomes the yoga of work, play becomes the yoga of play, everyday living becomes the yoga of everyday living (p. 149).

It is clear from Huxley's ideas that ceaseless practice of enhancing awareness is able to bring about a radical transformation of consciousness, leading to a great awakening or enlightenment. Huxley identified "everybody's job" with "enlightenment" and that job involves "here and now, the preliminary job of practising all the yogas of increased awareness" (p. 236).

Krishnamurti's Teachings on the Education of Awareness

Huxley and Krishnamurti were close friends. Krishnamurti (1999) also regarded awareness as the heart of education and meditation. He saw that the essence of awareness lies in its "choicelessness": "Awareness implies an observation in which there is no choice whatsoever, just observing without interpretation, translation, distortion" (p. 73). In this "choiceless awareness," without any judgment, comparison,

condemnation, interference, or memory, one is able to see the true nature of reality. Krishnamurti's view of education is uniquely centered on awareness; that is, he sees in choiceless awareness that "intelligence" functions and "learning" takes place. For Krishnamurti, intelligence and learning never imply accumulating knowledge. But rather, intelligence is to pay alert attention to what is going on in the present moment. Likewise, learning is to know directly what is taking place without any projection of acquired knowledge. Krishnamurti (2006) says, "So learning is pure observation, not only of the things outside you, but also of that which is happening inwardly – observation without the observer" (p. 22).

Just as Huxley described in the scene of the botany class, Krishnamurti (1974) replied to a student, when he was asked about looking at a flower:

> You look at a flower, and what is your relationship to the flower? Do you look at the flower or do you think you are looking at the flower? You see the difference? Are you actually looking at the flower or you think you ought to look at the flower or are you looking at the flower with an image you have about the flower – the image being that it is a rose? The word is the image, the word is knowledge and therefore you are looking at that flower with the word, the symbol, with knowledge and therefore you are not looking at the flower. Or, are you looking at it with a mind that is thinking about something else? (p. 72).

Krishnamurti discerns here a fundamental difference between looking with awareness and looking with acquired knowledge. Our ordinary perception is nothing other than a projection of the known, and he asks us to look in a totally different way in order to directly connect to an object to be looked at. He continues:

> When you look at a flower without the word, without the image, and with a mind that is completely attentive, then what is the relationship between you and the flower? Have you ever done it? Have you ever looked at the flower without saying that is a rose? Have you ever looked at a flower completely, with total attention in which there is no word, no symbol, no naming of the flower and, therefore, complete attention? Till you do that, you have no relationship with the flower. To have any relationship with another or with the rock or with the leaf, one has to watch and to observe with complete attention. Then your relationship to that which you see is entirely different. Then there is no observer at all. There is only that. If you so observe, then there is no opinion, no judgment. It is what it is. Have you understood? Will you do it? Look at a flower that way (pp. 72–73).

According to Krishnamurti, self-knowledge means for each one to become aware of what he or she really is. This is what education should facilitate more than anything else. In his *Education and the Significance of Life*, Krishnamurti (1953) wrote, "Understanding comes only through self-knowledge, which is awareness of one's total psychological process. Thus education, in the true sense, is the understanding of oneself, for it is within each one of us that the whole of existence is gathered" (p. 17). We can see how self-knowledge through awareness reaches to the profound realms of the self and thus the wholeness of life. This kind of knowing is vital for educators: "The right kind of education begins with the educator, who must understand himself and be free from established patterns of thought; for what he is, that he imparts" (p. 98). In the ways mentioned above, Huxley and Krishnamurti provided radical ideas for the education of awareness.

The Buddha's Teachings on Mindfulness

The Buddha explored the true nature of awareness. *The Dhammapada*, a basic text of the Buddha's teachings, has verses like "The path to the Deathless is awareness;/Unawareness, the path of death./They who are aware do not die;/They who are unaware are as dead" (Carter & Palihawadana, 1987/2000, p. 6). We see how awareness is the central path of liberating us from *samsara* (the cycle of birth and death) to *nirvana* (extinction of samsaric existence). In the Buddhist tradition, awareness in this sense is called "mindfulness." "Right mindfulness" takes up one part of the Noble Eightfold Path and this eightfold path forms the last section of what is known as the Four Noble Truths: suffering (*dukkha*), the cause of suffering, the end of suffering, and the path to the end of suffering.

One of the essential sutras regarding mindfulness is *Satipatthana Sutta*, or *The Sutra on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness*, originally collected in *Majjhima Nikaya* (see Thich, 1990). The term *sati* in Pali language means "mindfulness" or "remembering." In this discourse the Buddha clarified four objects of mindfulness: the body, the feelings, the mind, and the objects of the mind. The first three cover the chief components of personal existence and the last one includes the significant states of the mind regarding Buddhist practice.

The body is the first object of mindfulness. It encompasses breathing, positions, movements, the internal parts throughout the body, the four elements that comprise the body, and the dissolution process of the corpse. On breathing, the Buddha says,

> He [the practitioner] breathes in, aware that he is breathing in. He breathes out, aware that he is breathing out. When he breathes in a long breath, he knows, "I am breathing in a long breath." When he breathes out a long breath, he knows, "I am breathing out a long breath." When he breathes in a short breath, he knows, "I am breathing in a short breath." When he breathes out a short breath, he knows, "I am breathing out a short breath" (Thich, 1990, p. 4).

Breathing practice is usually the foundation of meditation, but, as described above, the point the Buddha raised is not to control breathing in a particular manner but pay alert attention to the breathing process as it happens at the present moment. Likewise, on the positions of the body, the Buddha says

> Moreover, when a practitioner walks, he is aware, "I am walking." When he is standing, he is aware, "I am standing." When he is sitting, he is aware, "I am sitting." When he is lying down, he is aware, "I am lying down." In whatever position his body happens to be, he is aware of the position of his body (p. 5).

In addition to the four basic positions of walking, standing, sitting, and lying down, awareness is applied to every kind of action in daily life. The Buddha refers to very small actions like "when the practitioner is going forward or backward, he applies full awareness to his going forward or backward. When he looks in front or looks behind, bends down or stands up, he also applies full awareness to what he is doing" (p. 6). Usually, all too easily, we forget to apply awareness to these small actions but the practice of awareness has to be applied to every action with no exception.

The second object of mindfulness is feelings that include three basic forms: being pleasant, painful, or neutral. The Buddha's instruction is the same here:

> Whenever the practitioner has a pleasant feeling, he is aware, "I am experiencing a pleasant feeling." Whenever he has a painful feeling, he is aware, "I am experiencing a painful feeling." Whenever he experiences a feeling which is neither pleasant nor painful, he is aware, "I am experiencing a neutral feeling" (p. 11).

Awareness of the feelings is important, for feelings unconsciously evoke mental responses such as attachment or aversion or indifference, leading to certain behaviors. It is such unconscious responses and behaviors that create the most part of sufferings and conflicts we have. If we can be aware of a subtle feeling in its initial stage and let it pass by without evoking a mental response, we can be free from unnecessary result.

The third object is the mind that includes a variety of mental formations. Here the Buddha first refers to three poisonous mental formations—desiring, hating (anger), and ignorance. The point is not to repress or change these poisonous mental formations forcefully, but to be aware of them as they are. It is in being aware of them that a transformation of the state of the mind takes place and results in calmness and silence in the mind. Paying attention to mental formations, we understand how they arise and persist. Being in a space of awareness "of them," we are no longer identified "with them" and able to let them pass away more easily.

Lastly, the objects of the mind (*dharmas*) include basic elements of Buddhist teachings: the five hindrances of practice (sensual desire, anger, dullness, agitation and remorse, and doubt), the five aggregates of clinging (form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness), the six sense organs and objects (and the six internal formations by organs and objects), the seven factors of awakening (mindfulness, investigation-of-phenomena, energy, joy, ease, concentration, and letting-go), and the Four Noble Truths. These objects of the mind involve both hindrances and positive causes in the Buddhist path.

But *dharmas* (the objects of the mind) virtually mean everything that we experience. Thich Nhat Hanh (1998) emphasizes this aspect: "The object of our mindfulness is actually the whole cosmos . . . . The Four Establishments of Mindfulness contain everything in the cosmos" (p. 74). Therefore, the crucial point of mindfulness is to apply full awareness to anything that is arising and passing within and without at any moment.

Traditionally, Buddhist meditation has two phases—*samatha* and *vipassana*, which mean "stopping and seeing" or "concentration and insight." In the samatha phase, awareness stays on one particular object and then the ecstatic state of *samadhi* created by this single-pointedness brings such effects as calmness, tranquility, relaxation, and joy. Concentration in this sense is necessary to stop habitual movements of the body and the mind before the meditator proceeds to vipassana phase. Otherwise, he or she cannot look deeply into the true nature of reality because of the obstruction of ceaseless thinking and feeling.

In the next stage, concentration is combined with vipassana, or "deep looking." Bhante Henepola Gunaratana (2002) defines vipassana as follows:

> The whole meaning of the word *vipassana* is looking into something with clarity and precision, seeing each component as distinct, and piercing all the way through to perceive the most fundamental reality of that thing. This process leads to insight into the basic reality of whatever is being examined (p. 33).

In this special way of looking, mindfulness also plays the central role to provide insight into the nature of reality, which is marked in the Buddhist perspective by impermanence, selflessness, and interdependence of things. Such insight ultimately resolves fixed views caused by our identification with the separate existence of things. Buddhism traditionally treasured the aspect of "wisdom" realized through "stopping and seeing."

Awareness and Holistic Experience

From the various examples discussed above, we can see how the practice of awareness brings about a holistic experience that is usually concealed in our ordinary perception. Ordinary perception has those perceptual modes of distinction, differentiation, articulation, and fragmentation. The world we live in is experienced through those perceptual modes. In other words, the world appears to be composed of separate things—seemingly solid, substantial, independent entities. We also cling to and are so much identified with the notion of the separate self and therefore try to do everything to maintain the separate self, believing it as the true self.

However, this fragmentary reality is not true reality but the one created by our minds that articulate what is immediately given as a whole into separate things. Interestingly, this function of the mind was fully recognized by Buddhist thinkers as well. For example, in *The Awakening of Faith*, a Mahayana Buddhist classic, it is claimed that the appearance of different things arises from the "deluded mind" or conceptual thinking: "Since all things are, without exception, developed from the mind and produced under the condition of deluded thoughts, all differentiations are no other than the differentiations of one's mind itself" (Hakeda, 1967, p. 48). The practice of awareness stops the predominant power of the mind from creating a delusive perception of reality and simultaneously reveals what is hidden under surface distinctions. Therefore, through enhancing our awareness we learn to have a holistic experience of reality. For instance, inspired by Zen, the Japanese philosopher Kitarō Nishida (1911/1990) once described "pure experience" as follows:

> To experience means to know facts just as they are, to know in accordance with facts by completely relinquishing one's own fabrications. What we usually refer to as experience is adulterated with some sort of thought, so by *pure* I am referring to the state of experience just as it is without the least addition of deliberative discrimination (p. 3).

Any intervention of the mind such as "fabrications" and "deliberative discrimination" disturbs pure experience. Nishida gives a more detailed explanation:

> The moment of seeing a color or hearing a sound, for example, is prior not only to the thought that the color or sound is the activity of an external object or that one is seeing it, but also to the judgment of what the color or sound might be. In this regard, pure experience

is identical with direct experience. When one directly experiences one's own state of consciousness, there is not yet a subject or an object, and knowing and its object are completely unified. This is the most refined type of experience (pp. 3–4).

Pure experience is direct, immediate, present, and non-dualistic. In this manner, it is a holistic experience that is realized when articulations of the mind completely cease to arise.

Multidimensional Reality

Awareness is like an illuminating light that directly delves into reality and in this discovery reality is perceived in a multidimensional way. Much of Eastern thought developed various views of multidimensional reality. These multidimensional views commonly include the surface dimension of separate things, various intermediate dimensions, and the deepest dimension. The chief characteristic of Eastern thought lies in the recognition of the deepest reality that has been diversely referred to as *Brahman*, *nirvana*, *tao, li*, and so on.

In my previous studies (Nakagawa, 2000), I have formulated "the five dimensions of reality" as a worldview of holistic education based on both contemporary theories of holistic education and Eastern thought. Briefly they are

> *Objective reality*: the surface dimension of separate things
> *Social reality*: the social dimension that articulates objective reality through communication
> *Cosmic reality*: the interconnected reality of nature, life, and the universe
> *Infinite reality*: the ontological ground or the deepest reality of all beings
> *Universal reality*: the transformed dimensions by realizing infinite reality.

First, "objective reality" is the phenomenal world of things where distinctions and separations are predominant. Undeniably, we are completely identified with this dimension in our everyday living. However, objective reality is never given to us in an "objective" way but it arises through the constructive function of the mind that articulates primordial unity into separate things. In this way, objective reality has its own semantic foundation. This foundation is called "social reality" in my scheme, for it is the dimension of social interrelation that articulates the phenomenal distinctions of separate things. As articulation is determined by a language system and our communicative actions, social reality is the semantic and communicative basis of objective reality.

Beneath social reality comes "cosmic reality" which means the living dimension of nature and the universe. This is the realm of interconnection in which everything is dynamically and ecologically connected to everything else. When we realize this dimension, we find ourselves in direct communion with nature and the universe. However, being seen from Eastern perspectives, cosmic reality is not the deepest dimension of reality. There is an infinite dimension on the deepest level of reality that embraces cosmic reality. This infinite dimension has been variously known as *nirguna Brahman* (formless absolute) in Vedanta, *nirvana* (extinction) in early

Buddhism, *śūnyatā* (emptiness) in Mahayana Buddhism, *tao* (the way) and *wu* (non-being) in Taoism, and *wu* or *mu* (nothingness) in Ch'an/Zen Buddhism. As these concepts are identical in trying to stand for something infinite beyond any qualifications, this dimension is called "infinite reality."

Though infinite reality signifies the deepest dimension, yet it is not the final phase in Eastern perspectives. To understand this, it is necessary to discuss the twofold path of seeking and returning in spiritual realization. In the seeking path, one starts with the surface level and explores the deeper levels to eventually attain the deepest level of infinite reality. The full realization of infinite reality is known as *moksha* (perfect liberation), *satori* (enlightenment), and so forth. For example, in Buddhism, the very word "*Buddha*" means "the awakened one" and Buddhist practice is intended to attain *Buddhahood* (awakening) mainly through enhancing awareness. However, just attaining infinite reality covers the first half of the way in spiritual cultivation. If one sees infinite reality as the final and transcendental destination, he or she would fall into false attachment to it. On the contrary, Eastern thought does not describe infinite reality as a transcendental realm clearly isolated from the other dimensions. Rather, once one attains infinite reality, he or she has to return immediately to all the other dimensions with no trace of attachment to infinite reality.

Through the returning path all dimensions (objective, social, and cosmic realities) resurge in the way that infinite reality manifests itself through them. This transformed reality, as a whole, is called "universal reality." Generally, Eastern thought regards this transformed reality as the truly ultimate reality which is, for example, called *tathatā* (suchness) in Mahayana Buddhism and *saguna Brahman* (absolute with forms) in Advaita Vedanta. *Tathatā* is the absolute affirmation of things as they are after realizing *śūnyatā* or the true empty nature of things; that is, the infinite (emptiness) permeates all dimensions in the returning phase and thus each existence, even a tiny flower, turns out to be a wondrous existence (suchness). *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, the principal sutra of Hua-yen Buddhism, imparts this unified view in a beautiful line like this: "In the atoms of all lands/Are seen Buddhas existing there" (Cleary, 1993b, p. 215). In clarifying the twofold path of seeking and returning, Eastern perspectives show ways to recover the wholeness of multidimensional reality in our existence.

Pure Awareness as Infinite Reality

The practice of awareness would bring us to a great awakening in infinite reality. It is important to know that infinite reality is no other than "pure awareness." The practice of increasing awareness eventually leads us to the point where the witnessing self is dissolved into the boundless ocean of pure awareness. The Indian thinkers of Advaita Vedanta (the non-dualistic view of Vedanta) were very clear about infinite reality as pure awareness or consciousness. For example, Śaṅkara (1979/1992) remarked, "I Myself have the nature of Pure Consciousness" (p. 120) and, in the same way, the legendary sage Ashtavakra repeatedly stated that the

essential nature of reality and the self is "pure awareness" (Byron, 1990). Also, the modern Advaitic mystic Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj (1973/1982) said, "Awareness is primordial; it is the original state, beginningless, endless, uncaused, unsupported, without parts, without change" (p. 29).

Roger Walsh and Frances Vaughan (1980) give an excellent explanation about pure awareness from the perspective of transpersonal psychology:

> Finally, awareness no longer identifies exclusively with anything. This represents a radical and enduring shift in consciousness known by various names, such as enlightenment or liberation. Since there is no longer any exclusive identification with anything, the me/not me dichotomy is transcended and such persons experience themselves as being both nothing and everything. They are both pure awareness (no thing) and the entire universe (every thing). Being identified with both no location and all locations, nowhere and everywhere, they experience having transcended space and positionality (pp. 58–59).

As discussed here, pure awareness eventually becomes one with the entire universe (every thing). Nisargadatta Maharaj (1973/1982) reports on this in his realization of pure awareness: "I saw that in the ocean of pure awareness, on the surface of the universal consciousness, the numberless waves of the phenomenal worlds arise and subside beginninglessly and endlessly. As consciousness, they are all me" (p. 30). In this phase, pure awareness is to witness and embrace what is arising from the primordial depth of reality. This signifies what the concept of universal reality intends to describe.

Great Compassion as Ultimate Reality

It is this pure awareness that is also identical with true compassion. Mahayana Buddhism explains this aspect by uniting great wisdom (*prajñā*) with great compassion (*karuna*). Great compassion in this sense represents an embracing energy emerging along with universal reality. In other words, universal reality, as such, is the manifestation of boundless compassion.

This is not just a teaching of Buddhist philosophy. It is also an experience that happened to Krishnamurti. While he sometimes mentioned "love," his concept of love seems to be similar to great compassion. For him, love has nothing to do with personal feeling or sentiment but it refers to the deepest reality disclosed in his meditative experience. Krishnamurti (1979) relates his experience as follows:

> The earth was waiting for the dawn and the coming day; there was expectation, patience and a strange stillness. Meditation went on with that stillness and that stillness was love; it was not the love of something or of someone, the image and the symbol, the word and the pictures. It was simply love, without sentiment, without feeling. It was something complete in itself, naked, intense, without root and direction. The sound of that faraway bird was that love . . . (p. 58).

In his meditative state, which he describes as a complete silence of the mind, love exists. Krishnamurti says, "in complete emptiness there is love" (p. 30). In this regard, we can see how the essence of infinite reality lies in love and universal reality arises in the movement of this love.

The Pure Land tradition of Mahayana Buddhism has been mostly concerned with "great compassion" and personified it in the Buddha named *Amitabha* (*Amida* in Japanese), or the Buddha Measureless, which means "infinite light" and/or "infinite life." It is widely known through a Pure Land sutra that Amitabha made the vow to save all beings when Amitabha was still a bodhisattva named Dharmakara. With regard to this, the Japanese Pure Land Buddhist Shinran discerned two types of compassion, "relative" and "absolute." He said, "The compassion in the Path of Sages is expressed through pity, sympathy, and care for all beings, but truly rare is it that one can help another as completely as one desires" (Unno, 1984, p. 9). This refers to "relative" or conventional compassion that people have in some cases for others. On the other hand, Shinran said, "The compassion in the Path of Pure Land is to quickly attain Buddhahood, saying the nembutsu [i.e., meditation to intone *namu-amida-butsu* (I take refuge in Amida Buddha)], and with the true heart of compassion and love save all beings as we desire" (p. 9). In Shinran's view, absolute compassion is not released by the "self-power" on our side but it flows from what he calls Amida's "other-power." Amida's boundless compassion manifests itself through compassionate actions of those who have completely surrendered to the other-power. In other words, it is only when we are born in the Pure Land of Amida, which implies enlightenment, that we can be truly compassionate for other beings.

Great compassion is an altruistic aspect of enlightenment. Significantly enough, Mahayana Buddhism formulated the final objective of Buddhist practice as cultivating great compassion. Even one's enlightenment has to be in seeking for this altruistic end. Then Mahayana Buddhism highlighted the concept of *bodhichitta* or the awakening mind. According to Robert Thurman (2005)

> *Bodhichitta* is the spirit of becoming perfectly awakened and perfectly wise, perfectly compassionate and loving, so that we are capable of helping all other beings become perfectly happy and perfectly wise themselves (pp. 105–106).

Those who have settled in *bodhichitta* strive to concentrate on attaining awakening (Buddhahood) in order to save others from suffering and to help them attain awakening. In this regard, Mahayana Buddhism has highly celebrated the path of *bodhisattvas* who are established in *bodhichitta* to attain perfect awakening for the sake of other beings.

The Learning of Compassion

Mahayana Buddhism emphasizes the importance of compassion more than anything else. But it is also important to know that early Buddhism had a relevant teaching on how to be compassionate to others. Theravada Buddhism, in keeping the style of early Buddhism, has favored meditation on the Four Immeasurable Minds (*brahma-viharas*): loving-kindness (*metta*), compassion (*karuna*), joy (*mudita*), and equanimity (*upekkha*). In developing them one learns to transcend self-centeredness and to open his or her heart to pain, suffering, and joy of others, and to share

caring and loving energy with others. This is done in equanimity with no emotional attachment or clinging to others. Nowadays, of the Four Immeasurable Minds the one widely known is loving-kindness (*metta*) and the meditation for expanding loving-kindness is practised together with "mindfulness meditation." Originally, the teaching of loving-kindness appeared in the chapter of *Metta Sutta* which is included in the classical text of the Buddha's teachings, the *Sutta Nipata* (see Thich, 1997).

In this way we can see how the teachings of the Buddha involve instructions on both awareness (mindfulness) and compassion (true love) from the beginning. From this fact we learn to know an essential connection between them. Awareness is inseparably combined with compassion; awareness is not complete in itself without compassion; and true compassion is possible only with awareness. It is in such combining of awareness with compassion that there is a truly meaningful contribution of the Buddhist teachings to our understanding of spiritual development.

Mahayana Buddhism recognizes the crucial importance of cultivating compassion in spiritual development. By establishing the concept of *bodhichitta*, it puts a special value on learning what compassion is from the very beginning of Buddhist practice. Otherwise enlightenment may become an extremely absorbing experience in which one may stay in perfect contentment and forget the rest of the world. This might happen among serious seekers who pursue enlightenment for their own sake. But, if the experience of enlightenment is shared with others through compassionate engagement, this benefits us all and contributes to the evolution of consciousness at large. Therefore, compassion is something to be learned from the beginning and this learning serves as a strong ground, cause, and motivation to attain enlightenment and benefit others.

In this regard, the Dalai Lama (2001) maintains, "In our spiritual endeavor, the most profound practice is the practice of compassion and the altruistic wish to achieve Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings. There is no better practice than this" (p. 69). The Dalai Lama sometimes refers to a famous teaching given by Chandrakirti who talked about compassion as being fundamental in the initial stage, in the intermediate stage, and also in the final stage of spiritual development, and comments on this:

> Initially, the awakening mind of bodhichitta is generated with compassion as the root, or basis. Practice of the six perfections and so forth is essential if a Bodhisattva is to attain the final goal. In the intermediate stage, compassion is equally relevant. Even after enlightenment, it is compassion that induces the Buddhas not to abide in the blissful state of complacent nirvana (p. 44).

Compassion is indispensable for entering into Buddhist practice and for keeping this practice in spite of difficulties and hardships, and then it is again necessary in benefiting others after enlightenment. The Dalai Lama (2002) remarks on the inseparable connection between enlightenment and compassion that happens in the final stage:

> Full enlightenment means that you are in the continual presence of great compassion; therefore you will not remain in solitary peace but will always be fully engaged in the welfare of others. Like the ripened state of a harvest to be enjoyed by multitudes, this is the importance of great compassion in the end. (pp. 135–36).

The tradition of Tibetan Buddhism has treasured the bodhisattva's path that was originally described by Indian Mahayana scholar saints such as Nāgārjuna, Shāntideva, and Atisha. In his classic, *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, Shāntideva (1997) described the path of bodhisattvas and this work strongly influenced Tibetan Buddhism. In the chapter on meditation, Shāntideva suggested meditations on the equality of self and others and on the exchange of self and others. On the meditation of equality, there are verses as follows: "Strive at first to meditate/Upon the sameness of yourself and others./In joy and sorrow all are equal./Thus be guardian of all, as of yourself" (p. 123). This meditation on the equality of self and others aims to see everyone as being equally seeking for happiness and avoiding suffering. Therefore, it calls for us to dispel the pain of others as much as dispelling our own pain, and to aid others just as we would aid ourselves. This meditation dissolves false boundaries between us, for any boundary is an illusion created by our deluded mind. To cultivate *bodhichitta* (the awakening mind), we need to overcome attachment to the separate self and to realize the interdependent nature of all beings.

The meditation on the exchange of self and others is more straightforward about breaking through attachment to the separate self. As experiences teach us, if we exclusively cherish our own merit, pleasure, or desire and disregard or harm others, it will bring both of us misery in the end. On the contrary, joy comes through working for the good of others. Shāntideva makes his point: "To free myself from harm/And others from their sufferings,/Let me give myself away,/And cherish others as I love myself" (p. 129). This requires us to exchange our happiness with others' sufferings.

In Tibetan Buddhism, since "the seven points of mind training" were introduced by Atisha, the mind training to cultivate *bodhichitta* called *lojong* developed (see Wallace, 1992/2004; Kyabgon, 2007). In *lojong*, one of the unique methods to develop a compassionate heart is *tonglen* (sending and taking). It is a meditation to activate both loving-kindness and compassion. By applying mindful breathing, a meditator alternately sends his or her loving energy to others and takes suffering from them. In practice, one breathes in dark feelings of others such as pain, misery, sorrow, and fear, and lets them be absorbed in one's own heart. In turn, one breathes out the finest energies in joy, happiness, and blissfulness. In the cycle of taking in suffering and sending out blessing, the heart serves as an organ to transform negativities. Actually, what we are doing in everyday living is reversed in the practice of *tonglen* and this extraordinary method is precisely going to breakdown self-centeredness and open us to the whole world.

Integration of Awareness and Compassion

In this discussion, I have argued that awareness and compassion are two of the most important qualities to be cultivated in spiritual development. Both are our latent potentialities and need practices for their evolution. And my emphasis is upon the importance of integrating these two qualities, for they need each other to complete their qualities.

On the one hand, great awakening takes place through the practice of enhancing awareness, and then from that awakening great compassion flows out. But, as taught in the path of bodhisattvas, without the generation and maintenance of *bodhichitta* even awakening may not necessarily lead to the development of compassionate action. For this reason, we need to cultivate a compassionate heart from the beginning of and throughout the practice; that is, whenever we practice awareness, we need to feel compassion for the world and let compassionate energy pour out into the world.

On the other hand, any helping action of compassion must be accompanied with awareness. If it comes from self-centered interest, it serves as a means to satisfying one's own interest and may harm others. This may happen without the individual being fully aware of it. The belief that a person is acting from compassion easily beclouds his/her eyes so that he or she is unable to see what is unconsciously taking place. Therefore, awareness is necessary to look deeply into what is going on within us. If it were not for deep awareness, any action of compassion is not free from the danger of being used for unconscious manipulation. Thus, in spiritual development, awareness and compassion need each other in an integrated way to fulfill their potential qualities.

Toward an Education of Enlightenment

In concluding this chapter, I would like to give a short comment on an education that involves awareness and compassion in its core. Closely examining the work of the Buddha and his successors, Robert Thurman (1998) referred to "enlightenment education" (p. 99) or an "enlightenment-oriented education system" (p. 119). He saw the work of the Buddha as remarkably educational: "His movement was not the founding of a religion – it was the founding of a new educational system" (p. 95). Thurman argued for an education directed toward enlightenment:

> It [education] promotes enlightenment as the flowering of the individual's own awareness, sensibility, and powers, and thereby develops a strong society. Within the context of the politics of enlightenment, it is understood that the purpose of human life is education, not that education prepares a person for some other life-purpose (p. 126).

If we call for cultivating spirituality in education, what is needed in the first place is to enlarge our view of education. Of utmost importance, as I have shown, is to have a vision of "enlightenment education." When we are established in that vision, awareness and compassion will play central roles in the whole endeavor of the education of enlightenment.

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Chapter 32
Towards a Reclaimed Framework of "Knowing" in Spirituality and Education for the Promotion of Holistic Learning and Wellbeing – Kataphatic and Apophatic Ways of Knowing

Peter Mudge

Abstract Many ways of "knowing" are routinely neglected in the primary, secondary and tertiary environments, not only in religious education but in many other subject areas and disciplines. This chapter explores a relatively unknown framework of "knowing" in spirituality and education in relation to two complementary approaches—kataphatic (visible, quantifiable) and apophatic (hidden, ineffable) ways of knowing. In doing so, it builds on earlier writings on slow, meditative thinking (Mudge, 2007), and on twofold and fourfold taxonomies of knowing (Mudge, 2009a; 2009b, in press). It also draws on aspects of the kataphatic and apophatic theological and mystical traditions that are helpful to the articulation of ways of knowing and pedagogy in general. In addition, the chapter argues that the complementary inclusion of apophatic and kataphatic knowing is essential for "stretching" students' understanding and spirituality and for the integrated growth, holistic knowing, learning, and the wellbeing of children and adolescents.

Introduction

This chapter assumes that while traditional two- and fourfold taxonomies of knowing (Mudge, 2009a; 2009b, in press) have much to contribute to students' holistic learning and wellbeing, they do not offer the breadth of knowing contained within the kataphatic–apophatic model under consideration in this chapter. The overall orientation of this chapter is to present ways in which these latter ways of knowing can benefit thinking, knowing and pedagogy in the classroom environment.

In addition, this chapter assumes the presence of a transcendent or spiritual dimension as part of any process of human knowing. It understands "spirituality"

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as "a conscious way of life based on a transcendent referent" (Mason, Webber, Singleton, & Hughes, 2006, p. 2). That is, it acknowledges a reality beyond but complementary to the immanent, a reality that exists in God, yet in and beyond the material or created world (cf. Sinclair, 2003, p. 1267). This definition assumes the centrality of the spirit or soul in the process of knowing, which is not simply limited to knowledge of physical nature or matter (cf. Sinclair, 2003, p. 1148). In Catholic or Christian terms, this assumption of a spiritual dimension translates into a way of life centred on and responsive to the Holy Trinity and to the presence of the Spirit of the Risen Christ within the person as a member of the Body of Christ. As such, it is a spirituality that is visionary, sacramental, relational and transformational (cf. McBrien, 1981, p. 1093).

Equally, this chapter assumes that the classroom teacher is committed to "stretching" ways of knowing beyond any one individual style of knowing in order to enhance and maximise students' learning (Atkin, 1997, p. 3; Holt in Atkin, 2007, p. 22). Holt's assumption, for example, is that there are four distinct yet related worlds that each person can enter and explore. Before detailing explicitly the kataphatic and apophatic ways of knowing, it is instructive to compare Holt's "worlds" to the latter two ways (Table 32.1).

Table 32.1 John Holt's model of the "four worlds" we live in

The Nature of Learning – John Holt's model of the worlds we live in

(adapted from "What do I do Monday?")

World 1 is my inner world, the world inside my skin – my very inner psychological world.

World 2 is the world of my direct experience, the world of things I've done, people I have met, places I have been – this, with my inner world are the worlds of my mental models – my "knowing" of the world.

World 3 is the world I know about, have read about or heard about – I do not know this world directly.

World 4 is the world of infinite possibilities. I haven't heard about it nor imagined it – it is the world of my ignorance; it is the world I don't know that I don't know!

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The above diagram is adapted from the writings of Julia Atkin (2007, p. 9; citing Holt, 1971, p. 20) and is designed to illustrate the correlation between Holt's four worlds and the kataphatic and apophatic dimensions of knowing, which I have added to Atkin's original diagram. I would argue that Holt's first two worlds—World 1, one's inner world, and World 2, the world of one's direct experience—are equivalent to the kataphatic world or way of knowing. In a similar manner, Holt's third and fourth worlds—World 3, the world one knows about, has read about or heard about, and World 4, the world of infinite possibilities, not heard about, not imagined, but ignored; the world "I don't know that I don't know"—is roughly equivalent to the apophatic world or way of knowing. The remainder of this chapter delves more deeply into these kataphatic and apophatic worlds.

One way of making the necessary transition from Holt's model to the inter-related realms of kataphatic and apophatic knowing is to commence with a poem by Nancy A. Lynch. Lynch concludes that both teachers and students must be constantly challenged to think big, and to strain beyond what is controlled, assumed and reasonable. She writes

Whatever it is
That I think I am
I am that, and so much more
How many times do I limit myself
Thinking small
When life is large
Feigning weakness
When I have the strength to move mountains
Bowing low
When I should hold my head high
Coloring inside the lines
Fearing to step outside the box
Where all the wonders of life await
JUMP!
(cited in Cotner, 2004, p. 123)

We now take Lynch's advice to step outside the box and jump—into two very different but complementary types of knowing—the kataphatic and apophatic ways.

Kataphatic Ways of Knowing

I saw eternity the other night
Like a great Ring of pure and endless light,
All calm, as it was bright,
And round beneath it, Time in hours, days, years
Driv'n by the spheres

Like a vast shadow mov'd, In which the world
And all her train were hurl'd:
(Henry Vaughan, "The World", in Gardner, 1976, p. 271).

Prefacing Experiment—Walking Inside Two Rooms

The world is a gate, not a wall (Heschel, 1983, p. 98)

Roger-Pol Droit invites us to take part in an interesting experiment, itself linked to the two different ways of knowing under consideration. He assures us that the duration is a few seconds per experience, the only prop required is a dark room, and that the effect will be disorientating. The first part of the experiment, which I have added, is the willingness to place oneself in a sunlit room containing a variety of objects. One then walks within the room observing, touching, and navigating around these objects. One notices the space, the wall colour, textures, shapes and other features. One is encouraged to relate these observations to others, to draw conclusions and to sum up one's learning.

The second part of the experiment is where Droit's direct instructions apply. He suggests walking in the same room, except on this occasion it is a darkened room, or perhaps the person is wearing a blindfold. Imagine yourself in the following situation:

> You are walking in the dark. Preferably without expecting to. No light to give you your usual bearings as to obstacles and distances. With only your memory to guide you, you must cross a familiar room, your bedroom or your sitting room, in total darkness. *What is worth exploring here are your moments of uncertainty. Your gropings seem to suggest that you don't know how to navigate [a] familiar space.* . .How many steps are there between the [table] and the door? Is there nothing between them? Where's the arm of that chair. . .*These reassuring places bristle suddenly with question marks*. The simplest movements become fraught with risk and perplexity. Worst of all, you can no longer judge distances. *What you thought you knew, in the light, has become uncertain. Nothing is guaranteed*. You stretch out your arms, thinking you're about to bump into something, touch the wall or brush past the doorframe. . .Nothing there. *You keep groping in the void*. Almost from the start, what invades you without you wholly realizing it is in fact the benightedness of ignorance. The darkness makes you stupid. It has thickened your head and destroyed your bearings. . . *The absence of light skews all your estimations*. It confuses your contours, and your body seems uncertain and at a loss. You can only move in limited fits and tiny starts. And yet, very little is actually missing from your picture of things. Known reality is still unmoved and in place. Nothing has budged, neither the objects nor the relations between them. *Nevertheless, they have become incomprehensible. Distanced and vaguely menacing*.
>
> In the dark, the world is supposed to be "the same" as in the light. But you have only to test this proposition to find that *the world changes completely, depending on whether it is visible or not*. What we call "the world", "reality", "normal life" reposes inside a thin, easily disturbed stratum (2002, pp. 32–33, my emphases).

Droit's philosophical experiment (with my additions) represents two ways of knowing—one illumined by light, the other shrouded in complete darkness—two ways to which we now turn in more detail.

Two Types of Knowing

When you limit your life to one frame of thinking, you close out the mystery (O'Donohue, 2000, pp. 26–27)

Christianity traditionally has distinguished between two different but complementary approaches to knowing and spirituality, the kataphatic and the apophatic—although some authors such as Louth would situate symbolic knowing between the kataphatic and apophatic ways (1984, p. 109; cf. Ephrem Syrus in Brock, 1984, p. 135). On these two primary ways, however, Copleston comments, "There are two ways of approaching God, who is the centre of all speculation, a positive way (καταφατική) and a negative way (αποφατική)" (1962, p. 108). Throughout the Christian tradition, God has received "many names, an infinity of names ('polyonomos', 'apeironomos'); [and yet], on the contrary [God has remained] without a name, above every name ('anonomos', 'hyperonomos')" (Roques, in Luibheid, 1987, p. 6). The highly influential Pseudo-Dionysius states this eloquently: "Theological tradition has a dual aspect, the ineffable and mysterious on the one hand [apophatic], the open and more evident on the other [kataphatic]" (Letter Nine, in Luibheid, 1987, p. 283).

While both styles of knowing are examined in greater detail below, two provisional working definitions (building on those we commenced with) would be as follows: *kataphatic knowing* acknowledges what is visible, imaged, apparent and quantifiable in the material world and *apophatic knowing* points to what is beyond word and image, invisible, mysterious, ineffable, unmanifest, and unquantifiable in and beyond the material world. Mujica, however, adds a note of caution in relation to these two ways of knowing: "Rather than in opposition to one another [these two approaches] are viewed as 'different facets of the same religious experience' " (citing Dreyer, in Mujica, 2001, p. 748).

It is worth noting at the outset that every aspect of nature, existence and the cosmos contains both revealed and hidden dimensions. No reality, whether physical or spiritual, not even God, can be glimpsed in its absolute entirety or wholeness. One glimpses the front of a constellation, a sunset, a mountain, but never what lies behind it. One sees the top of an iceberg but not its vast, threatening mass beneath the sea; one sees the facade of a house but not the rooms inside or the backyard; one sees the branches of a tree but not its life-giving roots. The wisdom of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed affirms this understanding: "I believe in one God, . . .maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, [comma!] seen and unseen" (The Holy See, 2000, between nn. 184 & 185, p. 49).

Indiana Jones and Two Ways of Knowing

In order to better illustrate this distinction between the kataphatic and apophatic ways I want to recall a scene in one of the Indiana Jones' series of movies, namely the third in the sequence: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (The box set of

Indiana Jones DVDs is, by the way, the second best selling DVD collection of all time in Australia: Dale, 2008, p. 20). In the climactic scene in this movie, Indiana must pass through three trials or challenges in order to retrieve the Holy Grail, the reputed cup from which Christ and the apostles drank at the Last Supper and, more importantly, to heal his father who has just been shot and badly wounded. The first two trials rely on responses to written clues extracted from archaeological inscriptions. The first trial, "The Breath of God", demands a posture of humility. Its clue is, "Only the penitent man will pass". Indiana Jones must kneel and roll forward in order to avoid two large, whirring circular saws. Anyone who has previously stood upright during this trial has been beheaded. The second trial, "The Word of God", offers the clue, "Only in the footsteps of God will he proceed". Indiana must read one by one the letters of God's name in Latin, and stand in sequence on the stepping stones containing those letters. Of course, as the hero must, he makes it through these first two trials.

However, the third and final trial, "The Path of God", lies in the realm of the unknown and must be approached with the eyes of faith, literally via "a leap of faith". The clue is, "Only in the leap from the Lion's Head will he prove his worth" (the Path of God is watched over by a stone-sculpted lion's head). Indiana Jones stands at the Lion's Head overlooking a bottomless chasm, on the other side of which is the opening to the chamber of the Holy Grail. There is no clear or visible path across this abyss. Indiana mumbles to himself, "Impossible! Nobody can jump this! It's a leap of faith". His only choice is to step out into the abyss and, in the face of possible death, take that leap of faith. Miraculously, he feels solid but invisible ground when his left dangling foot steps out and reaches tentatively into empty space. Then the entire path appears "out of nothing" across the chasm. This ultimately allows him to choose the correct Grail cup and to take its restorative contents back to his dying father whose life is hanging by a thread.

I hope it will appear fairly obvious what comparisons I am drawing between the quest for the Holy Grail and the two ways of spirituality or knowing. The first two Grail trials represent the way of kataphatic knowing—the signs are visible, concrete, knowable, rational, and relational. The final trial across the Lion's Head symbolises the apophatic way—here there are no rational clues, no clear path, the way ahead is invisible and unknowable, and can only be negotiated successfully through the heart by faith and natural intuition. One is truly stepping out into the "great unknown", into the deep abyss or dazzling darkness.

Kataphatic Spirituality

Let us open our eyes to the light and become like God
(Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue 9, cf. Kardong, 2005, p. 110)

Kataphatic spirituality is also referred to as the "way of affirmation" or the "via positiva". "Kataphatic" is a word that originated in the mid-nineteenth century and literally means "[to speak] of knowledge of God" (Apple Inc., 2005–2007).

From the standpoints of theology and spirituality, it is a way that accepts that both knowledge and God are visible and quantifiable in the world. Kataphatic spirituality emphasises that which is revealed, visible and apparent. It refers to that which can be seen or articulated through word, colour, song, complexity, multiplicity of images and ideas, beauty and in many other ways (cf. Flory, 2005, passim). Copleston argues that, in the positive way, "the mind begins 'with the most universal statements, and then through intermediate terms [proceeds] to particular titles'...such as Goodness, Life, Wisdom, [and] Power..." (1962, p.108). The kataphatic or affirmative way holds that "God can be found in all things because all creatures are the overflow and expression of divine fecundity...[it, moreover] sees them as the shadows, echoes, pictures, vestiges, representations, and footprints of the triune God" (Egan, 1993, p. 15).

Kataphatic spirituality is predominantly word-, thought- and image-driven, and relies on analogies to communicate its type of knowledge (McLeod, 1986, p. 41). Its content and strategies are largely concrete, apparent, provable, revealed and public. It is typically situated within the realm of ordinary perception. It is a type of spirituality confirmed by putting one's finger *on* or pointing *at* something concrete and practical—in other words, by direct identification, definition, description or control. It approaches "truth" as something of an intellectually discursive nature, a point arrived at after a series of logical observations (Winters, 1991, pp. 1–5). It often ignores aspects of spirituality such as contemplation, stillness and silence due to an abiding belief in the powers and superiority of reason (McManners, 1990, p. 148).

In the domain of kataphatic spirituality, one resides within oneself relating to knowledge or selected images of God, and one's head "knows" the world and God on a level of conscious awareness (McLeod, 1986, p. 44). One is also typically confined to the literal and descriptive with some figurative, analogical and typological levels of interpretation (The Holy See, 2000, nn. 115–118, p. 33). At the same time, one is habitually confined to "conscious awareness" and to thoughts and images which seek to describe "who God is". This is a way of spirituality given to the cognitive and intellectual rather than to the affective way, which is focused on deep union and personal relationship with God (McLeod, 1986, p. 45).

The faculties typically employed within kataphatic spirituality include "reason, will, imagination, feelings, and senses [used] to provoke [various] kinds of experiences...[after which the person channels] these experiences towards specific goals" (McLeod, 1986, p. 45). The biblical images on which kataphatic spirituality focuses include the Christ of the Incarnation, Baptism, Nativity, Temptation, Eucharistic feedings of the crowds, ministry and Passion. Other scripture passages that support the kataphatic way are—Wis 13:1; Ps 145:5; Rom 1:20—we know about God from the good things that can be seen; Ps 36:9—"For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light"; Jn 1:4–5, 14—Jesus is the Light of the World overcoming all darkness; Jn 14:1–31—to see Jesus is to see the Father; 1 Cor 11:7; cf. 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15—Jesus is the image of the invisible God; and finally, 1 Tim 6:16—it is Jesus "alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honor and eternal dominion" (containing a mixture of the kataphatic and apophatic).

From the perspective of Christian spirituality, kataphatic knowing is accessed via God's creation. Bonaventure asserts, "In relation to our position in creation, the universe itself is 'a ladder by which we can ascend into God' ". The ultimate expression of kataphatic knowing is the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the "icon" (*eikon*) or "image" of God. Other spiritual writers who advocate the kataphatic way include— Walter Hilton, Teresa of Avila, Augustine of Hippo, Benedict of Nursia, Gregory the Great, Catherine of Siena, Rabanus Maurus, Guigo II, Anselm of Canterbury, Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugh of St Victor and the Quaker George Fox.

Note, however, that many Christian saints, depending on the orientation of their writings, can be situated either within the kataphatic or apophatic way of spirituality. For example, St. Ignatius of Loyola's work, *The Spiritual Exercises*, lies firmly within the kataphatic way of knowing. On the other hand, the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* was inspired by the apophatic tradition. Teresa of Avila is an example of one saint and mystic who writes from within both traditions of knowing (Mujica, 2001, pp. 741–748).

Kataphatic Knowing

God gives light to the mind. The mind perceives God or light and the light leads to virtue (Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE), cited in Holmes, 1980, p. 44).

From a pedagogical perspective, I have adapted various aspects of kataphatic spirituality to develop the concept of "kataphatic knowing". Kataphatic knowing therefore locates the source of knowledge and learning within created, visible things and uses images to stimulate spiritual experience. Just as kataphatic spirituality uses analogies to speak about God, such as friend, lover, Life, Beauty, mountain, shield, mother, father, and many more, so too, kataphatic knowing uses nature-based and other visible entities as sources for cultivating knowledge and wisdom. Kataphatic knowing focuses upon the visible, the quantifiable, the revealed, the apparent, in order to validate its sources of knowing. In short, every feature of kataphatic spirituality can be transferred to the pedagogical context under the heading of "kataphatic knowing".

Examples of kataphatic knowing in the classroom context might range from simple strategies of memorisation, application, analysis and evaluation. Students would focus on operations and strategies such as listing, naming, describing, outlining, surveying, graphing, drawing, reporting, classifying, debating and mind mapping. They would be occupied in collecting data, making empirical observations, compiling and interpreting statistics and so on. In relation to Bloom's taxonomy, kataphatic knowing places particular emphasis on the operations of remembering, understanding, applying, analysing and evaluating. Once one departs from these "visible" and quantifiable forms of knowing, one enters the grey, transitional area described above—an area given over to guessing, questioning, hypothesising, wondering, exploring and mythologising. This is the liminal pathway into apophatic spirituality and knowing—to which we now turn.

Apophatic Ways of Knowing

There is in God (some say)
A deep but dazzling darkness; As men here
Say it is late and dusky, because they
See not all clear
O for that night! Where I in him
Might live invisible and dim.
(based on John 2:3; Henry Vaughan, "The Night", in Gardner, 1976, p. 281).

Restoring Apophatic Spirituality

> *Where there is much light, the shadow is deep*
> (Goethe, cited in Gould, 2002, p. 120).

Teachers and students, once again in the context of holistic education and well-being, also need to cultivate a second, largely neglected, but complementary way of knowing—namely, apophatic knowing. This type of knowing is derived from the disciplines of theology and spirituality, where it is referred to as *apophatic spirituality* or *the apophatic way*. It is also referred to as the "negative way" or the "*via negativa*". Winters points out that, "It was a Neoplatonic philosopher, Proclus, who was the first actually to use the term 'via negativa' in the fifth century" (citing Eliade, in 1991, p. 7). "Apophatic" refers to the knowledge of God obtained through negation. The word originated in the mid-nineteenth century and is derived from a succession of Greek words including *apophatikos* "negative", from *apophasis* "denial", and from *apo-* "other than" and *phanai* "speak" (Apple Inc., 2005–2007).

This "via negativa" is "not the 'learned ignorance' of scholarly detachment, but [as Meister Eckhart describes it] the 'mindful ignorance' of facing 'a superessential darkness'. No matter how connected we are to divinity, God is radically ineffable and unknowable" (Yockey, 1987, p. 21). In encountering God through apophatic knowing, however, it is important to realise that this "darkness" is caused by an overwhelming experience of divine light, not just a plunging into divine darkness per se. Turner comments, "the divine light..., through its very excess, causes darkness and unknowing to the soul; hence, in that most Platonic of images, it is a light which is also a darkness, a 'dazzling darkness', a 'cloud of unknowing' " (1999, p. 252).

Augustine argues that even when God reveals God's Self, this same God remains a mystery beyond words. He asserts, "If you understood [God], it would not be God" (*Sermo* 62, 6, 16; *Sermo* 117, 3, 5; cited in The Holy See, 2000, n. 230, p. 61). Yet those seeking God must continue to explore and expand both the kataphatic and apophatic ways. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* asserts that the more we talk about and image God, the more we come to realise that God is beyond imaging and beyond full knowing:

> God transcends all creatures. We must therefore continually purify our language of everything in it that is limited, image-bound or imperfect, if we are not to confuse our image of God – "the inexpressible, the incomprehensible, the invisible, the ungraspable" – with

our human representations. Out human words always fall short of the mystery of God...
Likewise, we must recall that "between Creator and creature no similitude can be expressed
without implying an even greater dissimilitude"; and that "concerning God, we cannot
grasp what [God] is, but only what [God] is not, and how other beings stand in relation
to [God]" (*Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, Anaphora; and St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa
Contra Gentiles*, I, 30, cited in The Holy See, 2000, nn. 42, 43, p. 17).

This apophatic experience can be compared to an episode in the children's lit-
erature classic *The Wind in the Willows*. In Chapter 7, Mole and Rat are lured by
some magical piping to an indescribably sacred place. In the scene leading up to
this passage, author Kenneth Grahame (2007, pp. 120–124) emphasises the liminal
nature of the holy island to which they are being lured—the clear but elusive "voice"
of the river, reeds and wind, the "silent, silver kingdom" which they are entering,
the sudden sound then disappearance of bird song, fear mixed with yearning, tears
and heightened sensations. Suddenly they glimpse the numinous island, described
as "[r]eserved, shy, but full of significance, *it hid whatever it might hold behind a
veil*, keeping it till the hour should come, and, with the hour, those who were called
and chosen" (my emphasis):

> "This is the place of my song-dream, the place the music played to me," whispered the Rat,
> as if in a trance. "Here, in this holy place, here if anywhere, surely we shall find Him!"
>   Then suddenly the Mole felt a great Awe fall upon him, an awe that turned his muscles
> to water, bowed his head, and rooted his feet to the ground. It was no panic terror – indeed
> he felt wonderfully at peace and happy – but it was an awe that smote and held him and,
> *without seeing*, he knew it could only mean that some august Presence was very, very near.
> With difficulty he turned to look for his friend, and saw him at his side cowed, stricken, and
> trembling violently. And still there was utter silence in the populous bird-haunted branches
> around them; and still the light grew and grew (2007, p. 122; my emphasis).

Scripture passages often employed to support the apophatic way include Gen
1:1–2—the primordial presence of God when "the earth was [a] formless void,
and darkness covered the face of the deep"; Ex 19:16–25—Moses' journey into
thick cloud and darkness to meet God; Ps 139:12—"even the darkness is not dark
to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you"; ||Mk
9:2–8; ||Mk 14:43–15:47; Lk 24:13–35—Jesus' hiddenness and elusiveness during
the Transfiguration, Passion, death, and the post-Resurrection Emmaus journey; Mt
10:27—"What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light"; Acts 17:22–34—Paul's
reference to the Unknown God (a passage in which Dionysius the Areopagite is
mentioned!); and Paul's famous testimony in 1 Cor 13:12—"For now we see in a
mirror, dimly, [glass, darkly], but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in
part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known". It is also worth noting
in passing that many writers cited in this chapter—including Daniélou, Ranson and
Leech—conclude that Jesus' own journey stretched conspicuously and deliberately
from the kataphatic realm into the silence and "dazzling darkness" of the apophatic.
Bianchi comments in this regard:

> In Christianity we contemplate Jesus Christ as the Word made flesh, but also as the Silence
> of God. The Gospels show us a Jesus who, as he goes towards the passion, increasingly
> *refrains from speaking* and enters into *silence*, like a mute lamb [cf. Isa 53:7]. One who
> knows the truth and *the inexpressible ground of reality* neither wants *nor is able to betray*

the ineffable in speech, but protects it with his silence. . .Who is the crucified Christ if not the *icon of silence*, the silence of God himself?. . .The silence of the moment of the cross is able to express the inexpressible: the image of the invisible God is found in a man nailed to a cross. *The silence of the cross is the authoritative source from which every theological word should be drawn* (2002, p. 75; my emphases).

Spiritual authors typically linked to the apophatic way (some of these also communicated in a kataphatic way) include Gregory of Nyssa, the aforementioned Pseudo-Dionysius (the Areopagite), Augustine of Hippo, Meister Eckhart, Julian of Norwich, Symeon the New Theologian, Richard of St. Victor, Jan von Ruysbroeck, Johann Tauler, John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, Isaac of Nineveh and the poet William Wordsworth—the list goes on (examined in detail in Leech, 1985, pp. 323–333; and in Jones, Wainwright, & Yarnold, 1986, Index, p. 607). One of course cannot omit the celebrated apophatic and mystical experience of Thomas Aquinas, the greatest of the medieval philosopher–theologians, who wrote *eight million words* at a conservative estimate, and ultimately left his masterpiece, the *Summa Theologiae*, unfinished at his death. The latter event transpired on 6 December 1273 when, at the conclusion of his full and scholarly life and aged only 50, he "underwent an experience during Mass, and thereafter wrote *nothing*. His reported explanation for the cessation was: 'All that I have written seems to me like straw compared to what has now been revealed to me.' He died four months after the revelation" (Brodie, 1995, p. 43).

As Kenneth Grahame has intimated above, the apophatic is a form of spirituality that transpires "without seeing" as one becomes aware that "some august Presence [is] very, very near" (2007, p. 122). The apophatic way acknowledges that both knowledge and God are hidden, mysterious and ineffable. Human beings cannot accurately describe the fullness of knowledge, nor the essence of God. Therefore all descriptions if attempted will be false and limited. In the apophatic realm, the full gamut of spiritual insight is so far beyond human understanding and experience that it can only be "understood" or "comprehended" as an elusive Mystery. As John Armstrong points out, we know implicitly when something or someone is truthful, loving or beautiful "but we are inarticulate when we try to communicate this love" (2005, p. 4).

The apophatic way is accessible only when "the mind has stripped away from its idea of God the human modes of thought and inadequate conceptions of the Deity, [then] it enters upon the 'Darkness of Unknowing', wherein it 'renounces all the apprehension of the understanding and is wrapped in that which is intangible and invisible. . .united. . .to [God] that is wholly unknowable'; this is the province of mysticism" (Copleston, 1962, p. 110; citing Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology*). Apophatic spirituality is also characterised by interior intuition, imagelessness, wordlessness, indeed the transcendence of all words and symbols. It is focused on an abstract experience of the ineffable, a reality that can only be vaguely perceived or recognised (Flory, 2005, pp. 1–3). Apophatic spirituality seeks the mystery or divine reality through and beyond the realm of ordinary perception. It is a type of knowing that can be engaged "peripatetically" by "walking around", contemplating, or "hovering above" the subject in question, and by avoiding strict definition or

closure (Winters, 1991, p. 1). Becoming attuned to the apophatic way is akin to learning to be at home in a "dark cloud" beyond all thoughts and images. It occurs when the heart knows on a level *beyond* conscious awareness. As McLeod observes, "one leaps to God like a spark from a flame, discovering that while God cannot be grasped by concepts, [God] can be grasped by love. [At the same time] one is taken outside oneself to live in God, focused entirely on relationship and union with God. One is totally self-forgetful" (1986, pp. 43–44).

Apophatic spirituality also employs "faculties" or orientations *beyond* that of reason, will and imagination. Feelings are experienced in relation to emptiness, helplessness, uncertainty and even confusion. It is a spiritual way that assumes commitment, perseverance and faith as the person journeys into the territory of darkness and abandonment. The person enters a state of abandonment to the One who knows all, and comes to "know" via "not knowing" (cf. Holt's (1971, p. 20) and Atkin's (2007, pp. 10–12) emphases on "not knowing", and awareness of the world that *I don't know that I don't know*). He/she cultivates a mystical union with God through Christ that is beyond the "sensible" and through the use of emptying (*kenotic*) approaches such as meditation, mindfulness and prayer (McLeod, 1986, pp. 50–51). As Benedictine monk John Main advises, "Meditation is a way of coming to an immeasurable reality *beyond all images*" (1994, p. 41, my emphasis).

The challenge of apophatic knowing is to commit to the pathway that leads to mystery and the Mystery. David Ranson argues, "If we want to find the God of Jesus Christ we must go to *that* place of darkness, awaiting light, to *that* place of emptiness awaiting fullness, to *that* place of death awaiting life. *God is to be perceived in that which at first appears to be not God*" (2006, p. 63, my emphasis).

Apophatic Knowing

> It is lovely to imagine that real divinity is the presence in which all beauty, creativity, darkness and negativity are harmonized
>   (French poet René Char, in O'Donohue, 1999, p. 145).

From a pedagogical perspective, I have adapted various aspects of apophatic spirituality to develop the concept of "apophatic knowing". Apophatic knowing acknowledges that aspects of existence and reality are unknowable, hidden and ineffable. Whereas kataphatic knowing can identify, describe and interact with various forms of knowledge and data, apophatic knowing holds that various forms of knowing are beyond human understanding and experience. Human beings can sense when something ineffable is communicated to them or needs to be pursued for a fuller understanding, yet they are *inarticulate* when they try to communicate [exactly] *what* this "something" or this "knowledge" is. That is what the word "ineffable" connotes—an experience that is "too great or intense to be expressed in words, unutterable. . .too sacred to be uttered, indescribable, indefinable". It is derived from the prefix "in-" plus the "Latin *effabilis*, from *fari*, to speak – literally 'unable to speak or articulate'" (Sinclair, 2003, p. 607). Apophatic knowing is characterised

at different times by confusion, helplessness, darkness, wordlessness, uncertainty and by an inability to define or fully comprehend a particular experience. Apophatic knowing refutes the claim that all knowing is confined within the realms of scientific discovery, technology and the rational domain.

Examples of apophatic knowing in the classroom context might range from simple strategies of questioning, guessing, hypothesising, predicting and contemplating, to more complex and challenging operations such as lateral thinking, use of provocations and "not knowing". Apophatic knowing would incorporate silence, meditation, listening and kinaesthetic exercises, poetry, symbolic knowing, mindfulness, mindful walking or sitting in the bush, a rainforest or another natural environment. It would embrace "intellectual darkness", irony, paradox and acknowledge experiences such as crying, grief, suffering and death. It would accommodate issues arising from the great questions of human existence—Where did I come from? Why am I here? Does God exist? What is the meaning of evil, suffering and death? What happens after death? Is there a resurrection and a final judgement? In relation to Bloom's taxonomy, it places particular emphasis on the operations typically *not* accessed during kataphatic knowing—including those of evaluating, creating and operacy.

It is a key responsibility of teachers and students today to search for and open up alternative paths such as those detailed above—not only to truth and understanding but also to seeing and knowing themselves. Table 32.2 below is an acknowledgement that while much valuable work has been completed in the area of kataphatic knowing, still much more needs to be explored in the grey and apophatic spheres of knowing.

The Spiritual Journey from Kataphatic Through Liminal to Apophatic

The journey from kataphatic to apophatic knowing has been compared by some to a curve or spiral (O'Donohue, 1999, p. 202), even to the ebb and flow of God as the Great Ocean (O'Donohue, 2000, p. 180). Our pilgrimage, avers Lane, is one of ever-decreasing circles until we encounter "the still point of the turning world" in the person of the Risen Christ (2005, p. 1). The soul, observes Daniélou, strains constantly towards God (*epektasis*) and desires to cleave to (*devekut*) God (1979, p. 55). For Bonaventure, Walter Hilton and John Climacus, the spiritual journey is compared to a ladder from the Earth to the heaven.

This image is rejected in the mystical theology of John Scotus Erigena who compares the search for God at different times to the circular, to a concentric circle, and to the spiral journey towards God (Schmiel, 1984, p. 184). The latter image is echoed in the writings of Nicholas of Cusa (Yockey, 1987, pp. 18–19) and Meister Eckhart (Fox, 1984, p. 215). One additional metaphor for the spiritual journey, the labyrinth, is attested as early as c. 1194 in Chartres Cathedral, France (Geoffrion, 1999). It all depends on what metaphor one wishes to employ to characterise "ascent" towards

Table 32.2 Summary of key features: kataphatic, grey/fuzzy, and apophatic knowing

Kataphatic knowing white or light area	Fuzzy areas of knowing grey, liminal area	Apophatic knowing dark or hidden area
Majority of Bloom's (revised) taxonomy—remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating (Pohl, 2000; Griggs, 2006)	**Remainder of Bloom's (revised) taxonomy**—rest of evaluating, creating and operacy, e.g. assesses, hypothesises, recommends, creates, imagines, predicts, synthesises (Pohl, 2000; Griggs, 2006)	**Aspects of Claxton's "slow thinking"**—play, leisure, craft, dreaming, mulling, ruminating, "hovering", contemplating, considering, observing, "not knowing" (Claxton, 2000; Claxton & Lucas, 2004; J. Armstrong, 2005, pp. 135–136)
Most standard classroom strategies—listing, naming, describing, outlining, graphing, drawing, illustrating, reporting, classifying, investigating, researching, debating, surveying, ranking, mind mapping	**Some aspects of PEEL (Project for Enhancing Effective Learning)**—questioning, guessing, hypothesising, projecting, predicting, proposing (PEEL, 2007)	**Other ways of knowing that are difficult to classify**—mindfulness, meditating, listening/auditory, walking, sitting in a rainforest or other natural environment, adult sexual knowing; Lorca's *duende*, John of the Cross's *nada;*
The kataphatic tradition—what is revealed, visible, apparent; predominantly a way of knowing based on visual stimuli	**De Bono's "Boundaries of Reasonableness"**—making mistakes, accidents, madness, lateral thinking, experiments, chance encounters, provocations (de Bono, 1990b, p. 72; 1993, p. 49) Fuzzy Logic as "multivalence" (Kosko, 1993, pp. 18–19, 288)	**The apophatic tradition**—what remains concealed, hidden from view, ineffable, mysterious; also includes silence, contemplation, meditation, wordless intuition, art, poetry, music, song, mime, drama, dance/kinaesthetic (cf. McClymont, 1987, p. 50; Bossy, 1987, pp. 153–171), mantras, centring prayer, Christian Zen techniques, symbolic knowing, meditative walking, tears

God. As Turner comments in relation to the spiritual journeys he has surveyed in detail—those of the Exodus, Denys the Areopagite, Augustine, Bonaventure, Meister Eckhart, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Denys the Carthusian, and John of the Cross—"in every author we have considered, the metaphors of 'exteriority', 'interiority' and 'ascent' are central to the description of the progress of the soul towards God" (1999, p. 252).

In writings on spirituality, it is common for authors to ask, "Is the spiritual life more likely to be a journey from darkness to light or from light into darkness?" After weighing up the above key biblical, mystical and theological evidence, I am proposing that *neither* model is adequate or therefore fully accurate. The journey to true knowing and authentic, integrated spirituality (and thus by definition to holistic

learning and wellbeing) is neither a journey from light to darkness, nor one from darkness into light. It is instead an eternal progression or repetition of the three classic stages of enlightenment or illumination from light through greyness into darkness and hence into God's Absolute Light in the midst of darkness. The knower or spiritual pilgrim begins in the light of the divine image, journeys through grey cloud and black darkness and then regains God's light in the midst of a new domain of mystical, ineffable darkness. This is expressed in the Zen Buddhist tradition as, "You see the mountain – the mountain disappears – you see the mountain [again]" (cf. Halifax, 2004, pp. 52–53). In diagrammatic form, this can be represented as follows:
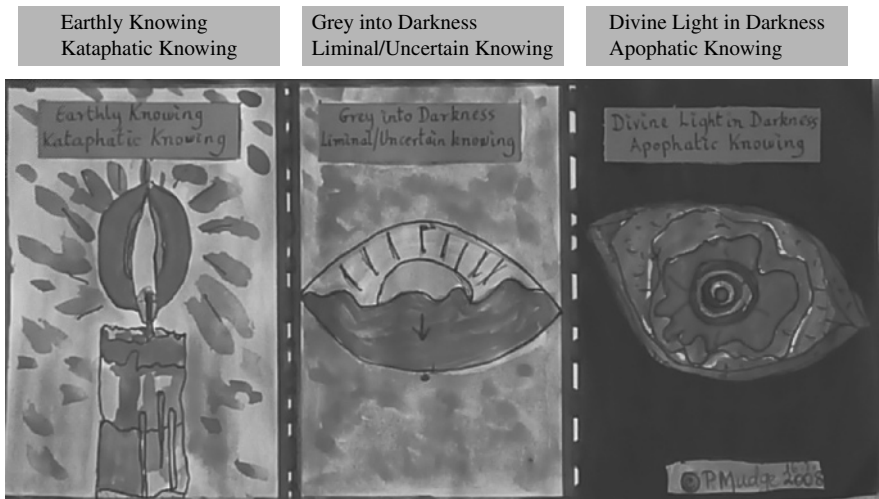
Diagram 32.1 The classic spiritual pilgrimage from kataphatic through liminal to apophatic Illustrated by P. Mudge, 2007.

Conclusions and Future Directions

Practical Strategies for Cultivating a Balanced Approach Towards Kataphatic and Apophatic Knowing

> *Here the Thou appeared to [humanity] out of a deeper mystery, addressed [them] out of the dark, and [they] responded with [their lives]*
> (Buber, 1996/1923, p. 92).

To adapt a famous saying by G. K. Chesterton about Christianity, "It is not so much that a wide variety of ways of knowing, particularly liminal and apophatic knowing, have been tried and found wanting. They have been found difficult and left untried" (adapted from: Thinkexist, 2007, p. 1).

In the final analysis, incorporating different ways of knowing into the teaching context is absolutely essential for the broad cultivation of holistic education and wellbeing. It is important to know through the process of contemplation. It is equally important to wait, to not know, to tolerate uncertainty. As Claxton argues convincingly:

> The individuals and societies of the West have rather lost touch with the value of *contemplation*. Only *active* thinking is regarded as productive. . .To tap into the leisurely ways of knowing, one must dare to *wait*. Knowing emerges from, and is a response to, *not-knowing*. Learning – the process of coming to know – emerges from *uncertainty*. Ambivalently, learning seeks to reduce uncertainty, by transmuting the strange into the familiar, *but it also needs to tolerate uncertainty, as the seedbed in which ideas germinate and responses form* (2000, pp. 4, 6; my emphases).

The research explored in this chapter raises a number of challenges and possibilities for future pedagogical contexts. Some of these include the need to

1. acknowledge the riches of two- and fourfold taxonomies of knowing, while at the same time incorporating a broad range of kataphatic, grey/liminal and apophatic styles of knowing across the total school curriculum, and in all areas of classroom pedagogy as well as in teacher/adult spirituality (refer to Fig. 32.1). Alongside the kataphatic ways of knowing listed in this chapter, teachers and students should be encouraged to "stretch" themselves towards other ways of knowing, namely the grey/liminal ways of hypothesising, questioning, predicting, synthesising, using provocations and lateral thinking, as well as more apophatic ways of knowing—dreaming, mulling, ruminating, "hovering", contemplating, "knowing that they don't know". Apophatic knowing could also include activities linked to meditation, mindfulness, listening, silence, poetry, mantras, symbolic knowing, centring prayer, meditative walking, and reflection on grief, death and suffering;
2. incorporate understandings from the kataphatic–apophatic model to all areas of educational measurement—data collection, planning, scope and sequencing, programming, design of assessment tasks and marking criteria, evaluation, reporting and school reviews or compliance audits;
3. acknowledge that one cannot "prove" or empirically measure apophatic knowing but one can provide opportunities for teachers and students to experience or sense these types of knowing. One way to approach apophatic knowing is to gather formal or informal "evidence" that the student has considered or remained open to this type of knowing, such as through a journal reflection, meditation or portfolio. These types of knowing should not be graded but perhaps acknowledged on a "completed", "pass" or "satisfactory" basis;
4. be aware that apophatic knowing can often be viewed as a type of "mystical career" and thus can be easily (and falsely) separated from a willingness to share in the suffering of the world, from theology itself, prayer, the prophetic response and the struggle to establish social justice, development and peace (cf. Leech, 1985, pp. 344–349);

5. encourage a balanced living out of kataphatic and apophatic knowing. This should lead teachers and students beyond the phoney and superficial to confront all forms of illusion and pretence, to act prophetically and subversively, to unmask illusion, to purify the self and to reject all manipulation and falsehood. As Leech asserts, "The road to God is the road which involves darkness and mystery, a *via negativa* in which all human constructs are relativised, and all inherited assumptions and languages are called into question". He continues, "In the journey to the abyss, we lose control of ourselves, abandon our obsession with ownership, and enter the 'abysmal waylessness', the ignorance of which no one can truly speak" (introductory points and both quotes from Leech, 1985, p. 348);

6. include a spiral curriculum approach that incorporates the so-called "great search for meaning questions of human existence", such as Where did I come from? Who am I? What is the meaning of life, suffering, evil and death? What happens after I die? Is there life after death? Who is my neighbour?

To conclude, I want to return to and extend Droit's earlier analogy of the lit and darkened rooms, in order to compare our ability to teach different ways of knowing to the structure of a dwelling. The Sufi mystic Mulla Nasruddin uses the image of the house with different rooms, some of which are familiar and others which are totally unexplored. He writes

> But they were like children born in a house from which they had *never been allowed to stray*, doomed to walk from one room to another *without knowing that there could be another house*, elsewhere, with *different furnishings* and a *different view from its windows* (Shah, cited in McClymont, 1987, p.49; my emphases).

The same metaphor holds for the ways of knowing which our students have or have not explored. The familiar, well-lit rooms are typically those linked to kataphatic knowing; the unfamiliar, darkened or hidden rooms relate to ways of apophatic knowing.

Or again, these diverse ways of knowing can be compared to a flourishing and resilient tree, not only its branches spreading into the sky but also its roots searching deep into the fertile earth. John O'Donohue writes, "Each tree grows in two directions at once, into the darkness and out to the light, with as many branches and roots as it needs to embody its wild desires" (1999, p. 157). The light, exposed, kataphatic branches and the dark, hidden, apophatic roots need to grow simultaneously in a vigorous and healthy way. If this does not occur, any trace of holistic learning and wellbeing will surely be decimated by the next unexpected storm that strikes the tree. Perhaps the final insightful words can be left to the poet Rilke, who portrays himself as the branches of a tree, with God as his roots:

> But when I lean over the chasm of myself –
> it seems
> my God is dark
> and like a web: a hundred roots
> silently drinking.

This is the ferment I grow out of

More I don't know, because my branches
rest in deep silence, stirred only by the wind

("I have many brothers in the South", cited in Barrows and Macy, 1996, p. 49).

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Chapter 33
Whence Wisdom? Human Development as a Mythic Search for Meaning

Inna Semetsky

> *And as imagination bodies forth*
> *The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen*
> *Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing*
> *A local habitation and a name*
>
> (Shakespeare)

Abstract Since time immemorial, people were searching for a universal language that would transcend cultural, religious, and language barriers. This chapter presents the system of Tarot images as both symbolic language, full of implicit meanings, and as a pedagogical tool to complement the existing aids in moral/spiritual education. The chapter is grounded in the educational philosophies of John Dewey and Nel Noddings; and positions Tarot within "other strategies to be employed" (Crawford and Rossiter) in spiritual education. Tarot pictures embody intellectual, moral, and spiritual "lessons" derived from collective human experiences across times, places and cultures. As a system of communication and interpretation, Tarot is oriented toward the discovery of meanings for the multiplicity of experiences that would have otherwise lacked meaning and significance. The meaning of Wisdom is embodied in the image of "The High Priestess". The process of interpretation contributes to our development and learning from experience; and enriches our personal and collective identities.

Since time immemorial, humankind has searched for a universal language in its quest for the perfect means of communication that would transcend prevailing cultural, religious, and language barriers. A poetic tale (Coelho 1993) explored such a language, once understood by everybody but now forgotten. The young hero of the tale who spends years in search of that universal language arrives at the understanding that it's all *written there*. The Bible speaks of a time when the whole Earth was of one language and of one speech, and all people indeed were one. Medieval symbolism considered the World as a book of God written in a *codex vivus*, which is to be deciphered. The philosopher Bacon contrasted the apparent unreliability of

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human communication with the language based on *real character*, the use of which would have helped people to understand each other by means of shared meanings. In our current global climate permeated by diverse beliefs, disparate values, and cultural conflicts, understanding the other and sharing each other's values is paramount for the survival of our species.

In the context of educating youth, Crawford and Rossiter (2006) equate young people's search for meaning, identity, and spirituality with the very reasons for living. They notice the link between the search for meaning, personal identity, and spirituality. They specifically point out the diversity that arises in pedagogy if and when education is oriented toward wisdom. Helping students "to look on their experience of education with a greater sense of its value" (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006, p. 321) is a noble task—but it should be performed by teachers equipped with at least an equal if not greater sense of value and meaning of their own professional practice and their own personal development. As Nel Noddings (2002) keeps reminding us, the aim of moral education is to contribute to the continuous education of both students and teachers, in the relational dynamics between selves and others. In their study devoted to the exploration of the very reasons for living, Crawford and Rossiter (2006) indeed agree that the purpose of moral and spiritual education is not simply to "inject" such a dimension into curriculum: "other strategies need to be employed" (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006, p. 320).

In this chapter I present one such alternative strategy: its focus is an ancient symbolic system of knowledge represented by the pictorial "language" of Tarot images, each of which is indeed—as the Chinese saying goes—worth more than many thousands of words. Tarot myths abound: the Greek god of communication, the messenger Hermes, has been identified with the Egyptian mystical god Thoth who has "given" his name to a Tarot deck known as The Book of Thoth. A Tarot deck consists of 78 pictorial cards or Arcana. The meaning of Arcana (or arcanum, singular) is that creative, but often missing, element in our lives, which is necessary to know, to discover in experience so as to be fruitful and creative in one's possible endeavors. If and when discovered—that is, made available to consciousness—it becomes a powerful motivational force to facilitate a change for the better at our emotional, cognitive, and/or behavioral levels and thus to accomplish an important ethical objective, especially considering that we live at a time of global conflicts, religious misunderstandings, and political bifurcations. What is called a Tarot layout or spread is a particular pattern of the picturesque cards with its images full of rich symbolism. Each position in a sequence has some specific connotations. A "reader" is a trained practitioner who has developed her intuition so as to secure readings of a high reliability. An expert reader, like myself, is also a qualified mental-health professional that gained her skills through appropriate personal and professional training, education, and development. Tarot pictorial symbolism embodies intellectual, moral, and spiritual "lessons" derived from collective human experiences across times, places, and cultures. As such, Tarot "speaks" in a mythic format of symbols, the metaphorical universal "language" full of shared, even if implicit, meanings. As a system of communication and interpretation, Tarot is oriented toward the discovery of meanings for the multiplicity of experiences that

would have otherwise lacked meaning and significance. Tarot therefore performs two functions, existential and educational, the latter focusing on the ethical and spiritual dimension of experience and the former on the construction of identity within experience itself. As an art and *techne*, it can therefore become a valuable tool to complement an existing set of educational aids in the area of moral and spiritual education.

The pictorial images create an adventure story of the journey through the school of life, each new life experience representing a stage in human development. As a lesson to be learned, it is our stopovers along the experiential journey through life that contribute to our learning and self-understanding. Tarot not only speaks "in a different voice," therefore bringing forth the subtleties of Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings' relational ethics, but also enables a process of critical self-reflection analogous to the ancient Socratic "Know thyself" principle in the heart of an examined (vs. unexamined) life. In her remarkable book *Educating for intelligent belief or unbelief*, Noddings (1993) calls for introducing spiritual questions into curriculum. The question of the meaning and purpose of life is of equal importance to children and adults alike. Addressing questions of children's belief or unbelief in God, Noddings stresses that they should be the subject of intelligent inquiry. Noddings reminds us of John Dewey's view on democracy that should include a common faith and truth, which is understood as an encounter of God in people in their actions and experiences. Noddings' discussions focus on the nature of God and many gods; the possibility of spiritual progress and the danger of religious intolerance; human desire to experience a sense of belonging; feminism and the politics of religion; immortality, salvation, and humanistic aspirations; religion in connection to mathematics and sciences; human dependence on God and secular ethics.

Like John Dewey who was concerned with changing the course of moral ideas so as to overcome the dualisms between mind and world, soul and body, nature and God, Noddings calls for the deep exploration of those questions that would have contributed to an enhanced capacity for all people to make informed and intelligent connections to the spiritual realm. Dewey, in his classic book *Experience and nature* (1925/1958), noticed that to call somebody spiritual never meant to invoke some mysterious and non-natural entity outside of the real world. To be a spiritual person meant for Dewey to possess qualities of rich, coordinated and sensitive participation in the many situations of life. Soul and spirit are not to be considered as belonging solely to a mythic realm; rather, they are embedded in real human experiences. That's what Dewey has called learning from experience: the ability to make multiple connections between what we do to things in the world and what we can enjoy or suffer from things in return. The idea of God, for Dewey, represented the active relation between the ideal and the actual. The human desire to unite the two belongs to what may be considered a spiritual act. Dewey distinguished between religion and the religious, an attitude, which—importantly—is not to be identified with the supernatural. A religious reorientation brings forward a sense of security and stability by creating a better and more enduring adjustment to real-life circumstances. New, spiritual, values are created so as to help in carrying one through moments of

desperation and, by virtue of the discovery of meaning for such an experience, not submitting to fatalistic resignation.

It is a specific contribution of Dewey's philosophy to education that an important aspect of learning is to be found in experience and that the development of practical life as *moral* amounts to our progressive capacity to intelligently evaluate and reconstruct this experience. We become capable of understanding the structures of knowledge at a deeper level, and our practical experience is a necessary element in the very formation of those structures. Experience, for Dewey, is not confined to the private world of mind. In fact, the world of mind is not at all private but is to be considered a meaningful pattern that emerges in interactions—or transactions, as Dewey called them—between an organism (a living body) and environment (the greater, collective and public, world of experience). Mind arises in the system of dynamic tensions between the two because of the practical necessity to evaluate and reconstruct "an" experience, that is, to understand its meaning and derive its value. The new relation is being established between subjective experience and objective knowledge because, for Dewey, experience is equivalent to the unified purposeful process (it has continuity). The dualistic split between experience and the world dissolves because mind is not confined to brain alone. Experience that has been taken out of the head, so as to speak, but instead put back into the world—where it originally "resides," even though we may remain unaware of this at the conscious level—means that the causes operate not intrinsically but relationally, meanwhile defying the (habitual) fact-value distinction.

Values are not just *subjective* feelings but do reside in the world, at the deepest level of reality called by Carl Gustav Jung the *objective* psyche, or the collective unconscious (cf. Neville 2005) constituted by archetypes which represent ideas reflecting multiple patterns of typical human situations, habitual behaviors, and significant events. Jung described archetypes as the dynamical structures of the psyche that determine the contents of the unconscious. The start of any inquiry and acquiring knowledge (facts) is motivated by us experiencing the world of values that make us strive for certain (even if implicit) goals; these goals and purposes reciprocally shape our experience and inform new values. Experience therefore has both logical and biological character, and values cannot be simply represented by a fixed set to be transmitted to students in the instructional mode (as, for example, in the traditional character education programs, or Australian National Values Education program, for that matter) but, in their functional role, are dynamic and depend on the evolving meanings of experience. For Dewey, experience is not just the knowledge of facts: an experienced person does not just possess knowledge; rather, s/he makes connections between perceived facts and the multiplicity of implicit aspirations, multiple purposes, explicit goals, etc., in order to construct a meaning for a singular experience, that is, to reconstruct it, to re-evaluate, to create the value anew by assigning meaning to a singular experience. Dewey emphasized the role of imagination in the process of unifying the self with objective conditions, stressing that unity, as the idea of a whole, is to be understood as an imaginary, and not a literal, idea. Imagination expands the world only narrowly apprehended in knowledge or realized in reflective thinking. Imagination exceeds faith, the latter based on the truth of propositions

solely by virtue of their supernatural author. A truly religious attitude is not limited to what is actually out there, but is inspired by belief into what is possible, even if only ideal in character. The realm of the possible is much broader than an intellectual assurance or rational belief can encompass.

This chapter presents such a realm of the possible in the mode of its symbolic representations embedded in the Tarot system with its 78 pictorial images, each representing an embodied "lesson" that the human soul must learn in the school of life. For Dewey, the patterns of experience as dynamic moving forces, "whether perceived or presented in imagination" (Dewey, 1916/1924, pp. 152153), manifest the naturalization of education, and

> What [a person] gets and gives as a human being, a being with desires, emotions and ideas, is . . . a widening and deepening of conscious life – a more intense, disciplined, and expanding realization of meanings. . . . And education is not a mere means to such a life. Education is such a life (Dewey, 1916/1924, p. 417).

Tarot images embody meaningful life-patterns of thoughts, affects, emotions, feelings, and behaviors, thus constituting the very values implicit in the collective experiences across times, places, language barriers, disparate beliefs, and cultures. Indeed Noddings, in the context of feminist moral philosophy, pointed to such common human experiences as birth, marriage, motherhood, death, or separation, even while denying moral universals as the predestined rules for our actions. These experiential events are fundamental and can thus be considered to have universal meanings for humankind even when happening in different places across the globe and in different times in history. Significantly, the Tarot images—by embodying the range of those universal meanings—lay down an unorthodox "foundation" for the existing, both actual and potential, moral knowledge in the form of the collective memory gained by the humankind over the course of its history (Semetsky 2006). Such a foundation, when properly constructed, should help us in repairing what Isaiah Berlin (1990), borrowing the phrase from Marx, called *the crooked timber of humanity*. In total, the images create an adventure story of the journey through life, with its many events and experiences. Indeed, "stories lives tell" (Witherell & Noddings, 1991) bind together disparate events and represent in a narrative form that what Charles Taylor (1989) called a quest for the *Good*.

The multiple narratives constituted by our journey through Tarot pictures "give shape and expression to what would otherwise be untold" (Witherell & Noddings, 1991, p. x). Pictures can be used to make implicit or explicit inferences, subsequently deriving a meaning for the image. The pictorial story is educational because each new life experience contributes to self-understanding and, ultimately, spiritual rebirth. In the Tarot deck, the idea of Rebirth is signified by "The Sun" card, with its image of a small happy child warming in the sunshine, the psychic energy of a child enriched by the solar energy of the world of nature (Fig. 33.1).

The philosophy of Tarot is grounded in the anti-dualistic (anti-Cartesian) ontology that does not posit humans as separate from nature, nor mind and matter as two separate substances. Tarot psychology is transpersonal, and the philosophy it

Fig. 33.1 The Sun

embodies is akin to the process-metaphysics exemplified in the work of such figures as John Dewey, Charles S. Peirce, Alfred North Whitehead, or Henri Bergson (cf. Rescher 1996). Tarot brings to our awareness many initially unperceived meanings, thereby contributing to human learning and development based on both actual and potential experiences. Each card in the deck, in psychological terms, carries a strong *humanistic* aspect by virtue of the persistent drive to grow, develop, differentiate, and nurture our spiritual feelings in the process of becoming an integrated personality. This process is akin to what Carl Jung described as individuation. The aim of individuation is the achievement of a greater personality equipped with the sense of value and identity, the Self. The Self is never given a priori in the form of a

Cartesian subject; rather the search for meanings embedded in experience leads to human development and the construction of identity as a function of our continuous learning from experience. In this respect, the subject or Self becomes, as Noddings would have said, constituted; rather than being an a priori constituting subject forever separate from the world of objects.

This nuance is significant, and the process of the constitution of the Self and discovering one's identity is what the existential function of Tarot is all about. Existential function is very much concerned with the problem of identity—self-creation, or creation of the Self—because it is when new meanings are constructed and become available to consciousness that "the old self is put off and the new self is . . . forming" (Dewey, 1925/1958, p. 245). The educational function derives from the holistic dimensions of such an experience, the scope of which becomes expanded to incorporate the spiritual domain. We thus acquire a better ability for self-reflection, self-knowledge, and a sense of value, purpose and meaningfulness of our experiences. Importantly we achieve a better understanding of what may seem to be irresolvable moral dilemmas that subsequently leads to the choice of right action and a better-informed—or intelligent, as Noddings would have put it—decision-making ability. As Crawford and Rossiter (2006) point out in their monumental study:

> meaning and identity are the same psychological reality looked at from different perspectives. From the viewpoint of meaning, it is an explanation of individual intentionality. From the viewpoint of identity, it is the individual's distinctive self-understanding and self-expression (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006, p. 33).

The educational function includes the much-talked-about transformative aspect which is a pressing issue in contemporary curriculum theory and pedagogical practice. Jim Garrison, addressing the problem involved in the "ever creative curriculum" (Garrison 2000, p. 117), describes such a curriculum in terms of it being a transformative and participatory process that would have continuously embodied new emergent meanings and values. Traditionally, that is within the boundaries of binary logic and formal thinking, those new meanings have been considered quite "inaccessible to sense" (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 32). According to the thesis of this chapter, however, the conditions enabling the possibility of accessing the otherwise inaccessible may be realized in practice, and it is the interpretation of Tarot symbolism that performs the logical function of the "included middle," thus connecting the spiritual realm with the practical world of human actions, decision-making, and choices.

Tarot empowers us with the ability to "make sense" out of the chaotic flux of experiences as we become capable of learning from and within this experience when it is being unfolded in front of our very eyes in the structures of experience represented by the constellations of pictures. An obscure situation represented by the archetypal images becomes converted, in the course of the interpretation of symbols, "into the clear and luminous" (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 266). As themes emerge during Tarot readings, therapeutic material is being collected (Semetsky,

2005a, 2006). This material contributes to the healing of the soul and spirit by providing a valuable and caring guidance toward resolving problematic or perplexing situations. Indeed, Noddings argues that our modern liberal education, devoid of feeling and/or caring dimensions, does not enrich the human mind and spirit but tends to narrow its scope. Presenting feminist spirituality as an alternative to traditional patriarchal religion, Noddings acknowledges that women have long suffered inferiority under the prevailing theological and philosophical theories. She suggests that students should be exposed to both the story of the Fall and to its feminist critique with an emphasis on the Goddess religions, in which the biblical serpent is not evil but instead educates humans in gnosis—or inner knowledge—and brings healing. Such Gnostic knowledge that embodies the ancient Socratic "Know thyself" dictum can become available to us by means of using a different voice, which "speaks" in images and symbols and articulates many of humanity's ethical, intellectual, and spiritual "lessons." Noddings (2006) is adamant about the importance of self-knowledge as the very core of education: "when we claim to educate, we must take Socrates seriously. Unexamined lives may well be valuable and worth living, but an education that does not invite such examination may not be worthy of the label education" (Noddings, 2006, p. 10).

In the Tarot deck, the potential of/for self-knowledge, albeit expressed in "a different voice," is embodied in the meaning of the picture, called "The High Priestess," Major Arcanum number 2 (Fig. 33.2).

She is as a symbol for Sophia, or Shekhinah, or Ennoia; all the feminine principles of wisdom across religions and cultures, yet all representing the return of the Goddess for the purpose of unfolding the scroll she holds in order to reveal to humankind the secrets of Gnostic knowledge lost in the "pure reason" of modernity. The High Priestess sits on the throne as on a seat of *transformation*, ready to reveal to humankind the words of wisdom "written" in the scroll she holds. Her knowledge is of the lost speech that describes the true nature of things in the symbolic language similar to the one, according to myth, used by Adam before the Fall (or before the confusion of tongues in Babel). "The High Priestess" is a symbol of spirituality and female intuition as a special sensitivity and sensibility. She signifies the invisible and secret knowledge vs. the sensible and empirical; yet she can potentially express herself, thus making the invisible present. This lost or forgotten speech may manifest itself in the unconscious contents such as a slip of the tongue in Freudian psychoanalysis, in dreams, in Jungian active imagination, and in Tarot symbolism. The unconscious contents enfolded in the scroll that the Priestess holds are not arbitrary but accord with specific grammar or code that provides them with structure, making them potentially available to consciousness.

The Priestess' number in the deck is 2, which in Jewish mythology, for example, signifies "Beth," the second letter in Hebrew alphabet meaning the house. The Priestess' house of wisdom would have been opened with the two keys (and the keys are often portrayed on this card in some other decks). The gold key is Logos and reason; the silver key is intuition and imagination; thus The Priestess symbolizes the holistic wisdom in which the feminine mode of knowing complements an essentially masculine rationality. According to a Jewish myth (cf. Schwartz, 2004),
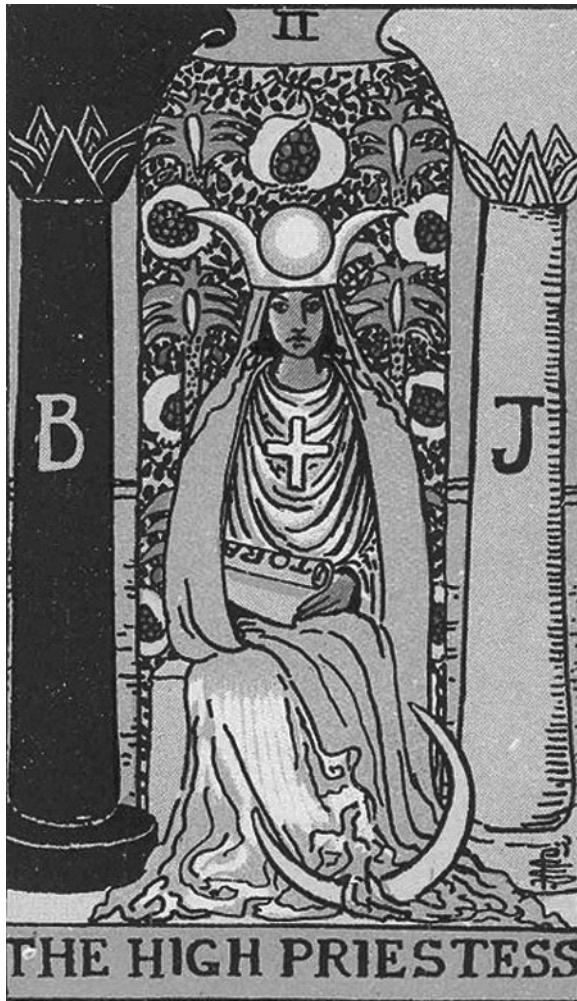
Fig. 33.2 The High Priestess

Shekhinah dwells here—in this world—while desperately wanting to reconnect with her beloved: she is the bride (the feminine counterpart) of God. As medieval philosophers would say (apparently in the context of the one-sidedness of patriarchal religion), the wisdom of the father lies in the lap of the mother. That is, Shekhinah represents God's immanence in this world. While in rabbinic literature the term *Shekhinah* is used primarily as a synonym for God's *presence* in *this* world, some Kabbalistic sources suggest a kind of mythic separation from God: the divine as present in, but yet hidden from, the human. Sophia is God's (that is, celestial) self-reflection (in the terrestrial) because it is *wisdom* indeed which is necessary for self-reflection. Yet, being separated from her beloved (in exile, according to myth)

Fig. 33.3 Nine of Swords

Shekhinah/Sophia is often sad and depressed, and sometimes appears to us at this plane of manifestation in the twilight zone between night and morning in the guise of the Holy Ghost, as symbolically portrayed in one of the minor arcana cards, the "Nine of Swords" (Fig. 33.3).

She needs to be recognized and spoken to, but we cannot wake up and are forced therefore to let her go. In Egyptian tradition, her name is Isis, the goddess of the rainbow and bridge between heaven and earth, who was also depicted as a wisdom figure in mythology. She is the deep feminine understanding that manifests through human nature: she is The High Priestess. "The High Priestess" is preceded by earlier experiences along the road toward spiritual development and individuation. The

Fig. 33.4 The Fool

very first card in the deck is an unnumbered one (or rather, numbered as zero) and is called "The Fool." (Fig. 33.4)

Let us articulate the meaning of this image. A child has been born. This is the symbolic child within many of us, the archetypal *puer aeternus*, symbolizing new beginnings, the potentiality of life, novelty itself. The very first picture in the major arcana of the Tarot deck depicts a youth projecting the image of wide-eyed innocence, curiosity, and a trusting heart. She is standing at the edge of a cliff, but with her head high in clouds, The Fool does not seem to notice the uneven road or the possibility of falling down. The Fool's childlike topological perception of the

world, in accord with Piaget's developmental theory, is not restricted by conventional Euclidean geometry; conversely, her world is not conceptualized merely in terms of the rigid syllogisms of formal logic. The world ahead is full of encounters and many experiences of which the Fool has no knowledge yet, but independently of that, the phenomenal world is here in the picture, symbolized by the abyss just a step away, and has always already been here even before the youth approached the edge.

The Fool's youthfulness, bordering on infantile carelessness, expresses a sense of connection that is present in a small child's perception of the world as an undifferentiated totality, in which inner and outer realities are movable and transient. Only venturing into novel and as-yet-unknown territory might bring a relative order into the chaotic flux of childish perceptions. And free choice—even if not a rational choice, because formal logic is as yet beyond a child's grasp—of coming to a decision of "making a step forward" that would have separated oneself from the present but enabled one to leap forward into the future in search of authentic experience and individuation is transmitted by this card's imagery. The wandering Fool is always on the road, always learning from experience. S/he carries his/her sack on the stick as the universal symbol of vagabonds and minstrels and is pictured as though existing in a fleeting moment of having stopped at a pivotal point on the edge between knowledge and ignorance: for Dewey, the task of education always involves more education. At a higher level, this picture embodies the idea of numinous Spirit itself: free, unconstrained, and ready to step into the world of experiences. Dewey noted that

> when the organization called soul is free, moving and operative, initial as well as terminal, it is spirit ... Spirit quickens; it is not only alive but it gives life ... Soul is form, spirit informs. It is the moving function of that of which soul is the substance. Perhaps the words soul and spirit are so heavily laden with ... mythology ... that they must be surrendered; it may be impossible to recover for them in science and philosophy the realities designated in idiomatic speech. But the realities are there, by whatever names they be called (Dewey, 1925/1958, p. 294).

At the level of socio-cultural reality, the idea of "The Fool" is inscribed in cultural practices per se: as a signifier of innocence and nostalgic wholesome times, the Fool's presence can be traced, for example, in the cultural artifacts of Walt Disney's world(s) or Kasdan's film *Grand Canyon*—the title itself implying the image. With regard to the latter, this idea has been interpreted in terms of a "radical innocence ... [as] the signifier for a hegemonic practice ... where luck and chance" (Giroux, 1994, p. 42) acquire power vis-a-vis "struggle and agency." Such an interpretation, albeit negating the positive qualities of the childhood motif, indicates the diversity of meanings that may be assigned to the notion of childhood and innocence, and points toward the danger that a naive Fool may encounter when, facing the brute facts of reality, it becomes not only subjected to manipulation by others but also downgraded from the activated dynamic life-force into an ideological construct. Still, despite the threat of being reduced to what Giroux qualified as an ideological appeal to nostalgia, the Fool's presence in contemporary culture is a sign of her resilience. The Fool's adventure is high-spirited, even heroic, and, as

such, capable of erasing a hegemonic practice that might seem to exist as its own counterpart.

In the journey through the subsequent experiences embedded in the pictures, the Fool's very identity will be contested and will reappear in the guise of the names of other major cards in the deck. The next card numbered 1 and called "The Magician" is a symbol of practical wisdom and successful accomplishment of goals (Semetsky, 2003).Each subsequent card in a deck represents an evolution in human consciousness as a function of experience in the phenomenal world. I have already described in detail and analyzed the symbolic meaning of "The High Priestess" as the very essence of hidden wisdom, the search for which is the task undertaken by Socrates in his effort to prepare educators as philosophers or *lovers of wisdom*. Striving to get more experience, the Fool meets "The Empress," trump number 3, who teaches her a lesson of healing with her abundance of feelings and ability to give and receive love, like only the archetypal Mother can provide. Next comes "The Emperor" as a symbol of superego, representing the omniscient and powerful Name of the Father. To adjust to societal standards the Fool must learn a lesson of conformity and to sometimes follow the tradition of those who represent the establishment as embodied in the image of "Hierophant" or "The Pope," a symbol of lawful rules, orthodoxy, or conservative politics. "The Lovers," trump number 6, represent temptations and duality, a time for choice; as for "The Chariot," it teaches our Fool the lesson of controlling one's emotions and being able to differentiate between fantasy and reality. A Greek myth tells a story of souls that, in their disembodied state, have chariots, and a charioteer must gain control of the unruly horse in a pair (an appetitive vs. spirited element), as indeed portrayed in "The Chariot" picture. With the newly found inner "Strength" (trump number 8) the Fool is able to acquire interpersonal skills. S/he can now tame any beast that distracts her from learning what are her strengths, values, skills, and limitations (Fig. 33.5).

On this Tarot picture the female figure is portrayed as mastering the lion with her bare hands, and the lion conveys the image of accepting the "defeat" so as to reconcile the action of both conscious and unconscious influences. Primitive instincts are won over, and with the new awakening of the guiding power of intuition and consciousness the Fool is ready for the lesson of "The Hermit" who teaches her the Socratic "Know thyself" principle (Fig. 33.6).

That's where—at the beginning of the "mid-life" cycle of the Jungian individuation process—examination and self-reflection produce an examined vs. unexamined (read: lacking meaning) life! That is, authentic experiences reach their critical mass when the Fool has to symbolically stop so as to reflect back on them, to reflect on oneself: the lantern in the picture symbolizes this search, via inward knowledge, for the ethics of authenticity (cf. Taylor, 1991). Next comes trump number 10, "Wheel of Fortune." After many efforts, the Fool has reached a turning point in his/her journey and a possible change of luck. Perhaps the Fool is getting insight into the law of karma or distributive justice, represented by Arcanum number 11, called "Justice"; s/he learns that each of the many steps along the road to individuation provides a base for the next one. The Fool is bound by "Justice" to maintain a balance and to weigh and give a fair and balanced evaluation to life issues (symbolized by a

Fig. 33.5 Strength

blindfolded female figure holding scales, who knows justice with her heart!). It might be necessary to face a sacrifice: perhaps something is counterproductive to the journey ahead; such is the lesson of "The Hanged Man," trump number 12. The Fool feels suspended between the sky and the ground: there is no solid foundation under his/her feet at this point. This is a testing period accompanied by a feeling of the loss of direction.

The Fool might need a fresh start, represented by trump number 13, "Death": transition, change, and renewal. Restrictive viewpoints, stagnant environment, or everything that was playing the role of status quo for the Fool is now in a stage of

Fig. 33.6 The Hermit

evolution and transformation even if the dynamics of this process are quite painful. "Do not rush," advises "Temperance," trump number 14, who teaches the Fool a lesson of moderation. The maxim that said "Nothing in excess" as the virtue of "Temperance" was as much celebrated in the Hellenic world as "Know thyself": both were inscribed on the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Still, caught in vice rather than in virtue, The Fool may be feeling enslaved by the symbolic image of "The Devil," trump number 15, the fallen angel, the dark archetypal Shadow of oneself. Self-destructive tendencies may pull the Fool back. What is holding our Fool in bondage? How to overcome the fear of becoming-other as a necessary component in human development? The realization comes forward, sometimes in the form of a

shock, and "The Tower," next trump number 16, breaks everything in the Fool's life that she does not need for the journey ahead. At the level of the *psyche* (both individual and collective), overthrowing of false consciousness takes place, sometimes in a form of a catharsis. A rapid—and painful—rising of consciousness is transmitted by this card's symbolism; it is the lightning that hits the ivory tower one imprisoned oneself in! It might be a moment of a sudden truth shaking basic—perhaps false—security but providing enlightenment, a light of awakening, and in this light the Fool is able to see "The Star," trump number 17 (Semetsky, 2005b). This is the star of hope and healing which empowers our Fool with confidence, realization of talents, and self-esteem.

Next comes the warning of "The Moon," trump number 18. The Fool may be distracted by the cold light of the moon and unable to distinguish between truth and deception. Real or imagined—but perceived as real by the *psyche*—enemies may be present. Nonetheless, after having worked through confusing and overwhelming issues, the Fool is welcomed by "The Sun," trump number 19, as though having been born again into sunshine after the moonlit night. The next card, "Judgment," number 20, is a symbol of resurrection when the wise Fool becomes capable of finally hearing the sounds of the trumpet from the higher plane of expanded consciousness.

The evolution of consciousness as an "eventual function" (Dewey, 1925/1958, p. 308) of learning from experience is inscribed in the images of the 22 major cards in the deck that culminates in "The World," also called "The Universe" in a number of decks (Fig. 33.7).

It represents the very symbol of having completed a current cycle in the search for meanings, but with a qualification. The circular shape in the World picture represents a continuum, that is, the idea that the real search for meanings is a never-ending process in the changing circumstances of experience. Personal wholeness is an ideal limit approximated by the many actualities in the multiplicities of experience, and the Fool continues on the road of discovery, starting again from *zero*, her widened consciousness bringing it into better relationship with her subjective internal world and with the world of objects at large. The culmination of the journey taught our Fool the lesson of accepting responsibility *in* the world and *for* the world. The ever-expanding and varying multitude of experiential situations and events always presents new challenges: the story of the Fool's journey describes, in a mythic form, the real-life journeys of us, human beings who indeed learn in this process. The Fool that reaches The World, so to speak, is the very symbol of the Self that finally overcomes the dualistic split between itself and the material world and embodies a greater numinous, spiritual, dimension. In Dewey's words, the Universe is precisely the "name for the totality of conditions with which the self is connected" (Dewey, 1934, p. 407). "The World" represents the ideally individuated Self, that is, an integrated personality as inseparable from its life-world. As Dewey emphasized,

> the unification of the self through the ceaseless flux of what it does, suffers and achieves, cannot be attained in terms of itself. The self is always directed toward something beyond itself and so its own unification depends upon the idea of the integration of the shifting scenes of the world into that imaginative totality we call the Universe (Dewey, 1934, p. 407).

Fig. 33.7 The World

Even as the process of individuation appears to have reached its limit, the Fool will start again as if from zero in order to integrate more experiences and learn his/her moral and spiritual lessons: we repeat that, as Dewey asserted, education always consists in more education. Still, during the experiential journey from "The Fool" to "The World" the limited world available to physical observation expands so that we ourselves and the World become a unified whole. The potential Self actualizes itself, and what appeared to be merely ideal in character becomes existentially real because it is via the interpretation of the pictorial meanings that we are able to tap into what Dewey called "an imaginative projection" (Dewey, 1934, p. 407). The

culmination of the stage of the journey as embodied in the picture of "The World" represents the existential lesson in the school of life.

It is our participation in the world—that is, taking a responsibility for others, both human and non-human—which is fundamental to Nel Noddings' ethics of care (1984) and is an integral part of spiritual education. Care theorists turn upside down the abstractions of moral philosophy, insisting that universal experiences are grounded in concrete human conditions described as "the commonalities of birth, death, physical and emotional needs, and the longing to be cared for. This last—whether it is manifested as a need for love, physical care, respect or mere recognition—is the fundamental starting point for the ethics of care" (Noddings 1998, p. 188) in education. The commonalities of our everyday experiences are inscribed in the so-called 56 minor cards. The numerical growth from Ace to 10 represents progressive mastery of a (Deweyan) problematic situation, even if and when encountering a temporary defeat as a moral lesson to be learned. The pictures express a commonality of meanings similar to those that Noddings, for example, finds "at the bottom of each suffering event [such as] pain that cries for relief, a threat of separation that triggers an increased need for connection, and a dread of helplessness that begs for empowerment" (Noddings 1989, p. 129). The reading and interpretation of these implicit meanings establish "a metaphysical context and [provide] a human-to-human care process with spiritual dimension" (Noddings 1989, p. 128, quoting from Jean Watson's work in the area of nursing).The dynamics of spiritual development never stops: the 56 minor pictures tell us multiple stories about feeling happy or feeling sad; making plans or breaking promises; winning or losing; experiencing financial difficulties or laying foundations for a marriage; falling in love or getting out of an abusive relationship; and starting a new venture or experiencing separation anxiety. The list is endless, and real-life experience always presents new contexts and encounters that would have called for new evaluations, new meanings, and more education in practice, especially considering that each layout would have combined the pictures in a new "constellation," each time reflecting novel circumstances and presenting the perplexity of an unexpected problematic situation.

In regard to a spiritual dimension in education, let us return to the very beginning of this chapter and focus in particular on Dewey's distinction between a single religion and a specifically religious attitude. Dewey insisted that what he called a religious phase of experience is totally separate from anything supernatural and should indeed be emancipated from a "'religion' as a noun substantive" (Dewey, 1934, p. 404) as well as from any submission or "the servile obedience rendered to an arbitrary power by frightened men" (Dewey, 1934, p. 403). It is the moral and spiritual "import" of practical life that should be present in education. Jim Garrison (2000), addressing the problem of spiritual education, presents it as a process that should embody new meanings and values as embedded in that dimension of experience which may be as yet "inaccessible to sense" (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 32). For Dewey, it is what is unseen (if by "seeing" we mean the usual sense—perception) that would have decided what is there, in the reality that exceeds our habitual world of solely physical objects, to be seen. This "unseen" spiritual dimension is available to what Noddings, in her book *Intuition in education* (Noddings & Shore, 1984)

called "an inner eye" capable of perceiving "the background of organized meanings [that] can convert the ... situation from the obscure into the clear and luminous" (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 266), thus creating new understanding. An unseen spiritual dimension becomes literally "seen" in the material form of Tarot images, thus establishing the conditions in practice that create a possibility of accessing the otherwise inaccessible when it becomes instantiated and realized in experience. This reassurance indeed moves us closer toward answering Jim Garrison's persistent and disturbing question, "Dare we teach children to create ethereal things?" (Garrison, 2000, p. 117), especially keeping in mind that, as productive of real effects, these things are truly "knowable if not [yet] known" (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 269). Something that was only possible or potential and as yet disembodied—like spirit that, as Dewey insisted, informs but by itself lacks a material form—can become actualized in a singular experience in the material world and be known to us via its material representation in the form of pictures. Still, asks Garrison emphatically, "can we stop them [children]?" (Garrison, 2000, p. 117). But of course we can, and shame on us educators if we do! Too often we forget that the "more an organism learns. . .the more it has to learn in order to keep itself going" (Dewey, 1925/1958, p. 281). Too often we as educators assume the position that Dewey (1925/1958) ironically dubbed the supreme dignity of adulthood, therefore betraying the very continuity of the growth process while at the same time trying to foster "growth" in our students. But for them to learn, shouldn't we too?

The traditional curriculum rarely provides any conditions for discussing "genuinely controversial issues" (Noddings, 2006, p. 1) that would have contributed, even if potentially, to the possibility of connecting with the Other for a while by understanding the plurality of different perspectives and viewpoints up to the point of becoming engrossed in these experiences. This kind of affective understanding would have constituted learning as an experiment with the world and with ourselves. This type of education is genuinely moral because, sure enough, it "does ... challenge deeply held beliefs or ways of life" (Noddings, 2006, p. 1). We tend to forget that education is inseparable from organic life and a spiritual dimension as embedded in experience would have precluded human attitudes and dispositions from being considered as "separate existences. They are always *of*, *from*, *toward*, situations and things" (Dewey, 1925/1958, p. 238), that is, they are relational in character. Dewey acknowledged the significance as well as "inadequacy of our present psychological knowledge" (Dewey, 1925/1958, p. 238), and the deep exploration of Tarot psychology and its unorthodox language of expression should not be ignored because it provides us with a real-life interpretive practice complementary to its mythology. Learning Tarot's symbolic language will have enabled us to construct a bridge between the material and spiritual worlds that would have contributed to an enhanced capacity for all people to make informed and intelligent connections to the realm of Spirit. Tarot images, projected into a spread or layout, may be considered a representation of the *Memoria,* posited by St. Augustine. A pagan turned Christian, he described in his *Confessions*, "the fields and spacious places of memory (*campos et lata praetoria memoria*), where are the treasures (*thesauri*) of innumerable images" (quoted in Yates, 1966, p. 46). *Memoria* is a realm

of as yet unconscious (that is, prior to their being articulated in verbal words of our human languages) images as embedded in the universal memory of the Jungian objective *psyche*. When a Tarot reader—in the process of "educating psyche" (as Bernie Neville would have called such an unorthodox "lesson")—translates the language of images into a spoken word, s/he in fact performs yet another, third, or transcendent, function embodied in Tarot by means of connecting the realm of numinous Spirit with our world of earthly phenomena and human concerns. Let us again turn to St. Augustine:

> Whoever . . . is able to understand a word, not only before it is uttered in sound, but also before the images of its sounds are considered in thought . . . is able now to see through this glass and in this enigma some likeness of that Word of whom it is said, "In the beginning was the Word. . ." For of necessity, . . . there is born from the knowledge itself which the memory retains, a word that is altogether of the same kind with that knowledge from which it is born. . . .And the true word then comes into being. . . .[it] is a simple form, and simply equal to Him from whom it is, and with whom it is wonderfully co-eternal (In Clarke, 1990, pp. 26–28).

If, as for Noddings and Dewey alike, it is Spirit that can inform us, then securing the continuity of our relation to Spirit in practice and understanding the very meaning of its expressive language is a prerequisite for education understood as spiritual. And a valuable aid for spiritual education, as an art and *techne*, is available to us in the guise of beautiful pictures, each one telling us a story expressed in the universal language of archetypal images. These stories constitute experiences that could have equally happened to every one of us. To use every opportunity to complement an existing set of educational aids in the area of moral and spiritual education so as to put into practice the fact that Spirit informs is not only an educational task of considerable challenge but is also our ethical responsibility.

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Chapter 34
Reconnecting with Earth: Ecospirituality as the Missing Dimension in Spirituality and Sustainability Education

Caroline Smith

Without the soaring birds, the great forests, the sounds and coloration of the insects, the free-flowing streams, the flowering fields, the sight of the clouds by day and the stars at night, we become impoverished in all that makes us human

Thomas Berry

Abstract This chapter proposes ecospirituality as the missing dimension in Education for Sustainability. The period 2005–2014 is the UNESCO Decade for Education for Sustainable Development, and the transdisciplinary field of Education for Sustainability (EfS) has the goal of fostering an environmental stewardship approach to life on Earth. But EfS rarely includes a spiritual dimension which has the potential to ground students' experience in a recasting of the I-It to an I-Thou relationship with Nature. Extreme consumerism, burgeoning human population, and spiritual impoverishment have led to a radical disconnection of humans from Nature, and many young people fear the future, believing themselves to be powerless to change direction. While the exploitation of Nature has underpinnings in the Abrahamic religions which privilege the human over the rest of creation, in recognition of the convergence of cosmology, ecology, and spirituality through ecospirituality, religions are beginning to recast themselves to take account of the global ecological crisis. Thomas Berry (2000) describes this recasting as "moments of grace," where humanity begins to understand its deep connection within the evolution of the universe and that human wellbeing is intimately entwined with the wellbeing of Earth's ecosystems. Indeed humans would seem to be born with an empathetic orientation toward Nature. Thus, positive age-appropriate ecospiritual experiences are critical for developing concern for the environment, without which children may develop "ecophobia" (Sobel, 1999). The chapter concludes with a discussion of approaches and resources for ecospirituality education.

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Introduction

At last humanity is beginning to understand at a deep level that we are living unsustainably on this beautiful Earth,[1] and in hindsight, the period 2006–2009 may be seen as a tipping point. Severe weather events, food and other price rises relating to peaking of the oil supply, the exquisite timing of Al Gore's (2006) high impact film, key reports such as Garnaut (2008); Stern (2007) and the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2007) as well as environmental education itself, have left no doubt as to the scale and impact of environmental problems as well as the magnitude of the difficult and radical changes needed to create a more sustainable future.

With its roots in the natural and social sciences, the new transdisciplinary field of Education for Sustainability (EfS) is emerging across all sectors of education as a response to the global ecological crisis. A central goal of EfS is to foster an environmental stewardship or custodianship approach to life on Earth. Concurrent with the emergence of EfS there is a deeper groundswell, that of a new transcendent consciousness. This consciousness is recasting the I–It to an I–Thou relationship with Nature,[1] in other words, a deep ecological spirituality or ecospirituality is beginning to take root. Here I have adopted London's (2000) definition of "spirituality" or "Spirit" to refer to the nonmaterial source participating in the emergence or evolution of the universe through which humans experience meaning, value and purpose and which cannot be reduced to the functioning of the material world.

Traditionally, considerations of spirituality have tended to be located largely in the realm of the relationship between the human and the divine, where the I–Thou relationship is with the human social world. This chapter argues that a recasting of the human–Nature relationship as I–Thou is critical to sustainability.[2] Ecospirituality, still largely missing from both EfS and spirituality education, provides a unifying foundation upon which both educators and students can begin to recast humanity's damaged relationship with Earth to imagine and create a sustainable future.

Three Moments of Grace

The emergence of a global ecospirituality arises as a response to three deep realizations about humanity's relationship with creation that have become part of our consciousness, particularly over the past century. The great Catholic cultural historian Thomas Berry (2000) calls these realizations "moments of grace", profound moments which have the potential to change radically the course of the future:

> As we enter the 21st century, we are experiencing a moment of grace. Such moments are privileged moments. The great transformations of the universe occur at such times. The future is defined in some enduring pattern of its functioning. There are cosmological and historical moments of grace as well as religious moments of grace. The present is one of those moments of transformation that can be considered as a cosmological as well as a historical and a religious moment of grace (p. 1).

The first moment of grace emerges from an understanding of four centuries of evidence-based cosmological science, which has opened up a deep and profound understanding of the origin and evolution of the universe and humanity's place within it. It is now understood that nearly 14 billion years ago, all matter and all energy burst into being through a great flaring forth, known as the Big Bang, giving birth to the universe (Swimme, 1999). Where once humans viewed the universe as a collection of objects whose processes merely followed the dictates of the laws of classical physics, the 20th and 21st century sciences of quantum physics, cosmology, systems theory, chaos and complexity have changed the way in which the organizational principles of the universe are understood. Cosmologists now view the universe as evolving, dynamic and ever-changing in a dance of destruction and creation, a *cosmogenesis*. Great dynamic cycles of creation and destruction are the shaping forces for the emergence of life itself. Hinduism perfectly captures this through the trinity of the gods Shiva the destroyer, Vishnu the preserver and protector, and Brahma the creator of the universe. The material seeds of life, the heavier elements carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, iron and others, were conceived in the death throes of a giant star, a supernova explosion that took place five billion years ago which gave birth to our Sun and the Solar System. Humanity is literally stardust, the children of the stars.

This understanding has radically begun to reshape the human–Nature relationship toward an ecological worldview which sees humans as an intimate part of Nature, part of the great narrative of creation. We are, as Tucker (2002) puts it, "not only part of humankind but of Earthkind; we are not simply human beings but universe beings" (p. 1). No longer cold and mechanistic, the new understanding of the universe is one of participation, of relationship, of adaptability and interconnectedness, where there is no such thing as an impartial or disinterested observer. Recast this way the universe becomes, as Berry (1999) puts it, a communion of subjects rather than a collection of objects. Humanity is an integral part of the great unfolding of the universe as "we find ourselves living both as cosmos and cosmogenesis" (pp. 198–199). Human consciousness is a manifestation of the very consciousness of the universe, and with this knowledge humanity stands in awe and wonder at its magnificence. This recasting is critical, according to Berry, to see humanity's place in creation and its future: "The future can exist only when we understand the universe as composed of subjects to be communed with, not as objects to be exploited" (pp. x–xi). For Berry, the sense of awe and wonder at the magnificence of the universe made possible through the gift of cosmological science is essentially a spiritual one. And paradoxically this epic, ancient universe story is also teaching that humanity's time on Earth could well be cut short.

The second moment of grace comes through the relational sciences of ecology, systems theory, and neuroscience, which teach that humans are but one of a myriad of species on Earth, and whose health, wellbeing, and very survival as a species are intimately entwined with the health, wellbeing, and survival of Earth's great dynamic ecosystems. This understanding was brought into sharp and exquisite focus by the extraordinary pictures, taken in the 1970s, of Earth from space, seen for the first time ever in the history of humanity. Seen against the black velvet backdrop of

space, Earth is a seamless, extraordinarily beautiful blue and white jewel, possibly unique in the universe, which contains within it the conditions for the emergence and sustenance of the magnificence and complexity of life in all its myriad forms. The astronauts who saw Earth this way talked in reverent tones of how "fragile was this tiny ball of blue and green, floating through the enormity of time and space"; how "this was our only home", and how "important it was that we should take care of it" (National Review Online, 2005).

Humanity's material evolutionary history and biological being teach that as a species, *Homo sapiens* is an integral part of the great living system of the web of life, the same material as the plants, the other animals, Earth, and the universe (Capra, 1996; 2005). Living systems are open, adaptive, and capable of self-renewal and self-organization. They are participatory, engaging in an active exchange and coupling with the environment for growth and renewal, enabling change, evolution, and learning (Maturana & Varela, 1992; Wheatley, 1992). Every element in the system is in relationship with every other element and it is the relational interactions that are important, not merely the structures.

The third moment, perhaps of crisis as well as grace, is the recognition of humanity's increasingly destructive and potentially all-life threatening impact on the ecosystems on which it so profoundly depends and forms an intimate part. Earth is indisputably in the midst of a global ecological crisis. The human species has radically altered the conditions of Earth's great ecosystems and is unraveling the web of life itself. Humans use fully 40% of the photosynthetic productivity of the planet for food and, increasingly, for biofuel production (Postel, 1994; Brown, 2008), leaving little for the other myriad species for whom this planet is also home. Indeed humanity now presides over the sixth great extinction of life on Earth (Glikson, 2008; McDonagh, 2004).

The profligate use of fossils fuels over the past 150 years and a burgeoning global population have created possibly irreversible changes to Earth's atmosphere and ocean systems, resulting in dangerous climate change which may now be unstoppable (Dow & Downing, 2007; Garnaut, 2008; Gore, 2006; Stern, 2007; UN IPCC, 2007). This is not to take a romantic view of past cultures as possessing the wisdom to live sustainably on Earth which modern people somehow seem to have lost. For complex reasons, some human cultures have always ravaged their ecologies, while others have learned to live sustainably (see Diamond, 2005; Flannery, 1994). In the past, though, populations were small, fossil fuels were not in large-scale use and as a result, individual ecological footprints were also small. Now, the human footprint on Earth is large and critically unsustainable (Brown, 2007).

Life as Commodity

The human footprint is not only large, but is growing exponentially. Particularly since World War II, societies of the global North[3] have become increasingly hi-tech and high consuming, while total world population has a doubling rate currently of around 60 years (Rosenberg, 2006). In the global North humans are increasingly

narrowly defined and constructed as consumers and resources in an economy, rather than citizens in a society. Shaping this social structure are the driving forces of consumption, efficiency, winning, productivity, competitiveness, risk taking and power over others. Success is promoted as a set of values clustered around the desire for accumulation of material possessions and appearances that become measures of status and power. These values that are embedded in the very fabric of society, where the daily discourse is one of continued pressure to consume, aided, and abetted by a powerful advertising industry. Economic growth and its attendant fetishization of commodity are rarely critiqued; indeed there is heavy social and political pressure not to do so. Commodification seeks to permeate every aspect of life (Princen, Maniates, & Conca, 2002). However, studies show that commodity acquisition rarely brings other than transient happiness. Rather, it is a manifestation of a dysfunctional addiction (Roszak, Gomes, & Kanner, 1995; Hopkins, 2008). Hamilton and Denniss (2005) use the term "affluenza" to describe this unsustainable addiction to economic growth that manifests in "an epidemic of stress, overwork, waste and indebtedness caused by dogged pursuit of the Australian dream" (p. 3). As Orr (2008) observes, "the pace of modern life leaves precious little time to be grateful or awed by much of anything" (p. 10).

In an increasingly globalized 21st century, the centrality of economic discourse continues as the dominant worldview of the global North and increasingly the aspiration of the global South; witness the rapid expansion of China and India. Global markets dictate value and every transaction is counted as a "good" that contributes to a nation's gross domestic product (GDP). Under this system of values, Nature is regarded as an "externality", merely a resource to be exploited for the human species with no intrinsic or spiritual value itself, a manifestation of I–It (Hamilton, 1994). In GDP accounting[4] there is little distinction made between ecological and social costs and benefits. Destructive events such as road accidents, oil spills and clear-fell logging add to the GDP of a country in the same way as, for example, ecologically responsible food production does.

Radical Disconnection and Spiritual Impoverishment

Much has been written about the spiritual impoverishment that manifests itself alongside humanity's growing footprint[5] (see, for example, Mander, 1991; Norberg-Hodge, 1992). Norberg-Hodge (1992) points out that too much affluence weakens human interdependence and community. As human societies become more urbanized, there are fewer opportunities to engage with Nature, particularly 'wild' Nature. As Sterling (1993) puts it, humanity has moved from an inhabiting to an occupying of the land, building over it rather than living within its limits. The result is the loss of the ability to read the land, to recognize the signals of ecological distress. Even as the toxic chemical horror and environmental wake-up call of *Silent Spring* (Carson, 1962, 1994) is played out, humanity's increasingly radical disconnection from Nature prevents people from recognizing the meaning of its signals. A kind

of ecological amnesia takes place between generations, with each generation normalizing what they observe, not realizing the magnitude of the losses that have taken place.

In Australia, the majority of people cling to coastal cities, seeing the bush as alien, the other; political discourse itself is often framed in a polarity of bush/city. Recent crises in agriculture through poor management, drought, and over-exploitation are dismissed as "rural issues," rather than seeing salinity, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and soil erosion as the consequences of an increasing desire for goods and a high standard of living. The causes of biodiversity loss, salinity, climate change, and ozone depletion are poorly understood, let alone linked to lifestyle and worldview. Alienation from life-supporting ecosystems for many is complete (Hicks, 2002; Smith, 2007a). These two issues—the radical disconnection with Nature and the unsatisfied desire for consumption—have resulted in the wreaking of immense havoc on natural systems.

A number of writers have linked the impoverishment of Earth's ecosystems and the desacralization of Nature to a concurrent impoverishment of the inner world of the human spirit. Humanity is of Earth, Earth's decline becomes ours. Al Gore (1992) recognizes this as he laments: "the more deeply I search for the roots of the global environmental crisis, the more I am convinced that it is an outer manifestation of an inner crisis that is . . . spiritual" (p. 12). The realization is that Nature and the human are one, the inner and outer dimensions of existence. As Thomas Berry (2000) puts it:

> We see quite clearly that what happens to the nonhuman happens to the human. What happens to the outer world happens to the inner world. If the outer world is diminished in its grandeur then the emotional, imaginative, intellectual, and spiritual life of the human is diminished or extinguished.

Orr (2008) believes that deep happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living and in giving thanks for the wonder that is life, humans can restore harmony and balance in their lives. He quotes the Rabbi Abraham Heschel who says that

> humankind will not perish for want of information, but want of appreciation. The beginning of our happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living. What we lack is not a will to believe but a will to wonder (p. 10).

The Domination of Nature

The worldview underpinning domination of nature and its contribution to environmental destruction can be traced to the period of the European Enlightenment and the rise of rationalism in the 17th century, which in turn has its origins in early Greek and Judeo-Christian thinking (Wilber, 1996; Zimmerman, 1994). While it is clear that humans have a long history of exploitation of Nature (Diamond, 2005), the pre-rational organic worldview (still the dominant worldview of many indigenous peoples today) was I–Thou, of a participatory consciousness, where Nature

was sacred, humans and the other-than-human world were kin, and identity was found through active relationships with the land (Broomfield, 1997). Humans participated directly in the natural world; it was their source of knowledge and wisdom as well as sustenance and healing. It was, in Berry's (1990) words, "our native place" (p. 1).

For the people of the Western world, the centuries of the Enlightenment brought about a profound shift in worldview. Here is the legacy of the dualism of the philosopher Descartes (in *Discourse on Method*, 1631), the radical idea (at that time) that mind and body are mutually exclusive. Mind became associated with the rational, with the very essence of being ("*cogito ergo sum*"). Zimmerman (1994) argues that "Descartes' quest for absolutely clear and certain truths" (p. 111) arose from the high degree of uncertainty and insecurity of the times, as Europe emerged from another of its devastating plagues. The plague's awful and lingering legacy was that the physical body became associated with the seeming irrationality of Nature, which required to be conquered. Such thinking gave permission for Nature to become "disenchanted", in other words, it no longer held any spiritual significance. The view of Nature as a resource rather than intrinsically connected to humanity was able to follow.

The same impetus drove Francis Bacon (1571–1626) to develop the analytical/reductionist scientific method. Bacon determined that radical and rational methods needed to be applied to Nature to begin the understandings of how it might be controlled and manipulated. This was a radical, violent, and reductionist recasting of humanity's relationship with Nature as I–It (Merchant, 1989). Sheldrake (1990) quotes Bacon's approach to nature which was to be

> bound into service' and made a 'slave'... she would be 'dissected', and by the mechanical arts and the hand of man, she could be 'forced out of her natural state and squeezed and moulded', so that 'human knowledge and human power meet as one (p. 32).

Descartes' powerful dualism coupled with Francis Bacon's development of a reductionist scientific method, later supported by Newton's determination of the mathematical basis of physical phenomena such as gravity (1666) and Kant's philosophy of reason (1788) among others, challenged the very worldview of pre-modern humanity and provided the underpinning to the shift to the powerful reductionist, mechanistic, and deterministic worldview that has become the dominant epistemology over the last 300 years. Gradually, and with many detractors and critics, the rise of a scientific rationality, untempered by an ecospiritual dimension, has imposed the most profound impact on the world, leading directly to the development of the technologies and mindsets that have enabled massive exploitation of the world's ecosystems. This modernist metanarrative of the rise of human progress through the domination and exploitation of Nature by means of science and technology remains the dominant worldview even as humanity enters the 21st century. It is also the epistemology still reflected in much of schooling.

For Berry (1990), the insights gained by delving into the natural world through the tools and procedures of reductionist science has led to a kind of autism, where humanity is no longer enchanted by Nature's magic. Indeed the very idea of magic

or enchantment belongs to a mediaeval age, of unenlightenment, of irrationality. As Berry (1990) puts it, the only interpretation of recent Western history now left is one of irony, where "our supposed progress towards an ever improving human situation is bringing us to wasteworld instead of wonderworld" (p. 17). The splendor of Nature has been killed, replaced by instrumental utilitarianism. Slaughter (1996) summarizes the legacy of the Enlightenment as the metaproblem of our time; a world characterized by the principles of the dominance of instrumental rationality, reductionism and the loss of the transcendent, the use of science and technology for irrational ends, and the desacralization or disenchantment of Nature.

Clearly, science and technology have given humanity high standards of living and other benefits, particularly those living in the global North, and few would want to return to widespread poverty and lack of access to education, shelter, and health care.[6] However, the looming ecological crisis suggests that this could well be the case for everyone if urgent steps are not taken to repair the damage and seriously engage in a global transition to a sustainable future. The transition to sustainability clearly will need to include aspects of rationality through the use of appropriate science and technology, but at the same time rejecting those that impact on the ability to live sustainably.

Nature and Christianity

The exploitation of the natural world for human ends, writ large through the Enlightenment period, has itself deeper underpinnings in the Abrahamic religious traditions. One dimension of this is that the divine is characterized by transcendence rather than immanence. Long (1997) argues that Abrahamic creation stories firmly place "Man" at the center of creation. Earth has received the created order which culminates in the emergence of the human, thus ending the creative process. The key I–Thou relationship is human—divine, and, with some notable exceptions such as Aquinas and Hildegard of Bingen, is profoundly anthropocentric and indeed, patriarchal. The duty of the human is to populate, subdue, and conquer Earth. It is as if the material world of Nature, of the universe, is somehow part of humanity's earthly burden, only able to be transcended to Paradise at the end of the earthly journey, that is, through death. Paradise is outside of the earthly, material sphere. God is outside creation and the natural and divine are separated in different spheres (Long, 1997).

This privileging of the human and the seeking for perfection through transcendence rests on a profound human/rest-of-creation dualism, and remains a foundational tenet of the Abrahamic religions, and of Christianity in particular. The other-than-human world, or Nature, is relegated to the instrumental, the backdrop that provides for human needs, but which is not sacred in its own right nor possesses any inherent rights. Descartes' philosophy of body/mind is entirely consistent with this view; indeed he famously declared animals to be no more than machines, possessed of no feeling.

This I–It perspective was taken to task by the American historian Lynn White Jr in his famous address to the 1966 American Association for the Advancement of Science (White, 1967). White put the view that Christianity was uniquely responsible for the environmental crisis. It is sobering to see that the term "crisis" was being used as long ago as 1966:

> Christianity in absolute contrast to ancient paganism and Asia's religions (except, perhaps, Zorastrianism), not only established a dualism of man and Nature but also insisted that it is God's will that man exploit Nature for his proper ends . . . By destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit Nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects (p. 1204).

Recasting Humans as Ecospiritual Beings: From I–It to I–Thou

White's view has come in for some criticism and challenge (see, for example, Minteer & Manning, 2005). However his work was important in that it foregrounded the debate about the nature of the relationship between science, religion, Nature and spirituality, and paved the way for the reworking of the I–Thou relationship with Nature within Christianity. The evolutionary and relational sciences of cosmology and ecology have given humans a great gift, the ability to see themselves as part of the web of life, as ecological universe beings, born into a material bio-ecological world as much as into a social world. This is the moment of grace that is part of the great shift in consciousness now occurring toward a participatory rather than a dominator relationship with Nature, toward an ecological worldview. This shift signals a profound move from the exploitative, objectifying I–It relationship to Nature to an I–Thou spiritual relationship, that is, an ecospirituality. Buber himself talks of this mode of relating to Nature: "but it can also happen, if will and grace are joined, that as I contemplate the tree I am drawn into a relation, and the tree ceases to be an It" (Swanson, 2008).

As a relatively new concept, ecospirituality is subject to many and various interpretations, and the challenges thrown up by positing an ecospirituality are, for some, akin to a heresy. Deep debate continues about the position of humans in the scheme of things. Ecocentric Deep Ecology sees humanity as but one species in the great web of life, no more important than a flea or a blade of grass. For Deep Ecologists, Spirit resides in all aspects of the universe. The anthropocentric Abrahamic religions, on the other hand, see humanity as a special species of God which was created in His image and, for Christians, who chose to be reincarnated in the human form. Indeed some conservative Christians such as Robert Sirico (1997) are deeply suspicious of ecospirituality, seeing it as post-Christian, a threat to traditional theocentric and anthropocentric understandings of the created order. Sirico considers that having respect for God's created order does not imply that it is not to be used for the benefit of humankind. For Sirico, a belief in the sanctity of life still allows dominion over Nature. This paradoxical view again echoes the I–It relationship, the dualism that has, inadvertently or otherwise, given permission for the exploitation of Earth.

For many others though, including agnostics, recasting humanity's relationship with Nature as a spiritual one brings a sense of renewal, an awakening as if from a dysfunctional slumber, a coming home, of a deep belonging and sense of meaning. Nature is re-enchanted, resacralized. Long (1997) believes that this re-interpretation is both new and ancient, and may indeed mark the dawn of a post-religious phase. New, because it is post-Enlightenment, drawing on insights from rationalist modern cosmology and ecology which enable a new synthesis and ancient, because it is essentially pre-religious, harking back to the beginnings of humanity's evolution. As the ecotheologian Diarmid O'Murchu (1997) puts it:

> Our spiritual identity is inescapable . . . Religion is one aspect of our spiritual unfolding, but only one. Our spiritual evolution as a species took place for at least 70,000 years without formal religion and there are many indications that we are, once more, evolving spiritually into a nonreligious ambience (p. 13).

Certainly not all Christians see ecospirituality as heretical. Edwards (1999) argues that from the Christian perspective, since humanity is made in the image and likeness of God, humans are mandated to act as God would act, that is, not to harm any part of the universe. Tucker (2004) suggests that religions have the potential to transform themselves to take account of the global ecological crisis. Key avenues for this have been the Harvard conferences entitled "Religions of the World and Ecology" which promoted interfaith dialogue to support the creation of a sustainable future, as well as the Teheran Seminar on Environment, Culture and Religion held in 2001 (Tucker, 2004).

Within the Catholic tradition, the writings of both the late Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI have called for a profound change in the way humans relate to Earth. John Paul II (2001) passionately articulated the need for an "ecological conversion", a re-awakening of an appreciation of planet Earth as the gift of God, humanity's home, and bountiful provider of all its needs:

> We must therefore encourage and support the "ecological conversion" which in recent decades has made humanity more sensitive to the catastrophe to which it has been heading. Man is no longer the Creator's "steward", but an autonomous despot, who is finally beginning to understand that he must stop at the edge of the abyss (para 4).

In his January 2007 message for the celebration of the World Day of Peace, Pope Benedict XVI clearly recognizes the interdependence of human wellbeing and the wellbeing of Nature, and that this recognition forms the ground for a multifaceted ecology of peace:

> Alongside the ecology of nature, there exists what can be called a "human" ecology, which in turn demands a "social" ecology. All this means that humanity, if it truly desires peace, must be increasingly conscious of the links between natural ecology, or respect for nature, and human ecology. Experience shows that *disregard for the environment always harms human coexistence*, and vice versa. It becomes more and more evident that there is an inseparable link between peace with creation and peace among men (italics in original).

Dispirited: Young People's Images of the Future

Pope Benedict XVI's articulation of the link between peace with creation and peace among humans provides a strong message of hope. It is hope that has the potential to counter the alienation experienced by many, particularly young people. Research points to a deepening negativity, lack of hope, and a sense of powerlessness among young people (Eckersley, 2002; Mudzeilwana and Smith, 2001; Ojala, 2007), many of whom seem unable consider the future in positive, hopeful ways. Hutchinson (1994) found that many young people in Australia fear a future world they characterize as uncompassionate, physically violent, divided, mechanized, environmentally unsustainable, and politically corrupt. The bleak conclusion is that for many, the future is a depressing and fearful place where the young feel hopeless and increasingly disempowered to make a difference in their lives. The profound loss of a sense of belonging in this postmodern hyper-real world leads to a deep angst and a sense of purposeless and lack of meaning. Hopelessness cultivates inactivity, denial, displacement behavior such as drug taking, and psychic numbing, leading some to believe that this may be one of the factors contributing to the relatively high rate of youth suicide in Australia (Eckersley, 1997, 2002; Wasserman, Cheng, & Jiang, 2005).

One of the clearest indications of a dispirited culture is evident when young people are asked to describe their images of the future of the planet. Their global future images are almost entirely dystopian, depicting ecological destruction, vanishing species, lack of greenery, global warming and overpopulation, or hi-tech, populated with supercomputers, spaceships, and flying cars (Hicks, 1994; Mudzeilwana & Smith, 2001). While partly a reflection of lived experience, these dystopian images are also the products of the continual assault on the imagination by various media. The image of the future in popular culture is invariably portrayed as fearful and extreme, where Nature, corporations, or technology run wild (Slaughter, 2004) as in films such as in *Blade Runner*, *The Day After*, *The Children of Men*, and most recently, *I am Legend*; or a techno-utopian world where the "march of progress" has led to consumer bliss. The imagination is in danger of becoming moulded into false despair or false promises where the future is already "occupied territory" (Sardar, 1999, p. 9). The message of these dystopian images is that the future is a frightening place outside human control which can only be participated in passively, far from the participatory consciousness that Berry talks of. In other words, humanity is powerless and hamstrung. Positive images of a sustainable future remain elusive in popular culture.

The meanings attached to these images remain contested and of course not all young people are pessimistic about the future (Eckersley, 1999). Further, images vary across different cultures (Inayatullah, 2002). When asked to describe their preferred image of the future, Gidley (2001) found that Steiner-educated students, where connection with Nature forms a central part of their education, generally produced more positive and less technological views. Hicks and Holden (1995) identified a gender divide when girls and boys were asked to describe their preferred

future, with boys' images tending to be highly technological, while girls referred more often to social justice and peace with people and Earth.

Education for Sustainability

Given the situation humanity has created, it might be imagined that education would play a critical and leading role in what Thomas Berry (2000) has called the "Great Work"—the transformation of global society toward a sustainable future. In schools, though, students paradoxically experience a profound, but largely unconscious dissonance between what they hear about environmental destruction and their lived experience of education. In other words, there is a crisis of praxis. The ascendency of neo-liberal ideology over the past few decades has seen literacy and numeracy privileged in curriculum as essential to producing the compliant and "flexible" workers needed for a globalized world, and much time is spent on these, particularly in the early years of schooling. Of course it is essential that children are language literate and numerate, but even as resources are poured into these forms of literacy, ecological literacy and ecospirituality have tended to be neglected. Now, as Education for Sustainability (EfS) is becoming a priority in schools (see, for example, the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI)), it inevitably brings its own contradictions and tensions both for students and teachers. The reality for many students, in spite of the critical global situation, remains an experience of a paradoxical and profound conflict between what they learn about ecological sustainability and their wider lived experience.

Unconsciously, education perpetuates the largely unexamined tensions and contradictions between the need to engage in EfS and the hidden curriculum that continues to transmit the worldviews and values of an increasingly dysfunctional, addicted, and dispirited Western culture. But it is at the level of worldview, its myths and associated epistemology that the real work of a re-orientation toward a sustainable future needs to take place. One of these myths is, as noted earlier, that humans are the controllers and dominators of Nature, the myth that has allowed the satisfying of the desire for wealth and success by exploiting the natural world. In schools, this translates into the subliminal message "if you do well, you can get a good job, buy into consumer culture and be successful" (Smith, 2007a). For many young people, exhortations to reduce consumption and adopt a sustainable lifestyle sit in uneasy contradiction with a youth culture that glorifies the ephemeral popular culture wired world of materialism, fashion, and celebrity. A survey conducted in the UK found that the second most desired career for 11-year-old girls was that of pop singer (vet was first) (ORC International, 2002). A more recent opinion poll published by UK Children's Society (the Good Childhood Survey, 2008) noted mounting concern among adults that the commercialization of childhood is damaging children's wellbeing.

The current generation of children frequently comes home to the bleak techno-world of the TV, the play station, and the computer instead of experiencing the deep joy of engaging with Nature. Children increasingly inhabit hyper-real cyberworlds,

where time and space are decoupled; speed and spectacle replace peace and still-ness, and where relationships are increasingly conducted in cyberspace. It is the brave young person that recognizes and challenges the value of this world.[7] It is not surprising that many young people do not know where milk comes from, that fruit trees and vegetables have flowers and seeds, that mangoes cannot be grown in Melbourne, and that the apple they are eating for lunch was probably picked last year and has been in storage for months. In their world, food is supplied all year round, available on demand. The link between food production, human settlement, consumption, and ecological degradation is not experienced. Students' increasingly urban, closeted existence serves to distance them from Nature, where experience of the natural world and understanding its functioning is less available. As Orr (1999) so cogently puts it:

> The Western education system, which has replaced indigenous forms of education through out the world, prepares students almost exclusively for an urban existence and dependence on fossil fuels and global trade. Children are taught from an early age how best to compete with each other rather than how best to work towards and live in a sustainable society (p. 166).

Reconnecting: Toward an Ecospiritual Education

The centrality of education in the transition to a sustainable future is now well established. The period 2005–2014 has been declared the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (UN DESD) by UNESCO, spawning a wealth of activity, curriculum development, and research. Through EfS, teachers are increas-ingly required to adopt the role of change agents and advocates for sustainability. While the importance of the ecospiritual dimension of both EfS (Smith, 2007b) and Spirituality Education (Berry, 2000; London, 2005; Long, 1997) is slowly being recognized, to date there is little in EfS literature and curriculum that reflects this. This echoes the secular origins of EfS, which is only recently developed from Envi-ronmental Education with its origins in the natural sciences. While EfS focuses admirably on the knowledge base, attitudes and behaviors associated with reduc-ing the ecological footprint, energy and water conservation, waste minimization, the importance of biodiversity and, for older students, issues of consumption and its philosophical underpinnings, it rarely refers to ecospirituality. If mentioned at all, spirituality tends to be linked to indigenous knowledge of the land, as if it were a special way of knowing not readily accessible to others (see, for example, AuSSI). Recently, "spirituality" has been listed as an indicator within environmental education, classified as part of "attitudes, values and view points" (Environmental Education (EE) indicators, 2007), as if it were a box to be ticked or a subset of a value system, rather than a framework for deep participation in the world.

If recast through the epic story of the universe, an ecospirituality is available to all, capable of being interpreted and accessible to most faith traditions as well as those professing no faith. Indeed this is what arch-atheist Richard Dawkins means when he talks of the God of Einstein, who said: "I don't try to imagine a personal

God; it suffices to stand in awe at the structure of the world, insofar as it allows our inadequate senses to appreciate it" (Dawkins, 2006, p. 9). The convergence of cosmology, ecology, and spirituality through ecospirituality within education opens up what Harvey (2000) has called new "spaces of hope", enabling a deepening of students' development of an I–Thou ecospiritual relationship with Nature and a renewed sense of their place in the world.

Nature is a common trigger for peak, inspirational insight experiences, and for many a powerful part of childhood. The healing power of the other-than-human is well known, for example, the role of gardens and animals in speeding recovery rates in hospital (Chiras, 2005). Berry (1996) asserts that:

> We have an absolute need of the natural world for activation of our inner world ... For it is from the stars, the planets and the moon in the heavens as well as from the flowers and birds and forests and woodland creatures of Earth that some of the more profound inner experiences take place in children (p. 5).

Ecopsychologists Roszak et al. (1995) contend that humans are born with the foundation for an empathetic orientation toward Nature. Sobel (1999) refers to a number of cross-cultural studies indicating that positive experiences in Nature during childhood represent the single most important factor in developing a personal concern for the environment. A majority of environmentalists attribute their adult commitment to a combination of significant time spent outdoors in Nature in childhood or adolescence, and to an adult who taught respect for Nature (Chawla, 1988; Chiras, 2005). In his study of recalled childhood experiences, Hart (2004) (cited in London, 2005) notes that nearly 80% of young adults report a sense of awe and wonder inspired by Nature; 39% before the age of 13. Smith (2000) found that 85% of adult participants in a permaculture[8] design course related childhood experiences of working with or being exposed to Nature as important influences in their desire to learn permaculture.

It is not yet clear that early experiences of Nature are a necessary pre-requisite to developing an ecospiritual consciousness, and that this cannot develop if such experiences are absent. Some authors see such experiences as essential. Chiras (2005) is convinced that

> Without a connection to nature, protecting it will seem to have little to do with our everyday lives. Without a love for nature, there is no hope for humankind ... we may even revile what seems foreign (p. 29).

However, it would appear that some people are more sensitive and empathetic to Nature than others. Gardner (1999) has posited Naturalistic Intelligence as the 8th of his Multiple Intelligences, suggesting that while it is a foundational intelligence for all, it may be better developed in some people more than others. In Smith's (2000) study of people learning permaculture, some participants reported that a sibling, presumably raised under similar conditions, had no interest in Nature, and they themselves often felt the "odd one out" in their family. However the indications are that there is an important relationship between early experience in Nature and the development of an ecospiritual consciousness and, as Chiras (2005) believes, if not established early, may be less likely to be renewed in adulthood.

Conversely, Wilson (1997) disturbingly notes that without positive experiences in Nature, children may instead run the risk of developing negative attitudes. Sobel (1999) coined the term "ecophobia" to denote feelings of aversion, disgust, and fear that many, including children, may have toward Nature. In a study of children's attitudes to Nature (Wilson, 1997), children more often reported expressions of fear, dislike, and violence than of appreciation, caring, and enjoyment. For example, wild flowers were viewed as dangerous because they attract bees which might sting. A number of children even expressed violence toward Nature, indicating that they would perform violent acts on creatures such as butterflies and baby birds if they were close to them. My own experience of working with children in a school gardening program attests to this; a number of children routinely expressed disgust at earthworms, slugs, "dirt" and compost, and a fear of flying insects and spiders, which they invariably wanted to kill. These attitudes may stem from a lack of positive experiences in Nature, particularly if adults around them express similar attitudes, reinforced by TV advertisements that routinely cast "dirt" as unhealthy, while bacteria or "germs" are frequently portrayed as monsters to be eliminated.

As well, young children are bombarded with inappropriate negative and frightening images of dysfunctional I–It human relationships with Nature. Sobel (1999) expresses deep concern about the negative impact of all this depressing knowledge, where the weight of the world's environmental problems is laid on the shoulders of primary school children. As Sobel puts it:

> ... teachers are descending on second and third graders to teach them about the rainforests ... school children are learning about tapirs, poison arrow frogs, and biodiversity. They hear the story of the murder of activist Chico Mendez and watch videos about the plight of indigenous forest people displaced by logging and exploration for oil. They learn that between the end of morning recess and the beginning of lunch, more than 10,000 acres of rainforest will be cut down, making way for fast food "hamburgerable" cattle ... Children are disconnected from the world outside their doors and connected with endangered animals and ecosystems around the globe through electronic media [http://www.yesmagazine.org/article.asp?ID=803].

It is not surprising that many young people describe the future in dystopian terms. One of the greatest gifts educators can give children is a re-enchantment of the natural world, that it is a magical, beautiful, and extraordinary place, to be treated with love and respect. The key question for educators is: "how can positive relationships with Nature become part of education so that young people see themselves as part of the web of life, and as stewards and custodians of creation?" In other words, how might an ecospiritual education be developed?

Framing an Ecospiritual Education

The holy grail of ecospirituality education would undoubtedly be that schools would seek to recast themselves as what Sterling (2001) calls a Sustainable School. Here, an ecological consciousness provides the foundation for the orientation of the whole school operation, from guiding principles and policy to curriculum, pedagogy, and

operations within an ecospiritual framework. Few schools have managed to achieve this (see, for example, Satish Kumar's The Small School [Kumar, 2004]). This is not surprising given the dominant modernist dualist epistemology that schools still tend to reflect. However given this fundamental constraint, the AuSSI program represents one significant attempt to provide this re-orientation.

While schools may not be in a position to recast themselves entirely as Sustainable Schools, there are a number of important steps that they can take to move toward developing an ecospiritual dimension to education. Through the Spirituality and Education Network, London (2005) and his colleagues have proposed a framework for developing curriculum programs for strengthening students' connections to Nature. The framework draws on exploring, developing, and understanding the reciprocal relationship between giving and receiving by focusing on two key aspects: (1) how Nature nourishes humans and (2) how humans can become steadfast friends of Nature. These echo the words of Pope John Paul II when he asserts that

> Not only has God given the earth to man, who must use it with respect for the original good purpose for which it was given to him, but man too is God's gift to man. He must therefore respect the natural and moral structure with which he has been endowed. Encyclical Letter, Centesimus Annus (1991).

The Spirituality and Education Network describes three eras of child development that may be usefully used to frame age-appropriate ecospiritual education (London, 2005). The first is from birth to around 6 years, when the child needs to be able to explore his/her immediate natural world—the world of the backyard, the garden, the park, and the playground. Most young children of this age are fascinated by, rather than fearful of, Nature. At age 4, my brother used to spend long hours in the backyard just watching ants. My 3-year-old niece seems to go into a trance when looking up into the branches of a great tree. I have an intense childhood memory of hours combing though the sea life of rock pools on the beach at age 5. These are small but exquisite moments of grace, enchantment, wonder, and awe, and the places where they take place are special.

Van Andel (1990) notes that the extent to which a place is special for children depends on the degree to which they are actively involved in making it their own. So rather than providing special places for young children, adults should rather be developing them with the children. The role of the parent and the educator in this era is to work with children to provide a rich natural environment to enable an intense, intimate exploration to take place, where the adult is able to enter into and model a positive, passionate, loving relationship with Nature, while being aware of and avoiding ecophobia. This may be through working together in intense enjoyment in the garden, planting and nurturing seeds or harvesting fruit. But it can also be in the wider universe, through watching the moon, the stars, sunrise and sunset, the changing seasons. My son's first word was "star".

The second era, from 6 to 11–12 years, is where the child learns though joyful positive aesthetic pursuits such as drawing, painting music, and movement. Abstract ecological theories and environmental guilt have little place for children in this era.

Instead, positive, concrete connections with the deeper cycles of Nature can be made through observing the seasons, the changing shadows throughout the day, the great cycles of death and rebirth of plants, insects, and other animals. This is the time when responsible pet care and the joy of gardening can develop, so that the special intimate bond between children and the other-than-human world can grow and be nurtured. Teachers report that children love to take care of hens, collect eggs, and are entranced by hatching chickens. Visits to farms, the zoo, local wetlands and other environmental parks, and camping in wild places are important in this era.

At this stage, many young people also benefit from belonging to societies and taking part in local community environmental action through tree planting, maintaining trails, being part of Landcare and authentic environmental monitoring programs, such as Stream Watch or Frog Watch. It is here they begin to develop a sense of place and build knowledge of their local environment. They begin to read the land, to recognize the symptoms of ecological degradation. Local groups working for a sustainable future have a strong bond in common – they *know* their place. Active involvement is empowering, providing a sense of being able to make a positive contribution to the future.

The adult's role at this stage is again critical, through the conscious modeling of responsible pro-environmental behavior and attitudes, as well as sharing an ecospiritual consciousness. The role of the school is critical too. A school that professes to be pro-environment but that does not behave as such does not go unnoticed by children in this era. Lights left on, dripping taps, and lack of waste recycling sit uneasily with messages to be good custodians of the planet. This is why whole-of-school sustainability programs such as AuSSI and projects such as Stephanie Alexander's Kitchen Garden Foundation (SAKGF) are particularly important and increasingly popular in Australian primary schools. Through SAKGF, children are taught to garden and then to harvest and cook the produce, developing clear links between food production, health, and wellbeing.

Pat Long (1997) describes a Children's Summer Camp that takes place at Genesis Farm in the United States, for children aged 5 to 9 years. Genesis Farm represents a practical manifestation of ecospirituality. Its founder, Sr. Miriam McGillis, describes her vision for the farm as

> Rooted in a belief that the Universe, Earth, and all reality are permeated by the presence and power of that ultimate Holy Mystery that has been so deeply and richly expressed in the world's spiritual traditions. We try to ground our ecological and agricultural work in this deep belief. This Sacred Mystery, known by so many religious names, is the common thread in our efforts [http://www.genesisfarm.org/vision.htm].

The purpose of the camp is to discover and recover the sense of the sacred in Nature, to "open up in participants a sense of wonder and awe at the natural world and the numinous energy at the heart of all matter" (Long, 1997, p. 2). This is approached through the telling of the universe story through words, gesture, song, and contemplation. The camp culminates in a children's adaptation of the deep ecology *Council of All Beings* ritual designed to develop empathy with other life forms and to connect the human profoundly into fabric of the evolving universe (Seed,

Macy, Fleming, & Naess, 1988). This ritual, originally developed for adults, can be used for all ages if appropriately adapted and sensitively approached.

As the young person matures through ages 12–18, a more abstract, conscious, and philosophical relationship with and appreciation of Nature begins to emerge. Scientific concepts of energy flows, material cycles, food webs, and ecosystem functioning are able to be understood. In this era, many adolescents benefit from being in remote, wild places where they may experience a deep and profound joy in connecting with Nature. It is at this stage that the young person is able to contemplate the I–Thou relationship with Nature, and become deeply aware of the interconnection of all life. This era may also coincide with a growing awareness of the paradoxes and dissonances between a healthy ecology and the consumer society, and at this stage, many young people decide to become activists, joining environmental organizations and working in local conservation.

However, adolescence may also be a time of rejection of ecological values as peer pressure and popular culture messages to consume clash with messages to conserve. Young people interested in Nature may be labeled as "uncool" or feel the need to hide their true feelings. Again it is critical that knowledgeable, sensitive adult role models are available who are respected by the young person and are able help sort through the confusion and complexity of emergence into adulthood.

To these three eras I would add a fourth, that of adulthood, not necessarily age-based but particularly prevalent in those with young children. This is a time when, given opportunities for contemplation, reflection, communication, and education with others in a safe environment, adults may begin to voice their hopes and fears for their own future and that of their children. It can be a time of great receptivity, where they begin to be able to work through fears to reconnect with Nature, often becoming passionate and empowered advocates of a new sense of stewardship.

As noted earlier, the lack of positive images of the future is considered an indicator for hopelessness, depression, and even suicide for some young people. Throughout all these eras, it is crucial that creativity and imagination are harnessed to envision and explore images of sustainable futures, where humans can begin to recast themselves as stewards of Nature.

Resources, Support and Sites for Ecospirituality Education

As well as numerous resources or EfS, there is now a developing range of excellent resources, support, and sites for teachers and students that advocate and support an ecospiritual approach to education. Genesis Farm in the USA and the *Council of All Beings* workshops have already been mentioned. Similar organizations in Australia include the Centre for Ecology and Spirituality in Glenburn, Victoria, administered by the Christian Brothers, Earth Link in Brisbane, and the EarthSong project offer courses on a range of aspects of ecospirituality. The Catholic Bishops' Conference, through Catholic Earthcare Australia, has produced a number of excellent documents such as the pastoral letter on the Great Barrier Reef *Let the Many Coastlands*

be Glad. Of special relevance for education is the outstanding document *On Holy Ground* (currently being revised) and the video *The Garden Planet*, which have been made available to all Catholic schools and parishes. These and other documents send out a clear message about the Bishops' commitment to and interest in sustainability, locating it within a concern for God's Creation, heeding Pope John Paul II's passionate call for "ecological conversion" and to become far more sensitive stewards of the Earth as the norm.

The Earth Charter (2000) provides an authoritative system of values, principles, and aspirations to guide the vision and development of Earth, and is at heart a deeply spiritual document. Earth Charter resources are now available for use at all levels of education.

Conclusion

In these troubled times, three great moments of grace are upon us. The first is the understanding that we are in intimate relationship with an evolving universe, that the universe story is the human story. The second is that humans are of Earth, that human wellbeing cannot be separated from Earth's wellbeing. The third is the realization of the great harm that human life is perpetrating on Earth through prodigious consumption and population pressure, made possible though a dysfunctional and disconnected worldview that values consumption over the integrity of Earth's ecosystems. Through these moments of grace emerges an ecospirituality, an I–Thou relationship with Nature.

Many young people have pessimistic views of the future. What is required to move to an I–Thou relationship with Nature are positive images of a sustainable future and the development of an ecospiritual consciousness by linking education for sustainability to ecospirituality education.

Berry (1999) says that the Great Work of our time is to raise human consciousness to see itself in harmony with the whole creation as an integral part of the Earth Community. Rather than "lord it over" the other life forms, be in respectful interdependence with them. This is the gift, the insight, and the joy of ecospirituality.

Notes

1. The terms "Nature" and "Earth" are capitalized to reflect their centrality and importance in considering ecospirituality. This usage follows authors such as Berry (1999) and London (2005).
2. Sustainability is defined here as "development that seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future" (Brundtland, 1987).
3. The term "global North" refers to the most "developed" part of the world, i.e. those countries with the highest per capita GDP (around 20% of humanity). "Global South" refers to the rest.
4. A positive development is that lately there have been efforts to include socially and environmental destructive practices as negatives in cost accounting and socially responsible triple bottom line accounting and reporting is becoming standard practice in many industries.

5. This is not to say development should stop. Clearly much of the global South requires an increase in standard of living to be lifted out of grinding poverty. The inequity of global growth and its unsustainable use of resources is the issue.
6. This of course remains the situation for most in the global South since resources are shared unequally across the globe.
7. This is not meant to be a futile argument for the removal of the information and communication technologies from modern day life. ICTs have an important role to play and are now an integral part of the world. However there needs to be a balance between their use and engagement with the material–spiritual world of Nature.
8. Permaculture is a holistic design system for ecologically based human settlement, see Mollison (1988).

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Chapter 35
Promoting Wholeness and Wellbeing in Education: Exploring Aspects of the Spiritual Dimension

Marian de Souza

Abstract The notion of wellbeing and education has become a topical issue in Australia. This could be, potentially, a response to the research in recent years in the fields of health and youth studies that highlight the disillusionment that afflicts many of our young people. Also notable is the distancing of many young people from traditional institutions such as religious traditions which provided some meaning and purpose to the lives of past generations. Instead, the contemporary search for something that may give meaning to their lives often leads young people into spaces without boundaries. This "dabbling" does not always lead to satisfaction, happiness, or wellbeing, and new ways to address this issue are required.

This chapter draws on the spirituality factor in human life to argue for an education that nurtures and gives expression to the inner and outer lives of students so that there is a greater chance of promoting balance and wellbeing for students to live and function effectively within their communities. In particular, it explores the concept of conscious and nonconscious learning which may help young people develop their individuality, view the world from a different perspective and become more understanding and inclusive of others who are different. Potentially, such an approach to learning will promote social cohesion and wellbeing for individuals and their communities.

Spirituality and Wellbeing—The Context

> The question for Australia in the 21st century is not how we can become richer: it is how we can use our high standard of living to build a flourishing society—one devoted to improving our wellbeing rather than just expanding the economy.
>
> . . . Many Australians are anxious about declining moral standards. We worry that we have become too selfish, materialistic and superficial and long for a society built on mutual respect, self-restraint and generosity of spirit.

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> ... The challenge of our age is to build a new politics that is committed, above all, to improving our wellbeing.
> (From *A Manifesto for Wellbeing*, http://www.wellbeingmanifesto.net/)

A Manifesto for Wellbeing was launched at the Edge Theatre, Federation Square, Melbourne, 14 June 2005 by Clive Hamilton, Executive Director, The Australia Institute, and it is an indication of the interest that has been shown in the concept of wellbeing in Australia. This interest is not confined to any one segment of society but is apparent in many different areas and at many different levels. In the area of education, it is reflected in the fact that many schools today have positions for Wellbeing Coordinators which, relatively speaking, are a fairly recent innovation. Another piece of evidence is the development of the project *KidsMatter* which is a mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention initiative for primary schools across the nation developed by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, in partnership with other agencies including Beyondblue: the national depression initiative, the Australian Psychological Society, The Australian Principals' Associations Professional Development Council and also supported by Australian Rotary Health Research fund. There were four components to KidsMatter all of which had links to the relational dimension of students' lives. These are (1) Positive School Community; (2) Social and Emotional Learning for Students; (3) Parenting Education and Support and (4) Early Intervention for Students at Risk or Experiencing Mental Health Problems. Approximately 101 schools were involved in a 2-year trial to examine the extent to which KidsMatter was able to make a positive impact on the mental health and wellbeing of primary school students in Australia (KidsMatter, Issue 2, December 2006).

Given this current interest in wellbeing, it is necessary to describe it as it will be used in this chapter. Eckersley's (2005) description of wellbeing is based on a study of relevant literature and research and states,

> We often measure wellbeing as happiness or satisfaction with life. The search for happiness is often confused with the pursuit of pleasure, but wellbeing is about more than living "the good life"; it is about having meaning in life, about fulfilling our potential and feeling that our lives are worthwhile.
>   ... The evidence shows that a good marriage, the company of friends, rewarding work, sufficient money, a good diet, physical activity, sound sleep, engaging leisure and religious or spiritual belief and practice all enhance our wellbeing, and their absence diminishes it. Optimism, trust, self-respect and autonomy make us happier. Gratitude and kindness lift our spirits; indeed, giving support can be at least as beneficial as receiving it. Having clear goals that we can work towards, a "sense of place" and belonging, a coherent and positive view of the world, and the belief that we are part of something bigger than ourselves foster wellbeing (http://www.wellbeingmanifesto.net/wellbeing.htm).

If we examine the list of features which enhance wellbeing according to Eckersley, we observe that they identify the various factors that provide a holistic overview of an individual's life; factors that are generated by the relational dimension of being human; and this relationality is expressed through connectedness to Self and Other. It has to do with the individual's feelings of belonging and of having a sense of place. As well, it has to do with an awareness of a transcendent dimension

in one's life, that is, being able to connect to something bigger than the individual person, something beyond the physical realm.

These elements then, as discussed by Eckersley, highlight the link between well-being and spirituality. The concept of spirituality, as understood here, pertains to the relational dimension of being (de Souza, 2003, 2006b), which is the connectedness that the individual feels to Self and Other in the world, the cosmos and beyond. For some, their spirituality may not progress beyond the relational level within the physical world but for others, it may extend into the metaphysical world. Earlier research findings (de Souza, 2003; de Souza, Cartwright & McGilp, 2004) led us to describe the individual's spiritual journey as moving along a continuum of human relationality where the boundaries that separate Self from Other gradually become blurred and, ultimately, Self becomes one with Other. Thus, the ultimate point of the journey, Ultimate Unity, takes the individual beyond relationality since Self becomes absorbed into Other to become one entity. At this ultimate point, individuals have, somehow, moved into another realm, sphere or level of consciousness where they discover they have a distinct place in the order of things; where they are a part of a whole. This point may engender liberating experiences of transcendence, intense joy, freedom and/or peace which could deepen their usual sense of connectedness, enhance their ability to find meaning through their life experiences and promote feelings of wonder, delight, empathy, compassion and so on. In the end, it will affect the way they perceive and live in the world. One feature of such experiences is that the individual has been touched at an integral level of mind, body and soul and has been transformed in some way.

Following this thinking, if spirituality is nurtured it gives the individual a sense of belonging and a sense of place which, in turn, provides the individual's life with some meaning and purpose. Thus, in the simplest terms, if the individual feels that s/he belongs to her/his community, feels valued and has a voice, it gives her/him a sense of place. This belonging can bring with it a kind of ownership as well as a sense of being one of many; of being part of a whole. Further, it could inspire a feeling of responsibility to self and community and, therefore, provides a sense of purpose which, then, can give life meaning and value. The essence lies in the feelings of being connected, of being part of something more than self. Consequently, if contemporary educational programs and environments are designed to foster young people's spirituality and allow its expression, they should promote wellbeing.

The Influences on Educational Contexts that Detract from Spiritual Nurturing

Education systems are vehicles that serve the social and political contexts within which they exist. Accordingly, the past 50 years have seen curriculum changes introduced in many western education programs that have responded to various concerns and issues of the times. A major goal of these changes has been to turn out highly skilled and knowledgeable citizens for societies which have been media driven and steeped in consumerism and amazing advances in technology. A product of these

advances is that individuals are able to "connect" with each other through mobile phones and the Internet. This is a positive feature often pointed out by advocates of technology. However, not enough attention has been paid to the quality of this type of connection. Invariably it removes the human face and therefore has the potential to become superficial. This can give rise to undesirable experiences such as cyber bullying (made easier when face-to-face contact is avoided) or negative occurrences of Internet dating when people can take on false personas and so on. The perpetrators of such instances are protected from witnessing the distress they cause because their connection is maintained at a distance. Therefore, this type of "distant connectedness", a common feature of the contemporary world, is not always one that inspires a sense of wellbeing among children and young people.

Speaking of the American system, Eisner claims that, "Schools see as their mission, at least in part, as promoting the development of the intellect" (2002, p. xi) and this is certainly reflected in Australia and other western countries. Accordingly, knowledge has been viewed as a desirable commodity and the production of knowledge in education has been a dominant factor. Subjects such as literacy, numeracy, the sciences and technology are perceived as the ones that will produce skilled people and are therefore given priority. Not surprisingly, in such a climate, the thrust for knowledge has almost obliterated the need to develop wisdom and the potential of subjects like the arts to improve the mind, help people to connect and promote wisdom is often ignored so that art subjects remain on the fringe of learning programs. And yet,

> Many of the most complex and subtle forms of thinking take place when students have an opportunity either to work meaningfully on the creation of images – whether visual, choreographic, musical, literary, or poetic – or to scrutinize them appreciatively (Eisner, 2002, p. xii).

Arguably, it is wisdom that assists the individual in their search for meaning and developing compassion but too often, in the crowded curriculum of western education systems, including Australian systems, the notion of developing wisdom as a sound educational goal has been overlooked. Indeed, the dualism that has generated the development of most social institutions in the western world, where a positivistic, reductionist, scientific world view has dominated, has left little room for a consciousness that is grounded in the totality of human experience. This has meant that the emotional, imaginative and intuitive elements of the human condition have been given little attention.

Another feature of today's educational programs is the emphasis on assessment. The regular testing over the primary and secondary years frequently means that there are periods of time during the school year when teaching can become fixated on preparing for tests. This often results in surface learning—the ability to produce the "right" answer when tested but with little or no "depth" learning, that is, transformational learning is not necessarily achieved. Writing over a decade ago, Noddings (1992) argued that when the main focus of education is on achievement rather than producing moral and caring people, it could lead to students' feeling uncared for, especially when testing and striving to achieve can lead to unhealthy

competition between individuals and between schools as they seek to promote themselves over others. Such a process does little to encourage connectedness or positive relationality.

Finally, the busy schedules that permeate schools and classrooms today leave little time for wonder, stillness, silence and inner reflection. As well, developing the imagination and intuition requires time and excellent multisensory resources and, while many schools may have good resources, many classroom teachers struggle to devote time to continually developing up-to-date, exciting and relevant materials, given other external pressures on their daily practice.

This time factor has another impact. Most children have their daily routine well organized with time-consuming activities. Not only are they kept busy at school or doing school-related homework but they also belong to sporting teams, attend gyms, have lessons in martial arts, music, dance and so on, not to mention their involvement in the inevitable whirl of shopping and other social activities so that, even in their private lives, they are always doing rather than being. Their lifestyle, then is highly structured so they have little time to get to really know themselves; to know the inner Me.

Fortunately, there is a growing number of teachers and other educational practitioners who are recognizing the limitations of such education systems and are seeking alternative ways in which they may teach holistically whereby they can address the intellectual, emotional and spiritual dimensions of their students. This trend may be observed by the number of attendees at conferences, workshops and professional development days in Australia and other countries that focus on holistic learning and spirituality in education.[1] However, this dimension is still not clearly reflected in educational policies or government directives, so classroom practitioners who attempt to use a holistic approach that recognizes the complementarity of the three dimensions of learning have difficulty fitting this practice into existing systems. These are some of the areas in education that clearly need attention and reform if the aim is to help students achieve their potential as whole individuals. One way forward is to recognize and address the role of the conscious and nonconscious mind[2] in the learning process.

Conscious and Nonconscious Learning

In general, the focus on cognitive learning means a focus on the conscious mind with teaching and learning strategies aimed at promoting thinking, reasoning and analytical skills. That the nonconscious mind has a distinct role in the learning process is often overlooked. In particular, there are two elements pertinent to nonconscious learning, which are linked to emotional and spiritual intelligences. These are affective and inner-reflective learning and they may be associated with the processes of feeling and intuiting. I have written about this previously (de Souza, 2008, 2006a, 2006b, 2005a, 2005b) but provide a brief overview here in order to contextualize the further ideas I am presenting in this chapter. I have argued that the role of the emotions and intuition in the learning process is often ignored during

curriculum development or lesson planning while the intellect and cognitive learning are the major foci. To plan for engagement of the emotions and intuition in the learning process would require more time than is allowed in the busy timetables that operate in schools today. Teachers are usually pressured to follow strict curriculum guidelines and to ensure that their students meet particular outcomes within a given time frame, all of which provide invisible barriers to contemplative and reflective learning. These are important features of emotional and spiritual learning.

It is true that following Goleman's (1995) well-known discourse on emotional intelligence, and the research of Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000), the literature on the subject has expanded and become widely accessible to practitioners so that emotional literacy is now being targeted in many classroom programs. In her discussion on emotional literacy, Sherwood (2008) draws on Plato to suggest that one of the objects of education is to teach children to love beauty and goodness which touches the "feeling life of children deeply" (p. 5). She cites Lievegoed who refers to one of the fundamental concepts in Steiner education where the "primary psycho-spiritual experience" for the primary school child is to experience beauty while the "primary psycho-spiritual task for the adolescent is to experience truth and authenticity" (p. 5). Sherwood asserts that

> it (is) through their hearts that children live out life – the feeling life that is coloured by the sensory images of the natural world, peopled by creative visualizations of their imaginations and warmed by their connection to the qualities that sustain life, hope, love, beauty, goodness and justice (p. 5).

For Sherwood, emotional literacy is about educating the whole child not just the child's mind. It provides a language of the heart and is at the core of an individual's wellbeing. As a result, it is an important factor to be considered in teacher education so that teachers learn to teach "with heart" (pp. 135–147). This aspect is also noted by Cheminais (2006) in her guide for teachers to the British government educational program *Every Child Matters* where she highlights the importance of the training of teachers to develop their own emotional intelligence so that they address the emotional needs and behaviour of their students. Emotional learning is also one of the aims for the Australian mental health program for primary schools, KidsMatter (see www.kidsmatter.edu.au).

While these are positive signs for learning and teaching, there is still an imbalance between cognitive and affective learning since cognitive learning outcomes are explicit and can be measured while it is difficult to determine if and when affective learning outcomes are achieved. Therefore, cognition or the rational dimension of learning still tends to be the dominant factor in most programs.

Similarly, the third dimension of learning, the spiritual or inner reflective aspects, provides even more ambiguity in terms of the assessment of learning, thereby creating further barriers to its inclusion as a core element of learning programs. The other problem is that for some people, spirituality is still seen as interchangeable with religion and religiosity so that in countries where education and religion are kept quite separate, as in Australia, little attempt has been made to examine contemporary

concepts of spirituality as pertaining to relationality which is the aspect of human life that seeks and promotes connectedness and meaning.

Nonetheless, I have, in the past, examined in some depth the role of intuitions and intuitive thinking in enhancing the spiritual dimension of learning because it acts as an integrating factor in the learning process (de Souza, 2009, 2008). Drawing on the literature, my conclusions were that intuitions are produced through the merging of learning generated by conscious and nonconscious perceptions; very often the latter has led to knowledge that individuals do not know they have (for instance, see Hogarth, 2001; Myers, 2002) and, moreover, they do not know how or where they got it (Claxton, 2000; Eraut, 2000; Hillman, 1996; Wilber, 2000, 2001). Thus intuitions are a product of a unifying process between new and old perceptions, thoughts and feelings and they come from deep within a person's psyche—the heart and soul. I have proposed that for such learning to take place, time and silence are required to allow children to absorb new knowledge constituted by new perceptions and to undergo a "rumination process" (Claxton, 2000, p. 50) where new knowledge mixes with conscious and nonconscious previous learning in a lateral movement to emerge in the form of new learning, solutions, creations and so on. Thus, an intuition appears to provide us with a clear understanding of a situation by presenting the whole rather than the part and which, in turn, complements the rational and logical mind and prompts it to arrive at a solution or conclusion.

An interesting and relevant discussion by Zull (2002) provides physical evidence to support the learning process described above. Zull describes three functions of the cerebral cortex and identifies the different areas that are engaged in each function:

> The functions are *sensing, integrating*, and *motor* (which means moving)... These three functions of the cortex are not an accident. They do the key things that are essential for all nervous systems. They sense the environment, add up (or integrate) what they sense, and generate appropriate movements (actions:

$$\text{Sense} \Rightarrow \text{Integrate} \Rightarrow \text{Act (p. 15).}$$

Zull describes the integration as the process where the individual perceives a number of signals in the external environment and takes them in through the senses. When these reach the brain they are added up to become recognizable as the sum of the individual parts. That is, the individual parts merge to form larger patterns and these become meaningful. For instance, they form images or words, "In the human brain these meanings are then integrated in new ways that become ideas, thoughts, and plans. At their most basic, these integrated meanings become plans for action" (p. 16). Zull further describes the physical shape of the brain where the integrative part lies between the sensory cortex and the motor brain. Thus, when signals are transferred from the outside world or from the individual's own body (sensory input) to the sensory cortex in the brain, they move through the integrative part of the brain which is situated close to the sensory part and then move through to the integrative part of the brain which is close to the motor brain. This is then detected by the whole sensory brain "so that the output of the brain becomes new sensory input". Thus new learning and action are generated which, in turn generate more new learning and action.

Nonconscious learning, then, may enhance the spiritual dimension of learning by encouraging intuitive, creative and imaginative responses that spring from deep within the individual/s mind, heart and soul. It provides the ability for the individual to make connections, "see the light", problem solve and find meaning without any conscious action on their part. The other aspect of nonconscious learning is that it also may impede connectedness and positive relationships. Because it is based on many bits of previously gained nonconscious perceptions and impressions, it is prone to creating stereotypes. Therefore, nonconscious learning may trigger intolerant attitudes and prejudices which are projected by the individual towards people who are different through race, culture or religion. The rest of this chapter will examine this trait of nonconscious learning with a view to determining its impact on a new generation who have grown up against a backdrop of political and religious divisiveness.

Nonconscious Learning as an Impediment to the Nurturing of the Spiritual Dimension in Learning

All learning begins with perceptions, conscious and nonconscious, which the individual absorbs through his/her senses. Winston (2003) asserts that, if we have sufficient motivation, we can "pay attention to complex streams of information and that only some of this occurs at the conscious level" (p. 136). He provides an account of several experiments to determine how people take in "information through perception" (pp. 134–138) and concludes that there are two levels of information processing that occur in the brain, conscious and nonconscious, the latter happening at a much faster pace than the former (p. 173). He suggests that in situations where an individual is surrounded by a lot of sensory information, something in the brain determines which information will be attended to and which will be ignored. He refers to this as the

> "cocktail party effect"—based upon the observation that, even in environments which demand so much of our senses simultaneously, we are often able to follow conversations and at the same time respond if someone on the other side of the room mentions our name (p. 136).

Winston suggests that we can hear our name through all the noise and other sounds in a crowded room because it is information which has emotional significance. This is an important point since it suggests that the individual can be processing information and, simultaneously, also be influenced by unattended information. He points to the fact that, while we may consider ourselves to be consciously alert and paying attention, in reality, some information may actually pass us by. However, we will also be noticing some things without knowing that we have noticed them. He describes how it takes 100–200 milliseconds for the brain to fire up in response to new sensory stimuli but then there is a dampening effect in other areas:

It's as if the brain is taking in everything, all the time, but the mechanisms within it act to turn the "contrast knob" up or down – focusing our attention on some features, shutting off our attention to others (p. 143).

In the end, Winston insists that, while "soft research" (p. 467) may suggest that intuition is some kind of mysterious sixth sense, there is no concrete evidence to support this. Instead, intuition should be understood as a "super-efficient means of evaluating information from the five senses we do possess" (p. 465). Arguably, this claim is generated by Winston's background which is steeped in the sciences and it does, rather, ignore the fact that there are many happenings in human experience for which there is, currently, no physical evidence and for which, therefore, science has no answer. However, his notion of nonconscious processing of information has significant implications for young people today. They live in a highly visual and aural society where their senses are continually bombarded by a huge array of images and sounds so that their brain processes endless pieces of information, some of which they are aware of since they consciously use the knowledge gained. However, at another level, they absorb information which gets stored in their nonconscious mind and which will only ever be retrieved by the conscious mind when the conscious mind finds links between it and newly gained knowledge. Therefore, if there were ways and means of enabling individuals to facilitate this process of retrieval of information buried in the recesses of their minds in order to assist them to draw out and make the best meaning they can from new learning, this is an area that requires serious investigation by educators and researchers.

Another proponent of intuition, Myers (2002) also discusses different levels of consciousness where he claims that "our consciousness is biased to think that its own intentions and deliberate choices rule our lives (understandably, since the tip-of-the-iceberg consciousness is mostly aware of its visible self). But consciousness overrates its own control" (p. 15). Myers insists that the individual processes vast amounts of information "off screen" and he uses the analogy of an army of cognitive workers who work in the "mind's basement", the nonconscious mind, and only sending the most important bits of information as it is required to the "executive desk" which is where the conscious mind works (p. 15). In other words, the mind is constantly busy with new and influential happenings but these are not ostensibly conscious. Citing Wegner and Smart, Myers describes this world below the surface as "deep cognitive activation" (p. 23). Myers also presents much literature and research to support his claims that intuition is alive and well:

Inside our ever-active brain, many streams of activity flow in parallel, function automatically, are remembered implicitly, and only occasionally surface as conscious words. "Thinking lite" this unconscious processing has been called – one-fourth the effort of regular thinking (p. 29).

Myers, therefore, describes parallel ways of knowing: controlled (conscious) which is complex, reflective and logical, and automatic (nonconscious) which is effortless, spontaneous and emotional. He cites Bargh to claim that "automatic processes pervade all aspects of mental and social life" (p. 29). Indeed, Myers supports this notion of intuition and examines the role of intuition in a range of

areas encompassing human endeavour but takes care to point to the serious problems that can result unless intuitive thinking is considered critically and carefully. In other words, intuitions should be balanced with rational thinking in order for the individual to gain the best results.

Unlike Winston (2003), Myers concedes that psychological science has its limitations in that it offers explanations about why the individual thinks, feels and acts in a particular way; however, it is incapable of providing answers to ultimate questions about the purpose and meaning of life. What is pertinent to this discussion is that he points to the growing interest from scientific fields regarding the non-rational, intuitive ways of knowing which, he argues, provides a credible basis for an examination of the concept of spirituality (p. 242). As well, he acknowledges the growing evidence that faith and belief is associated with "increased health, happiness, coping, character, generosity, and volunteerism" (p. 245), which tends to support the concept of spiritual intelligence "but it cannot tell us whether spirituality is an illusion or a deep truth" (p. 245). Ultimately, Myers admits that the human person cannot *know* the answer but concludes,

> We're all surely wrong to some extent. We glimpse ultimate reality only dimly, both skeptics and faithful agree. Perhaps, though, we can draw wisdom from both scepticism and spirituality. Perhaps we can anchor our lives in a rationality and humility that restrains spiritual intuition with critical analysis, and in a spirituality that nurtures purpose, love, and joy (p. 246).

Thus, Myers from his extensive examination of research and literature on intuition suggests that it may be linked to a spiritual way of knowing and he provides sound arguments as to why this should be attended to. More importantly, he also identifies links between spiritual ways of knowing and the individual's wellbeing.

Myers' contention that there are two ways of knowing which usually results in a dual attitude system is supported by Wilson's (2002) theory of the adaptive unconscious. Wilson argues that individuals base their self-knowledge on their conscious selves. Therefore, they never really get to know themselves completely because there are layers beyond their conscious awareness, beyond reach—this is what he calls the adaptive unconscious. Wilson speaks of the automaticity of thought that Myers refers to and the lack of awareness of the individual of any deep rooted feelings s/he may have; feelings that have developed as a result of perceptions that would have begun accumulating over a lifetime. Wilson supports Myers' contention that perceptions can lead to the formation of stereotypes which, then, results in prejudicial attitudes and he provides sound arguments to substantiate this claim. He says

> The adaptive unconscious might have learned to respond in prejudiced ways, on the basis of thousands of exposures to racist views in the media or exposure to role models such as one's parents. Some people learn to reject such attitudes at a conscious level, and egalitarian views become a central part of their self-stories. They will act on their conscious nonprejudiced views when they are monitoring and controlling their behaviour, but will act on the more racist disposition of their adaptive unconscious when they are not monitoring or cannot control their actions (p. 190).

Wilson's notion of the adaptive unconscious would certainly appear to play a determining role in the development of our attitudes since it absorbs information,

interprets and evaluates it and sets goals in motion, quickly and efficiently, and all this occurs outside our conscious selves. In particular, Wilson notes that an individual tends to form a judgement or interpret a situation in a way that will maintain his/her sense of safety and wellbeing rather than by a desire for accuracy and accessibility (p. 38) and this point is significant in attempting to understand how individuals may be manipulated or manoeuvred through their nonconscious learning. It is particularly important when considering contemporary societies such as Australia which have experienced enormous changes in a short time from being mono-cultural, mono-religious and mono-linguistic to multicultural, multi-religious and multi-linguistic. For instance, given the human tendency to gravitate towards tribalism (Law, 2006), perhaps because it promotes a certain sense of security and wellbeing, the adaptive unconscious may be manipulated when a politician or the media creates fear about a particular race or religious groups by suggesting that they are responsible for actions that could not be supported by the public, thus leading to the call—"we do not want people like that". In such a scenario, it is not surprising if many people are swayed by the call. Law (2006) explains this when he says, "human beings are peculiarly attracted to them-and-us thinking" (p. 30).

In Australia, "them and us" thinking was clearly evident in the first 100 plus years of white settlement. It was not only evident between European settlers and indigenous people but it also dominated the relationship between the Catholics (mostly of Irish origin) and Protestants (mostly of British origin). A short story will serve to illustrate this situation. I was on a flight from London to Melbourne in 2007 and found myself beside a couple in their seventies who had just been on a holiday visiting her family. She was British but had settled in Australia as a child. In the course of conversation I responded to a question about my occupation by saying I taught at the Australian Catholic University. The man paused and then said, "I've got some friends who are Catholic. . . and they are quite nice blokes". A bit later he returned to this theme and said, "You know, when I was younger, we didn't really mix—Protestants and Catholics; it was very much a them and us situation". Of course, this couple would have grown up in the Eurocentric Australia of the 1940s and 1950s.

The situation to which this man referred was further encouraged because of the separate Catholic school system which was put in place by the Catholic hierarchy in order to pass on the faith tradition to new generations. Thus, a significant number of Catholic students did not have much engagement with those who went to the State schools, and name calling between the two groups became a feature of the social conditions in which they lived. Arguably, the assimilationist policies that were in place in Australia until the 1970s may have been prompted by the learning that was absorbed through those early years so that all new arrivals were "them" and had to learn to assimilate with the dominant culture to become one of "us". It is true that when the policies changed in Australia to celebrate multiculturalism, most people appeared to respond and become more inclusive. However, after 9/11, a "them and us" attitude again became quickly evident in some quarters of Australian society in response to media presentations and political pronouncements which indiscriminately attributed the problems of terrorism to Islamic communities without making any distinction or recognizing that differences exist among them. This process could

easily be seen as the manipulation of the adaptive unconscious of the general public so that many non-Muslims who had little experience or engagement with Muslims often responded by perceiving any adherent of Islam, particularly young males who physically resembled Muslims from the Middle East, as possible terrorists. The ensuing misconceptions and misunderstandings, then, have led to symptoms of divisiveness based on underlying discomfort and fear. This is a most troubling factor in a contemporary, pluralist society.

It is this aspect of learning that, I believe, impedes the nurturing of human spirituality since it creates barriers between people who are different so that minority groups are formed who never quite experience a sense of belonging and being equal in the society in which they live. Thus, if children grow up with constant exposure to media presentations or parents' attitudes which demonstrate particular viewpoints, it is not surprising if they absorb these at a nonconscious level. If, at a conscious level, they learn, through education or wider experience that there may be other ways of perceiving things, they may make a conscious effort to overcome their previous attitudes. However, at a nonconscious level, these original perceptions and attitudes may prevail which will, ultimately, impact on their attitudes and behaviours. This is particularly so if the context is tense or uncomfortable or if there is a perception of a possible threat to their wellbeing. In such situations, their immediate reaction will be driven by their nonconscious learning before their rational mind is able to "kick in". This is an important factor that needs consideration in contemporary Australia and in other pluralist societies where friction between dominant groups and minority groups is evident. Formal education provides one avenue through which the negative aspects of nonconscious learning may be addressed and this is discussed in the next section.

Using a Multisensory Approach to Learning Across the Curriculum

Learning programs should be holistic in order to address the human child in the totality of his/her being. Logically, this means that education should not confine itself to teaching approaches that aim to promote the intellectual capacity of the individual alone but should be inclusive of his/her emotional and spiritual capabilities as well. Zull's (2002) discussion of the difference between the emotions and feelings is pertinent here as it provides a clear reason why the emotions and feelings should be considered in the planning of learning programs. He claims that when we become conscious of our emotions, we identify them as feelings:

> "To feel is to sense things, and we sense things with our bodies. Emotions in the brain produce feelings in the body" (p. 71).

Further, Zull claims that there is no such thing as cold reason since our emotions tend to drive our reason, consequently, all reason is permeated with some level of feeling which has been generated by the emotions in the brain.

The third aspect of the human person referred to above is spirituality and, again, its role in learning is distinct. If we accept that human spirituality is about relationality—expressed through the different levels of connectedness and meaning that a person experiences in his/her life, we need to investigate elements in learning programs that relate to these aspects. We also need to reflect on the different ways that students absorb information, that is, consciously and nonconsciously. This means that the presentation of new information and content should utilize resources that engage the different senses since each of the senses provides different kinds of memory which, in turn, promotes holistic learning that can lead to transformation.

Anecdotally, the busyness of classrooms and the pressures on teachers to adapt constantly to new curricula which involve ever more preparation and administration are often reported. Therefore, one of the most important features of this approach is the use of time and the role of the arts. In a contemporary world which is rich in sensory stimulation, the resources and materials in classrooms often do not have quite the same impact. Time is needed to develop activities, resources and other materials. Extra time is needed to plan lessons and units of work where attention is given to articulating cognitive, affective and spiritual learning outcomes (de Souza, 2006a) since this will be a new concept for most teachers who have previously only focused on cognitive and, perhaps, affective learning outcomes. Time is needed for children to contemplate, meditate and learn how to reflect inwardly so that they increase their self-knowledge. Time is also required during each day for periods when children learn the value of being silent and still. Time is needed when children view art works, hear music or listen to stories so they have a chance to engage in the "ruminating process" described by Claxton (2000) where connections between new and old, conscious and nonconscious learning takes place. Importantly, this acknowledgement of time as a significant factor to produce transformative learning has serious implications for contemporary Australian educational systems and it needs a considered and proactive response.

The use of time has to be considered, also, when presenting students with new information. They have grown up in over-stimulated contexts dominated by sophisticated multimedia programs and technological devices which inject information in short bursts, usually with a mass of colour, sound, movement and amazing action. Consequently, most children have, relatively speaking, a short concentration span and their minds need to be constantly energized with exciting materials and resources that are visually and aurally thought-provoking. In other words, activities and resources need to be entertaining and invigorating in order to engage today's children, and careful planning is required to discover such resources and utilize them in a way that will stimulate conscious and nonconscious learning through the different senses.

A further aspect of a media-saturated environment is how it may upset the balance of learning. Zull asserts that transformative learning has three stages. To begin with there is the movement (transformation) from past to future, that is, the experiences the individual have become memories which inform plans of action for the future. Second, transformation occurs when the external knowledge has been internalized since it enables the individual to move from being a receiver to a producer.

Thus, s/he does not have to rely on the external source for the knowledge since s/he now has the knowledge within and can use it accordingly. Thus, the learner has moved from being passive to being active and can now create further knowledge. Third, there is the transformation of power. If the learning has been balanced and involves the whole brain where new knowledge has moved through the process of sensing, integrating and action, the control of the learning passes from others to the individuals themselves. They will be able to assess their own learning, identify what else they may need to know and act on this rather than relying on others. Consequently, if we return to the situation of children and young people who have been exposed to hours of television, the learning process has often remained passive. They have continued to absorb information but have not used their whole brain in the learning to the point of responsive action as described by Zull, and so, parts of the brain have not developed sufficiently to engage in deep learning which will truly transform the individual. This is another reason why time is needed to allow reflection and action that can result from new learning.

This is where the use of the arts can be an excellent resource to provoke interesting and unusual responses from students; to engage the students through their different senses, thereby initiating nonconscious learning; and to allow students to glimpse the way another may perceive the world, perhaps encouraging some levels of empathy for people who are different. Finally, if the arts are selected with sensitivity and wisdom, they may be used to confront students to shift them from complacency to concern and, perhaps, prompt a move from passivity to action. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the values of the arts as a tool to promote deep and transformative learning are not often recognized. Apart from some of the visual arts and, sometimes, drama, other arts subjects, such as music and dance, remain on the fringe in many curriculum programs.

To sum up, the multisensory learning environment should be one that engages the students at a variety of sensory levels:

- where children experience adventure, mystery and magic;
- where the learning process is "lightened" with the use of humour and, therefore, becomes fun;
- where they feel a sense of connectedness within the community which promotes their feelings of security and responsibility because they have a place and a voice, they belong;
- where they observe that the development of positive relationships, justice and a fair go are the normal code of behaviour for all members of the community;
- where they learn to be respectful, accepting and inclusive of difference and recognize the value of diversity;
- where they can experience wonder and awe;
- where they can, if they need, retreat to a space that is quiet and tranquil and which creates a sense of the sacred (this does not, necessarily, pertain to religious things).

While many individual schools or practitioners may attempt to address the spiritual dimension of their students by adapting their practice to include some of the

ideas contained here, in general, such practices depend on specific individuals and, therefore, will not be consistent, for instance, if the individual leaves the school for any reason. Consequently, if the value of the spiritual dimension of learning is to be recognized, as well as its contribution to the wellbeing of the individual, it needs to be applied consistently in curriculum planning and in the development of school policies. If it is to be of benefit for all students, a thoughtful and well-informed response is required from educational authorities. Certainly, this should be an important goal for education systems in pluralist societies in the global world of today. Potentially, such a move will assist them to create classrooms where the reality for all students is inclusiveness, thereby allowing them to move along a path of belonging and meaning-making. As well, it will generate future societies that are peaceful and socially cohesive where empathetic and compassionate individuals have opportunities to become deeply connected to one another. Such a learning system, without doubt, will promote the wellbeing of future generations of students who will, in turn, contribute to the wellbeing of the communities to which they belong.

Notes

1. The 8th International Conference for Children's Spirituality held in Ballarat Australia in January 2008 had as its theme *The role of spirituality in education and health: Finding meaning and connectedness to promote wellbeing*. As well, the first Asia-Pacific Conference on Children's Spirituality will be held in February 2009 at the Centre for Religious and Spirituality Education, Hong Kong Institute of Education.
2. In order to avoid confusion between uses of the word sub-conscious and unconscious I use the word non-conscious in this chapter.

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Chapter 36
How Then Shall We Teach?

Joyce Bellous

Abstract In this chapter, I suggest that conditions faced by youth are not new but are disquieting and reflect a sense of desperation. The purpose of this chapter is to re-establish confidence in conveying truth claims to children and young people as a foundational experience. I propose that the only reason not to give children settled views on the world and its meaning (religious and secular) is a belief that they are incapable of eventually thinking for themselves. If true, that belief undermines liberal education entirely, more so than the most rigorous forms of indoctrination. In making my claim for a concerted adult response to confusion in the young, I describe two capacities: an ability to make prejudices explicit and an ability to perceive patterns in human experience. On the basis of these abilities, I outline a teaching method that aims to offer a reasonable foundation for formation and to develop reasonableness in youth, a capacity central to Western liberal education and to being an educated person. An issue that interferes with our confidence in passing tradition on to the young is our uneasy alliance between liberal education and religious instruction. The problem is, however, that the confusion among children and youth has to do with the meaning of life, the nature of God and their own place in the universe. These are spiritual anxieties. The young seek and use religious language to address these concerns. Therefore, we need to find ways to secure the young in traditions which they can reflect upon when they are older. This chapter makes a contribution to that educational aim.

Introduction

Children and young people are confused. Jean Baudrillard (1993), sometimes called the high priest of post-modernity, postulated that the times in which we live are best identified as the revolution of confusion (pp. 3–13). I suggest that the confusion is spiritual and intellectual. My interest is in its spiritual side. I define spirituality *as a sense of felt connection* (Bellous, 2006), implying that *a sense of felt connection*

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to a world of meaningful objects (Bellous) is as fragile as it is precious and it may atrophy. As central as spirituality is to wellbeing, it is easily silenced so that spiritual needs of children and youth, real though they are, can suffer neglect. A *sense of felt connection*, potential in everyone, develops through life experience to provide children with worldviews they form by early adolescence. Under some conditions, these worldviews, constructed through the meaning-making activity engendered by spiritual processes (Bellous), leave children in a state of confusion. This is due to the narrative quality of a worldview. It is the foundation for the story we tell ourselves about life and our place within it; it acts back on how we interpret experience and tells us what to expect from life. In order to feel satisfied by ultimate realities—God, oneself, other people, the world—children need an education that is responsive to their questions and offers a confident foundation for the story that directs their lifelong learning, particularly given the complexity of our modern and post-modern contexts.

In addition to being caught in complexity, modern individuals are both object and subject of consciousness. Therefore children go through three processes to achieve competence: they are formed, informed and transformed as subject and object. They learn to be both the person that thinks and the person that thinks about that thinking. American psychologist and educator Robert Kegan (1997) pointed out the demands of modern living and identified a process of development based on Piaget's theory to describe how people make meaning consciously. In his view, we are compelled to be reflective by the complexity of our current circumstances to a degree that is novel in human history. What, then, do children and youth need given the current circumstances? I think they need confidence and methods capable of building a foundation for thinking and also for thinking about thinking.

In this chapter, I investigate relationships between spiritual confidence and intellectual complexity. My purpose is to show that religious education can ground the young in confident worldviews without creating in them a fortress against future learning. Religious education can help them build worldviews that promote the spiritual confidence that encourages them to feel well connected to truths passed on through tradition. Spiritual confidence does not foreclose on intellectual openness; rather, it is best served by developing confidence so children sense they are securely connected to the world, others, themselves, God/or ultimate ideals, and thereby come to trust that the world is meaningful and makes good sense. In contrast to confident ones, spiritually confused children feel anxious about life, an anxiety which does not relax simply by addressing the intellectual side of their confusion. Anxiety does nothing to help them deal with the complexities of life.

The purpose of this chapter is to re-establish confidence in conveying truth claims to the young by tracing the path of a belief that all knowledge is interpretation and provisional. It might be reasonable to be provisional during their formation if children were incapable of thinking for themselves; but if true, that belief undermines liberal education entirely—as much as the most rigorous indoctrination. To support my argument that spiritual confidence allows children to deal effectively with intellectual complexity, I first pick out a Socratic method to situate the learning model I spell out at the end. I then examine the belief that all knowledge is interpretation and

provisional by outlining Gadamer's approach (1991) in *Truth and method*. Gadamer addressed the idea that all knowledge is interpretation and provisional by revealing a role prejudice has in passing on any tradition. He argued for acquiring hermeneutical skill to discern our own thinking and identify patterns in human experience to distinguish reasonable from unreasonable prejudice. A confident formation, in my view, provides the foundation for Gadamer's hermeneutical skill.

An ability to identify one's own prejudice and find patterns in human experience cannot be built on a confused foundation. Instead of an insecure grounding, I argue for teaching the young hermeneutical skills that rely on initiating them into a tradition, whether religious or secular, but these worldviews must be spelled out for them in a holistic and reasonable manner by adults who have a strong and confident commitment to them. Finally, I offer a model for teaching the young to build into their educational repertoire the ability to make prejudice conscious and to organize experience into patterns that make sense of the world. Spiritual confidence and intellectual complexity work together to offer children a foundation for interpreting experience meaningfully.

Socrates, Spiritual Confidence and Intellectual Complexity

For example, Socrates was spiritually confident (committed to "the god" to the point of death) and intellectually open. He was able to address complexity in the cultural milieu of fifth century BCE Greece (Grube, 1981). His method of dialogue distinguished reasonable from unreasonable prejudices inherent in ancient Greek culture. Yet he was not immune from prejudice. In *Meno* he used a common prejudice to support his idea of recollection, namely that the slave boy in the dialogue must have come by his answers, based on knowledge he acquired or had always possessed (Jowett, 1985). His concept of recollection was built on that prejudice. He did not consider that the slave boy used hands-on knowledge of the world to think his way through to the answers he gave. Now we would say the slave boy could think, despite having no formal education, because he was well schooled in *Kenntnis*, a German term for an education based on hands-on, practical experience, as opposed to *Wissenschaft*, or book learning. The slave boy answered his questions because Socrates used what the boy knew already to set up a learning environment, a point of connection between his approach and Dreyfus's learning model that I will outline at the end of this chapter.

Even for Socrates, being confident was not the same as being right for all times in all places with all people. He was not confident because he was right; rather like Wittgenstein, he knew that knowledge must be grounded somewhere, just as a door must have hinges in order to be useful as a door that can open and shut (Wittgenstein, 1979). Socrates had confident trust that the Delphi oracle knew he was the wisest man in Greece; he built that confidence on a prejudicial trust in the role of oracles. He was willing to die for his prejudicial trust in a god who guided his action (Grube). I suggest his spiritual confidence and hermeneutical skill was based on complex irony and a method of dialogue he used to discern

reasonable from unreasonable prejudice. But first, I want to stipulate what I mean by a method.

A method is a designed, repeatable pattern with clear steps leading to a goal. Each one prepares for the next and is related to an overall purpose. A method allows learners to enter a process that leads them into learning for themselves. Teachers set up parameters for the method, explain what needs to be explained and let learners see for themselves how to achieve the method's purpose. Using a method is a risky business: learners may not perceive its purpose or learn what teachers want them to learn. Regardless of their immediate success, learners follow the method and become independent eventually. Reflecting on a method allows them to see for themselves what they did and why. In using a method, learners do several things at once. They

- Work on their own
- Utilize the method and its steps
- Recognize and eventually name its purpose
- Reproduce the method for themselves in a new context
- Achieve intellectual independence

Socratic dialogue is a method that holds up well over time and was outlined by Plato in *Phaedo* (Grube). It is a method American educator Sophie Haroutunian-Gordon summarized as follows:

- Taking as my hypothesis in each case the theory that seemed to me the most compelling
- Accept only those assertions (about causes, effects, relations) that agree with it. Work only with the logic of those statements that follow from that hypothesis
- If someone challenges the hypothesis, first draw implications from the challenge to see if they are mutually consistent, i.e. consistent with one another. If they are consistent with one another and the hypothesis, go on to the next step
- Assume a more satisfactory hypothesis (perhaps a more general or self-evident one that is more acceptable to the challenger) and deduce the original hypothesis from it. That is, alter the original hypothesis in a way which takes account of the challenge
- If the implications of the hypothesis are not consistent with one another, then reject the hypothesis (Haroutunian-Gordon, 1991, p. 140)

At this point, we must find a new hypothesis. That is, the method that Plato attributed to Socrates allowed a dialogue to ratify or redraw what someone had in mind as knowledge, i.e. statements accepted as true.

In using the method, Socrates professed that he had no knowledge. When he made this claim he used complex irony, in which he both did and did not mean what he said. He wanted to assure his hearers that in the moral domain there was no single proposition he claimed to know with certainty. But in another sense he claimed to have knowledge in a specific sense: he claimed to have knowledge that was justified true belief, justifiable through dialectic (*elenchus*), an *elenctic* form of argument, i.e.

a method of philosophical investigation. He also claimed not to be teaching when we used the method and he both did and did not mean that as well.

Teaching is a complex irony (Vlastos, 1991). If to teach means to transfer knowledge from teacher to learner (mind to mind), he did not do that sort of teaching. But if teaching is engagement, in which would-be learners are involved in *elenctic* argument until they are aware of their ignorance, if they discover for themselves something new about ideas they actively pursue, Socrates was a teacher. Dialectic (*elenchus*) is meant to evoke and assist a learner's own effort at moral improvement; the student learns from and for life. What is essential to Socratic dialogue is that both interlocutors have concepts to begin with that dialogue will clarify or dislodge. That is, there must be something in the learner to begin with or dialogue cannot start. Students must have ideas that they take to be knowledge before they can question what they have in mind.

In *Meno*, Socrates demonstrated that a slave boy could think; but a capacity to think is not the only material one needs to engage in dialogue or *elenctic* argument. We must be schooled in a way of life. Even American philosopher Richard Rorty, who believes we all have a responsibility and right to construct our own vocabulary (or system of meaning), could not imagine a culture that socialized its youth to make them dubious about their own formation. To him, free thinking is for adults. As he put it, free thinkers need something to have doubts about, something from which to be alienated (Rorty, 1989) in order to exercise freedom to allow thought to go wherever it might lead them, once they begin to critically reflect on their own formation.

In teaching others to think, Haroutunian-Gordon (1991) noted that Socrates did not follow his own method rigorously but used it to "orient and re-orient himself—to set himself on a certain course of conversation at particular points in the dialogue" (p. 142). This adjustment happened because "context lays constraints upon him . . .and as the conversation proceeds, new possibilities for comments are opened up by what has been said" (p. 145). If we scrutinize his dialogues we perceive questions and comments that move the discussion in directions not envisioned from the beginning (p. 146). To Socrates, thinking was the path to freedom. Thinking saves us; we are saved through dialectic (Murdoch, 1977). He said he was a midwife of thought, and through dialogue, aimed to give birth to insight about what people thought they already knew. He was well connected to a world of objects—the world, himself, others and "the god" that led him; he could afford to play with knowledge, question it thoroughly and invite others to do likewise. His life exemplified a relationship between spiritual confidence and intellectual openness, a connection best understood to arise from his humility.

Education as Initiation

Cultural initiation was a first step in developing a capacity to think when people dialogued with Socrates. Initiation, as groundwork for formation, was spelled out during the twentieth century by British educational philosopher Peters (1982). To

him, education is the "intentional bringing about of a desirable state of mind in a morally unobjectionable manner" (p. 27). The manner of teaching is unobjectionable if, for instance, indoctrination is not involved in its transmission. The overall process of education involves the transmission of knowledge and the acquisition of understanding in learners that eventually characterizes a way of looking at the world. To Peters, understanding "must involve the kind of commitment that comes from being on the inside of a form of thought [whether science or something else] and awareness" (p. 31). He expanded on this view by saying that

> A man [sic] cannot really understand what it is to think scientifically unless he not only knows that evidence must be found for assumptions, but knows also what counts as evidence and cares that it should be found. In forms of thought where proof is possible cogency, simplicity, and elegance must be felt to matter (p. 31).

Peters echoed Socrates' passion: it is important not only to think about one's life but also to care about doing so.

As a process of initiation, education has three main criteria in Peters' view: its matter, its manner and its cognitive perspective. Cognitive perspective is a process that stores the mind with mental furniture. To Peters, the outcome of initiation is "the development of the individual mind [which is ..] a slow process by means of which generalized beliefs are acquired as a precipitate of individual experience" (p. 47). Accumulated beliefs are a precipitate of learning to be a member of a community. As British theorist Kate Distin (2005) put it, the human mind "is furnished with all sorts of mental states and events [representations], including thoughts and feelings, attitudes and opinions, memories and skills" (p. 20). Of these mental furnishings,

> beliefs are those natural internal indicators which have become representations with the function of controlling a certain behaviour, *because of* the information they carry about external situations, and *in order that* the behaviour may be produced whenever that situation occurs (p. 22 italics original).

We pick up our beliefs while in the presence of others. To Peters, inherent in liberal education is the ability to reason, which "develops only if a man [sic] keeps critical company so that a critic is incorporated into his own consciousness" (p. 51). He agreed with Longinus that judgment is "the final flower of much experience. But such experience has usually to be acquired in the company of a man [sic] who already has judgment", or in Aristotle's terms, one who has practical wisdom (p. 60). Peters thought initiation was a chancy business since wisdom is caught more than taught.

Education as initiation transmits cognitive perspectives (overarching, implicit attitudes) that learners pick up as they acquire content. As one example, in the last century girls caught the idea along with the content of science—that its subject matter was too hard for them—that they would not be good at it. That cognitive perspective was rejected and revised later in the century, but older women tell stories of being humiliated in university math classes because they really should not have been there, according to the cognitive perspective of their professors. Arguably,

our current cognitive perspective that knowledge is provisional interpretations of truth contributes to the confusion the young carry as a heavy burden, and persuades teachers that they should not pass on content confidently, since their confidence might mislead children in the future.

To recap my argument, what is genuinely human in us is that we must learn to reflect on our personal formation and consider its moral, social, economic, cultural, racial, gendered and political significance. All research (social and scientific) is a search for patterns to explain experience, based on reflecting on that experience. How can we prepare children to be reflective during their religious education? Modern reformers, Sigmund Freud, for one, considered religious education to be a biased start that prevented children from ever being reflective, free thinkers. His assertion did not explain his own childhood, which included a religious upbringing. As an adult, he became an atheist, i.e. a godless Jew in his terms (Rizzuto, 1979; Bellous, 2006). The general modern protest against religious education made formation teachers anxious; religious education was taught without confidence. Some of the modern prejudices against religious education were widely circulated and expressed in the following beliefs:

- Children should decide for themselves about religion when they are old enough to choose
- Religion conflicts with, contradicts, scientific thinking
- Religious people cannot think for themselves
- Religious instruction prevents thought from going where it will
- Religious thinking is prejudice and prejudiced
- Children would not think about God if it were not for religious education (i.e. indoctrination)

These assertions are found in Freud's philosophical and cultural writing. Are they accurate? What is the relationship between religion and spirituality? I suggest that, while spirituality is a larger concept applying to a dimension of everyone's experience, if religion is disdained, spirituality is silenced.

Children need to know how the world began, how it will end and their place in it; they must have their spiritual needs met. Freud modelled maturity on rejection—grow up and reject God—a view that violated his theory of object relations in which he showed that objects such as concepts for mother, father or God cannot be got rid of; they can be revised or repressed, but they do not disappear. From about 1920 onwards, his views on religion attracted a great following. He set the cultural agenda, creating a climate of opinion central to the imagination of that age, especially in North America (McGrath, 2004). In its reaction to religious education, his modern reforms worried about prejudice. Yet we live in different times—in an excess of his views. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, as Russell argued (2007) the "greatest threat to children is 'not that they will believe something too deeply but that they will believe nothing very deeply at all' " (p. 65). In the formation of a child, prejudice plays an inevitable and positive role in the development of thought.

Prejudice and Confidence

Gadamer addressed problems of prejudice. His hermeneutics helps show how to teach children to become fully human and capable of reflecting on their own formation, without stripping them of prejudice (leaving them confused) or creating political fundamentalists, that is those who make war (and kill) to privilege their particular prejudices. I examine prejudice and promote its role as an inevitable start to being a good interpreter. In addition, I summarize an aspect of Mary Carruthers's *Book of Memory* (1990), in which she distinguished fundamentalism and textualism to suggest a way of linking them as one tries to understand text and context. While modern reformers did not use the term fundamentalism, they sensed something like it was harmful to children's education. But a prejudice against prejudice, Gadamer noted, prevented them from seeing what children need in their earliest formation, both informally at home and formally at school. My aim is to reclaim a role for prejudice as an essential aspect of human thinking and to show what to do with prejudices as we grow up. By inviting the young into a worldview, confidently formed and teaching them to become conscious of it later on, children and youth build a basis for hermeneutical skill. But first, I want to examine fundamentalism and textualism as a way to introduce hermeneutical skill.

Rather than speaking about fundamentalism in its political sense, as a form of action and reaction, Carruthers placed these two terms within literary theory to show their dependence upon each other when one is trying to get to the meaning of a text within a context. In her view, these two terms are always in tension. Changes in literary theory are often an effort to redress an imbalance between them. In her view, fundamentalists deny legitimacy to interpretation. A work of literature (e.g. religious texts) does not require interpretation. Interpretation is unnecessary and distracting; they emphasize the literal form of a work as independent of circumstance, audience or author. In their view, words are not signs or clues, they are things in themselves; written works are objects exclusively, independent of institutions. A reader may rephrase the meaning of a written document but its meaning is transparent, simple and complete. In studying a text, fundamentalists engage in mere restatement of inerrant truth. No adaptations, interpretative renderings are encouraged: no gloss, no commentary. The role of scholarship is to houseclean text, clearing out debris piled up through accumulated interpretation. Fundamentalists polish up an original, simple meaning. With respect to scripture, God is the direct author of the text. In literary theory, secular fundamentalists attribute to texts a god-like author who plans, directs and controls the text.

In contrast, textualists refuse to confine texts to what is written down in a document. They value literature for its social functions. A text is more than what is written down; it is a source of group memory, i.e. its textual community. In this view, texts are written and oral. The word *textus* means to weave. The word context refers to setting we are woven into as we become members of a community. Context acts back on its members. When referring to social interactions, context is the milieu, surrounding, situation, circumstance, setting or background into which people are woven. Each context has a mood or ambience due to the actual weaving together of

its bits and pieces. Paintings have a particular look, cloth has a specific feel, food has a unique aroma and human interactions create an identifiable context. In social relations, the range of possible actions and tendencies to treat people in a certain way are shaped by that context. The weight of these impacts encourages conformity and discourages resistance. A context can be read in cultural data that support the environment it perpetuates. For example, a social proposition *Look out for number 1* creates an environment to support those that follow its lead and disprivilege those who refuse to use it a model for their lives, despite its force in their context. It is a prejudice people may follow; as with all prejudice, we become reflective about its practical wisdom if we acquire hermeneutical skill that allows us to stand back from the context as well as the prejudice itself. Or perhaps we should say that standing back from that prejudice and considering it reflectively allows us to perceive our context, perhaps for the first time.

Textualizing occurs as the stories of a group are institutionalized in memory. Literary works become institutions as they weave a community together by providing shared experience and a certain kind of language. It is the language of stories experienced over time, as occasion calls for them (e.g. the story of Israel's escape from Egypt in Hebrew scripture). The meaning of a text is thought to be hidden, implicit, complex, requiring continual interpretation and adaptation. The text acquires its texture from layers of meaning attached to it, woven into and through it, based on its historical institutional life. But extreme textualism buries a text in solipsistic interpretations. If text is buried in interpretation, piled up over time, fundamentalists ask, Where is the text? In Jewish tradition there is a careful separation of text and interpretation, e.g. Midrash is understood to be interpretation. If this distinction is not kept, it is difficult to separate textualism from the text itself.

Under favourable conditions, textualism and fundamentalism work together to make a text meaningful—to keep it meaningfully the text it is. Textualism elaborates, fundamentalism cleanses. I suggest a similar play between fundamentalism and textualism as between prejudice and tradition in a child's education. Every child is situated in a context. It is imperative for children be effectively woven into a context so they can flourish and think about it later. In saying that everyone needs to develop hermeneutical skill regarding their context, I affirm a confident foundation for that process during a child's formative experience within a given tradition.

In *Truth and method*, Gadamer examined the relationship between prejudice and tradition by first comparing the hard sciences and the human sciences in terms of the methods they use. As he investigated human science methodology, he revealed a positive role for tradition in educating hermeneutical skill. He analysed the process of induction to show that all sciences aim to establish similarities, regularities, conformities to law; that is, both human and hard sciences look for pattern. Given that commonality, induction in the human sciences is tied to psychological conditions that include in his view,

- A well-stocked memory
- An acceptance of authorities

- The development of tact: knowing how to relate effectively, face-to-face with others, which Daniel Goleman (2006) calls social intelligence

In terms of the hard sciences, Natalie Angier's book, *The Canon* (2007), a well-received introduction to modern science, summarized views of practising scientists to say that hard science

- Is not a body of facts or dogma, but a state of mind, a dynamic state of discovery (pp. 19–20)
- Involves observation, hypothesis forming and hypothesis testing (p. 21)
- Accepts there is a reality that can be understood, shared and agreed upon by others (p. 22)

In her summary of science, Angier conveyed an agreement that "we remain forever at the mercy of our first impressions" (p. 44), a point consistent with formation theories. An issue for education that contributes to the confusion of youth in my view is our uneasy alliance between liberal education and religious instruction. In the past, liberal educators in North America and elsewhere (but not everywhere) hoped religion would remain a private issue and took it off school curricula. But the confusion children and youth are experiencing has to do with the meaning of life, the nature of God, the value of their own place in the universe. These are spiritual anxieties and children and youth seek and use religious language to address these concerns.

The scientists Angier interviewed agreed that misconceptions and preconceptions about large issues of life are as tricky to confront and articulate for them as they are for non-scientists. Further, she recorded their agreement that science is not truth but is a way of approximating truth; we learn to be scientific by dissecting the source of our misconceptions. What leads scientists forward is their dependence on observing that an "objective reality of the universe comprises the subjective reality of every one of us" (p. 22), a prejudice that scientists have reflected upon.

In summary, hard scientists look for pattern and must deal with prejudices they inevitably bring to their observations; human scientists look for patterns and must deal with prejudices they inevitably bring to their observations. This practice in human sciences is identified, for example, in action science in which our preconceptions are laid bare so we can alter them by referring to directly observable data (Argyris & Schon, 2000). I am not saying hard and human sciences are the same. Hard sciences break down problems into pieces in order to look at one aspect at a time, tend to ask one question at a time and to work with repeatable experiments. Human sciences deal with messy complexity, and as Gadamer pointed out, rely on research rather than experiment. But it is not true that hard sciences rely on reason while human sciences do not. If we understand reason's role in recalculating prejudices and locating patterns in data, each side examines information using competencies that can be applied to understanding religious traditions. In terms of my argument that children need a confident base to become good at identifying patterns and deal with prejudice eventually, I will explore more fully the confidence held

in one's worldview, which also supports an educational confidence to transmit to children a whole and integrated worldview, whether it is religious or secular.

How Did We Get So Provisional?

Gadamer traced the development of an idea that gets in the way of trusting one's own worldview as a reasonable body of knowledge to transmit to children. I will explain his point by examining a role theologian Martin Luther played in removing from the task of interpreting biblical texts a commonly used pattern, i.e. allegory. Up to his day, allegory was used to explain religious texts, a practice introduced by the first century Jewish writer Philo. To Philo, historical revelation was God's method of spelling out truth in terms of the world. As a pattern used to make sense of texts, allegory arranged its clues, which when rightly seen, led to illumination (Williams, 1990). In reaction to its exclusive use, Luther moved away from allegory to say that

- We do not need a tradition to achieve the proper understanding of scripture
- Nor do we need an art of interpretation in style of the ancient doctrine of the fourfold meaning of Scripture (i.e. allegory)
- Scripture has a univocal sense that can be derived from the text: the *sensus literalis*
- Allegorical method, formerly indispensable for the dogmatic unity of scripture
- Is legitimate only if allegorical intention is given in the scriptural passage itself
- Take the text literally but literal meaning is not intelligible every place at every moment
- The whole of scripture guides individual passages [whole understood by parts; vice versa]

A circular relation between whole and its parts was not new, but was newly applied to text. According to Gadamer, Luther and his followers transferred a circular relation to process of understanding itself. Details of texts were understood from the *contextus* and *scopus* (p. 175). *Scopus* refers to a unified sense at which the whole text aims, as a system. In Luther's approach, a hermeneutical circle enfolded interpreting and reading. In terms of my earlier distinction, textualism and fundamentalism were open to becoming one process; text was freed from its tradition. As a result, eventually, interpreting a text was understood to be provisional and unending. Following Luther, interpreters stripped texts of allegory; but people need to decipher patterns in texts and contexts to live meaningfully in the world. Allegory is one of those decipherable patterns for thinking about texts within contexts.

To meet a human need for large-scale pattern organizers, so to speak, Gadamer used the metaphor of a horizon to explain what people achieve as they become members of a given context. A horizon (like *scopus*) is a range of vision including everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point. People without a conscious horizon overvalue the things closest to them (like *contexus*). Having a horizon means not being limited to what is nearby; with a horizon we know the

significance of what is near, far off, great or small. The task of interpreting involves acquiring an appropriate horizon and taking a stand with reference to that horizon. In conversation, when we discover another's standpoint and horizon, her ideas become intelligible without us having to agree with her. To Gadamer, a horizon is not a rigid boundary but something that moves and invites us to advance further. It circumscribes a life-world in which we move as historical creatures and it involves other people. An implication of his work is the argument for a developed capacity in all of us to live with others on the basis of self-assertion and integration. Life is defined by the fact that what is alive differentiates itself from the world in which it lives, yet remains connected to and conscious of it. We preserve ourselves by differentiating ourselves from others; we sustain ourselves by integrating ourselves with them (Distin, 2005). As a consequence, we become aware of consciously chosen prejudices that construct and maintain a horizon; we do not live without prejudice if we hope to make sense of the world. While we do not reify prejudices, we place confidence in them; they are worthy enough to rely on, otherwise our sky is vacant, unending; boundaries between the Earth and the sky are absent.

To Gadamer, prejudice does not foreclose on understanding. As people try to understand a text or person they are always projecting. They project meaning as a whole as soon as some initial meaning emerges from the other. Interpreting text occurs because readers have expectations [fore-meanings, anticipatory frameworks, prejudices]. A person reading a text is distracted by these fore-meanings that are not part of a text but arise from personal historical subjectivity. How are we to break the spell of prejudice? He answered this question by saying we are pulled up short by the text. We remain open to text in the same way we remain open to others; we question things, including ourselves. Following Heidegger's hermeneutics, Gadamer thought that a hermeneutically trained consciousness from the start was sensitive to textual alterity. But sensitivity does not require self-extinction or neutrality. Like good scientists, readers make conscious their anticipatory ideas. But they also make use of some of them, as did Socrates, to perceive patterns in human experience.

To Gadamer, it is not a question of securing ourselves against a tradition that speaks out of a text, but of excluding everything that hinders us from understanding it. It is the tyranny of hidden prejudice that makes us deaf to what speaks to us from tradition and text. Prejudice must be justified by rational knowledge, even if the task is never fully complete; but being prejudice free is not a requirement of rational thought. Discarding prejudice was an extreme demand of the Enlightenment and is, itself, a prejudice against prejudice. To question it reveals how it dominates not only our humanity but also our historical consciousness. Gadamer asked, Does being situated within a tradition really mean being subject to its prejudice and limited in freedom? When teachers pass ideas onto children during their formation to convey that knowledge is provisional only, they are unreflective about this modern prejudice against prejudice.

Gadamer cautioned that the prejudices of a person, far more than their judgments, constitute the historical reality of their humanity. In Gadamer's hermeneutics there are legitimate prejudices. He acknowledged that the Reformation gave rise to a flourishing hermeneutics and taught the right use of reason in understanding traditional

texts. Neither appeal to the Pope nor to tradition obviates the hermeneutical work that safeguards finding the reasonable meaning of a text against all imposition of patterns that do not apply. Yet he said that, while authority may be a source of error it can also be a source of truth. Following authority is not always blind obedience. Prejudice is not necessarily a false judgment. It is one that comes before a text is read. He observed that rationalism in the hard sciences believed it could expunge prejudice. But to him, there is no dichotomy between tradition and reason. In tradition there is always an element of freedom, perceived through its own history. Tradition can be renewed. This point is affirmed by Angier's assessment of the current state of experimentation in the hard sciences, noted earlier. Gadamer lived during a period of arrogance among hard scientists, perhaps scientists too are more humble now.

Confidence and Hermeneutical Consciousness

Hermeneutical consciousness grows gradually by infusing research with a spirit of self-reflection. Gadamer pointed out that, not only religion but also humanisms share with their oldest forms a consciousness of belonging in an immediate way to them as models. Interpretation is less a subjective act than participation in an event of tradition. Hermeneutics belongs to a tradition. The task is to reach agreement about textual meaning; the text may be one's own life. To achieve hermeneutical skill is to move between the whole and its parts until full understanding is achieved. The hermeneutical circle is a movement of expectations and prejudices; the circle is not dissolved by understanding—it remains. The circle is not formal, not subjective versus objective, but the interplay between tradition and interpretation. As we read a text and anticipate meaning, we are not subjective if we perceive the context of that tradition. Our perception of context is constantly being formed in relation to tradition. We renew our interpretation of a tradition by being engrossed with it as fundamentalist and textualist; the circle describes how we understand text by relying on each in its turn.

To Gadamer, hermeneutics starts with a search for understanding within a traditional text to which one has social bonds: it exists as an intelligible context. Hermeneutics operates playfully with the text's strangeness and familiarity; the true locus of hermeneutics is this in-betweenness. We cannot separate hindering versus helpful prejudices in advance of coming to a text. Rather we learn to foreground prejudice, to make it explicit; this activity applies to each reader whether secular or religious. The meaning of a text goes beyond its author and completely expresses its meaning. What it says is the complete truth, until it fails as truth, as in the model of Socratic dialogue. In Socratic dialogue, I realize I do not know what I thought I knew. Now I am open to learn from text and context. That openness is humble: humility is not the enemy of confidence.

To Gadamer, in the history of hermeneutics there was first understanding, interpreting and applying. A shift occurred in the West until understanding and interpreting were fused. Application was neglected. In the trajectory of hermeneutics,

the fusion of understanding and interpreting means that understanding is always interpretation. Gadamer said understanding, interpreting and applying became one process. To understand a text is not to reason one's way back into the past. It is to have a present involvement in what is being said within a text, so that we are dependent on the experience of a tradition in order to understand the text. We hear the text from within a tradition. Hermeneutical rigour is an uninterrupted listening. Listeners keep at a distance prejudices that suggest themselves as soon as they are rejected by the text itself. But to become hermeneutical, we need to know the context in which we interpret a text. Yet textualism is kept sane by fundamentalism.

We are formed within a tradition in order to interpret it later. Children are kept sane by confident formation. They inevitably acquire prejudices along the way and become mature by acquiring hermeneutical skill. Unless we are confidently formed, we are insecure and confused. The post-modern condition is clear: life is complex; we must learn to think about our formation, in order to become wise. We realize we are both subject and object of experience. In the task of becoming mature, a fully human life differentiates from and integrates with a known context, which implies first of all being confidently woven into an environment. To learn the practice of distinguishing ourselves within that context, we acquire a horizon and move towards a larger one. To learn how to foreground our prejudices and find patterns in human experience, we do not reject our formation, we renew it. To become reasonable people we do two things at once: we integrate ourselves and differentiate ourselves—that is what makes us human and adult. Would we have it any other way?

Initiation as Method

In my argument so far, I propose that initiation is at the heart of learning to be human; however, with membership comes prejudice. Prejudice itself inheres in all human thought, so the question remains as to how we learn to be confident members of a human group and learn to reflect on that membership. How does one come inside a tradition, yet at some point, stand outside of it to perceive its impact and evaluate it as a way of life? To respond to the question I outline a method of apprenticeship devised by Hubert Dreyfus (2001) in which he identified seven stages of learning that culminate in mastering complex skills (pp. 32–49). It is a staged process: each one is necessary for later stages. His method relies on a view of education Leonard Sax explored in his book, *Boys adrift* (2007), in which he argued that North American schooling is producing an epidemic of unmotivated boys and under-achieving young men, due in part to education's exclusive use of *Wissenschaft*.

Wissen implies knowing about something; *Kenntnis* is learning that uses hands-on, practical, face-to-face encounters, as used by the slave boy. Dreyfus's model relies on *Kenntnis* though he does not use the term. *Kenntnis* allows children to experience natural objects for themselves—to touch, feel, smell, taste, hear them. To explain the stages, Dreyfus used examples of learning to drive a car, acquiring a

motor skill, learning to play chess, an intellectual skill and learning to understand a subject, an academic skill. His process moves a novice to mastery by apprenticeship in face-to-face experiences. Through these encounters a human body acquires its competence through a combination of instruction and practice. As part of his argument, he rejected an exclusive use of computer-mediated communication. To him, omitting the body from a learning environment (as with computer-mediated communication) leads to a loss of the ability to recognize relevance, loss of skill acquisition, loss of a sense of the reality of people and things and loss of meaning. I summarize his learning theory using an example of a boy learning to drive a car.

Stage 1 Novice

Learners are inexperienced and are given features and rules. Teachers begin by decomposing the task environment into context-free features that beginners recognize from everyday life. For example, if a teacher tries to help a group of grade 1 students learn about parallel lines, she takes them outside and puts them in pairs, each pair with a piece of string. Then she asks one child to walk along one edge of a sidewalk and the other to walk along its other edge and to keep the string between them tight. When back in class, the teacher points out that they were walking along parallel lines if the string stayed tight.

Children learn about parallel lines based on knowing how to hold string, walk a straight line and cooperate with one another. These features are domain-independent. In this stage, beginners are given rules for determining actions based on these features, like a computer following a program: "walk at the same pace as your partner; continue holding the string without letting it get loose between you". Learners must recognize the features presented and engage in drill and practice to become familiar with them and their rules of use. In learning to drive a car, learners recognize domain-independent features such as speed (indicated by the speedometer) and receive and use rules, e.g. shift gears when the speedometer points to 10.

Stage 2 Advanced Beginning

Learners have some experience and are given maxims. As novices gain experience actually coping with real situations and begin to develop an understanding of the relevant context, they begin to note, or an instructor points out, fruitful examples of additional aspects of the situation or domain. After seeing a sufficient number of examples, students learn to recognize new aspects. Instructional *maxims* (as opposed to rules that one must not break) are used at this stage. A maxim is a principle of action that learners take on and try out. Unlike a rule, a maxim requires that learners already have some understanding of the domain to which it applies; they must become discerning with respect to maxims. A maxim is applied to new situational aspects, recognized on the basis of experience, as well as to objectively defined

non-situational features recognizable by the novice. An advanced beginning driver uses situational aspects such as engine sounds as well as non-situational features such as speed in deciding when to shift gears. In addition to the rules acquired as a novice, he learns the maxim: shift up when the motor sounds like it is racing and down when it sounds like its straining. Engine sounds cannot be adequately captured by a list of features. Features cannot take the place of choice examples in learning relevant distinctions.

Stage 3

Competent learners have experience and can identify potential relevance. With more experience, the number of potentially relevant elements and procedures learners are able to recognize becomes overwhelming. Since a sense of what is important is missing, performance is nerve-racking and exhausting. The student might well wonder how anyone ever masters the skill or gains know-how. To cope with the overload and achieve competence, people learn, through instruction and experience, to devise a plan or choose a perspective that then determines which elements of the situation or domain must be treated as important and which ones can be ignored. As students learn to restrict themselves to a few of the vast number of possibly relevant features or aspects, understanding and decision making become easier.

To avoid mistakes, the competent performer seeks rules and reasoning procedures to decide which plan or perspective to adopt. But rules such as these are not easy to come by if the learner is expecting the ease with which features, rules, relevance and maxims were acquired—even though these were not experienced as easy to get for a novice. In learning any domain, there are more situations than can be named or precisely defined; no one can prepare learners with a list of types of possible situations and what to look for in each situation. Students must decide for themselves in each situation what plan or perspective to adopt, without being sure that it will turn out to be appropriate.

Given the level of uncertainty inherent in becoming competent, coping is frightening as well as exhausting. Prior to this stage, learners can rationalize that they were not given adequate rules for doing what they want to do. When they have someone else to hold accountable, they feel no remorse for errors. But at this stage results depend on learners themselves so they feel responsible for their choices and the confusion and failures that occur. But choices sometimes work out well and learners feel elation unknown to novices. The role of emotion in becoming competent is important. Embodied human beings take success and failure seriously. Learners at this stage are understandably scared, elated, disappointed or discouraged by outcomes of their choices. As competent students become more and more emotionally involved in the task, it is increasingly difficult to draw back and adopt a maxim-following stance, as advanced beginners do. The strangeness of this stage is felt deeply: learners believe they are getting better at a skill but begin to feel

worse about what they are doing. Involvement is disconcerting. One response to the distress that is felt may be to withdraw, but this is the wrong move.

Unless learners stay emotionally involved and accept the joy of a job well done, as well as remorse for mistakes, they will not develop further in mastery. They will burn out trying to keep track of all the features and aspects, rules and maxims that a domain requires of them. In general, resistance to involvement and risk leads to stagnation and ultimately to boredom and regression. At this point teachers matter a great deal. They influence whether students withdraw into dis-embodied minds or become more emotionally involved in learning. A teacher's manner and embodied perspective towards the domain is a model for learners. Teachers may be involved or detached: either way, their learners will pick up their approach, responses, hope or despair. If teachers have the courage to be open and involved, if they take risks and continue to learn from their own failures and successes, their courage is transmitted to learners. Courage constitutes the best possible embodied perspective for learners to experience to move on into being masterful.

A competent driver leaving the freeway on an off-ramp curve learns to pay attention to the speed of the car, rather than whether to shift gears. After taking speed into account, surface conditions, criticality of time, etc. he decides he is going too fast. He then has to decide whether to let up on the accelerator, remove his foot altogether or step on the brake and precisely when to perform these actions. He is relieved if he gets through the curve without mishap and is shaken if he begins to go into a skid.

Stage 4

Proficient learners are involved; they see issues immediately but must decide what to do. If the detached, information-consuming stance of novices and advanced beginners is replaced by involvement, learners are set for further advancement. The resulting positive and negative emotional experience strengthens successful responses and inhibits unsuccessful ones. Learners' developed theory of the skill, as represented by rules and principles, gradually is replaced *by situational discriminations, accompanied by associated responses. Proficiency seems to develop *only if* experience is assimilated in an embodied, atheoretical way. Only then do intuitive reactions replace reasoned responses. Action becomes easier and less stressful as learners simply see what needs to be done rather than using a calculative procedure to select one of several possible alternatives. Students learn to act appropriately with respect to the skill in question. There is less doubt about taking the action. People at this stage learn to discriminate among options, even though they are deeply involved. Proficient learners still need to decide what to do even though they are discriminating. They see goals and salient aspects of the situation but acting is not immediate; though seeing what matters is spontaneous, they fall back on detached rule-following and maxim-following.

A proficient driver, approaching a curve on a rainy day, may *feel in the seat of his pants* that he is going dangerously fast. He must then decide whether to apply the brakes or merely to reduce pressure by some specific amount on the accelerator. Valuable time may be lost while he is deciding, but a proficient driver is likely to negotiate the curve more safely than the competent driver who must consider speed, angle of the bank, felt gravitational forces, to decide whether the car's speed is excessive.

Stage 5

An expert sees what needs to be done and how to do it. The ability to make more refined and subtle discriminations distinguishes experts from proficient performers. In situations all seen as similar with respect to the plan or perspective the learner has chosen, an expert distinguishes between situations requiring one reaction from those demanding another. With experience in a variety of situations, all seen from the same perspective but requiring different tactical decisions, the brain of an expert gradually decomposes classes of situations into subclasses, each requiring a specific response, allowing immediate intuitive situational responses characteristic of expertise.

In teacher–student relationships, observation and imitation of expert teachers replaces the random search for better ways to act. Simulations or case study learning help make the shift from a classroom to real life. But it is not sufficient to work through lots of cases; they must matter to a student. Flight simulators work by creating airplane conditions and provide stress and risk. For case studies to work, students must be emotionally involved and identify with the experience of those in the scenario.

The most reliable way to produce involvement is to have students work in a relevant skill domain as an apprentice. By imitating a master, they learn abilities for which there are no rules, such as how long to persist when work does not seem to be going well or how much precision should be sought in research situations. The role of a master is to pass on to an apprentice the ability to apply theory in the real world; master and apprentice must be immersed in a context. Suppose one is trying to become a masterful medical doctor. In becoming a master at diagnosis, the instructor has learned to see an already-interpreted situation in which certain features and aspects spontaneously stand out as meaningful, just as when one is familiar with a strange city its face ceases to look like a jumble of buildings and streets and develops a familiarity. A medical intern is trying, among other things, to acquire a masterful doctor's physiognomic perceptual understanding. In transmitting an informed understanding of the domain, teachers cannot help demonstrating the cognitive perspective they take that typifies the way they do things. As they are apprenticed, students pick up an embodied perspective; in addition to content, they adopt a personal style.

The expert driver not only feels in the seat of his pants when speed is an issue but knows how to perform the appropriate action without calculating and comparing

alternatives. On the off-ramp, his foot slips off the accelerator and applies the appropriate pressure to the break. What must be done is done simply.

Stage 6

Mastery of a complex skill includes discernment combined with personal style. Learners are now not only skilful but also authentic. They apply discernment in a way that is characteristic to them. Personal style matters to the mastering of a subject or complex skill. For passing on style, apprenticeship is the only method available. This is not to say that teachers produce clones. Working with different masters (as many musicians do) becomes a way of finding one's own style. Using a music example, it is not that young musicians go to one teacher for fingering and another for phrasing. Skill components cannot be divided in this way. Rather, one master has a whole style and another master has an entirely different whole style. Working with more than one master destabilizes and confuses an apprentice so that he/she cannot copy either master and must develop his/her own style. This is mastery; learners develop a personal style, which shapes the discernment they have acquired over time and through experience.

Stage 7

Practical wisdom is the highest level of mastery. This stage adds to discernment and personal style sensitivity appropriately situated in a given ethos and is referred to as cultural style. Culture is learned by being among others that have already learned it. It is often invisible unless we experience a different way of doing things. Learning about own cultural style is a bit like setting up house with someone who uses our toothpaste tube and squeezes it by grabbing it in the middle, while we always thought it could only be squeezed from the end with precision. As we notice differences we come to see how things are done. Compare differences in child-rearing practices in Canada and Japan. General cultural styles determine how infants in each culture will encounter themselves and others. Japanese babies make sense in Japan, Canadian babies make sense in Canada. Once we see that a style governs how anything can show up for what it is, we notice that the style of a culture shapes the perception of its culture bearers.

Embodied commonsense understanding is passed among members without saying anything, by and large. As we are apprenticed to our parents we learn practical wisdom, which as Aristotle says, is the ability to do the appropriate thing, at the appropriate time, in the appropriate place, with the appropriate person, to the appropriate extent for the appropriate reason. Learning practical wisdom requires other people in face-to-face interaction. To learn wisdom, the mastery of a skill must be learned alongside other culture members that know how to do it already. Once skill is developed to this level, it must be appropriately situated in cultural know-how

for learners to be acknowledged as masterful, so that other masters can recognize complex skill for what it is.

Conclusion

Complexity should draw us towards humility, instead it has frightened us into confusion. I suggest we teach children our religious traditions according to Dreyfus's model so that all the players in children's formation provide them with confident examples of people who believe in what they are passing on. His model provides the young with rules, maxims and principles experienced in face-to-face interactions that draw out of learners their emotional involvement, courage and embodied discrimination so that, by being in the presence of several exemplars, they acquire personal style and practical wisdom in a complex skill.

Ideally, learning to deal with complexity draws us towards confidence not confusion. I hope we will teach religious education to children and youth according to Dreyfus's model with confidence in our traditions. If we take seriously the initiation model, children and youth will experience a whole life with those who do and those who do not believe. They can choose their own path by realizing all that comes along with belief and unbelief. It is not exposure to unbelief that harms the young as much as it is exposure to true believers who refuse to confess their faith openly. It is essential for true believers to say so; in our times, given our history, even true believers have come to think that they harm children by teaching the tradition they are committed to themselves. They fail to convey their confidence in ideas that direct their own lives in a way that is satisfying. In the revolution of confusion that makes us anxious, adults are swarmed by modern fears that prejudice is harmful and by the modern nonsense that we can become reasonable people, and at the same time, be prejudice free. At this time in the West, it is these views and the confusion they engender that harm the young.

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Chapter 37
Cultivation of Mindfulness: Promoting Holistic Learning and Wellbeing in Education

Ngar-sze Lau

Abstract Following the trend of globalization, we live in a fragmented and alienated world. Many young people and adolescent suffer from depression, negative emotions, and low attention span in this age of multi-tasking and distraction. In the past decades, mindfulness that is a meditation skill has been broadly adapted and implemented as an effective healing tool to address stress, depression, and negative emotions in hospitals, corporations, professional sports, and even prisons in the West. A growing number of scientific researchers have shown that incorporating mindfulness into daily life is significant in benefiting health, relaxation, attention span, social relationships and creating a sense of wellbeing. Within this context, it is evident that mindfulness practice is helpful in enhancing the academic performance of students through a holistic approach by developing the skills of emotional, bodily, and interpersonal awareness. Curriculum design and leadership training incorporating mindfulness for learning in different ways have been adapted in tertiary institutions, secondary and primary schools. This chapter demonstrates the significance of mindfulness in holistic education, reviews related researches, and discusses its further applications for promoting holistic learning, spirituality, wellbeing, intuitive knowing, mind–body–spirit, and relationships by reconnecting children to the world.

Background

The Culture of Multitasking and Speed

Attention is undoubtedly a key factor in promoting quality and effective learning. However, living in this multitasking and speed environment, both children and adolescents easily get lost from the distraction of dizzying information and possibilities in daily life. A recent study (Al-Sudairy, 2007) conducted on 3,048 young people

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aged from 15 to 22 in eight Asian areas reported that most of them were found to have difficulties in paying attention among their daily life activities including schoolwork, sports, leisure activities, and social gathering. Comparing with other regional areas, the attention level of Hong Kong youths were among the lowest. Near 80% of the 300 respondents reported that they were unable to focus on their daily activities. Psychiatrist Hallowell (2005) revealed that, over the past decade, there has been a 10-fold rise in the number of patients with symptoms resembling those of attention-deficit disorder (ADD) that is caused by overloading messages and tasks. The productivity would decline and people would feel guilty and inadequate for their tasks. This is the fallout of addictive and compulsive use of electronic technology like cell phones, iPods, computers, and BlackBerry in this multitasking and demanding living environment (Wallis & Steptoe, 2006; Wong, 2001). At workplace, home, or public space, people often have meals with television, Internet, or MP3. The continuing interruptions not only directly decrease the attention span but also increase the level of anxiety and stress, which affect the spiritual growth of children in the society.

The Era of Fragmentation and Alienation

Jon Kabat-Zinn (1990) who started running a stress clinic at the University of Massachusetts from the 1970s pointed out that we are living in an age of anxiety and fear. Many patients who were recommended to him by other medical doctors suffered from symptoms of negative emotions like fear, anxiety, and stress, but not those of physical illness. Overwhelming thoughts of fears and anxiety can easily lead to symptoms like muscle tension, rapid heartbeat, and sweating, or seriously, lead to dangerous actions like self-harm and suicide.

In Hong Kong, which is a competitive international financial and business city, there are distressing numbers of suicide cases across different ages of people who suffered from financial problems and debt, family violence, sickness, relationships, and also stress from study and work (Xie, 2000; Yip, Chi, & Chiu, 2000). The suicide rate in Hong Kong has continually risen with a total increase of 35% from 1999 to 2003 and 16.5% from 2002 to 2003. For the age group 0–13, the suicide rate has risen from 1.6 to 3.3% from 1999 to 2003 (Lee, Lau, Hui, & Au, 2007). More teachers and students committed suicide especially during the rapid educational reform that emphasizes accountability, and serious economic recession after the political turnover in the past decade. Evidence showed that suicide has become the leading cause of death for the age group 15–24 (Yip et al., 2004). These have been broadly discussed as social issues instead of personal issues in public sectors.

Miller (2007) suggests that the imbalance of culture in the trend of globalization has led to sickness in human society. Since the Industrial Revolution, with emphasis on standardization and compartmentalization, people have begun to live in an era of fragmentation and alienation. Human lives are filled with experiences of separateness and a sense of isolation from human wholeness, in the context of materialism and consumerism. The unity and connection have been broken throughout

the society across different levels. At the ecological level, human beings exploit and pollute the natural resources like air and water. At the social level, people abuse their spouses, children, elderly, and the weak ones. At the individual level, our bodies and hearts are disconnected. At the cultural level, we have no shared values and consensus on moral issues. People are not happier even if they are able to purchase more material goods. Spirituality that originated in our mind has been inevitably sacrificed and missed in the secular world.

Spirituality in Education

Despite the difficulty of generalizing a universal definition on *spirituality* and *spiritual education* since there are no shared consensus of ultimate beliefs and values in this multi-faith society (Wright, 2000), incorporating spirituality in education which concerns ultimate meaning and purpose of life should be a top priority in educational system and policy (Tacey, 2006). In this chapter I use the definition that Hay and Nye (2006) propose in understanding and fostering children's spirituality, which are three core categories of spiritual sensitivity, namely, *awareness sensing, mystery sensing*, and *value sensing*.

The first category *awareness sensing* not only refers to "attention" which psychologists use but also refers to a reflexive process "being aware of one's awareness." In the development of awareness sensing, children are able to experience four dimensions, namely *here-and-now moment, tuning, flow*, and *focusing*, which are connections to oneself. Both dimensions of a sense of *wonder and awe* and *imagination* are involved in the raised awareness of *mystery sensing* which create the curiosity of investigating the world and transcend the life experiences. The search of ultimate meaning of life can be reached by *value sensing* involving three dimensions such as *delight and despair*, *ultimate goodness*, and *meaning*. Finally, recognition of feelings and discovery of meaning by asking questions like "Who am I? What is the purpose of life?" can directly develop spirituality of children in a holistic approach (Hay & Nye, 2006). In this context, awareness is a key condition in understanding and fostering spirituality of children.

Holistic Education

Following the trend of the society, fragmentation has also been found in the education systems which tend to emphasize individual competition, standardized assessment, reasoning, and technology-driven curriculum. The wholeness of the education system has been destroyed by the imbalance with disconnected relationships within and beyond the institute. Abbey (2004) criticized that the school curriculum has been dehumanized and centralized to standardized testing. We are educated mainly with cognitive rationality like logic, analysis, and linearity, while spirituality involving feeling, emotion, intuition, and relationship is ignored.

What is holistic education? Holistic education involves in the development of wholeness in a person, the community, and the cosmos (Miller, Karsten, Denton, Orr, & Kates, 2005). Facing this dehumanized situation, however, Miller (2007) points out that, spirituality of a school can be restored by implementing holistic education, which is an education of balance, inclusion, and connection. Balance can be restored among individual and group, knowledge and process, reason and intuition, and quantitative and qualitative assessment. Various education orientations such as curriculum and students can be linked together and included as wholeness. Education of connections involves relationships between mind and body, the individual and community, and relationships with the earth and the soul within oneself.

Several holistic strategies and models addressing wholeness and connectedness in education have been suggested and demonstrated (Abbey, 2004; de Souza, 2006; Miller, 2007). Abbey (2004) suggests that concepts of balance, interconnectedness, awareness, and respect should be concerned and emphasized in the learning environment for facilitating self-acceptance and self-knowledge, self-understanding and self-development of learners. The interconnection and integration of body, mind, and spirit can be highlighted in teaching children for developing the awareness of interconnection between person and the world. Psychiatrist Hallowell (2005, 2006) suggests that a timeslot of about half an hour a day for relaxing or meditating is significant in reconnecting oneself.

Concerning promoting a sense of self, meaning, and purpose of lives, de Souza (2006) suggests that a spiritual dimension should be incorporated in educational and school policies so that the aspects of spiritual, emotional, and intellectual wellbeing of young people can be recognized. Time and space can be included in the daily or weekly timetable that allows for silence, solitude, and contemplation. Meditation for solitude that inspires peace and a sense of mystery is recommended as daily school activity (Abbey, 2004; de Souza, 2006; Miller, 2007).

Meditation and Consciousness

> Meditation is the experience of the limitless nature of the mind when it ceases to be dominated by its usual mental chatter (Fontana, 1999, p. 5).

How Does Meditation Help Promote Wellbeing and Holistic Learning?

Although there is no agreed definition of meditation, Fontana (2007) suggests that the common features of both ideational and non-ideational meditation across Western and Eastern traditions are *concentration, tranquility*, and *insight*. Ideational meditation involves focusing on an idea or ideas to stimulate intellectual activity. For instance, in Western Christian tradition, Christ is visualized by experiencing spiritual love. In Hindu and Buddhist traditions, the qualities of the Four Divine Abidings (loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity) are contemplated.

Non-ideational meditation refers to a pure awareness of the natural mental state. After practising for a period of time, the thoughts arise less frequently and the mind becomes increasingly calm and still. *Concentration* power can be cultivated in both ideational and non-ideational meditation when the practitioner concentrates and focuses on a visual image or object of body. When the mind releases the grasping of thoughts and emotions by awareness, experiences of *tranquility* and *insights* arise as consciousness of itself (Blackmore, 2003; Brahmavamso, 2006; Fontana, 2003, 2007; Wallace, 2007).

Recent scientific research demonstrates that the human brain function can be trained and the structure can be reshaped by meditation (Aftanas & Golosheikin, 2003; Blackmore, 2003; Davidson et al., 2003; Jha, Krompinger, & Baime, 2007; Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Ortner, Kilner, & Zelazo, 2007; Wallace, 2007). Neuroscientist Davidson et al. (2003) at the University of Wisconsin discovered that meditation obviously increases the frequency of gamma waves and activates the brain synchrony, located at left prefrontal cortex associating with happiness and flu vaccine. Experienced practitioners with meditation hours ranging from 10,000 to 50,000 over the past 40 years were invited to join the research by hooking up electroencephalograph (EEG) for brain scanning at the laboratory for functional brain imaging and behavior (Kaufman, 2004). The more years the practitioner had spent on meditation, the high levels the gamma waves. Sara Lazar at Massachusetts General Hospital also presented the research results that meditation slows down the process of natural thinning of gray matter in the brain that involves aging (Cullen, 2006). Evidences showed that meditation not only associates with happiness but also slows down the process of aging

Mindfulness that is a non-ideational meditation skill with moment-to-moment awareness is suggested as a practice for restoring spirituality and wholeness (Erricker & Erricker, 2001; Fontana & Slack, 1997; Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Miller, 1994, 2007; Nhat Hanh, 1993, 1998; Rozman, 1994; Wallace, 2007). By practising mindfulness, a sense of connectedness can be fostered between mind and body, individual and the world. The capacity of wonder and imagination as well as wellbeing can also be reclaimed.

Mind and Mindfulness

> Meditation is also about cleaning out the mind to make space for nicer, clearer, purer things (Tenzin Palmo, 2002, p. 113).

Mindfulness is a quality of mind and a meditation skill originated from Buddhist psychology in ancient India. Mindfulness in English is translated from *sati* in Pāḷi and *smrti* in Sanskrit with the meaning of memory and being *conscious or aware of something* (Bowker, 2006; Keown, 2004; Kuan, 2008). It refers to the cultivation of a mental state with moment-to-moment attention and awareness of an object in mind and body without judgment (Blackmore, 2003; Germer, 2006; Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Nyanaponika, 1962; Palmo, 2002; Wallace, 2007). In ancient Chinese, mindfulness

is translated as *nian* (Foguang Shan Zong Wu Wei Yuan Hu, 2003; Kuan 2008) which is composed of *jin* as the upper part and *xin* as the lower part. *Jin* refers to here-and-now or present moment, while *xin* refers to the mind. *Nian* is a mental state of awareness without forgetfulness. In Buddhist psychology, mindfulness is a wholesome mental quality that can be cultivated constantly as the foundation of attention, understanding, wisdom, and insight by knowing the mind, shaping the mind, and freeing the mind.

"All experience is preceded by mind,
Led by mind, made by mind.
Speak or act with a corrupted mind,
And suffering follows
As the wagon wheel follows the hoof of the ox.
All experience is preceded by mind,
Led by mind, made by mind.
Speak or act with a peaceful mind,
And happiness follows
Like a never-departing shadow."

(The Dhammapada 1 & 2, cited in Fronsdal, 2005, p. 1)

In an important writing on Buddhist psychology *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma* (Bodhi, 2000), it is stated that in the human mind there are two kinds of mental factors: wholesome factors and unwholesome factors. Wholesome factors include faith, wisdom, compassion, mindfulness, and non-greed, while unwholesome factors include wrong view, greed, conceit, envy, hatred, and doubt. With the theoretical framework of verses 1 and 2 from the *Dhammapada*, wholesome factors lead to wholesome speech and action, and finally cause happiness including joy and peace. With the same theory, unwholesome factors lead to unwholesome actions and finally cause sufferings including fear, anxiety, and unhappiness.

The relationship between a seed and a flower can be the metaphor in explaining the operations of mind, mindfulness, and mental factors. A flower can grow properly only when the seed is planted with right conditions including water, nutrients, and sunlight. Without necessary conditions, nothing can be grown from the seed. Positive mental states like happiness can be obtained by cultivating wholesome factors and practising wholesome actions like non-greed and compassion. Moreover, the seed of a sunflower can grow only into a sunflower, but not a rose. Negative mental states like suffering are less likely to result by cultivation of wholesome factors like mindfulness and non-hatred.

With mindfulness, which is a wholesome mental factor with moment-to-moment attention and awareness, the mind is capable of making a choice in every moment. On the one hand, the mind can identify and embroil in the thoughts and emotions. In the opposite way, the mind is able to let go and release the negative thoughts and harmful emotions without following the tendency of attachment. In other words, the mind can make a choice of cultivating positive thoughts and emotions. With

mindfulness, the mind not only can be reshaped but also be free from the bondages. Habitual mental pattern, speech, and behavior can be changed constantly after practising mindfulness for a period.

Tenzin Palmo (2002) who is a renowned experienced meditation practitioner and teacher likens the operation of our mind to a mountain lake. A clear and peaceful mountain lake reflects the surrounding mountains wholly and accurately that it is not easy to tell which image is the landscape and which is the reflection on the lake's surface. The water plants and fish under the water surface can be seen clearly. When the mind is silent and calm, we receive accurate information from our six senses that are sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and consciousness, without any distortion. "In the seen there is only the seen; in the heard, there is only the heard; in the sensed, there is only the sensed; in the cognized, there is only the cognized" (*Udāna* 8, cited in Wallace, 2007, p. 114). We can respond to others by our speech and action in a right way. This is called insight, which is wisdom arising from looking inwardly into the mind.

However, when the lake is stirred, the surface would be choppy with waves, and reflections would be distorted. The mud would pollute the water and the lake depth would not be seen clearly. When our minds are agitated with thoughts and emotions, we distort the reality and interpret what happens according to only our biases and prejudices. Without insight, we would respond to others and make decisions in a wrong way. In secular society, the pattern of the human mind is similar to a "monkey mind" which keeps swinging from past regrets to future worries, leaving little time to be here and now (Kalb, 2004). Therefore, it is significant to restore the calmness and peace of the mind by practising mindfulness. When the mud sinks at the bottom of the lake, the water is clear again.

Ways of Practising Mindfulness

> Be watchful that you are not holding on to some past experience that you are trying to re-create. . . . Simply be open, be soft, be mindful with whatever is presenting itself. This is the path of freedom (Goldstein, 1993, p. 52).

Mindfulness can be cultivated by contemplating body and mind through insight meditation in a systematic method that is based on *The Greater Discourses on the Foundations of Mindfulness* (Nyanaponika, 1962) and *The Foundations of Mindfulness* (Nanamoli & Bodhi, 1995). The four main objects of mindfulness from the original source are *body, feeling, state of mind*, and *mental contents*. In a broader sense, the territory of mindfulness includes all experiences, covering bodily sensations, feelings, perceptions, emotions, thoughts, images, and memories.

Mindfulness can be simply practised in various aspects of daily activities like breathing, walking, standing, sitting, lying down, speaking, keeping silence, and eating. For example, by practising walking meditation, the practitioner can focus the mind to observe the sensations of the natural steps of the feet with awareness so that the mind can be concentrated and centered on the body. In sitting meditation, the practitioner can sit in a relaxed posture, focus the mind on the nostril and

observe the breath by noticing inhaling and exhaling. With a relaxing and slowing down mental state, the practitioner observes the bodily sensations and mental states without judgment, the passing thoughts and emotions can be let go, and the mind would be settled into a clear, calm, and peaceful state, like the peaceful mountain lake. The wholesome mental state would finally lead to a sense of happiness, joy, and wellbeing.

After the session of mindfulness meditation by walking or sitting, loving-kindness or *metta* (in Pāli) meditation is always practised to strengthen the positive mental state by building up the interconnectedness between the individual and the world (Miller, 2007). The practitioner first sits with a relaxed and comfortable posture. Calming down the body, one allows the mind to radiate the feelings of happiness, peace, kindness, and love from the heart throughout the whole body. In the next step, the practitioner can radiate the loving-kindness to other people like family members, relatives, and all the beings in the world (Goodman, 2006, p. 197). One can contemplate loving-kindness with the following scripts:

May I be well, happy and peaceful.
May all beings in the room be well, happy and peaceful.
May all beings in this school be well, happy and peaceful.
May all beings in this neighbourhood be well, happy and peaceful.
May all beings in this region be well, happy and peaceful.
May all beings in this hemisphere school be well, happy and peaceful.
May all beings in this planet be well, happy and peaceful.
May all beings in this universe be well, happy and peaceful.

(Miller, 2007, pp. 180–181)

Mindfulness in Psychotherapy and Clinical Applications

Mindfulness meditation has been adapted and implemented as an effective healing tool in clinical settings to cope with emotional distress, depression, habitual patterns in reacting thoughts and stress. An increasing number of positive research results demonstrate the benefits to physical and mental health in mindfulness training. There exists effectiveness of mindfulness interventions on improving psychological, physical, and psychosomatic disorders such as physical pain, depression, anxiety, addictions, substance abuse, and personality disorder (Benson, 2004; Bishop et al., 2004; Blackmore, 2003; Carmody & Baer, 2008; Germer, Siegel, & Fulton, 2006; Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Leigh, Bowen, & Marlatt, 2005; Shapiro, Schwartz, & Bonner, 1998).

Jon Kabat-Zinn (1990) who founded the Stress Reduction Clinic in 1979 is the pioneer who constructed and started an 8-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. He discovered that many people ignore and deny the feelings of fear and finally develop

habitual maladaptive behavior patterns such as focusing on physical symptoms or overwhelming by feelings. The symptoms of generalized anxiety include muscle tension, restlessness, shortened breath, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, sweating, nausea, dizziness, difficulty concentrating, and trouble falling asleep.

Claire, who is a married woman, suffered from panic attacks for 11 years immediately after the death of her father. She accepted the suggestion of taking tranquilizers and antidepressants urged by many psychiatrists but found that the medication did not work. When she was pregnant again, she stopped all the medication and joined the 8-week program in a stress clinic. By practising moment-to-moment awareness in the program, Claire developed calmness to acknowledge the emotion rather than fight it. Then she learnt to let go the negative emotions and respond appropriately instead of responding with immediate reactions. Finally, Claire successfully calmed herself with only a very mild panic attack 1 year after the program (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Janet Clarke who had a spinal tumor suffered from her unremitting back pain took an MBSR program instead of painkillers. She said, "It was about getting in touch with your body, rather than your head. Mindfulness gives you something painkillers can't—an attitude for living your life" (Kalb, 2004, p.40).

In the 8-week MBSR program, participants are invited to practice meditation exercises in a group for 2.5 h every week and about 45-min at home every day. During meditation exercises including body scan, yoga, sitting meditation, and walking meditation, participants are invited to recognize and accept any feelings of tension found in the body without judgement. After observing the mind moment by moment for a set period of time, thoughts that carry different levels of emotional charge can be slowed down or even let go. A calm and silent mind is capable of facing the storms of fear, panic, and anxiety that blow in our lives (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).

Behavioral changes of practising meditation have been well researched and discussed. Researches show mindfulness practice has a positive impact on anxiety reactions. For instance, relapse of serious depression using mindfulness-based therapies is lower compared with general therapies. "The application of mindfulness to chronic anxiety involves allowing the anxiety itself to become the object of our non-judgemental attention" (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p. 334). With a calm mind, the thoughts and feelings can be observed to arise and go away naturally. The practitioner can make a choice to respond to the thoughts and feelings wisely without immediate reactions.

Now there are over 200 hospitals, clinics, and mindfulness research centers which offer MBSR program to communities. Over 14,000 people (Stein, 2003) have benefited from the program for coping with chronic pain, anxiety, and depression that destroy health. Nowadays mindfulness is commonly incorporated in psychotherapy and healing in different levels and ways since researches show the effectiveness of enhancing physical and mental wellbeing by developing awareness and acceptance at the present moment (Germer et al., 2006).

For enhancing research on mindfulness, a number of self-report measurements on mindfulness levels have been constructed and developed under scientific validation. Recent developed measurements are the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness

Scale (CAMS; Feldman, Hayes, Kumar, Greeson & Laurenceau, 2006), the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI; Buchheld, Grossman, & Walach, 2001), the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (KIMS; Baer, Smith, & Allen, 2004), the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS; Brown & Ryan, 2003), the Mindfulness Questionnaire (MQ; Chadwick, Hember, Mead, Lilley, & Dagnan, 2005), and the Toronto Mindfulness Scale (TMS; Lau et al., 2006).

Each measurement assesses different facets of mindfulness levels, for example, FFMQ (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006) that consists of 39 items assesses five facets of mindfulness including observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience, and non-reactivity to inner experience. Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI) is constructed as a 30-item questionnaire (with average alpha reliability coefficients over 0.9) including four factors: Factor I: present-moment disidentifying attention; Factor II: non-judgemental, nonevaluative attitude toward self and others; Factor III: openness to negative mind states; Factor IV: process-oriented, insightful understanding (Buchheld et al., 2001).

Mindfulness in Education

As a mainstream practice for stress reduction, mental and physical wellbeing over the past two decades, meditation has been recommended to schools to promote wellbeing, spirituality, and learning effectiveness across curriculum in Western countries. Several books on meditation with children have been published in introducing the concepts and skills to children, teachers, and parents (Erricker & Erricker, 2001; Fontana & Slack, 1997; Langer, 1997; Miller, 1994; Rozman, 1994; Strahan, 1997). Fontana and Slack (1997) explain the technique as well as the benefits of meditation with children including concentration, relaxation, creativity, imagination, and moral growth in *Teaching Meditation to Children*. In *Meditation in schools: A practical guide to calmer classrooms*, Erricker and Erricker (2001) provide a practical guide for teachers with the applications of meditation in different subjects including music, art, and creative writing. Rozman (1994) presents a useful meditation workbook with guidelines and exercises in *Meditating with children*, while Miller (1994) provides both theoretical and practical bases of meditation with different spiritual traditions in educational contexts. Langer concerns how mindfulness can help in memory, learning, and problem solving in *The power of mindful learning*. In *Mindful learning*, Strahan (1997) illustrates strategies incorporating self-awareness in maximizing academic learning.

Apart from cultivating spirituality by relaxation and calmness, mindfulness practice is suggested to be helpful in enhancing academic performance of students by developing the skills of emotional, bodily, and interpersonal awareness (Association for Mindfulness in Education, 2008). Thus there are curriculum plan and leadership training programs incorporating mindfulness for effective learning in tertiary institutes, colleges, and primary schools. Several universities like UCLA have set up mindfulness awareness research centers for long-term researches on the

relationships between spirituality, wellbeing, and education. Cases explaining benefits of incorporating mindfulness in classrooms have been discussed in published books on holistic and spiritual education (Erricker & Erricker, 2001; Fontana & Slack, 1997; Kabat-Zinn & Kabat-Zinn, 1997; Miller, 1994, 2005; Sarath, 2003; Shelton-Colangelo, Mancuso, & Duvall, 2007).

Cultivation of Attention and Concentration

The mind, hard to control,
Flighty—alighting where it wishes—
One does well to tame.
The disciplined mind brings happiness (The Dhammapada 35, cited in Fronsdal, 2005, p. 9).

In the age of multitasking and distraction, building up attention and concentration is especially essential for students to learn effectively in the classroom. Experienced teachers understand that students with a distracted mind not only learn ineffectively but also easily interfere with other students.

"Attention is the key to learning, and meditation helps you voluntarily regulate it" (Davidson, as cited in Cullen, 2006). Neuroscientists suggest that mindfulness meditation enhances the development and emergence of receptive attention skills (Blackmore, 2003; Jha, Krompinger & Baime, 2007; Ortner et al., 2007). From a research study about psychomotor vigilance on college students, biologist Bruce O'Hara at the University of Kentucky concluded that meditation significantly helps people in concentration and they perform better. Participants who practised meditation perform 10% better in response by hitting buttons relative to those having a midday nap and watching TV (Cullen, 2006).

The classroom is a busy place for active minds which are involved with talking and finishing some tasks. Mindfulness training helps teachers and students in building up concentration and attention. By practising walking meditation or stretching yoga exercises, the actions can be slowed down and the mind can be trained to focus on the body sensation with awareness. By practising sitting meditation with focus on the breath, the mind can be further settled down by observing and letting go the thoughts and emotions without judgement. Restoring peace and calmness, the mind's focus finally can be sharpened and the attention span can be increased.

For instance, a teacher, Cherry Hamrick, incorporated mindfulness in her fifth-grade class at the Welby Elementary School, in south Jordan. Each day a different child was in charge of ringing a bell for the quiet time with an upper limit of 10 min. The children decided the duration and the ways they would practice like sitting, body scanning, stretching, standing, and walking. Children learnt to focus the breathing and watch the thoughts come and go without reacting to each of them. After 1 year training, the boy with ADHD (attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder)

was successfully able to lead a 10-min sitting meditation for the whole class and visiting parents (Kabat-Zinn & Kabat-Zinn, 1997).

An 11-year-old girl of the class wrote,

> Doing meditation has become more of a habit at home for me, and I will be doing this for the rest of my life. While I was doing meditation at first, and an itch came, I would say, "feeling, feeling" to myself, but after one minute, I would find myself scratching it. But now I don't scratch it because now I can be with it long enough that it just goes away. In my meditation, I've also noticed that my breathing has become deeper and I'm more focused on it. In yoga, I've noticed that I get more energy than before, and I think it's because I'm more mindful on what I'm doing. Because of meditation and yoga, I don't rush everything I do like I used to (Kabat-Zinn & Kabat-Zinn, 1997, pp. 303–304).

Another teacher in the school reported how the students were able to focus and not be distracted by the noise,

> "Ms. Hamrick also taught the students how to focus and how to get in touch with their own breathing, and how to control their own lives with that technique. They seemed to be able to work better during the day after a few moments of meditative preparation in the morning" (Kabat-Zinn & Kabat-Zinn, 1997, p. 305).

Apart from bringing mindfulness into the classroom, Cherry has also integrated mindfulness into every subject like science, mathematics, English, and geography, with the approach of developing cognitive skills, intuition, and feelings. The peaceful atmosphere of the classroom was impressive to other teachers in the school. She reported that, "The students seemed genuinely happier and more content in the classroom setting that I had even observed or experienced myself. They expressed their love with appropriate touching (hugs), and they knew how to resolve conflict and problem solve in a loving, caring fashion rather than in a hostile or abusive fashion" (Kabat-Zinn & Kabat-Zinn, 1997, pp. 304–305).

Reducing Stress and Promoting Wellbeing

It is natural to have thoughts and emotions in daily life, just like there are waves in the ocean. The problem is how we react to them. Most of the people escape from unpleasant thoughts, feelings, and emotions by distracting themselves by watching TV, listening to sad music, overeating, screaming, or fighting. These behaviors not only suppress the feelings and emotions but also create more problems by strengthening and overwhelming the emotions, just like putting more logs on the fire.

Practising mindfulness allows us to stay present to the unpleasant thought or feeling for its natural duration without feeding or repressing it. During mindfulness meditation we get countless opportunities to recognize the thoughts and emotions as passing mental states without judgement. They would rise and fall like ocean waves, and finally let go. In metaphorical terms it is as if you are watching the stream of consciousness rather than swimming in it and being buffeted by its eddies and currents. This does not just apply to the emotion of fear or anxiety, it applies as much

with any other associated emotions such as stress, shame, anger, sadness, or distress. In this way, the abatement of negative emotions prevents further harmfulness to the body and physical illness.

Research results on brain cortex activity of experienced meditators and novice meditators suggested that regular meditation training correlates to positive emotional experiences and psychoemotional stability (Aftanas & Golosheikin, 2003). In a study on premedical and medical students, significant findings showed that mindfulness-based intervention enhances their psychological and spiritual wellbeing as well as cultivates skills of the future role as physicians (Shapiro et al., 1998). In a research on reducing emotional interference, both relaxation meditation and mindfulness meditation result similarly in responses to unpleasant pictures; however, only mindfulness meditation is effective in reducing emotional interference in the process (Ortner et al., 2007). The findings of other research on school teachers and public showed that more mindfulness practice in daily life leads to increases in mindfulness and wellbeing and decreases in stress and other symptoms (Carmody & Baer, 2008; Winzelberg & Luskin, 1999).

In a 5-week program of mindfulness practice launched at Piedmont Avenue Elementary School, where over half students are Black and Latino, a mindfulness coach Ms. Megan visited the school twice a week and invited the students to learn to be in the present moment for a 15-min session by closing their eyes and focusing on their breathing, with the sound of the Tibetan bell at the start and the end of the session. Physician Amy Saltzman who started the Association for Mindfulness in Education in 2003 found that mindfulness enhances an increased control of attention and reduction of negative internal chatter. For example, one girl reported that there was a gossip inside her head as "I am stupid, I am fat," or "I am going to fail math." Apart from this stress reduction mindfulness training, students are invited to cultivate "loving-kindness" and spread to their classmates before rushing into the playground. Alex Menton who is 11 reported that "I was losing at baseball and I was about to throw a bat." He emphasized that the mindfulness really helped him in calming emotions (Brown, 2007).

Connecting Mind, Body, and Spirit

> Our breath is the bridge from our body to our mind ... which makes possible one-ness of body and mind (Nhat Hanh, 1975, p. 37).

Building connection between mind, body, and spirit within oneself is a concern in holistic education. Abbey (2004) encourages her students to observe breathing by doing inhaling and exhalation exercises in order to restore the connection of mind and body. Practising mindfulness on breathing is the most respected and convenient way of reconnecting the mind, body, and spirit. The breath not only supports the survival of the body but also the mind. The condition of our breath is varied with different mental states. When the mind is calm and tranquil, the breath is long and deep. When one gets angry, the breath becomes short and shallow. Taking a deep breath to calm down the mind and body is a widely used skill for dealing with

traumatic emotions. Awareness of breath and body every moment is a discovery of wonder and awe.

I started a Pilot Program of Mindfulness Education in HHCKLA Buddhist Ching Kok Secondary school in Hong Kong in October 2007. A 6-week program was designed for a class of Secondary 4 students. During the six sessions, I invited them to learn and experience mindful sitting, walking, lying down, and eating. One girl reported on the feedback sheet,

> When I was walking mindfully, I could feel the pressure on the legs when they touched the floor. I could be aware the thoughts and emotions arousing in my mind. When I was sitting observing the breath, I felt very comfortably throughout the body, and there is no thought in my mind. I had an idea of sending warm wishes to others. When I was lying down, the mind was very calm and the body relaxed. It's totally different from sleeping at home because there were no thoughts. The mind is very quiet. It helps me to release the tiredness of the whole day.

After I invited them to eat a candy mindfully, another girl reported,

> Before I eat the candy, I smell it once. I could feel the good smell and saliva came out in the mouth. After putting it in the mouth, saliva mixed with the soft candy, and there's a taste of sour. I know the teeth were biting the candy with flexible texture. When the teeth tear off the candy, the taste became stronger, it's much tasty. Food is very precious! I never try to feel the activity of food inside the mouth so seriously. I remind myself I should not waste food.

Intuitive Knowledge, Insight, and Creativity

> In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert's there are few (Suzuki, 1970, p. 21).

There is a famous Chinese Zen story:

> One day a layman visited a Zen master and enquired for advices on spiritual practices. The Zen master kept silence and served the layman a cup of tea. However, the Zen master continued to pour tea into the cup even it had been full. The layman asked the master curiously, "Why don't you stop pouring the tea? The tea has flown on the desk!" The Zen master gave response calmly, "Just like tea will flow out when the cup has been full, if your mind has been filled with thoughts and memories, it cannot be ready for new knowledge."

Suzuki emphasized that the real secret of Zen is always being a beginner. "Our 'original mind' includes everything within itself. It is always rich and sufficient within itself. . . . If your mind is empty it is always ready for anything; it is open to everything" (1970, p. 21). In Zen practice, it is believed that insight which is "spontaneously arising wisdom" has been stored in the mind. When the mind is settled to be clear and calm like the mountain lake, everything is clear, and insights arise obviously. This is intuitive knowledge that is not derived from reasoning or logic, but from space, free mind, and imagery involving subconscious mind. Intuition that is an insight arising instantaneously and unexpectedly gives knowledge of wholes rather than parts (Abbey, 2004). It provides connection at the levels of the individual, the group, and the world.

Several great scientists like Archimedes and Newton discovered significant theories by intuition not by reasoning. Students of philosophy in ancient Greek discovered answers to fundamental questions through direct experience of higher levels of being and not only through reason. For example, the students of Pythagoras's school had to spend the first 5 years of study in silent meditation before formal training (Fontana, 1999).

However, Miller (2007) points out that the trend of the society has led the education system to sickness due to the imbalance between reason and intuition, knowing and process, and quantitative and qualitative assessments. Mudge (2008) suggests that complementary inclusion of both kataphatic knowing and apophatic knowing is essential for holistic learning. Mainstream education system relies on kataphatic knowing that involves logical reasoning, analysis, and evaluation. Mindfulness, meditation, poetry, and silence belong to the category of apophatic knowing which acknowledges the aspects of unknowable, hidden, and ineffable reality.

In order to implement education in a holistic approach, Abbey (2004) suggests that creating space in classrooms can offer chances for transformation and deepening intuition, creativity and imagination. The spaces created should be safe, trustworthy, warm, alive spontaneous, connected, and compassionate. Students are respected for their expressions of their feelings and thoughts. The learning activities should promote reflection, imagination, and creativity, and a response to beauty and creation (de Souza, 2006).

Both ideational and non-ideational meditation practices facilitate insight which arises spontaneously (Fontana, 2007). Mindfulness meditation derives insight for problem solving and creativity. After practising mindfulness for relaxation, exercises of guided imagery can be introduced to students to unlock creativity in a conscious way. Students can be invited to imagine according to the guidance of images including undersea adventures, spaceships, balloons, wheels, plants, fire, earth cycles, inner body explorations, mirror reflections, desert islands, and waves on an ocean. Students are encouraged to keep their drawings of images in journals (Abbey, 2004). Mindfulness has been incorporated in learning in art, mathematics, dancing, and writing (Miller, Karsten, Denton, Orr, & Kates, 2005).

Silence that is usually ignored in teaching and learning has been found to be a powerful means to promote spiritual growth as well as creative learning. Maria Gray (2007) invited her students to sharpen thinking, reflexive inquiry, and spiritual skills by bringing silence into teachings of academic writing and Latina literature. She shared that,

> If I am patient, if I wait however long even in dead silence, my students (sooner rather than later) speak up. . . .I learned to be still, to listen, to wait, and to appreciate the silence that oftentimes means that my students are thinking (Gray, 2007, p. 49).

Maria began most of her sessions with a few minutes of meditative silence. She invited the students to sit in a relaxed posture with their feet flat on the floor, their backs straight but comfortable. They could rest their hands on their laps in an easy way, and pay attention to the pattern of breaths, noticing the exhalation and inhalation, and letting go the distracting thoughts. During the summer course, she asked

the students to sit outside on the grass, walk the seashore in silence, pick up a shell, and note the uniqueness of each shell. Silent observation helped students in training the mind to recognize concepts and judgments, and facilitate writing in the literature class by connecting subject matter to inner life. After 1 year's training in silent observation, a student wrote to Maria and shared that the deep inner calm developed helped her to "become spiritually aware" and "make sense of the world." She is able to restore the balance in daily life as a busy student, part-time employee, and single mother. Besides facilitating the creative thinking, practising silence promotes a trust, a sense of community and a safe emotional space in the classroom (Gray, 2007).

What makes a fire burn is space between the logs, a breathing space.
Too much of a good thing,
too many logs packed in too tight
can douse the flames almost as surely as a pail of water would.
So building fires requires attention to the spaces in between,
as much as to the wood (Intrator & Scribner, cited in Brady, 2007).

A mathematics teacher Richard Brady has begun incorporating a moment of silence in his lessons at Sidwell Friends School in Washington, DC, over 30 years ago. During the course of creative problem solving (CPS) on education, he was inspired by the idea that a non-judgmental mind and non-discursive mind is required for the brainstorming phase of handling ideas. He has created his own ways of contemplative learning which is implemented into the existing high school mathematics course in the four dimensions: centering, questioning, awareness, and community for better learning. He rang a small Japanese bell in his math class to help the students to stop and center themselves by listening to the bell. Questions, ideas, methods could be dwelled on with the space of stop (Brady, 2007).

Richard also led guided meditation for the students before a test or quiz for them to observe and let go the negative emotions such as nervousness and fear. Students are also encouraged to write their personal journals for expressing the feelings, thoughts, and ideas of which they are aware in their daily life. Richard would respond positively to the students and showed appreciation for their efforts of practising awareness in daily life (Brady, 2007).

Building a Peaceful and Compassionate Community

If we are peaceful, if we are happy, we can blossom like a flower, and everyone in our family, our entire society will benefit from our peace (Nhat Hanh, 2005, p. 11).

With the current trend of materialism and consumerism, human beings have been experiencing separateness and a sense of isolation, in the fragmented and alienated living world (Miller, 2007). Long-term exploitation of human beings and natural resources has already alarmed us for the crises of extinction. It is necessary to rebuild the connectedness throughout the world by establishing harmonious

relationships within oneself, with other people in family, society, country, and the world. A peaceful and compassionate community is appreciated to help resolve the conflicts in the society as well as crises in the world by practising mindful speech and actions.

de Souza points out that "students should be encouraged to accept responsibility for themselves and others to develop empathy and compassion, and to commit to action for the common good" (2006, p. 1137). As Abbey contends, "compassion cannot be taught but must be discovered and lived" (2004, p. 7), some teachers build up a compassionate community in the first lesson so that a trust and communal rituals are set up and practised every lesson. For instance, students are invited to share with and listen to each other by passing a stone and creating a "talking circle."

There is a community that is composed of small families within each school. Compassion and empathy can be practised in classroom learning activities and school activities. As a teacher in Buddhist Mau Fung Memorial College, I led a morning assembly with all teachers and over 1000 students every Wednesday as a regular spiritual practice. After a short sharing, I would invite over 1000 people to have a short meditation time in silence, being mindful of the body sensation and breathing. Following the silent meditation, we would contemplate on loving-kindness and send it to ourselves, teachers, classmates, family members . . . other people, and all beings in this world. "May I be well and happy, may I be free from all the sufferings and danger, ..." Colleagues and students reported that they felt calmer with a positive energy after the practice every Wednesday.

The famous NBA coach of Chicago Bulls and LA Lakers basketball teams Phil Jackson employed meditation with his players to enhance the ability of playing sports in "the zone" and to reduce stress and emotion for attaining calmness and dealing with pain. With the support from school, David Forbes (2005) started a challenging meditation program with 12 16-year-old varsity football team members in a multicultural school with students including Latinos, African, and Arab Americans. At the beginning, the team members did not take the practice seriously; they teased each other with hurtful joking, laughing, punching, and roughhousing. After building up a positive relationship with them by spending time with them after school, David was successful in setting up the regular session as a group in circle, with a climate of trust, confidentiality, and respect. Not only they shared the difficulties, frustrations, and fears of games but also their daily life relationships.

The after-school 1-hour session every week with the format of snacks, discussion, and meditation was productive. The boys were able to sit with eyes closed and observed their breathing with a relaxed, still, and upright body in a silence. The young men found that they got benefits from meditation for their playing. One member reported that, "Meditation worked. I was able to concentrate on catching the ball, and not letting my mind get ahead of myself like I used to" (Forbes, 2005, p. 158). They also practised loving-kindness meditation for radiating loving-kindness to team members and other players. One member shared that he learnt how to put himself into the minds of other players and think of their feelings. Once a member lost his temper in a stressful moment, other teammates encouraged him to "breathe" and calm down.

David Rodgers (2007) teaches new immigrants to learn English and earn a New York City high school diploma. Before the lesson, he invited the students to breath with a Tibetan bell to help them relax and calm the emotions. Sometimes he guides them with visualizations to help them to locate and identify the stress knots that store tension, or worries that physically affect the body, such as tight muscles in the neck or shoulders.

"Bringing spirituality to our classrooms means nurturing a healthy respect and appreciation for the vast spectrum of the world's cultures, traditions, and lifestyles. Only by truly honoring our differences can we begin to glimpse our connections" (Rodgers, 2007, p. 115). Students are invited to make journal entries on their experiences with the guided breathing. Some students gave feedback to Rodgers, "When we ended the meditation I felt like a great discharge had left my body. This helped me to be relaxed the rest of the day. I was able to absorb more of my studies and I was able to do my homework faster." Another student reflected, "This is very important because now I have found a type of balance between good and bad, this is something that perhaps not too many people may understand but I feel good with myself, with nature, everything in equilibrium" (Rodgers, 2007, p. 123). Mindfulness can be a wonderful tool in developing an awareness of communication such as conservation skills, listening skills, and nonverbals for building a peaceful and compassionate community (Huston, 2007).

Leadership Training

In his new book *Five minds for the future*, Howard Gardner (2006) suggests leaders of the next generation should cultivate the five abilities: the disciplined mind, the synthesizing mind, the creating mind, the respectful mind, and the ethical mind. Those who attain these five abilities will be selected as a priority in the workplace. *The disciplined mind* masters a specific scholarly discipline, craft, or profession. It knows how to work steadily and improve skills and understanding. *The synthesizing mind* is able to understand and integrate the information and ideas from different disciplines into a coherent whole and to communicate. *The creating mind* uncovers new questions, conjures up fresh ways of thinking, and explores unexpected answers. *The respectful mind* is aware and appreciates the differences between human individuals and human groups like peers, teachers, and staff. It tries to understand others and cooperate with them. The last one, *ethical mind* knows how to serve the needs of people in the society out of self-interest. It understands the role as a citizen of a region, a nation, and the planet. Among the five, the first three minds deal with cognitive dimensions, the last two minds deal with values and human relationships as a base for a peaceful community. The respectful mind is more concrete, while the ethical mind is more abstract. Mindfulness practice can be served as a basic training for the development of the last two minds, by practising mindful, compassionate speech, and actions.

Odahowski (2004) started the project of "Mindfulness in Higher Education" in the University of Virginia. Mindfulness has been incorporated in curriculum and

program designs, and leadership training. A future leadership not only requires diligence, reflection, insight, creativity but also a passion in serving the community. Therefore, the aim of the movement is to prepare students to take responsibility for their learning, find pleasure in learning, change in sustainability, embrace joy, and create a caring and cooperative society. The practice of mindfulness is introduced to students to listen deeply to their thoughts and feelings, to enhance self-connection, self-awareness, self-control, self-regulation, raise value of self-respect, and provide a greater connection in relationships as well as community, by producing a resonating effect to others. In reality, a growing number of corporations including Deutsche Bank, Google, and Hughes Aircraft offer meditation classes to the staff since meditation improve productivity by increasing attention and preventing stress-related illness (Cullen, 2006).

Concluding Remarks

Facing a fragmented and alienated world, young people, adolescents, and adults have suffered from depression and low attention span in the spiritual crises in society and the imbalance in education. In this chapter, we have explored the concept and meaning of mindfulness, its significance as well as demonstrations of incorporating mindfulness into curriculum and school activities as a holistic approach to promote wellbeing and spirituality in academic learning, stress reduction, community building, and leadership training. Educators who are concerned with restoring spirituality in school can consider the implementation of policies through a holistic approach by

- introducing mindfulness practice in the classroom including stretching exercise, walking, or sitting in order to build up concentration and attention for learning as the brain alpha waves increase during meditation;
- providing time and space for students to practice daily mindfulness meditation which increases the blood flow to the left frontal cortex of the brain to promote wellbeing and happiness and reduces stress by letting go the negative emotions like fear, stress, shame, anger, sadness which are harmful to the body;
- reconnecting the mind, body, and spirit and promoting health of students by mindful breathing which can calm the mind to a state of peace and tranquility by affecting the immune system and brain function;
- creating a safe, trustworthy, and warm space by incorporating awareness of the body and a moment of silence in different learning activities like writing, mathematics, art, and dance for creating insights, intuitive knowing, creativity, and imagination;
- building a peaceful and compassionate community in school through practising mindful meditation, mindful speech and actions, and loving-kindness meditation;
- training leadership with the approach of enhancing self-connection, self-awareness, self-regulation, self-respect, and providing great connection in relationships as well as community.

To conclude, holistic education and wellbeing can be promoted and implemented in developing wholeness in the person, the community, and the world by introducing mindfulness practice into learning activities and the school system.

Charater List of Chinese Terms

Jin — 今
Nian — 念
Xin — 心

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Chapter 38
The Importance of Happiness to Children's Education and Wellbeing

Jane Erricker

Abstract In this chapter I investigate what happiness means now and how we should strive for a life of happiness. If happiness is what we aim for, for ourselves and for our children, we can assume that the greatest happiness for the greatest number should therefore be the utilitarian aim of education, health service and politics. These institutions of the state should thus explicitly address the happiness of citizens, including children.

We know from experience that happy children are healthier, learn better, display more emotional literacy and are better behaved. But to talk about happiness in education is somehow "soft," and instead we talk about emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and anger management. In this chapter, I propose that we should seriously consider the happiness of our children in our institutions of education and link the concept to spirituality, health, wellbeing and, in particular, to the empowerment of our children and young people.

Introduction

This chapter began its life as a keynote address for the Eighth International Conference on the Role of Spirituality in Education and Health. When considering my talk I asked myself what was important in children's education, and realised that if one asked parents what they really wanted for their children, most would say that they wanted them to be happy. So I asked myself three questions:

- What is the aim of education if it is not the happiness of young people?
- What is the aim of government if it is not the happiness of citizens?
- What is the aim of civilisation if it is not the happiness of the human race?

This chapter, then, is the results of my thinking about these questions. I will start with the research project that started my work on children's spirituality.

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The Children and Worldviews project was set up in the mid-1990s by Clive Erricker, Cathy Ota and me. We had an initial idea of investigating children's spirituality, and this rapidly caused problems because of the difficulty of defining the term spirituality. We arrived at the term "worldviews" partly because of the religious overtones of the word spirituality. We wanted to encompass the children's religious ideas, but not to use the terminology of religion so that readers of our research would not situate the work in a particular metanarrative (Erricker, Erricker, Ota, Sullivan & Fletcher, 1997). However, since that time the term spirituality has gained a wider acceptance and a wider understanding, partly because of the opportunities afforded by the International Journal of Children's Spirituality and the Association for Children's Spirituality started by the Project. These fora for discussion have allowed the widest possible interpretation and investigation of children's spirituality and so, in general, people are more comfortable with the use of the term.

The Children and Worldviews Project interviewed about 250 children to find out what their lives were like, and what influenced their feelings about their lives. The project had at its core a respect for children and a desire to listen to what they had to say. We felt that too many decisions were being made for children and about children, without an acknowledgement of their very real ability to understand and contribute to those decisions. We call what we were accessing their spirituality, but nested within that overarching term are many other aspects of children's worldviews—their emotional literacy, their religious beliefs, their social competence, their health and wellbeing and their happiness. All of these things are affected by the structures within which their lives exist—their family, their friends, their community, their school and their religious community. As well, these are all affected by the political system under which they live and the political decisions that are made, generally without consultation, for them and about them. It is my contention that children's spirituality is political, as is their happiness and their wellbeing. Consequently, these things should never be discounted.

This chapter intends to investigate what happiness is, how it connects to spirituality and wellbeing, and why we should be concerned about something which seems (like spirituality itself) so difficult to pin down, and so ordinary.

I will ask the questions what is happiness and why is it important? Is there a connection between happiness and spirituality? Should happiness be an important goal for education? Should it be an important goal for government? Should we ensure that our children are as happy as possible and if so, how?

We all think we know what happiness feels like. As with all emotions it is difficult to describe—we just use different words to say the same thing: I'm happy, okay, alright, content, not unhappy, relaxed, not stressed, not worried. I don't think joy and ecstasy have a place here because those emotions are too disturbing. Happiness is altogether milder and various philosophers have tried to explain its importance in human existence.

Happiness is sometimes described as the pursuit of the good. Aristotle claims that happiness comes from the good life—the activity of the soul in accord with perfect virtue—in other words, from the pursuit of rationality, which is what man was designed to do. Augustine says "Those who are happy . . . are not happy because

they desire to live happily, which even evil men may desire, but rather because they will to live rightly—which evil men do not" (Augustine quoted in Noddings, 2003, p. 16).

Hume makes a similar point in "Of Impudence and Modesty" (1826) when he states that he is

> of the opinion, that the common complaints against Providence are ill-grounded, and that the good or bad qualities of men are the causes of their good and bad fortune, more than what is generally imagined. There are, no doubt, instances to the contrary, and these are pretty numerous; *but few in comparison of the instances we have of a right distribution of prosperity and adversity*: nor indeed could it be otherwise from the common course of human affairs (III.IV.1).

He suggests that "To be endowed with a benevolent disposition, and to love others, *will almost infallibly* procure love and esteem; which is the chief circumstance in life, and facilitates every enterprise and undertaking; besides the satisfaction that immediately results from it. The case is much the same with the other virtues. Prosperity *is naturally, though not necessarily*, attached to virtue and merit; and adversity, in like manner, to vice and folly". He appears to be saying that if you are happy and kind, then you will be loved and you will prosper, and with that prosperity will come virtue. But he is also saying that if you are pleasant and kind to others (as Hume himself seems to have been, see Adam Smith's obituary) you will be happy. Thus, for Hume, not only are the good happy, but the happy are good.

Both Hume and Aristotle suggest that a happy life is a good one or a good life is a happy one. The connection between happiness and morality is interesting and has intriguing implications for education. If children are happy, potentially, they will be good—this could be seen as an important reason for us to take happiness seriously. However it can sound like a very instrumental reason for wanting happiness for our children.

Of course the happiness associated with virtue is not the only way of regarding or gaining happiness. It can also be an aspect of the control we have over our lives and the amount of agency we have. Csikszentmihalyi says

> ...we have all experienced times when, instead of being buffeted by anonymous forces, we do feel in control of our actions, masters of our own fate. On the rare occasions that it happens, we feel a sense of exhilaration, a deep sense of enjoyment that is long cherished... (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002, p. 3).

This would suggest that, for someone to be happy—adults or children, they need to feel some control over what happens to them in their lives. This resonates with some of the things that children have said to my co-researchers and me when we were interviewing them for the Children and Worldviews Project. The following is a section of the transcripts from the interviews we carried out. During the project work there were certain interviews that were particularly powerful, and this was one of them. These two 10-year-old boys spoke at great length and with great honesty and insight about their lives. They indicated their desire to be interviewed after an

assembly held by one of my colleagues at their school where he shared with the children the stories other children had told us.

G: *I wrote down on my paper because I'd like to discuss it, its really hard for me, my mum split up with my dad and I don't know what its really like to have a mum cos I wasn't old enough to know when they split up and I'd just like to go and see her more often cos all I hear of her are like phone calls or I go and see her about once every year.*

Q: *so how old were you then?*

G: *I was three, all I remember was my mum and dad having a row*

Q: *but you remember that do you G?*

G: *yeh, that's all I remember of it*

Q: *can you say how you remember that? Have you got a picture in your mind of how it happened?*

G: *yeh, very clearly*

Q: *and what was it like? How did that feel at the time?*

G: *it felt really scary, cos I didn't know what was going on where I was so young*

....

L.......*.my mum and dad split up cos my dad had other girlfriends in other countries and he was hitting my mum and my sisters and I was about 7 and they split up and a couple of years ago I went to a social worker cos I was really in distress and my mum's remarried and they've had another baby, his name's Ashley, he's my brother, and my dad's, my dad isn't married yet but he's got a girlfriend and she's got two kids, there's one, a boy about my age, so I get on very well with him, but um, when they first split up I thought, I felt really alone cos there was no one person, um man in my life who I could mess around with and things*

Q: *really?*

L: *yeh, and it was a bit distressing for me. I only see my dad every other week now, but its better than then*

Q: *better than then?*

L: *yeh*

Q: *and do you live with your mum?*

L: *yeh*

Q: *and do you remember that very well, that happening, when they split up?*

L: *yeh, I remember the exact night it happened, cos I was coming down the stairs and my dad was slapping my mum and it was really horrible*

Q: *it was horrible?*

L: *yeh*

Q: *so what do you think would help you in your situation? Is your situation better than it was? Are there things that you think need to be sorted out?*

G: *yeh, I reckon I should go and see my mum about every other week or stay there at weekends and stuff to get things sorted out, cos I always ask my dad 'why did we, why did you get divorced and that?' but he hardly ever explains it to me, he just says 'cos we had a row'*

You can see in this short section of a very long interview how these two boys L and G are describing lives where they do not control what is happening around them. And yet they know what would make things better, and sometimes it is just having the appropriate information. It would be understandable, then, if these children were disruptive in school since their lives are chaotic and arbitrary, and out of their control. They are not happy.

In contrast take the story of Victoria. When Victoria's grandma was dying she offered these words to Victoria:

> She said she would be happy and she wanted me to be happy when she died. On that day she got a picture of her and all the family, stuck it on a postcard and wrote on the back, "I'll see you in your heart". Now she's always with me. Now I talk to her all the time. I talk to her when I'm lonely. When I've argued with my friends I go and sit on the wall and think about her and talk to her.'

The above extract illustrates how the grandmother's actions gave the child some control over a stressful and arbitrary event—the grandmother's own death. She acted with great insight and with a deep instinctive understanding of what that child needed.

Children have little power over adults or their own lives and few mechanisms to understand why they are unhappy, if they are, since they are passive receivers of what happens around them. When children are profoundly disempowered and, if Csikszentmihalyi is right that happiness results from being in control of our own lives, then these children will be unhappy children. This makes the happiness agenda profoundly political as it would involve the idea of empowerment as a source of happiness and wellbeing for children.

Many of our children are disempowered. They may be protected and not lacking in material possessions, but they have increasingly less power over their own lives. The agendas of power and protection compete with each other. By protecting our children so much we disempower them. Those of you who are as old as I am can remember how different our childhoods were. It is said often—today's children, in Britain certainly, do not walk to school alone, do not play out in streets and parks alone, and do not spend all day at the beach alone. If they were allowed such experiences it would enable them to practise independence and learn necessary skills.

Some questions that are generated by the above discussion are as follows: Why do adults feel now that they need to protect children so much? Is the world any more dangerous today than it used to be? Indeed, there may be some good reasons for that perception—for instance, the roads are busier. But in general, need for constant stimulation, novelty and the sale of news means that every incident is represented as important, shocking and worrying. It is difficult to know if crimes against children are actually rising but Bauman (1999) suggests that this increased perception of danger is constructed. He would say that the government has a vested interest in our being afraid. This fear spills over into our treatment of our children, and by over protecting them, we disempower them and do not allow them to take responsibility for their own lives. We also stop listening to them because we are afraid that they might ask for things we are afraid to give them. In the end, it becomes our agenda, not theirs.

Bauman thinks that we are suffering from *Unsicherheit*, which means uncertainty, insecurity and unsafety. He says "the absence of certainty, security and

safety leads to the dissipation of self assurance, the loss of trust in one's own ability and the other people's intentions, growing incapacitation, anxiety, cageyness, the tendency to fault-seeking and fault-finding, to scapegoating and aggression." Bauman claims that he sees this in our behaviour. He gives the reasons for our uncertainty and insecurity as insecurity of livelihood; the abolition of institutions meant to limit the degree of uncertainty; the loss of solidarity between people; the loss of religion as an explanation of the contingency and temporary nature of life; and the rule of market forces. While Bauman sees people frightened and disempowered, I see us transferring that fear to our children. Bauman argues that the Government's solutions to these problems is to control the only things they can control, such as immigration and crime or law and order and criminalising all social problems, thereby producing the fear we live with, and the fear we impose on our children.

One example of the way that fear is imposed on our children can be drawn from the newspapers. In the United Kingdom, recently, a woman who allowed her seven-year-old child to walk to school was reported to social services by another "concerned" parent. Similarly, the case of Madeleine McCann, a 4-year-old child who was kidnapped from her bedroom, resulted in the vilification of her parents for allowing their children to sleep in their hotel room while they ate at a restaurant 200 m away.

One might think that certain legislation works in opposition to the disempowerment of children. For example the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people (aged 17 and under) a comprehensive set of rights. The United Kingdom signed the convention on 19 April 1990, ratified it on 16 December 1991 and it came into force in the United Kingdom on 15 January 1992. Australia signed it on 22 August 1990. The convention gives children and young people substantive rights. These include the right to

- special protection measures and assistance
- access to services such as education and health care
- develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential
- grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding
- be informed about and participate in achieving their rights in an accessible and active manner

In the United Kingdom, there is a program—Every Child Matters: Change for Children—which is a new approach to the wellbeing of children and young people from birth to age 19. It is intended to build on the Rights of the Child. This legislation came about because of a famous case of child neglect—Victoria Climbie—where there was a perception that the lack of coordination between education, health and social services led to Victoria's death.

The UK Government's aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic wellbeing

The Government says that this means that the organisations involved with providing services to children—from hospitals and schools, to police and voluntary groups—will be teaming up in new ways, sharing information and working together, to protect children and young people from harm, and to help them achieve what they want in life. Accordingly, the government is setting up children's centres, where parents will have access to different services all on one site. As well, the government is aiming to provide children and young people with opportunities to have far more to say about issues that affect them as individuals and collectively.

Both of the above pieces of legislation seem well meaning but are not radical enough. It is more than possible that they will be emasculated in the bureaucracy that develops from such initiatives and that they will be neutralised by the fear and distrust that emanates when power is given to children. The fear that Bauman identifies is too strong to allow us to transfer power to children. The vilification in the media would be too great if something went wrong.

This puts us—parents, teachers and bureaucrats—in a difficult position. On the one hand we can recognise that the empowerment of children is beneficial. For instance, Muijs and Reynolds (2001) have linked self-esteem with the feeling of personal power. Indeed, they suggest that building up children's sense of personal power is what increases children's self-esteem. Responsibility and personal power prepares them for adult life by allowing them to develop skills, and by giving them agency, it makes them happy. On the other hand adults fear for their safety if we allow them more freedom and control.

So it is important that another approach be taken, such as the much more radical and unbureaucratic method described in Anthony Swift's in his inspiring book Children for Social Change (1997). Here he tells the story of the empowerment of street children in Brazil. He says, and I think this is transferable to any context:

> Perhaps we need to teach children about what they should hope to have…..care, nurture, love warmth understanding protection etc, and to see that if they can't have these things their own education might allow them access to it and also the possibility of changing the situation others are in…. ... (Intro p.2)

Swift wanted to teach children to fight for their own rights, to teach children to empower themselves to use "righteous indignation" and to fight back when they are disempowered. He argued that the children need to understand what wellbeing is and to know that they could use their voice to fight for it. He felt education, literacy and so on, when properly used, will give children a voice where previously they would not have had one.

Certainly, this is an inspiring aspiration. This idea of empowerment is not evident in our Western education systems, particularly not for young children. Education, here, is seen as controlling and moulding our children, not empowering them.

In another scenario, Swift tells of how Padre Bruno, a priest in Brazil, formed a group of street educators, that is young people who would work with the street children and offer them somewhere they could go to eat, as well as to form groups to challenge injustices. He described their role in the following extracts:

> What Brazil's street educators do…is to assume a personal responsibility for reversing the social exclusion of the children they work with. By engaging with them, instead of accepting their abandonment, they forge a new social alliance that is mutually and socially transforming. Being loved, valued and included, the children are able to become critically aware of the processes that consign them and their families…to live in poverty. Instead of being made victims of these processes, or of recreating them, many become, in various ways and degrees, protagonists for social change (Swift, 1997, Intro p. 2).

and

> By trial and error, practice and review they learned to negotiate a more concerned and respectful relationship with the children, demonstrating respect while, at the same time, making it clear that respect had to be a two way transaction: "We really want you to be here. But you are here of your own choice and you can also choose to go. If you choose to stay you must respect the right of others to take part," was the kind of argument they might put to a disruptive youth (Swift, 1997, p. 17).

The emphasis was on the way that the young people worked with the street children, that is, never being authoritative, always being respectful and listening to what the children thought were issues, and what the children thought needed to be done:

> Just as he (Padre Bruno) disbelieved the prevailing assumption that people with political and economic power knew what was best for those without, he strongly doubted the precept that adults automatically knew what was best for children. What interested him was the idea of children and youth themselves realising their own possibilities, and for that to happen a new educational approach was needed (Swift, 1997, p. 6).

These ideas resonate with the work that the Children and Worldviews Project did back in the 1990 where the stress was on the importance of listening to what children said. There was an underlying belief that children were capable of far more that they were normally given credit for. The two boys referred to earlier showed this when they suggested that other children in the school, who were going through family break up, could benefit from, both, reading the transcript of their interview and from a support group run by children, for children. In the end, they set up a support group and ran it themselves.

It is appropriate here to inject a further reference to Swift where he quotes Padre Bruno:

> Awareness that you are the subject of rights, enables you to see others in the same light, and with that comes the recognition that you have a duty to respect the rights of others, both in interpersonal relationships and in relation to society at large. Such change is constructed over time through new experience and access to information rather than through adherence to dogma Padre Bruno (Swift, 1997, p. 55).

Contained in this quote is the message that there is a danger in compliance. Teachers have a tendency towards compliance and it is possible that this can be passed down to the children that are being taught.

We had come to understand that no educational experience is politically neutral. It either fosters acceptance of the status quo or it can aim to bring about change. To do the latter, it must raise children's consciousness of reality and, through their organisation, enable them to act to change reality (Swift, 1997, p. 57).

The idea of empowering children within the education system is not new. A. S. Neill founded the Summerhill in the UK in 1921. Summerhill is a democratic school, where whole school meetings, involving staff and pupils on an equal basis, decide the running of the school. The usual school subjects are offered, and exams taken, but there is no compulsion to attend lessons.

As well as the structured timetable, there is free access to art, woodwork and computers. There are also open areas where kids not in classes can hang out, amuse themselves, socialise, play games, be creative etc. Adults are not there to create things for the children to do- they need to create things for themselves. So sports, games and other amusements are all generated by the pupils and adults, according to need. (http://www.summerhillschool.co.uk/pages/)

The children are in control of their own lives and of their learning and the school has supported this stance for many years, and have contested and survived Ofsted inspections that sought to make them conform.

Through its self-government and freedom it has struggled for more than eighty years against pressures to conform, in order to give children the right to decide for themselves. The school is now a thriving democratic community, showing that children learn to be self-confident, tolerant and considerate when they are given space to be themselves (http://www.summerhillschool.co.uk/pages/)

Neill believed that the happiness of his children was of paramount importance. He is quoted as saying, "All crimes, all hatreds, all wars can be reduced to unhappiness".

As well, the school website says:

Summerhill is a happy and caring community that recognise the importance of expressing emotions and learning through feelings. There is a general openness and honesty among the community members. Staff do not use adult authority to impose values and solve problems; these are solved by the individual with the help of friends or ombudsmen or by the community in meetings (http://www.summerhillschool.co.uk/pages/).

Happiness is about empowerment, and empowerment comes from political education, but empowerment also comes from knowledge. If I know what's going on, know the history of what's going on, if I understand what people are saying, understand their allusions then I am confident and powerful. Aristotle also makes the point that happiness comes from the use of our rationality—doing what "men", people, are designed to do, Using rationality—the skill—and knowledge, allows us to understand our situation, to be powerful and to be happy.

A colleague of mine at my University said that she was not concerned with her students' happiness, just their education. I don't think she meant that she wanted her students to be unhappy, just that being educated was not always a comfortable experience. It is a challenge and it involves some periods of very hard work and stress. But the end result should provide happiness. We all know the pleasure in

having grasped a difficult concept, the pride in having completed a piece of work, the satisfaction of knowing something. This is what Aristotle means about happiness.

Both of the above aspects of happiness—being empowered and knowing—are part of another project carried out by me and a colleague of mine at the university at which we work. We have been investigating the experience that students have of their first semester at university. We wanted to know if it was good or bad, and whether they had thought about leaving during this time. In other words, we wanted to know if they were happy, and if not, why not. We tried to talk to a wide variety of students, but ended up concentrating on those students who were the first in family to attend university.

The interviews showed us that "not knowing" was an important cause of their discomfort during the first semester. One student, a mature woman with a family and a job said

> *Yes, I managed to stay in the temporary job I found, which was to go on to part time, so I was still working five days a week, with college, university was five days a week, but there still wasn't structure. Some of it was the timetables, well I've had a lecture, now what do I do? Do I leave? Do I stay? It's not knowing what I did with my university time, at work you go there and you are there until 5 or whatever, at university you might come in mid-afternoon for an hour, that was the point. So it was learning to fill my own time in studies and not knowing which areas to study, I knew I was doing English, but suddenly they turned everything upside down of what English was......*
>
> *I was thinking that I knew quite a bit about English and I didn't. We looked at it in different ways, they didn't look at just a book or anything, like at college, you suddenly have all the biographies and the critics and although I knew something about them from the sociology, I could sort of translate it from psychology might take all the excess and the literature, there seemed to be a lot more to it and that, because this book actually had an impact on that book, and you soon found that you had about 30 books.*

This student nearly left the university at Christmas.

Another, younger, student found the whole transition from school to university very stressful:

> *Well I found the whole transition between like living at home and then you come here and you've got like no-one around you and you try and make friends and learn to cook and manage your money and different things, I found the whole thing really, really stressful and problematic. I didn't like it at all.,*
>
> *...you're just sort of lost, it's a very big leap.*
>
> *...it was just you know you've got to, you've got to make friends, you've got to learn how to cook, you've got to learn you know everything, about getting yourself up in the morning and everything all in one go and I found that really, really hard.*

The reasons why these students were not happy were really very simple, and easily addressed. They were in a situation where they did not have the necessary knowledge to understand what was going on, and they saw themselves as unable to do anything much about it because they were being controlled by the whole university system and hierarchy. There is actually no reason why they should not have been asked more about what they wanted or needed during this time of transition However, the university was following the process it had always used. If these students had been brought up in a culture within which "university" was a familiar

concept—as other students interviewed had been—then their transition would have been less painful and they would have been happier in that first semester.

The Dalai Lama offers us another way of looking at happiness. He says:

> Consider the following. We humans are social beings. We come into the world as the result of others' actions. We survive here in dependence on others. Whether we like it or not, there is hardly a moment of our lives when we do not benefit from others' activities. For this reason it is hardly surprising that most of our happiness arises in the context of our relationships with others (HH The Dalai Lama).

So this can give us a third definition of happiness, or at least another way of achieving happiness—our relationships and our communities—and many of us know that a great deal of our day-to-day happiness depends on those who care for us. As well, we know that the most significant relationships for children are with their close families and with their peers. The question is, now much of this knowledge informs educational programs so that they can build on those relationships, and help children and parents to form and maintain them?

This brings us back, partly, to the work that our project has done, because within the interviews that my colleagues and I undertook was evidence of the children's emotional literacy, that is, the way in which children were aware of their own and other's emotions, and aware of how to manage such emotions. It is a positive sign that within the United Kingdom, emotional literacy has been taken up as an issue in many schools. There are various projects that provide materials to develop children's handling of their own emotions, often with the aim of helping children to manage anger and as part of anti-bullying campaigns. Other valuable work is being generated by the project Working with Others (http://www.workingwithothers.org/) which concentrates on building good relationships and working practices in schools, both between teachers and between pupils. This work builds the confidence of teachers to allow pupils to work independently and to consult them about their learning.

While these are positive aspects, it is difficult for schools to work towards collaboration and consultation with pupils when society as a whole works against it. It is difficult to escape from the competition that lies at the heart of capitalism. Children hear from the media about the success that comes from being better than others, as an individual, rather than the happiness that comes from working within a supportive community of one sort or another. Game shows, reality shows, celebrity, business success—the role models we offer our children is that of individualism.

Further, League tables in the United Kingdom judge one school against another and offer parents choice based on those league tables. The "best" school is one that offers good examination results—better than the school down the road—not the one that supports children the best and makes them happiest.

This brings us back to Bauman who says that it is in the government's interest that we should be estranged from one another. Capitalist business works best when we are competing against one another and government gains when we are afraid of each other. All this, together with the death of small town centres as large shopping developments are placed on the outskirts of towns, prevents the sustaining of community. New development of housing seems to be planned with no consideration of

how the community produced will work. Where are the communal spaces, where is the agora? (Bauman, 1999, p. 3).

The government in the United Kingdom puts sticking plasters on the problem by such statements as the one made by the children's secretary, Ed Balls, on 11 December 2007. He said that he would put parents at the heart of a 10-year children's plan to improve children's education and happiness in response to research which suggests their prospects were hampered more by their home environment than their schooling. He would order new guidance to advise on mergers between schools, libraries, sports centres, police stations and health centres to try to rebuild communities (http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2007/dec/11/uk.topstories3).

It is difficult not to be sceptical of the attempts of our government in the United Kingdom to rebuild communities. They are too dependent on the money of the large corporations to oppose them in, for example, the building of large out-of-town supermarkets, with the resultant death of small town centres. George Monbiot describes examples of this process in his book Captive State (2000), where the story of the development of the centre of Southampton is particularly poignant. The council here chose to build a huge new shopping centre rather than regenerate an existing community area. I am more in accord with Tom Paine, who said about government and society:

> Some writers have so confounded society with government as to leave little or no distinction between them; whereas they are not only different but have different origins. Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness positively by uniting our affections, the latter negatively by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other distinctions. The first is a patron, the last a punisher (Paine, 1982, p. 1).

Asking or expecting government to develop or sustain community is asking the impossible. In a capitalist society it is in the government's interest to foster competition and individualism, not collaboration and community. We need the strength and determination to do this in spite of government, in our schools, in our hospitals, in our health centres, in our colleges and universities and in our towns and villages.

When the Children and Worldviews Project team carried out their research, we were trying to find out about children's lives, beliefs and values under the umbrella term of spirituality. Like Hay and Nye (1998), we felt that the essence of spirituality was relationship. We talked to children about their relationships with their families, with their peers, with their pets, with the world around them and with God. None of these relationships was more important than another to us, though each child had their own hierarchy of relationships. One child used God and scripture as a reference point when the topic of discussion got difficult, for example, discussing why we should or shouldn't kill animals, others talked more about the environment, still others about their immediate families, others their friends and their football team, still others their ethnic community. They talked about when these relationships went wrong, and how much or little they were able to influence what was happening. They told us how they tried to cope in these situations. Many of the children showed great insight, understanding and compassion of this adult world that controlled them

and did not tell them what was going on, or ask them what they thought would be best. The agency that these children had, or did not have, was an important part of their spiritual understanding of the world, their understanding of relationship and community.

Conclusion

In the striving by education authorities for a better "quality" of education, as measured by test results and league tables, when are questions asked about the happiness of children? In general, happy children learn better and are better behaved but to what extent does this make a difference to the way in which schools are run? Happiness and spirituality are not, in general, aspects of children's wellbeing that are considered when the quality of education is being judged.

If children are to be happy and successful in their education they need to feel empowered and in control of their learning. Children feel strongly about their learning but they are rarely asked for their perceptions or thoughts. They have well-developed moral codes but do adults ask them about these or, indeed, respect them? During their teenage years many struggle with their identity and their sexuality—but does anyone appear to care? Do we help them in this struggle or do we try to deny that it is happening? Do we consult them about the architecture of their schools? Do we ask how they want their lessons structured so they learn best? Or do we ask them what they want to learn?

Schools are worried about, somehow, wasting the time they have to "deliver the curriculum" that they do not find the time to ask children about the rest of their lives. Teachers are worried that they might bring up things that they cannot deal with that they just look at the behaviour and the attainment of each student rather than the actual person. While a majority of teachers do indeed care deeply about the happiness of the children in their care they are constrained by the education system and prevented from giving children the education that will make them happy. Consequently, many teachers rail against the government's testing of children, the resulting league tables and the forcing of compliance by Ofsted, but pushing the boundaries is a risky thing to do particularly as, I believe, governments may have a vested interest in making educators afraid in many different ways, which all impact on their confidence to challenge the status quo (which is, of course, the point of it). Teacher training in the United Kingdom does not encourage such challenges and can result in teachers who have a similar approach to those described by Swift (1997) when he talks about the state-trained teachers who came to teach in the City of Emmaus School.

> Many were very unaware of the world they lived in. They had been trained during the dictatorship and no concept of education for a better society. They didn't consider families in a political, economic and social context. If a child had problems it was the child's own fault or that of the family. Also they had never considered the political implications of how they taught, or even that it had any political implications. We had to work to get them to review their role in society and to understand that unless they changed their way of working

they would be contributing to the very processes that excluded the poorer layers of society from their basic rights and from realising their status as citizens (Swift, 1997, p. 81).

Teachers are intelligent professionals and know that many children are being damaged by the current way of educating children but they also know that if they have high expectations of children then they will rise to meet that expectation. They can make decisions about their own lives and teachers can strive to educate them to do that. There is risk involved, but living is a risky business and we cannot protect children from that risk. Educators can, however, educate and empower them to make rational decisions about their life, their health and their education. Helping them learn to be powerful independent people is much better than just protecting them. By listening to children and helping them make decisions instead of deciding for them, they gain some control over their own lives, and with that control comes happiness and wellbeing.

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Chapter 39
Holistic Education and Teacher Training

Peter Schreiner

Abstract The discussion about holistic education (HE) should focus on issues and consequences for teacher training. This is the red line of this chapter. If the paradigm of HE does not encourage and stimulate consequences in different fields of pedagogy and educational practice including teacher training, it is nothing more than a theoretical exercise. It should help to stimulate to change the perspective of teachers, their attitudes, their professional understanding, their understanding of learning and teaching towards the purpose of education that is to nurture human potential in as comprehensive sense.

Standards of teacher training and quality of teaching are in the focus of the educational debate in many countries today. It is anew in discussion how school works, what basics of professional teaching are needed and what qualifications teachers should have.

This chapter presents elements of holistic education that can be linked to teacher training. In the first part, some basic information about HE is presented. The second part introduces three main perspectives of approaches that include elements of HE represented by Parker Palmer and Paulo Freire, two well-know educators, and by Peter Senge who is known for his Fifth Discipline approach of organisational learning that has created great resonance also in the area of schooling.

The chapter concludes with a summary and outlook.

Introduction

The discussion about holistic education (HE) should take into account what consequences for teacher training result out of this educational perspective. Why? If HE does not encourage and stimulate transformation in different fields of pedagogy and educational practice including teacher training it is nothing more than a theoretical exercise. The specific understanding of learning and teaching that shapes

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approaches to HE can inspire changing the perspective of teachers, their attitudes and their professional understanding towards the overall purpose of education that is to nurture human potential in a comprehensive sense.

Standards of teacher training and quality of teaching are in the focus of the educational debate in many countries today. It is anew in discussions on how school works, what basics of professional teaching are needed and what qualifications teachers should have. My main intention in this chapter is to discuss elements of holistic education that can be linked to teacher training. In the first part some basic information about HE is presented. This is followed by a sketch of some "founding authors" of HE. The second part introduces three main educational perspectives that include elements of HE represented by Parker Palmer and Paulo Freire, two well-known educators, and by Peter Senge, who is known for his Fifth Discipline approach of organisational learning that has created great resonance also in the area of schooling (Senge et al., 2000).

What is Holistic Education?

Holistic education (HE) is a movement of different educational theories and praxis that strives for whole people in whole communities in a whole world. It relates science and spirituality in a specific way. Concerning science holistic educators show great sympathy for a paradigm shift from a mechanistic, positivistic approach that has dominated the Western model of science for centuries to a rather holistic integrated vision that can be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century. This is closely linked with the development of the quantum physics which flatly refuted mechanistic science and resonates in many other science perspectives. Concerning spirituality, there is an overwhelming consensus amongst holistic educators that the integrated view on spirituality is what distinguishes HE most from other approaches to education. Spirituality means generally an "inner core" of every person that lies beyond the physical, social and other sources of personality named either in religious terms ("soul", "the divine within") or in the language of depth psychology ("the higher self"). The concept of spirituality dominating in HE is close to Aldous Huxley's understanding of perennial philosophy (a term coined by the philosopher Leibniz; see Huxley, 1970). The term refers to the spiritual wisdom in the history of humanity, to the core of its religious and wisdom traditions in a non-dogmatic sense. "Spirituality is the realisation that the individual is part of the whole; it is inherent beauty, truth, and all things unconditional. This experience brings about love, compassion, joy, humility, and interrelatedness" (Nava, 2001, p. 39). In other words, spirituality is also a key for the interconnectedness of the human being with the community s/he lives in and the wider context. There is little argument in the HE movement that there cannot be an education of the whole child without this transcendent dimension in education. And this dimension is not just seen as an inner dimension. The aim of a sensitised education for spirituality includes facilitating youngsters to learn how to think critically about the current socio-cultural situation

and about spiritual and moral issues. Under the umbrella of HE many different perspectives can be identified. Following Ron Miller, holistic education

> was a generic term that represented a countercultural epistemology underlying the various transcendentalists, libertarians, progressive and romantic educators who emphasized that education should address human development rather than serve more limited political and economic agendas (2000a, p. 83).

This list shows the broad and manifold range of approaches to HE. It documents that different sources lay ground to a critical thinking about conventional mainstream education through the centuries and for searching alternative approaches. A first glance about the ambitious aims of HE may be given by listing some book titles on HE: "Caring for New Life" (Miller, 2000a); "Education as a spiritual journey" (Palmer, 1993); "Nourishing Spirituality" (Riley-Taylor, 2002), "Yearning for whole communities" (Oldenski & Carlson, 2002) and "A journey for a more holistic understanding of education" (Palmer, 1993, 1998). These aims are based on a process-oriented understanding of human development, the evolution of consciousness and on theories of transformation. The thinking in dynamic spirals of development on an individual as well as on a collective level is also given a prominent place in relation with HE. New ways of thinking about teaching and learning have been materialised in creating respective learning communities as schools and also beyond schools (Miller, 2000b).

When asking the question: What is holistic education, mainly five characteristics can be mentioned. These are the following:

- A critique of conventional education
- A specific way of reasoning and acting
- An appreciation of spirituality in education
- A multidimensional approach to truth
- A change from transmission to transformation as aim of education.

– *A critique of conventional education.* Knowledge and ways of knowing become increasingly fragmented in modern conventional education. There is more and more pressure from the economy and politics to prepare the labour force and citizens that fit into the needs of a globalised, economy-dominated world. Employment becomes a luxury; working places are cut off, however, profits of multinationals become very high in many areas. HE deals critically with the consequences of conventional education, like fragmented knowledge, and supports developing, a concept of interconnected knowledge.

– *A specific way of reasoning and acting.* There is a long tradition of holistic thinking in the history of philosophy. Re-connecting to this tradition does not necessarily include devaluing the benefits of the enlightenment and modernity, especially the "freedom to use one's own intelligence" (Immanuel Kant) or the critical ideas as the centrality of freedom, democracy and reason as primary values of society. To value the interconnectedness of life means to question critically the perspective that science is the most valid form of knowledge that dominates all other forms (Francis Bacon) and a mechanical and reductionist worldview

(René Descartes) that dominates and neglects other dimensions of the human being. Emphasising interconnectedness or the web of life (Capra, 1996, 2002) means to enlarge this view by the principles of interdependence, integrity and systemic thinking. It is not to follow an uncritical appreciation of the past, but developing a critical evaluative competence of the failures and limitations of the dominant scientific–mechanistic paradigm.

– *An appreciation of spirituality in education*. A core element of HE is to appreciate spirituality as a key element of the human being. A common definition of spirituality is difficult because of the complexity of the term and its use. It has become an ubiquitous expression covering many different aspects of personal life and cultures. It is used in traditional religions, as well as in new religious movements and in non-religious spiritual groups. For educational purposes, the term spirituality needs to be broad enough to include a religious contribution, as well as acknowledging a spiritual dimension to living that covers values, commitments and aesthetic concerns. The relationships between meaning, identity and spirituality (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006) are important for education. They are personal development constructs. In itself, spirituality needs a holistic understanding. We should be aware of the different conflicting spiritual traditions that range from an autonomous self-spirituality focused on shared human beliefs to a spirituality that is the developing relationship of the individual within community and tradition, to that which is of ultimate concern, ultimate value and ultimate truth. The discussion of spirituality needs also to be connected to debates about values in education, values-education, the spiritual-moral dimension of education and religious education in its different forms. Concerning a comprehensive perspective on spirituality the spiritual dimension to the school curriculum and to school life has to be developed too.

– *A multidimensional approach to truth*. The either/or thinking, the dualistic perception of reality is dominant in what we call the Western thinking based on Aristotle's logic and Descartes' subject–object split. It is a common feature of HE that it is based on the competence to think in a complementary way, e.g. to combine a religious with a scientific worldview. Instead of a binary logic of either/or, in many new sciences and movements a "both-and" perspective has been developed. Helmut Reich (physicist and social scientist) has developed an empirical grounded theory of *Relational and Contextual Reasoning* as a way of possible thinking that he called first "thinking in terms of complementary of 'theories'" (Reich, 2002, 13, fn 3). His approach offers a specific thought from which implies a solution of a cognitive conflict when one seeks to bring together two or more heterogeneous competing descriptions, explanations, models, theories of the very same entity. Reich's empirical studies show that we are able to connect two or more competing theories about the same phenomenon.

Reich speaks of a way of thinking that elucidates the relations of the partial theories with the explanandum that needs to be explained and with each other as well as the details of the context dependence. He speaks of a *trivalent logic* of *Relational and Contextual Reasoning* (RCR): two statements about the same explanandum are

either compatible (both true concurrently), incompatible (never both true "simultaneously") or non-compatible (not compatible simultaneously, but one is "true" in one context, respectively, at one point in time, the other is true in a different context or in a different time.) Reich's theory illustrates what Niels Bohr, a pioneer in Quantum Mechanics, has stated as the principle of complementarity: "The opposite of a true statement is a false statement, but the opposite of a profound truth can be another profound truth." From this perspective it is essential to think the world together—without neglecting the concept of paradox. If we want to know what is essential, we must stop thinking the world into pieces and start thinking it together again.

> Could we create an educational practice that regularly moves in and out of these different perspectives? A multidimensional approach to truth tells us that the world is not just a singular "it" to be measured, as scientism and reductionism have led us to believe, but that it also exists as a system and social structure, as individual subjective experience, and as cultural patterns (Hart, 2007, p. 61).

A holistic perspective means recognising that no one view can take in the whole picture. Multiple and integrating perspectives are essential in the approach to knowledge.

– *A change from transmission to transformation*. Transformation is one of the major aims of holistic education. It is often used in opposition to transmission. Whereas transmission can mean to transmit knowledge from the one who knows (normally the teacher) to the one who lacks knowledge (normally the student) transformation refers to a common process of encounter and investigation of life-based issues and challenges.

In a pedagogical context the Dutch scholars Siebren Miedema and Wim Wardekker (2001) use these terms to characterise two models of education. Foundational for the transmission concept is the existence of the ontological subject–object split. There is an objective world of meanings and facts that the developing pupils needs to master. The teacher is the mediator of the knowledge that needs to be transferred to the pupils. It should enable them to take part in society. The model rests on a specific view of knowledge as representation. Those elements of culture that are more in the realm of emotions and affects tend to be excluded from the curriculum as such.

In the transformative view of education, the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and of norms and values as modes of being, knowing, feeling and acting is not taken in the dualistic subject–object way but in a holistic or transactional way. Learning is aimed at the growing capacity or the growing competence of students to participate in culturally structured practice. The idea of dialogue and participation is fundamental. The core focus of the learning process is not the transmission of knowledge, skills, values and norms but rather the transformation of these into a heuristic base for acting.

Approaches to holistic education try to bring together the different dimensions of the human being. It takes account of the fact that, in education, we have to engage

with all that people are and not only with their capacity for logical thought because "We are creatures of *both*, reason *and* emotion, mind *and* body, matter *and* spirit" (Riley-Taylor, 2002, p. 67, italics in original).

Holistic education is nurtured by the idea of holism that wholes are greater than the sum of the parts. In the latter half of the twentieth century, holism led to systems thinking and its derivatives, like chaos theory and the science of complexity. In a recent resource book on HE, developments in physical science, systems theory, ecology, depth psychology and philosophy are summarised that have given new ways to express the awesome wholeness of reality (Schreiner, 2005). Until the mid-twentieth century a holistic understanding of the cosmos was primarily expressed in the language of religion and theology. Descartes was the first who clearly identified the mind with consciousness and self-awareness and to distinguish this from the brain, which was the seat of intelligence. Hence, he was the first to formulate the mind–body problem in the form in which it has dominated up until today. Criticisms of dualism have been very fruitful in modern science. The related change of paradigm in epistemology can be described as a development from "either-or" to "both-and" thinking. No longer the split between mind and body, rational thought and emotions and other dichotomies are the bases of thinking and acting but the interconnectedness of life and the world. Science then is embedded in other ways of knowing in a transdisciplinary perspective that "goes beyond intellectual knowledge and attempts an integration not only of scientific disciplines, but also of other fields of knowledge such as art, customs, spirituality, and literature. Transdisciplinarity is the global integration of knowledge" (Nava, 2001, p. 33).

Consequently, key issues of holistic education are the interconnectedness of realities: spirituality as a key area of education and transformation as a major aim for education.

Historical Perspectives

There is a long history of holistic thinking (Gloy, 1996) that is based on a magical–mystical understanding of nature, an organic perspective that has been dominant in the area of Renaissance from the fourteenth to the late sixteenth century. The monadism concept of the philosopher Leibniz is a rational-based concept of an organic understanding of nature. This view has been radically questioned by what later has been called the Descartes–Newton paradigm based on a dualistic, mechanistic understanding of nature and its principles. These philosophers are seen together with Bacon as the founders of modern natural sciences. Cartesian dualism set the agenda for philosophical discussion of the mind–body problem for many years after Descartes' death.

Forbes (2003) presents an analysis of ideas and the nature of holistic education that refers to the philosophical underpinning of this approach to education. His profound examination of the ideas of holistic education goes back to the work of six "Founding Authors": Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827), Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel (1782–1852),

Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), Abraham Harold Maslow (1908–1970) and Carl Ransom Rogers (1902–1987). His theses is that other holistic educators like Maria Montessori, Krishnamurti, Rudolf Steiner or Ivan Illich did not contribute decisively to the development of HE but relied on fundaments that have been already worked out by the Founding Authors. The first three of the list are educators that were well known for innovative approaches to education. The other three are more based in the field of psychology. C.G. Jung and Abraham Maslow were humanistic psychologists and Carl Rogers was an early developer of transpersonal psychology. Before introducing the "Authors", Forbes argues for "Ultimacy as the goal of education" and a central term for holistic education. It is worth going deeper into his line of thought to learn about the main idea he sees in holistic education. Forbes starts with two formal meanings of the Ultimacy: "1) the highest stage of being that a human can aspire to, either as a stage of development (e.g. enlightenment), as a moment of life that is the greatest but only rarely experienced by anyone (e.g. grace), or as a phase of life that is common in the population but usually rare in any particular individual's life (e.g. Maslow's peak experience); and 2) a concern or engagement that is the greatest that a person can aspire to (e.g., being in service to something sacred)" (2003, p. 17). The reason why Forbes has chosen this term lies in the fact that it denotes both an end-state and a process and that it encompasses religious as well as psychological notions. It is also a term that can be found in many traditions. Many aspects of Ultimacy fall within theories of human development. Ultimacy can be discussed in relation to views of human nature and also as an aspect of religiousness. In the first perspective Ultimacy is seen as the maximum development of those capacities that together make up a human being. This understanding supports also the process-oriented character of HE because, as well as holism, Ultimacy is a stage that can never been reached. In the second perspective Ultimacy is seen as an aspect of religiousness. Indeed, in many HE approaches there is the distinction between religiousness and religion, the need to get away from stated inadequacies of traditional religions and to promote religiousness, depending on a human potential and competence that can sense, experience or perceive the divine. Many were more concerned "with that which lies at the origins of all religions, and that which is in humans that is related to the divine, they made universal claims which they felt are beyond the limitations of time and place inherent in religions" (Forbes, 2003, p. 24).

Forbes introduces Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) as the philosopher who first stated some basic principles of modern progressive education. Rousseau introduced childhood as a stage with a value in its own right and demanded that education should not interfere with the course of the child's natural development. He is considered as the herald of a child-centred education. "Following nature" is a message that is often used to describe Rousseau's understanding of education. He also gives aspects of teachers that facilitate the needed learning. "Rousseau was convinced that each child is different and, as a consequence, each child needs to be approached differently" (Forbes, 2003, p. 89). So the teacher must know the student and it is his/her job to understand what nature wants. The needed learning is oriented on the "law of necessity" that may be considered as combining the rules which govern the physical universe, human dynamics and human relations.

"The teacher ought not to train the student to follow commands but to understand the consequences of action" (Forbes, 2003, p. 94). The orientation on the child and the recognition of its stages of development can be seen as two elements that holistic education has gained already from J.J. Rousseau.

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827) acknowledged the importance of Rousseau's influence right until the end of his life, not least by his perspective to go "back to nature". Pestalozzi started an orphanage and a school for children in 1798 at a time when the French Revolution had spread to Switzerland, his home country. In his first book, written already in 1780, Pestalozzi stated that "education had to be according to nature; learning should proceed from the familiar to the new; emotional responses and the pace of learning of each individual child had to be respected" (quoted in: Forbes, 2003, p. 108). His school at Yverdon near Neuchâtel that existed between 1805 and 1825 became a popular place to visit by educators from all over Europe and America.

"An important difference between holistic education and mainstream education follows from Pestalozzi's notions of the capacities of the child, capacities he described as 'inner powers'" (Forbes, 2003, p. 112). So again a child-centred approach is obvious but in a more differentiated way now. Forbes compares Pestalozzi with Rousseau and concludes:

> Pestalozzi had a more complex notion of the teachers' self-development than Rousseau. Part of his notion can be seen as professional self-development in that Pestalozzi encouraged teachers to continually seek out the "education forces" in their students; to study the children and find the divine laws that express themselves in the children and must be harnessed for education (p. 129).

Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel, the third Author in Forbes study, is well known as the founder of the kindergarten. "His contention that early education lays the foundation for later education, and that education is the foundation for (...) social reform struck the popular chord" (Forbes, 2003, p. 133) in the time following 1816 after the devastation of the Napoleonic wars in Germany. Froebel was the most theistic of the Authors with his nature-mysticism Christianity. For him Ultimacy is the "representation of the divine nature within" achieved through unity which is "the goal of all human history, individual and collective..." (quoted in Forbes, 2003, p. 133).

This short presentation of three of the founding fathers of HE can underline that HE is a specific perspective that shapes education through its child-centred approach and it embeds education in a broader context. It shows also that the self-understanding of the teacher and his/her development are seen as an integral part of holistic education.

Based on the approaches of the Authors some of the basic principles of holistic education can be summarised as follows:

(1) The *human being* is a complex, interrelated entity of abilities, potentials and creative energies with an active meaning-making capacity. Holistic educators are always concerned with what they call the whole child, whole human being or whole person.

(2) *The concept of whole person contains as essential elements the* intellectual, emotional or affective, physical, social, aesthetic and spiritual part of every person.

(3) *Spirituality* should not be taken as an utterly mystical or other-world spirituality. There should be awareness of the different potentially conflicting spiritual traditions that range from an autonomous self-spirituality focused on shared human beliefs to a spirituality that is the developing relationship of the individual, within community and tradition, to that which is of ultimate concern, ultimate value and ultimate truth.

(4) Holistic education cannot be reduced to any *technique*, it happens in the heart of the teacher and the learner. Learning is more important than teaching and experiential knowledge arises from an impulse to learn from within the learner.

Developments Supporting Holistic Education

HE is not a monolithic term or a single approach to education but an umbrella term that covers different perspectives. It takes account of the fact that recent developments in physical science, systems theory, ecology, depth psychology and in philosophy have given new impulses to express "the awesome wholeness of reality" (Ron Miller).

Quantum physics: holism in quantum physics is said to refute atomism, which has been predominant in modern philosophy of nature.

Deep ecology: a paradigm that starts with the basic understanding that human beings and nature are not separated. The task is to explore the immanent values of all living beings (Arne Naess; cf. Drengson & Inoue, 1995).

Biology; evolution theory: definition of a living system as an autopoetic network.

The movement towards a new ethics: the Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff demands that rationality should be opened up in two directions, to affectivity, attentiveness and to spiritual experiences that *relate to the whole and to mystics so that "ethics should not degenerate to a cold war of regulations"* (Boff, 2000, 2002).

Feminist movement, eco-feminism: the central insight of eco-feminism is that a historical, symbolic and political relationship exists between the denigration of nature and the female in Western cultures (Spretnak).

Teaching and learning theories: concepts that argue for the existence of several intellectual competencies (Gardner, 1999a), exploring of emotional intelligence (Goleman 1996), constructivism and its implication for learning (Grimmitt 2000) are slowly influencing the thinking about teaching and learning (cf. also Oxley, 2002).

Current approaches to holistic education are aware of some of these findings and connect them with their view of education. A current project on holistic education has been the study project about holistic education in an ecumenical perspective (1999–2005), organised by the World Council of Churches. One of the outcomes of this project is a Holistic Education Resource Book (Schreiner, Banev, & Oxley, 2005) with a collection of basic information, approaches that includes elements of

holistic education and a number of projects based on holistic education. A special emphasis in the book is given to contributions to HE from different theories. Among them the theory of Multiple Intelligences gives evidence to the basic principle that the human being is a complex existential reality, an interrelated system of abilities, potential and creative energies. The American psychologist and educator Howard Gardner suggested in Frames of Minds (1993) that the concept of intelligence had been too limited by testing purely logical and linguistic abilities. He argued for the existence of several intellectual competencies and listed seven intelligences as follows: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal that means knowing of self and of others. Later Gardner considered three further types of intelligences but only the naturalist, the capacity to recognise instances of members of a species and to distinguish between species, was fully approved. Gardner's theory encouraged a more differentiated perspective to learning and a richer approach to teaching. Some years later Gardner reviewed his earlier writing on multiple intelligences, considered new categories and guidance on the use of his theory in education (Gardner, 1999b).

Also, a newly defined understanding of the relationship between reason and emotion coined in the term of emotional intelligence (Goleman 1996) has influenced the debate of HE. Goleman argues that human competencies like self-awareness, self-discipline, persistence and empathy play a central role in life, but are often neglected. Children should be encouraged to develop these abilities. He states also that emotional intelligence plays a far greater role in excellent performance of workplace competencies than intellect or technical skills. These different understanding of intelligence has encouraged and infiltrated alternative educational thinking.

The resource book gives reasons and answers why we need holistic education. The reasons unfolded in the different chapters include the need to engage the whole person, to engage whole persons in community and to take account of the fact that there are many ways of learning and knowing. Other guiding views are that wholeness is the essence of Christian faith (as in many other faith traditions) and that we need to learn to live together in wholeness. The list is manifold. It refers to the individual and his/her situation and also to the perspective that no individual lives in isolation without a community.

Intervention: A Critique of HE

HE has always provided emotionally loaded controversies. This is no surprise because conventional education, mainstream education, modern schooling are critically perceived and criticised sometimes in a very radical way. However, HE does not exist in another world. Even part of the HE movement claims that HE should include a critical analysis of existing inequality, racial and gender discrimination and a starting point for seeking alternatives. Ron Miller, in particular, has constantly argued for more dialogue and links between holism and other approaches:

> Bridges need to be built between holism and critical theory, between holism and progressive social movements, between holism and "reconceptualist" thinking and other so-called

post-modern approaches. (. . .)We must learn to speak in languages others than our own, and to appreciate the value of other world-views (2000a, pp. 20–21).

One critique has to do with the concept of holistic as such: Wholeness itself cannot be contained by any system of thought, even by holism, no matter how elegantly we express it! "Wholeness must be experienced as a living reality, as the Tao beyond words. Only in this way can we remain open to the complexity and paradox of the world as it essentially is." (Miller, 2000a, p. 116f).

The defence of personal subjectivity in different phases of holistic education "neglected the cultural and political dimensions of education and human development . . .. An apolitical educational theory–a view of education that does not take into account the force of culture–is incomplete and ungrounded in the realities of the human condition" (Miller, 2000a, p. 79).

It seems that one way to develop HE further is to take account of a diversity of progressive traditions and discourses in education that are yearning "towards connectedness with others, the natural world, and the cosmos; yearnings we may refer to as spiritual: that aspect of human consciousness and will that yearns towards meaning, purpose, and connectedness" (Oldenski & Carlson, 2002, p. 1).

Also the general notion of holism is seen critically. Holism asserts that everything exists in relationship, in a context of connection and meaning—and that any change or event causes realignment throughout the entire pattern. It includes the danger of a totalitarian thinking where nothing else can exist beside "holism". Here reference should be made to those approaches of HE that celebrates diversity and individuality.

But even one of the most "holistic" philosophers, Ken Wilber, who has developed a rich approach explaining the holistic nature of reality was very much aware that developing an integral vision is something that is impossible. But he states

So why even attempt the impossible? Because, I believe, a little bit of wholeness is better than none at all, and an integral vision offers considerably more wholeness than the slice-and-dice alternatives. We can be more whole, or less whole; more fragmented, or less fragmented; more alienated, or less alienated – and an integral vision invites us to be a little more whole, a little less fragmented, in our work, our lives, our destiny (Wilber, 2000, p. xii).

HE and Teacher Training

The more general introduction to the perspective and main principles of HE has provided a background to move towards the issue of how teacher training can be transformed through HE. Three approaches will be presented as good examples of a holistic-oriented perspective in education with relevance for teacher training. The concept of Parker Palmer starts with the view that education is a spiritual journey and the teacher relies to a great deal on his/her "inner teacher" that means his/her identity and integrity that comes from within.

Paulo Freire has developed an approach of a critical pedagogy where dialogue is at the centre of the teacher–learner relationship and where a critical encounter

with the political context is an integrated part of pedagogy. In his last books, Freire particularly dealt with many aspects of teaching and competences of the teacher.

Finally an approach from organisational learning is introduced that provides many inspirational ideas for HE. These three examples should not be seen as exclusive but they can be seen as helpful perspectives to raise the shape and quality of teacher training. In the following main ideas of each of the writers concerning HE and teacher training are introduced and then discussed in a comprehensive section.

Education as a Spirituality Journey (Parker Palmer)

Parker J. Palmer works independently on issues in education, community, spirituality and social change and lives in Wisconsin, USA. He offers workshops, lectures and retreats, and is author of teacher formation programmes. His main concern is about the inner life of teachers and how to create communities of learning.

Palmer starts developing his approach from the pain experienced by many educators. He highlights the "pain of disconnection": the disconnection from colleagues, students and their hearts.

He states that the world of education is filled with "broken paradoxes":

– We separate *head from heart*. Result: minds that do not know how to feel and hearts that do not know how to think.
– We separate *facts from feelings*. Result: bloodless facts that make the world distant and remote and ignorant emotions that reduce truth to how one feels today.
– We separate *theory from practice*. Result: theories that have little to do with life and practice that is uniformed by understanding.
– We separate *teaching from learning*. Result: teachers who talk but do not listen and students who listen but do not talk. (Palmer, 1998, p. 66).

If this is the situation teachers are dealing with, the task might then be: how do we develop paradoxical thinking? Paradoxical thinking means to embrace a view of the world in which opposites are joined, to celebrate differences and to try to see the world more integrated. An ongoing task might be: How do we overcome *either-or thinking* and create *both-and thinking*? How do we bring things together?

One of his first books, published in 1983, has the title: *To Know as We* are Known. *Education as a spiritual journey* (1993). It is this image of a journey that influences also his understanding of spirituality as a decisive element of teaching and learning. Palmer is critical against a spirituality of ends which wants to dictate the desirable outcomes of education in the life of the student.

> It uses the spiritual tradition as a template against which the ideas, beliefs, and behaviours of the student are to be measured.' (. . .) Authentic spirituality does not dictate where we must go, but trusts that any path walked with integrity will take us to a place of knowledge. Such a spirituality encourages us to welcome diversity and conflict, to tolerate ambiguity, and to embrace paradox (1993, p. xi).

Palmer encourages us to look beyond modes of knowledge that are inspired purely either by a curiosity or by a desire to control. He argues that another kind of knowledge is open to us, "one that begins in a different passion and is drawn to other ends" (1998, p. 8). This knowledge originates in compassion or love. The goal from knowledge arising from love is the re-unification and re-construction of broken selves and worlds. Palmer's guiding idea of teaching is to create a space where the "community of truth" is practised.

For Parker Palmer, teaching and learning require a community "that can help renew and express 'the capacity for connectedness at the heart of authentic education'" (1998, p. 89). He presents several models of *community in education* that give flesh to this image. Palmer states "The community of truth is an image of knowing that embraces both the great web of being on which all things depend and the fact that our knowing of those things is helped, not hindered, by our being enmeshed in that web" (p. 99).

The concept of the inner teacher is used by Palmer to focus on the call to teach from within. He states that "(t)he teacher within is not the voice of conscience but of identity and integrity. It speaks not of what ought to be, but of what is real for us, of what is true" (1998, p. 30f). So a strong sense of personal identity should infuse the work of the teacher. "Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves." (1998, p. 11)

Critical Dialogue (Paulo Freire)

Paulo Freire, Brazilian educator (1921–1997), has powerfully described the hidden power structures in education and schooling. In his method of alphabetisation and central to his pedagogy is the critical dialogue on an equal level between teachers and learners, to rename reality and to be able to transform reality. Some of his books became very popular all over the world: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Education for Critical Consciousness* and later on: *Pedagogy of Hope* and *Pedagogy of the Heart*. It is important to mention that Paulo Freire's approach does not stand for a specific method. Freire was always critical against any uncritical adaptation of his approach in a different context. He has always encouraged educators that they look at themselves as a man or a woman living and producing in a specific society. He invites learners to come out of the apathy and the conformism which is akin to being "dismissed from life", as they often find themselves. Freire challenges them to understand that they are themselves the makers of culture. This has led him to an approach to enable learners to decode their reality, to find out about the general issues in their context aiming at social transformation.

Freire's broad and deep understanding of education, taking its political nature at the core of its concerns, has been shaped by the following main principles:

1) *Dialogue*: One of his main principles of education. Dialogue is changing teach-
   ers and learners. Teachers become teacher–learners and learners become

learner–teachers. Raising questions together becomes more important than to share readymade answers.

2) *Praxis* (spiralling of action and reflection). Freire's approach has been developed through praxis, action and reflection about action that leads to a further development of action, etc.

3) *Conscientisation*. The development of consciousness is the central focus of Freire's pedagogy. The learner is seen as a subject with active meaning-making capacities and the capacity to re-name his/her context. This brings in a radical political dimension in education; Freire was committed to pedagogy of liberation from inhuman living conditions.

4) *Lived experience* is more important than theoretical thinking.

5) *Christian sources* have influenced his approach but also other approaches and philosophies like phenomenology, Marxism and concepts of social anthropology.

One of the well-known images Freire has used to characterise mainstream education is the *banking concept of education*. By "banking concept" Freire means that the teacher puts deposits on an "account" (the learner) with the hope that this will bear fruits. He is using this metaphor to characterise the dominant transmission mode of education and to develop an alternative approach to education that promotes transformation, liberation and change.

Education for critical consciousness has been his main focus to encourage a reading of the world especially of those that are oppressed and underprivileged. Freire speaks of "teacher–learner and learner–teacher" to characterise a dialogue-oriented method in education. Later he explored this as follows: "The teacher learns through teaching, the learner teaches through learning." Freire's book "Pedagogy of Autonomy" (original "Pedagogia da autonomia: saberes necessarias á práctica educative", 1996) has been translated in the American version into "Pedagogy of Freedom" (Freire, 1998) and currently into German (Freire, 2008). In these books Freire deals a lot with the situation of the teacher and their competences. Some of the features he argues for are:

- Knowing how to listen
- Openness to dialogue
- Caring for the students.

He closely connects teaching with learning (there is no teaching without learning), develops a critical view concerning information and facts (teaching does not mean to transmit information) and encourages compassion of the teacher for his/her students.

Learning, Teaching and Transformation (Peter Senge)

Peter Senge, Senior Lecturer at Massachusetts Institute for Technology MIT, has become famous for demonstrating to businesses the need to become "learning organisations" where personal and organisational growth goes hand in hand. His

Fifth discipline approach for learning in organisations and beyond provides specific methods and proposals for how interventions can be made to turn organisations into "learning organizations". This is of high relevance also for schools and other educational institutions and in line with what holistic education has always advocated.

According to Peter Senge (1990) *learning organisations* are

> . . . organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together.
>
> Organisations need to 'discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at *all* levels' (p. 3).

For Senge, real learning gets to the heart of what it is to be human. We become able to re-create ourselves. This applies to both individuals and organisations. Thus, for a "learning organization it is not enough to survive. "'Survival learning' or what is more often termed 'adaptive learning' is important—indeed it is necessary. But for a learning organisation, 'adaptive learning' must be joined by 'generative learning', learning that enhances our capacity to create" (Senge, 1990, p. 14).

The dimension that distinguishes learning from more traditional organisations is the mastery of certain basic disciplines or "component technologies". The five that Peter Senge identifies are said to be converging to innovate learning organisations. They are

- *Systems thinking*—the conceptual cornerstone of the learning organisation; people learn to better understanding interdependency and change and thereby are able to deal more effectively with the forces that shape the consequences of their actions.
- *Personal mastery*—"Organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning. But without it no organizational learning occurs" (Senge, 1990, p. 139). Personal mastery is the discipline of "continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively" (ibid., p. 7).
- *Mental models*—This discipline of reflection refers to "deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures and images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action" (Senge, 1990, p. 8). It is the repertoire we rely on and promotes awareness of attitudes and perceptions.
- *Building shared vision*—This is decisive for any kind of organisation to hold a shared picture of the future. Such a vision has the power to encourage experimentation and innovation.
- *Team learning*—such learning is viewed as "the process of aligning and developing the capacities of a team to create the results its members truly desire" (Senge, 1990, p. 236). It builds on personal mastery and shared vision—but these are not enough. People need to be able to act together.

The five disciplines provide a general scaffold for learning organisations that Senge and his collaborators have enriched by a number of methods, exercises and

exchange of experiences how these can be used in different organisations, including schools. This is elaborated in one of the resource books of the Fifth Discipline network with the title "Schools that learn: A fieldbook for educators, parents and everyone who cares about education" (2000). This volume works through examples how in the classroom, in schools and in community these principles were adapted in specific contexts.

Schools that learn involve everyone in the system in expressing their aspirations, building their awareness and developing their capabilities together. All schools, and their situations, are unique and require their own unique combination of theories, tools and methods for learning. The image of "Schools that learn" and the perspective of interacting systems—the classroom, the school and the community, include a set of attitudes about teachers:

> First, every school must have, as part of its core purpose, the promotion and development, the care and security – a recognition of the importance – of its teachers. Second, teachers must act as stewards for all students, fostering their relationships with each other and with the base of knowledge. Stewardship means holding a commitment to the entire learning community of the school, not just "my classroom" and "my students". Third, teachers themselves are continuous and life-long learners, with their knowledge of their subject, and of the craft of teaching, evolving throughout their lifetime (Senge et al., 2000, p. 12).

Perspectives/Summary

The three approaches of Paulo Freire, Parker Palmer and Peter Senge have a different context and are developed in different times. However, they share some common perspectives.

The Role and the Task of the Teacher

The first common aspect is a specific understanding of the role and the task of the teacher. For Palmer it is the image of the "inner teacher" that he uses to emphasise the need of identity and integrity of the teacher. According to Palmer the outward work of teachers is a projection of his/her inner condition. How teachers relate to the work they do, and how they relate to others through their work, hinges on how well they know and understand themselves. Furthermore, Parkers central tenet, "good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher" (1998, p. 10) includes a perspective that in any teacher training this dimension of self-reflectiveness should be given prominent attention.

While Paulo Freire's approach is shaped by a critical dialogue and an "action-reflection" process of encoding reality, in his later work he focused more on the competences of the teacher. For him teachers should have the competence to listen, openness to dialogue and a commitment of caring for the students. Teachers should not be like "bankers" who transmit knowledge to students but act as facilitators for learning including the readiness to constantly learn themselves.

The main focus of Peter Senge's approach is on learning organisations but clearly his proposed five disciplines include many that care for the personal development

of all who are involved in a learning organisation. His discipline of "personal mastery" means developing a personal vision that goes beyond competence and skills, although it involves them. It goes beyond spiritual opening although it involves spiritual growth. This discipline is closely connected with developing awareness of attitudes and perceptions as part of "mental models", personal and of others around. And educational organisations should provide space to develop those: "Schools and other organizations have a key role to play in this discipline, by setting a context where people have time to reflect on their vision, by establishing an organizational commitment to the truth wherever possible, and by avoiding taking a position (explicit or implicit) about what other people (including children) should want or who they should view the world" (2000, p. 60).

Teaching and Learning

In all three examples a critical perception of "knowledge" is obvious and an appreciation of the active meaning-making capacity of all involved in a teaching–learning process. Parker Palmer speaks of the "community of truth" that enables teaching and learning in an open and a dialogical way. It is like weaving a complex web of connections among the teachers themselves, their subjects and their students to encourage them to learn to weave a world for themselves. They emphasise also the central role of the teacher to become a self-reflective learner herself and to appreciate the students in their teaching competence. The "teaching task" then is not to transmit readymade answers but to encourage and facilitate a dialogue in a common search for possible contributions to existing problems and issues of life. "Good teachers bring students into living communion with the subjects they teach," says Parker Palmer. "They also bring students into community with themselves and with each other." (1993, p. xvii) Learning is both an inner process of self-discovery and a cooperative activity.

Education for Transformation

The presented examples have also in common the belief that education is a valuable instrument for transformation, that it can make things better. There lies a danger in this buzz term of transformation when it is linked with education. Definitely education is not the problem-solver of society, however, tempted many politicians are to mention this. But education can contribute to enable people to play an active role in a search for a better world, a world that is more whole and a little less fragmented.

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Chapter 40
Metaphors for Wellbeing: Enhancing Students' Learning and Teaching Perceptions Within a Pre-service Education Course

Mary Nuttall

Abstract This chapter focuses on metaphors for wellbeing that were developed by a number of pre-service teachers (students) within prescribed education units undertaken during their year-long Graduate Diploma in Education (GDE) Course. In light of readings, discussions and reflective activities, students explored attributes and potential of the metaphor for defining a sense of self and sustaining personal wellbeing during their course. Students used this valuable background knowledge and understanding of "self" to create personal metaphors that represented themselves on a "learning journey" undertaken within their prescribed education units. Students' metaphors became sources of personal wellbeing and sound bases for enhancing their learning and teaching perspectives within the framework of their course.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to engage students in developing metaphors for wellbeing that represented themselves on a learning journey undertaken during their year-long Graduate Diploma in Education Course. It was anticipated that these metaphors, whilst building on students' sense of wellbeing, would also provide sound bases for enhancing students' learning and teaching perceptions within the framework of the pre-service Course.

Methodology

This study was guided by qualitative research techniques. Qualitative research occurs in natural settings or contexts where there are naturally occurring events, programs and interactions. The researcher seeks to be "non-manipulative, unobtrusive, and non-controlling" (Patton, 1990, p. 40) and is open to whatever emerges in the data. "Varieties of viewpoints and multiple realities portrayed by respondents"

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(Caulley, 1992, p. 33) contribute to acquisition of a holistic research perspective culminating in detailed, "thick" description of the phenomena under study. The particular branch of qualitative research that was most applicable to this study was considered to be hermeneutic phenomenology.

According to Richard and Morse (2007), "Hermeneutical phenomenology: (Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricouer, van Manen) believe knowledge comes into being through language and understanding. Understanding and interpretation are intertwined, and interpretation is an evolving process. Hermeneutic phenomenologists use culture (symbols, myth, religion, art, and language), poetry, and art in their interpretations" (p. 49). Hence the use of metaphors symbolising students' wellbeing fostered during their personal learning journeys was considered to be an appropriate application of hermeneutics. As students formulated their metaphors and analysed them they followed closely an interpretation of hermeneutics expressed by Neuman (2003):

> It {hermeneutics} emphasizes a detailed reading or examination of *text*, which could refer to a conversation, written words, or pictures. A researcher conducts "a reading" to discover meaning embedded within text. Each reader brings his or her subjective experience to a text. When studying the text, the researcher/reader tries to absorb or get inside the viewpoint it presents as a whole, and then develop a deep understanding of how its parts relate to the whole (p. 76).

During their Course students entered into their individual metaphors or "texts" and in so doing developed a deeper understanding of how these metaphors related to their lives, personalities and sources of actual and potential wellbeing, thereby providing sound bases for enhancing learning and teaching techniques within the curriculum.

By adopting a qualitative research design advocated by researchers such as Bouma (2004), Burns (2000), Caulley (1992), Denzin and Lincoln (2000), Janesick (1994) and Patton (1990), the researchers were able to engage in a dynamic process of learning. Each researcher or student thus took into account his or her current unique context, did not attempt to manipulate that context, was open to enlightenment as it emerged from the metaphor and was not confined by predetermined outcomes. According to Patton (1990, p. 13), "Qualitative methods permit the evaluator {or researcher} to study selected issues in depth and detail". Hence "a wealth of detailed information" involving a smaller number of people and cases..." (p. 14) can be obtained. Given the potential richness of data that may be gathered from a small number of participants, it was decided to use purposeful sampling techniques for this study.

Purposeful Sampling

Patton (1990, p. 169) notes that, "Qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples, even single cases (n = 1), selected purposefully", cases that will yield rich data which "will illuminate the questions under study." Purposeful sampling allowed for variation in the design of personal metaphors representing

learning journeys and potential sources of wellbeing. Sixteen students enrolled in the Course elected to participate in the making of metaphors for their individual learning journeys.

Metaphors: Potential for Wellbeing: Frameworks for the "Learning Journey"

Metaphor has its origin in the Greek word "metapherein": "meta"' to change and "pherein" to bear. Thus metaphors can be described as change bearing. Egan (1978) perceives metaphor as "the tool that enables us to see one thing in terms of another. This peculiar ability lies at the heart of human, intellectual inventiveness, creativity and imagination" (p. 3). Hence, the making of metaphors is considered to be a powerful means for fostering a sense of wellbeing and for providing frameworks for individual learning journeys. A number of writers substantiate this viewpoint. For example, metaphors

- can bridge the past and present contexts of our daily living;
- can provide a framework that supports and shapes the language of our thinking and beliefs (Subramaniam, 2000, p. 3);
- help us to select paths that alter our thinking and spark our passion for the teaching and learning process (Subramaniam, 2000, p. 10);
- have a coherence and internal consistency, which provide insights into ideas that are not explicit or consciously held (Leavy, McSorley & Bote, 2007, p. 1222);
- can be evocative, stimulating both self and others to tease out connections which might not be made use of by direct questions (Ibid, pp. 1222–1223);
- play a role in the process of teacher self-formation and self-exploration (Bullough with Stokes, 1994, p. 200);
- are a helpful means for beginning teachers to develop alternative ways of thinking about teaching and self as teacher and for considering the ethical implications of holding one or another conception of teaching (Ibid, p. 200); and
- can be used by teachers "to guide their practices and to conceptualize their teaching roles" (Tobin & Ulerick in Stofflett, 1996, p. 577).

As the lecturer facilitating the Course, the advice outlined by Leavy et al. (2007) provided further justification for using metaphors to promote student connectedness, to provide opportunities for students to scaffold their learning experiences and ultimately to enhance each student's sense of wellbeing. Leavy et al. claim that,

> It is {therefore} crucial that the range of interconnecting elements of teacher education and the teaching career are such that they help scaffold and support new entrants to the profession in a way that helps them investigate, interpret and integrate their experience as they begin to build and consolidate their teaching identity (p. 1220).

Sources of Wellbeing: Nourishment for the Learning Journey

It is believed that a sense of wellbeing is nourished by the human spirit. According to Miller (2000), "To deny spirit is to deny an essential element of our being and thus diminish ourselves and our approach to education" (p. 9). Miller's soulful educational philosophy is reflected well in Kessler's (2000, p. 17) practical development of the "seven gateways to the soul in education". These "gateways" are perceived to emanate from the central point of each person's "yearning for deep connection" within the self, or sense of wellbeing. In honouring students' deep need for connectedness and sense of wellbeing each "gateway" was developed specifically within the designated education units. Within quiet, reflective contexts, students

- explored the concept of multiple intelligences and determined their preferred learning style (Gateway 1: *the yearning for deep connection* and Gateway 3: *the searching for meaning and purpose*);
- reflected upon their personal learning journeys within non-threatening teaching/learning environments (Gateway 2: *the longing for silence and solitude* and Gateway 3);
- enhanced their creative potential by developing metaphors that could provide direction for their personal learning journeys within the Course (Gateway 5: *the creative drive* and Gateway 6: *the urge for transcendence*);
- developed a sense of empowerment by undertaking specific transitions, in particular, from pre-service to their designated Professional Experience Programs and, finally to employment within the teaching profession (Gateway 7: *the need for initiation*); and
- celebrated their sense of wellbeing and the richness of their personal learning journeys (Gateway 4: *the hunger for joy and delight*).

Nourishment for wellbeing is further represented in the holistic approach to learning initially identified in Gardner's (1999) theory of the multiple intelligences. Whilst every person is endowed with the capacity to learn in a number of ways, people seem to learn best by using a particular intelligence or combination of preferred intelligences and affiliated learning styles. For instance, some people learn best by using numbers, words or graphics, whilst others facilitate their learning through role-play, music or nature or a combination of intelligences. Some people learn best by problem-solving alone; others prefer interpersonal or interactive approaches to learning.

More recently educators have drawn upon additional types of intelligence in determining and sustaining wellbeing in our lives. It can be argued that a sense of wellbeing and ability to maximise learning opportunities is further developed when students understand the components of the emotional, empathic and spiritual intelligences and acknowledge the importance of the interplay of these intelligences in their lives. Teachers who seek to develop wellbeing in themselves and their students establish learning environments in which emotional intelligence, "the intelligent use

of emotions" (Bodine & Crawford, 1999, p. 1), is acknowledged and fostered. It is critical for students to be encouraged to develop both "an aptitude for handling challenging situations whose expression may vary according to environmental contingencies" and "successful resolution of emotional challenges" (Bar-On & Parker, 2000, p. 461) inherent within each learning interaction.

The development of spiritual intelligence fosters wellbeing in our individual learning journeys; it enables us "to discriminate, to be creative, to change the rules and to alter situations" (Zohar & Marshall, 2000, p. 5). Empathic intelligence is a theory of relatedness and complements components of the spiritual intelligence. It is relevant to person-centred situations such as teaching and learning. Among the goals articulated by Arnold (2005) are goals of empathic intelligence that have particular bearing for this study. These include providing opportunities for students

- to become attuned to their own thinking and learning processes;
- to focus on the making of meaning; and
- to use their sensitivity to create purposeful and energising learning experiences.

Social intelligence provides a way of understanding individual personality and social behaviour and thus links well with Gardner's interpersonal intelligence and emotional intelligence noted above. Zirkel (2000), an exponent of social intelligence, stresses that people are reflective human beings whose behaviour can be understood in terms of the ways in which they engage in their social environment and the desired outcomes they seek in the important domains of their lives.

As the lecturer facilitating the Course I was able to draw upon previous studies in which Kessler's (2000) "seven gateways to the soul" and the multiple intelligences were used successfully to enhance students' classroom teaching and learning perceptions (Nuttall, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006). During the Course students were encouraged to recognise and to use to the full their dominant intelligence/s and to practise using their more latent intelligences. I was also mindful of incorporating specific multiple intelligence perspectives into teaching/learning sessions as suggested by Lazear (2003) and McInerney and McInerney (2006). In particular I ensured that

- Course content and processes were presented in authentic environments, for example, virtual and actual classrooms and school/community settings;
- students were encouraged to develop their competencies across all intelligences, not just their preferred intelligences;
- students had opportunities to work with mentors and undergo "apprenticeships" with experts in the areas of teaching and learning during their Professional Experience Programs;
- our Course was developed on the basis of an interdisciplinary curriculum across the specific units so that students were able to facilitate interconnections among the intelligences;
- Course content was integrated with Course assessment;
- flexibility in assessment practices was provided so that students could demonstrate their various competencies; and

- students were able to benefit from alternative assessments such as portfolios, work samples and personal metaphors.

Transforming Process: Reflective Practice: Context for the Learning Journey

Reflective Practice

Several writers attest to the value of becoming reflective practitioners. For instance, Miller (2000, p. 9) claims that, "Reflective practice is important in bringing the intuitive into consciousness where it can be acted upon." de Souza elaborates upon this claim by stating that,

> If the learning is to go beyond the surface, it must touch the 'soul' of the student. It must reach that core where that learning becomes transformed by an inner response which may and should lead to outward expressions of changed thinking and behaviour (2005, p. 122).

For student teachers, Leavy et al. (2007, p. 1222) allege that, "The central premise of reflective practice in teacher education is that meaning is constructed". In this study it is argued that wellbeing is enhanced when one builds into one's life a reflective approach to life and living. Killen (2007) distinguishes between reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. Reflection-on-action is a process of self-evaluation that occurs after a lesson, session, activity, etc. and can be used to shape future action. Reflection-in-action is also a process of evaluation, however, it is a process that can be developed whilst "on the run", when a teacher/learner focuses on what s/he is doing at a particular time, and why s/he is doing it. Reflection-in-action can become spontaneous and intuitive and ultimately can be characteristic of competent, professional teaching/learning in complex environments.

Several of Killen's (2007) reasons for becoming reflective teachers were considered to be critical for enhancing awareness and wellbeing. Thus within the content and teaching/learning strategies employed within the Course and, specifically by developing metaphors for their personal learning journeys, the pre-service teachers were given opportunities

- to make their learning explicit;
- to follow a cycle of monitoring, evaluating and revising their teaching/learning processes;
- to add value to "self" and "performance" in the teaching/learning profession;
- to enhance professional learning and personal fulfilment through collaboration and dialogue;
- to help move self from novice to expert, particularly during the Professional Experience Program; and
- to achieve a greater depth of meaning and understanding in their lives.

Development of Personal Metaphors: "Tools" for the Learning Journey

Given that metaphors can be such a source of personal inspiration and interconnectedness pre-service teachers were encouraged at the outset of the Course to image their learning journey and quest for wellbeing within a personal metaphorical framework. In preparation for the task students analysed the metaphor of curriculum as travel identified by Pinar (1975):

> The curriculum is a route over which students will travel under the leadership of an experienced guide and companion. Each traveller will be affected differently by the journey since its effect is at least a function of the predilections, intelligence, interests, and intent of the traveller as it is of the contours of the route. This variability is not only inevitable, but wondrous and desirable. Therefore no effort is made to anticipate the exact nature of the effect on the traveller; but a great effort is made to plot the route so that the journey will be as rich, as fascinating and as memorable as possible (p. 85).

An analysis of Pinar's metaphor prompted class discussion about how curriculum might be viewed by imaginative students and the teacher/learner guide as a wonderful route along which participants travelled and engaged in fulfilling personal and collaborative learning experiences. Key questions that emerged from discussion in relation to personal learning journeys were

- Where do I want to go (personal learning outcomes for the Course)?
- How will I get there?
- Who will guide me?
- What resources will I need?
- With whom will I travel?
- When will I travel?
- How will I measure my progress?
- What risks/problems am I likely to encounter on my learning journey?
- What can I do to anticipate/offset these risks/problems?

In the light of the questions each student was encouraged to design a travel brochure entitled "my personal learning journey" which sought answers to the questions raised. It was anticipated that students' metaphors would provide personal "tools" for wellbeing and self-development. Such "tools" could enhance students' learning and teaching perceptions during the year-long Course.

Empowerment: Celebration of Wellbeing: Enhanced Perceptions for Learning and Teaching

Students' Metaphors: The Travel Brochures: Analysis

Over 2 weeks students developed their metaphors (travel brochures for personal learning journeys). The metaphors were subsequently analysed and placed within three categories, namely, gardens and growing (4 students), travel (10 students)

and building/skill development (2 students). The metaphors bore various titles and encompassed a range of students' initial perceptions of "self" and potential aspects of wellbeing that could be developed during the Course.

Category	Description
Garden/growing	
A Daffodil	A daffodil bulb beginning to grow
A new garden	A new garden with myriads of seeds
A seed	A seed with potential to grow
A butterfly	Stages of progress
Travel	
A land of learning	Tour undertaken with personal map
A European car tour	Exploring greatest areas in greatest car
A bear hunt	Seeking bears in the wild
A personal learning tour	Personal learning tour returning a hundredfold
A taste tour of the world	Tastes of the world around us
A "Greek" Odyssey	A modern Odyssey
An ACU trail (Australian Catholic University)	A discovery journey on the ACU trail
A trip	An exciting learning journey down a highway
A slipper	A comfortable growth and development journey
A trip to development and learning island	An exciting and memorable learning journey

Category	Description
Building/skill development	
• Circus	A travelling performer
• Restumping a house	Restumping a life step-by-step

A preliminary analysis of the students' metaphors revealed that each metaphor was both a metaphor of learning and a metaphor for learning. Furthermore, the metaphors were perceived to fit within the frameworks of *situated cognition* and *situated learning* anchored within the *socio-historic perspective* (Martinez, Sauleda, & Huber (2001, p. 968). A central component of the *socio-historic perspective* is that "knowledge is created and made meaningful by the context and activities through which it is acquired" (Prestine and LeGrand, as cited in Leavy et al., 2007, p. 1230); in this study, the Course (context) and the activities undertaken within each of the units.

From a cognitive point of view, "knowledge consists of interrelated schema, which are individually and actively constructed by transforming old schemata into

new ones or by inductively developing new schemata from a series of varied experiences. Learning is the process of schemata construction" and "the mind is pro-active, problem-oriented and interpretative" (Martinez et al., 2001, p. 967). According to the *situative or socio-historic perspective* knowledge is distributed among individuals in a social community and knowledge is not only and completely located in individual minds: "Learning as a product is the consequence of authentic participation in the activities of a community of practitioners, and during the process of learning, the individual as well as their community acquire knowledge and skills" (Martinez et al., 2001, pp. 967–968). Within the parameters of the year-long Course the community of pre-service teachers had numerous opportunities to share their increasing knowledge and learning and concomitant sense of wellbeing as they became more confident in their teaching/learning roles.

Students' Initial Perspectives of Wellbeing

Students' metaphors revealed their initial perceptions of self at the outset of their learning journeys. All students, despite some perceived shortcomings, saw themselves in a positive light. They acknowledged their latent potential and looked forward with eagerness to the personal growth, "adventures" and challenges that they believed would emerge during the Course. For instance, students in the gardens/growing category described themselves as "a new garden: bare soil with a myriad of seeds below the surface, like the ideas we have planted by our teachers and our peers and also ourselves", "a seed with the potential to grow" and "a caterpillar with a goal of becoming a butterfly".

The student who visualised her learning journey as a "restumping" process initially acknowledged her personality and underlying strength of character. Whilst she seemed to be comfortable within her metaphorical lived-in-house, she could see what needed to be done to enhance her/its wellbeing. At the outset of her learning journey she saw herself as

> . . . *a house that real estate agents would describe as having lots of 'character' – somewhat frayed around the edges, has seen many ups and downs and a variety of experiences, but essentially has warmth and personality. But the foundations are a bit shaky and in need of reinforcement and repair.*

The student who had previously participated in only guided tours complete with tour guide and itinerary saw his forthcoming learning journey as an individual European car tour. His aspirations indicated that he looked forward to new and challenging experiences in which his wellbeing would be enhanced as he extended himself beyond the predictable and the comfortable:

> *Hopefully I will experience something new and exciting, something different. I want to get out of my comfort zone, and way outside it. I want to see, hear and taste new and exciting things. I want to be challenged, to be extended beyond myself.*

The Journeys: Students' Prospects for Enhanced Wellbeing

Students' prospects for enhanced wellbeing were portrayed in a number of ways. One student looked forward to responding to the call to acquire a taste for living and learning by undertaking "a taste tour of the world" in which she could savour exotic flavours that would give her a zest for life and wellbeing:

> *Come on an amazing adventure around the world, looking at all the different flavours it has to offer. If you like hot and spicy we have the tour for you; rich and indulgent; all things sweet and savoury, never fear you will try things you never knew existed.*

Another student's proposed personal learning journey, guaranteed to yield "one hundredfold", placed much emphasis on personal commitment and responsibility undertaken within the framework of the Course. The rewards or the hundredfold were implied as the student joyfully anticipated his learning journey and grasped opportunities to make a difference in his own life and subsequently in that of his pupils:

> *Imagine travelling through new ideas and concepts. Discover theories and practices never experienced by you before or studying the lives of influential people. You can! Simply by delving into new subject areas as a student teacher. You can make a difference.*

Students' learning journeys were expected to cater for individual needs and to be conducted at a suitable pace. Students looked forward to potentially memorable experiences and adventures as they "travelled" through the Course and strengthened their sense of wellbeing. Excerpts from various metaphors focused on these attributes. In relation to the proposed European car journey the student stressed the importance of following a well-paced personalised itinerary with options to linger in specific places. With such an itinerary and the provision of necessary resources onus was placed on the individual to gain much from the journey:

> *Want to explore, but at your own pace? Everybody wants to see the marvels of Europe, but going along with a tour group can be so dull. Who wants a set itinerary? To be herded like sheep from one city to the next, never able to explore the areas that YOU {sic}want to explore. That's where we come in. We provide you with a map and a car, and you bring the sense of adventure. It's up to you what you make of your European adventure!*

With reference to the learning journey perceived as a "bear hunt", the student proposed similar flexibility and personalised travel, "Feel you've been there, done that? Tired of the usual journeys? Don't fret – the abundance of new experiences to be had on this journey ensures that the trip is never the same for everyone".

The student who likened her learning journey to joining a circus paralleled the Course to becoming an expert travelling performer who moved among stationary circuses, gaining a range of skills in a number of unique contexts and ultimately, becoming a Ringmaster or excellent teacher/learner.

> *While many circuses are travelling, you as a performer/juggler will travel between stationary circuses. Sometimes, having learnt all you can from one circus, it will be time to move to the next one, gathering with you as you move on experiences that will help you on your way to be Ringmaster.*

It was anticipated that the pre-service teacher would learn key skills designed to augment a sense of wellbeing and to provide valuable preparation for the real world of teaching and classroom management. Key skills included juggling, operating the carnival stall, being cannon fodder, displaying oneself in the freak show, caring for the animals, being the clown, flying through the air as a trapeze artist, taming the lion, and ultimately, becoming the ringmaster. The student proficiently aligned the accomplishment of each skill to aspects of teaching and learning. For example, as a lion tamer, the expectations were stated as follows:

> As a lion tamer you will be keeping the lions under control, and also you will be a guide for them when they perform. You will maintain their habitat, keep them well-balanced, clean up messes and help them wherever you can. Always remember to show them RESPECT {*sic*}, and they will hopefully show you the same. If you fail in this you will be eaten alive.

As a clown, the student was assured of learning additional valuable skills, for example, teamwork:

> You could not be a part of a circus without partaking in this great tradition. As a clown you will learn teamwork, timing and you will develop your sense of humour. This position helps you to entertain not only the patrons, but also fellow performers.

Processes and essential resources to be used in the learning journey were included in some of the metaphors. Students' resources included a map, life experiences and a personalised slipper. Students described these resources as follows:

> A map is an excellent metaphor for learning because people could not travel without prior knowledge of where they wanted to go, how they would get there and how long the journey would take. A learner is able to visualise the layout of a Course before they begin to study so that they will have an idea of where they are going, where to find the information they are looking for and what skills they will require to get there.

One student perceived the contribution of students' life experiences as major resources that could be drawn upon to enhance the wellbeing of all travellers on their learning journeys. She urged, "Bring your own life experiences. These resources will benefit *all* {sic} travellers".

Another student sought wellbeing and enlightenment by wearing his specially designed slipper, "The Sharkie slipper encompasses everything a new teacher needs to kick start their career". This slipper was perceived to be warm and nurturing; it would provide comfort for the wearer, being roomy and generous. The student was assured of travelling far in its firm but flexible sole.

Connection and Collaboration: Nurturing Throughout the Journey

Students stressed that connection and collaboration through appropriate nurturing were crucial to their wellbeing and self-development for the duration of the journey. Several metaphors alluded to these processes, for example, individual students in the gardens/growing category identified the potential for growth as key participants

in the Course collaborated and nurtured one another. One student stated, "The seeds or ideas are waiting to grow and blossom into flowers or ideas; with nurturing and learning we will create a full garden of beautiful flowers and meaningful ideas".

Other students mentioned the need for absorbing specific nutrients:

> The garden grows with the help of others; it is helped along with nurturing and the addition of nutrients. Just like us as students, we are helped on our learning journey by teachers and peers and are given the seeds of ideas that we can use in our teaching lives by these people.
>
> With this learning journey I hope to take on the knowledge and experience of other people, represented by the rays on the sunlight, which will help the seed to germinate and grow, as well as my own personal experiences and characteristics, represented by the water, to become an effective teacher.

The student engaged in restumping her life, nominated specific people who would collaborate with her and provide necessary nurturing during the journey:

> There {is} a group of people who assist in the placing of many of the stumps and in their manufacture – they help determine the strength and longevity of those stumps. These people include my teachers, fellow students, student teacher coordinators, teachers who have me as a guest in their classroom and so on. They are the people who guide the formation of the knowledge, theory, professional skill, confidence, reflection and experience stumps, all of which are so very essential for a 'good' teacher.

The student who planned to undertake a European Tour saw the value of breaking free from dependence on his close circle of friends and opening himself to the richness of others' experiences:

> I also want to meet new people and learn from them. They have so much to offer, and I hope to be able to get something from them. I have always mixed with the same people, and I need a new perspective.

The taste tours of the world organisers were committed to collaborate with the tour guides, perceived to be connoisseurs of individual traveller's needs. The tour was guaranteed to enhance wellbeing by providing a long-lasting "taste" or experience that could be drawn upon and would provide sustenance in the days to come:

> The tour guides are there for you. They will make sure you keep an open mind about every new adventure you may face so that you can get the best experience you could ever hope for. Check in with one of your tour organisers and they will lead you in the right direction of places you want to see, things you want to try. The experience you will have on this tour will stay with you forever.

The bear hunt suggested that collaboration would occur in various stages as the journey unfolded. Guides would aid in the selection of resources appropriate for each traveller. They would also point out the best routes. As the journey proceeded opportunities for collaboration among the other travellers would be encouraged:

> At the beginning {of the bear hunt} you'll also meet the first of your guides. These wonderful and knowledgeable people will help you find your hiking boots and a walking stick best suited to your needs. They're also the best people to help point you out in the direction of where the bears are hiding.
>
> To begin with, we'll get acquainted with your travelling companions. You won't necessarily be spending the rest of your trip with these people – we encourage each of our

travellers to make what they can of the journey on an individual basis, meeting as a group at different points for sharing of stories and ideas. There's plenty of opportunity to share stories, and get a feel for something from someone else's eyes.

By sharing enhanced map-reading skills students could look forward to becoming competent guides and sources of information for other travellers on the journey.

It is the objective and ultimate goal of the map/learner to gain sufficient knowledge and skill to be able to guide others on their journeys, to be a comprehensive source of information that is easy to understand and to be available to all who have different strengths and abilities (i.e., equal opportunity for all).

Risks and Challenges

Several anticipated risks and challenges did not seem to deter the students from undertaking the promised adventures and from responding positively to the challenges identified. Remedies and support structures could be put in place as is illustrated in some students' metaphors:

The Taste Tours of the World saw the student "jumping into the deep end" and when specific doubts may have prevailed advised,

Don't know what to expect, scared that you can't keep up with everyone else on your tour, that you won't like your tour guide, things are moving too fast, too slow, not everything you need is included. . .

STOP {sic} right there. Here at Taste Tours of the World we cater for you. Tour organisers will make sure everything is just as it should be and if not, we will do our best to change it. No pain, no gain.

Students' personal resilience and example and suggestions for dealing with anticipated problems were encouraged as was evident in particular excerpts, "Experience risks and challenges, obstacles which seem too big to conquer, yet Your {sic}personal qualities will shine through that much brighter! Be a beacon of light to others in darkness".

In making the journey through "the land of learning" the student advised that

Possible risks/problems that can be encountered will be the misinterpretation of route indicators or the many diversions that may confuse travellers. To anticipate and offset these risks is to provide assistance or indicate where support groups/services are. The map represents a metaphor of learning that provides an opportunity to enhance analytical and problem solving skills, information processing and knowledge in an Australian historic and geographic context.

The bear hunt suggested some risks and challenges associated with mountain crossings. By following the bear's maxim of not giving in, the student was encouraged to remain focused and, with the help of guides, would be able to actually cross the mountain,

Mountains are the most strenuous to traverse. Steep at times, and covered with treacherous rocks which slip and fall beneath even the sturdiest hiking boots. Just remember, "the bear

went over the mountain", and so shall you. Guides are always posted in such locations. Should you need a hand, don't hesitate to call out. Then you too can see the other side. The view from the top is simply breathtaking.

The trails will all twist and wind through the forest, criss-crossing one another so that at times you will meet fellow travellers, and other times you will be individually journeying. You are never alone – always there is a multitude of life and sights to observe.

The modern Odyssey perceived risks and challenges in the forms of faulty Navigation accompanied by fog, fear, being unknown and lost. "The Isle of the Dead" posed further problems where ghosts and demons lurked as the student engaged in second semester {teaching} rounds and at times felt like an amateur with an accompanying sense of worthlessness.

As a caterpillar, a student perceived enormous risks to be encountered on her journey. However, these could be counteracted by being well prepared

The caterpillar faces the risk of being eaten by prey. As a learning teacher I will face problems in the learning journey. Problems can be minimised by being well prepared and ready for unexpected circumstances. Challenges result in a colourful journey.

Contemplation and Reflection

Contemplation and reflection throughout the learning journey as it unfolded were considered to be essential components of nourishing wellbeing. Some students alluded to the richness of engaging in such processes as are evident by the following excerpts:

Discover new ways to critique your progress and develop further improvements. Reflect on Your journey periodically and make suggestions on how you may overcome difficulties and imperfections. Think inwardly, 'How will you measure your progress?' Think! Listen! Learn!

Contemplate the future as a Teacher and the many lives You hope to positively influence. Think how You can change education for the better. Wow! {sic}

Develop a lifelong love for learning and discovering new ways to teach. Question lecturers, ask peers, search for the truth. These are the duties of a Teacher. Do not be afraid to seek help. Continue to grow in understanding and wisdom.

We recommend taking plenty of photos and recording bear-sightings in a journal. This is perfect to store memories in. as well as an aid to help you share stories and insights into bear behaviour further down the track with your fellow travellers.

The student who likened her learning journey to that of a caterpillar saw a need to further establish her identity as she was nourished by the content of the Course and the practical experiences to be gained in classrooms during the Professional Experience Program. She saw a need for self-reflection and for feedback and assistance to move into the next stage (chrysalis) of her journey:

Along the way the caterpillar needs to be nourished to enter into its own form. As a learning teacher there is a need to absorb all information and what is offered. I will grow as I experience teaching, through self-reflection and through feedback from supervisors. I will require assistance and will need nourishment to move into the state of chrysalis.

Beyond the Learning Journey

Contemplation and reflection prompted some students to visualise how their well-being would have developed by the end of the learning journey. The students who pictured themselves in garden settings imagined themselves as flower gardens in full bloom, as myriads of flourishing seeds, as a young tree beginning to grow on its lifelong journey, and as a unique flower growing beside other unique flowers, representing their colleagues in the Course. These students articulated their anticipated outcomes as follows:

> *The learner I would like to be by the end of the journey, is like a flower garden in full bloom, with the seeds of ideas blossoming into full flower and potential, creating a beautiful garden full of ideas, of differing usefulness in the classroom. A garden constantly that is creating the seeds of ideas from old ones, and new ones blooming with the help of colleagues, peers and ourselves. I like to be like a garden, retaining old ideas when they work and releasing ones that do not and constantly creating new ones.*
>
> *Now my roots spread to a new flower garden which is filled with little seedlings which will grow with help from my roots.*
>
> *The tree is only just beginning to grow, as this is the start of a lifetime of growth and experience and will not just stop growing after I finish this unit.*
>
> *When the Course is over and we are let loose on Victorian schools, we will be yearling trees with good roots as foundations to grow into wise old trees.*

The student engaged in "restumping" her "house" during the Course envisaged her synchronised sense of wellbeing which could be a positive force within the school community:

> *In the long term the house would need a garden to be beautiful and at one with its surroundings in a school. The garden would be the community I would like to cultivate in a school I might work in – the communities in my classrooms and in the wider school. Some of the people who are a part of that garden may want to come into the house at some stage, to become a more intimate part of my life. It would be wonderful if some students were to see a classroom that is part of my house/me as a sanctuary where they can grow in safety, so the doors must always be left open for those who need to come in. It is not my job to push them through.*
>
> *And in the very long term I would like the garden, house, stumps and all within them to meld together into one entwined happy being! My first thought was that where I would like to get to in the end is to be a bit 'Zen' – the classic serene Buddhist monk/nun living a life of community but in complete harmony with herself and the world. I think the house and garden sum it up even more because they take nature, structure building with scaffolding (a vital thing for a teacher). 'rooms' for some of the different 'compartments' of one's life, and character, wisdom and beauty all into consideration.*

Students identified some souvenirs that they acquired during their learning journeys. It was expected that these souvenirs would sustain students' wellbeing in the days beyond the Course. Souvenirs included increased confidence, knowledge about teaching and learning, self-discipline, new skills and compassion for colleagues and pupils. The student who developed his modern Odyssey believed he acquired the "gold" perceived as "treasure" and "metamorphosis" and "destiny" expressed as becoming a competent teacher and the "ENLIGHTENMENT" {*sic*} that accompanied his increased competencies in the fields of learning and teaching.

Other students identified attributes of increased self-esteem, confidence, awareness, resourcefulness, balance of time and life-style commitments, greater understanding of adolescents, respect for colleagues and others associated with the journey, personal assessment of progress and need to include waiting or gestation time in their lives.

Conclusion

At the end of their Course students reflected upon their personal learning journeys. They considered the multiple intelligences they had used in construction of their metaphors and reflected on ways in which their metaphors had enhanced their wellbeing and development as pre-service teachers. Students' individual learning styles were reflected in the range of intelligences selected, both in creating their individual metaphors, and whilst engaging in various learning experiences during their learning journeys. The reflections revealed that, among them, students had used Gardner's (1999) eight intelligences plus the emotional and existential intelligences, in defining their sense of wellbeing within the framework of the Course.

A number of important categories encapsulated students' metaphors and perceptions of their learning journeys and their perceived value in enhancing their sense of wellbeing and preparation for the teaching profession. Categories included flexibility of the Course, creativity within the Course, a focus on the "whole" person, stages of learning and development, links to learning and teaching and the concept of journey. Each of these categories is discussed and illustrated with students' responses.

Flexibility of the Course

Some students indicated that they appreciated the flexibility of the Course in terms of being able to engage in the Course from "a different perspective" and "to try different approaches" to learning and teaching. One student valued the opportunity to verbalise what one of his "preferred learning styles is like", whilst another student discovered that he could "put a different spin on what kind of teacher" he "would like to be". The opportunity to "see something from a different perspective and therefore understand it better" enabled a student "to think outside the normal parameters of the classroom".

Creativity Within the Course

Several students appreciated opportunities to tap into their well spring of creativity during the Course by exploring their creative potential, by creatively linking theory and practice to personal experience and by encouraging students to think laterally.

One student acknowledged and celebrated her latent creativity accordingly, "This was a creative activity and forced me really to try to be creative. I usually say to people 'I'm not creative', but I think this proves I am".

Another student's comment indicated that she was able, in logical steps, to creatively link theory to practice in the Course. She wrote, "It provided an opportunity to analyse, apply and reflect upon my experiences in a creative way as a pre-service teacher in comparison to the theory we have learned". A third student showed her appreciation for permission to go beyond a mundane implementation of the Course by stating, "It allowed me to think in a different way, providing for some creativity".

Clarification of a student's preferred learning style enabled him to attest to its value for teachers in lesson planning and implementation,

> The metaphor exercise was an ideal opportunity to attempt to verbalise what one of my preferred learning styles is like and as a potential teacher, this exercise provided me with the opportunity to try and be creative, a skill necessary for developing engaging lessons.

Focus on the Whole Person

A focus on the whole person through the medium of the personal metaphor was considered by students to be an invaluable asset of the Course. One student summed up such a perception as follows:

> It really highlighted the importance of being a "whole person" with goals, achievements and so on, which has been reflected over and over again throughout the course in the definitions of "effective teachers" and "effective teaching". An effective teacher is a whole person, a reflective person and one who had thought about why they are in that classroom.

Stages of Learning and Development

Instead of being overwhelmed by the extent and demands of the course, through the learning journeys students were able to view the Course in stages according to individual stages of learning and development. Potential challenges and deadlines could thus be anticipated and possibly offset. Within the Land of Learning and its road map metaphor a student explained:

> The road map metaphor illustrated the learning process from beginning (departure point) to the end (destination). The irregular route reflected the variety in the learning process. The detours indicated the unexpected and unplanned learning that takes place in a unit. The various places along the route indicate where specific learning takes place or where specific assessment tasks were to be completed.

Another student gained comfort from her metaphor when she was challenged during the Professional Experience Program. She stated

> I remembered it best at times when I was having difficulty during my rounds, or I felt I wasn't quite understanding something. It reminded me that this is still only the early stages of my development as a teacher, and it is okay to go through rough patches.

It helped me think about what I wanted to achieve this year, where I was coming from and what parts of my background might be useful or not, and consider some of the extra steps I might need to take to do well this year (not just academic work) and as a teacher.

Links to Learning and Teaching

Students' comments indicated that metaphors enabled students to make sound links between aspects of learning (including lifelong learning) and teaching. Some students claimed that they had gained skills in seeing each part of the Course in relation to the Whole. The use of students' multiple intelligences was perceived to be another attribute that would enhance learning and teaching as pre-service teachers engaged in their Professional Experience Programs and made the transition to the teaching profession. With this in mind, one student stated, "For curriculum development, metaphors can cater to students' multiple intelligences in different ways and thus give a teacher a 'peek' into the inner-most thoughts of the student". Other students addressed possible links by stating:

The metaphor exercise made me realise the necessity to try different approaches to the acquisition of knowledge and the expression of that knowledge and through this exercise, possible links between teaching, learning and curriculum development were appreciated.

Through the process of creating the metaphor, you come to realise that all the small parts of what we learn and teach come together to create a whole, and this is what I have learned about the links between teaching, learning and curriculum management – it is possible to view them separately, but better to view them together.

It graphically illustrated the processes involved in teaching, learning and curriculum development. {It showed} how all education related concepts and ideas progresses from beginning (learning focus) to an end (outcome).

Concept of Journey

Finally, the concept of journey provided an overarching direction and support for several students, particularly when their wellbeing was tested by being "bogged down" or during the "rough patches" of the Course. The continuity suggested by the metaphor and learning journey was perceived as a bonus by another student,

It encourages you to see the whole year in full as one great big learning process, rather than dwelling on small blocks which may or may not be going well. In particular, during the difficult times, the metaphor encouraged me to remind myself that rough patches don't last forever.

Another student was able to maintain a focus on her final goal and, at the end of the Course, to check on her overall journey to see if her journey was complete: "I was able to look at who I wanted to become and at the end was able to see if I had completed my journey".

By using her metaphor to link elements of the units and the Professional Experience Program, a student was able to visualise her role as "a beginning teacher" and,

whilst expecting to consolidate her role as she became more confident in the actual classroom, considered that she was "still able to teach".

> *My metaphor enabled me to understand and determine what I needed to know in regards to teaching. It enabled me to see that they are all linked and as a beginning teacher I'm still learning but I am still able to teach.*

Another metaphor that provided a stage-by-stage approach to link the theory and practice of teaching provided appropriate guidance for another student who claimed, "It allowed me to break up the journey of being a teacher and think about the stages I will need to go through to be an effective teacher".

Finally, one student proclaimed the benefits of keeping the entire learning journey in focus by stating:

> *It {the metaphor} allowed me to focus on the entire learning journey, not just on the immediate future, which I tend to do because I am very task orientated. Being able to see the entire journey, and where I was heading, was valuable when I became bogged in study and assignments.*

This section illustrated the rich benefits students claimed that they gained throughout the Course as they initially developed their metaphors and used them to plot and engage in their unique and productive learning journeys.

This chapter focused on metaphors for wellbeing that were developed by a number of pre-service teachers (students) within prescribed education units undertaken during their year-long Graduate Diploma in Education Course. Building upon readings, discussions and reflective activities within the framework of the Course students explored attributes and potential of the metaphor for defining a sense of self and sustaining personal wellbeing. Students used this valuable background knowledge and understanding of "self" to create personal metaphors that represented themselves on a "learning journey" undertaken within their prescribed education units. The findings suggest that the metaphors became not only sources of students' personal wellbeing but also provided sound bases for enhancing students' learning and teaching perceptions within the framework of the pre-service Course and as a preparation for the teaching profession. The metaphors were perceived to be essential components of lifelong journeys, some of which would be creatively lived out by the pre-service teachers as they embarked on their teaching careers in various classrooms throughout Australia and beyond.

Note

1. The Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) Course is a 1-year full-time or equivalent part-time Course offered by Australian Catholic University to graduates who have completed appropriate undergraduate studies. The Course facilitates within a Catholic Christian tradition, the development of reflective, educated, culturally aware and responsive individuals who are able to function effectively as beginning teachers in a variety of contexts and committed to their ongoing professional development.

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Chapter 41
Relating to the Spiritual in the Classroom

Roz Sunley

Abstract Teachers are the gatekeepers to the spiritual dimension in the classroom, and they can develop a quantum role in the education of young people when encouraged to explore their own spiritual autobiographies, in order to model the breadth of human experience and transformative learning.

Relationships lie at the core of teachers' lives, not only with their students and colleagues but also with the relationship between different aspects of their whole lives. Only the person who has learnt to value their own wellbeing and praxis can transform the act of teaching into a holistic engagement with mind, body and spirit for others.

Introduction

"Perhaps the most indispensable thing we can do as human beings, every day of our lives, is remind ourselves and others of our complexity, fragility, finiteness and uniqueness. And this is of course the difficult job, is it not; to move the spirit from its nowhere pedestal to a somewhere place, while preserving its dignity and importance, to recognise its humble origin and vulnerability yet still call upon its guidance" (Damasio, 1994, p. 252).

Daily life in the contemporary English classroom is premised on conformity and compliance. Education, or at least "schooling", is now underpinned by instrumental standards of performance, the language of "effectiveness" and measurable outcomes based on linear development (Hargreaves, 2003). Yet, the philosophy of Plato, the discussions of Aristotle, the concerns of medieval educators and many of today's writers, all testify to education having a spiritual dimension (Schreiner, Banev, & Oxley, 2005; Tacey, 2000; Wright, 2000; Best, 1996; Palmer, 1998). If education is to be more than the sum total of accredited achievement then all the dimensions of human "becoming" need to be valued and given time and space to develop. Education needs to honour not only visible outcomes, but also invisible learning which encourages young people to prepare for life in its fullest sense.

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In spite of this "systems driven" view of education, there is a claim that education is for "the whole person". This includes the physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual. Education is not a statistical exercise, but a deeply personal endeavour.

Teachers are the gatekeepers to the spiritual in the classroom. They can develop a quantum role in the education of young people and transform the act of teaching into an holistic engagement with mind, body and spirit. The spiritual dimension provides a window of opportunity, for both teachers and pupils, to participate in education that refuses to "chunk down" to accreditation; recognises personal growth and formation as more than measurable outcomes; and pays some attention to understanding the act of living. McClaughlin (2003) asserts that teachers who can engage with the spiritual domain "must be certain sorts of people who …can bring to bear the kind of pedagogic phronesis needed for its interpretation and application" (p. 195). This kind of practical wisdom (phronesis), which enables teachers to think and behave in ways that improve life for themselves and their students, is gaining increasing urgency in an ever changing world. Teachers are constantly called to engage in Capra's "continuous dance of energy" (Capra, 1983, p. 91) and actively reshape their meanings and understanding as they engage in what McGettrick calls "pedagogical jazz, in which there is constant improvisation and adaptation of the teaching method to create the beauty of the well-formed person" (2008).

I argue that teachers do not necessarily need to be particular kinds of people, but they do need to value their personal identity and integrity that enables them to resist the demands of political bureaucracies espousing a technocratic worldview (Hargreaves, 2003; Miller, 2000). Ginot asserts that it is the teacher who is "the decisive element in the classroom. It is my approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather" (Ginot, 1972, p. 15). Like Covey, I argue that "integrity is the most fundamental source of personal worth" (2004, p. 298) and congruence between professional activity and personally held beliefs and values is one of the most important ingredients in many teachers' lives (Sunley, 2005).

Teachers need opportunities to reflect on their own spiritual autobiographies if they are to begin to discern the mysteries of their lives, and develop the self-awareness and self-acceptance that enables them to model genuine "teaching presence" (Kessler, 1991, p. 10) with integrity, and some sense of its importance (Sunley, 2005; Kelly, 2008; Palmer, 1998; Hunt, 1992). To ask teachers to relate to the spiritual in the classroom without any consideration of their own understanding of this dimension is akin to asking someone to teach a foreign language without any knowledge of the country or the vocabulary. Palmer compares objective ways of knowing with a more relational form of knowing that is "animated by a desire to come into deeper community with what we know" (Palmer, 1998, p. 54). Little attention has been paid to teachers' own understanding or interpretation of this sphere, and their voice has been largely ignored in the ongoing debate.

Reference is made here to conversations undertaken with teachers in nine English secondary state schools (none of them faith based) as part of research to ripple out the spiritual dimension in their lives in order to gain a more authentic understanding of how teachers relate to the spiritual in the classroom (*comments in italics*). Conversations were shaped by Kelly (1955) and an anthology of ideas reflecting the

integrity of whole human beings, which allowed secondary teachers the time and space to explore the often unspoken conversations about their lives. These conversations yielded comments such as *I chose where the conversation went* or *think I needed to talk about some of these things* and *found it difficult but once I started, haven't been able to shut me up have you?* This study attempted to honour both the contours and inscape of human experience, while exploring the "inner" and "outer" voices and experiences of teachers as whole people, rather than attending to different aspects of their lives in fragmented ways.

The emphasis on teacher effectiveness and efficiency in pedagogy and practice has been a trend that has run the risk of deskilling teachers and so overshadowed their professional and personal qualities of confidence and self-awareness. Evidence suggests that those individuals who develop the confidence and vision to synthesise highly personal attributes that reflect their unique identity and integrity can move beyond mere instrumental skills required for teaching to embrace all the dimensions of human flourishing, which includes the spiritual. They can become "people-in-profession" (Sunley, 2005). They value and honour relationships as much as educational tasks, knowing that learning relationships are the cornerstone of lifelong learning and their own pedagogy and practice. "To move the spirit from its nowhere pedestal to a somewhere place" (Damasio, 1994, p. 252) requires teachers who can develop their own authority to teach from within which enable them to hold the paradoxes evident in education and life. In short they value and respect their own identity and integrity as adult critical thinkers engaged in praxis.

The Spiritual Panorama

The religious contours of our global world are undergoing radical transformation and reshaping so that reference to the spiritual can no longer be considered analogous with any clearly defined religious tradition (Heelas & Woodhead, 2004; Alexander & McClaughlin, 2003; Davie, 1994; Copley, 2000; Chadbourn, 2001; Hull, 1998). Spirituality is one of those ambiguous words that Sheldrake argues "whose meaning everyone claims to know until they have to define it" (Sheldrake, 1991, p. 40). Not only are there semantic differences in the conversation on spiritual meanings, but contemporary education contains other semantic tensions in that the language of efficiency, effectiveness and standards have become the impetus behind many educational policies and practices. This is not the language of spirituality. The prevailing spiritual discourse continues to derive from religious sources, but discussion can no longer be contained within the parameters of traditional religious thinking, and has widened to embrace many different schools of thought. In many ways this dissonance between the language of policy and administration and that of the spiritual may be a major factor in creating difficulties for teachers realising the spiritual domain in their professional practice.

The working understanding of the spiritual dimension used here relates to

deepening inner awareness of our connection with each other, the inexplicable, and the world around us, which animates the human search for meaning (Sunley, 2005).

This description takes up Macquarrie's (1992) notion of becoming more human by "going out" rather than focusing on self-interest. It offers a dynamic, animated approach to spirituality which encompasses people engaged in the human search for meaning as they realise the importance of their interconnection with things visible and invisible. It takes up Wright's notion of "the provocation of awareness" (1998, p. 4) and Freire's meaning making which he maintained was integral to our humanity, and part of our "ontological vocation to become fully human" (1996, p. 55). This is endorsed by Macquarrie (1992) who writes "spirituality has to do with becoming a person in the fullest sense" (p. 40). The spiritual is not a separate domain of higher experience, but is contiguous with ordinary life (Cupitt, 1998; Wheatley, 2002). According to Tacey (2000) "spirituality is not some marginal experience, it is pivotal and central" (p. 22) and rather than being some extravagant escapism from the world, is a human birthright that tribal and indigenous people have never forgotten. Palmer calls this birthright the "spiritual DNA of our uniqueness" or the seed of individual selfhood which may become obscured during our journey through life, but often reappears during the "unwalling" of the ageing process which allows more of the original core to be revealed (Palmer, 2004, p. 32).

This working description reflects Priestley's contention that spirituality cannot be accurately defined, but merely described (Priestley, 2002). To confine spirituality to any one of the diverse interpretations on offer today is to discount the spiritual experience of others because they do not fit a predetermined and recognisable framework. This understanding emphasises the vitality and animation that provide the natural dynamic for human life, coupled with a quest for connection that many religious and non-religious writers claim lies at the core of our humanity (Rilke, 1954; Palmer, 1998; Nouwen, 1996; Macquarrie, 1992; Heron, 1998; Freire, 1996). This relational understanding also highlights not only the "self-in-relation" to which Heelas and Woodhead (2004) refer, but echoes the "relational consciousness" that Hay and Nye (1998) concluded best explained young children's approach to this dimension.

Wheatley argues that we are all called to become explorers and adventurers in this newly identified universe of chaos and participation. Similarly Ferrer calls us to a spiritual "ocean of participation" (Ferrer, 2002, p. 191). Participation and cooperation are essential in these new horizons, and human beings need to be free to construct and take personal responsibility if they are to engage fully with these realities. Spirituality in this panorama refers to participation, by whole human beings, in all dimensions of life.

McGrath argues that "deep within us all lies a longing for absolute security, to be able to know with absolute certainty" (McGrath, 2006, p. 23) yet Rilke talks about the need to "live the questions now" rather than seeking out predetermined answers that preclude space for uncertainty" (Rilke, 1954, p. 35). Sometimes there simply are no answers. Sometimes all we can do is live the questions. There are no blue prints in an ever changing world—we have to make it up as we go along—that too is part of our humanity. Freire offered a world that was not a static, given reality, but one in which humans must engage. Wheatley takes this idea further declaring

> This need to discover ourselves is unnerving. I keep hoping I'm wrong and that someone,
> somewhere really does have the answer. But I know we don't inhabit that universe any

longer. In this new world, you and I have to make it up as we go along, not because we lack expertise of planning skills, but because this is the nature of reality. Reality changes shape and meaning as we are in it. It is constantly new. We are required to be there, as active participants. It can't happen without us, and nobody can do it for us (Wheatley, 1999, p. 174).

There are times we are called to practise what Palmer calls "being alone together" in order to balance the learning from within with lessons from our relationships with the outside world (Palmer, 2004, p. 54).

Existential discussions about life and death, morality and meaning may not be part of formal teacher knowledge, yet conversations arising out of learning about great artistic treasures, classic literature, scientific discoveries, historical events, world religions, natural disasters, current ethical issues can all give rise to difficult questions about human contingency. MacIntyre and Dunne (2002) contend that educators are charged with helping students recognise their lives as narratives, and Fullan (1993) talks about teachers having responsibility for the inner and outer learning of their students. Such emotionally challenging dialogue requires teachers to call upon a level of engagement and awareness for which there can be no theoretical preparation. A teacher's experience combines what Polanyi (1983) calls "tacit knowing", with Ferrer's "participatory knowing" which includes "the visionary and intuitive knowing of the soul" (Ferrer, 2002, p. 121). Csikszentmihalyi observes that what we call our lives are the "sum total of all we have heard, seen, felt, hoped and suffered" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002, p. 27).

The spirit in this discussion refers to an interdependent aspect of human wholeness that includes physical, intellectual, emotional and relational dimensions of human existence.

Perhaps the main issue is that there is no clear congruence between a philosophy of education; the educational system; the school; the classroom; and the learner. It would not be difficult to argue that educational philosophies can encompass the whole person. Indeed there are few who would recoil from that idea, although many would believe that personal belief systems should not fall within the sphere of public education. Whether there is a clear articulation of a philosophy in many systems is open to question. Systems are so often driven by the operational and the pragmatic. This means paying attention—some would say undue attention—to measurable outcomes and to the immediate. Such a view then impacts on school accountability systems and ultimately on the learner.

Throughout this cascade the spiritual is always on the margins. It is contentious in its definition, obscure in its language and lacks confidence in its operation. It is not easily measurable and it provides little impact to those who see education in more prosaic terms. In a world of economism, it appears to add little of economic benefit. In short, it requires people of conviction and of passion to insist on its place in education.

In a society that is increasingly "risk averse" the idea of promoting a domain of human development that cannot readily be identified or measured requires true conviction. The risk averse society does not embrace doubt or uncertainty. Of course this provides an education which is about certainty, compliance, the known, the immediate and the measurable. The world of the spiritual is not like that. It refers to

matters beyond the immediate and sees a much deeper human yearning for beliefs, ideas, feelings and conviction that cannot be expressed in behavioural terms.

Some writers argue that there are many people who remain oblivious to the spiritual in their lives (Dawkins, 1996; Gray, 2002), yet every human being, at some time, has to face searching existential questions about their own lives, be they career decisions, relationship issues, the absence of hope, coping with death and loss—no one can escape their innate humanity. Just as the word "love" in the English lexicon encompasses many different varieties of relationships and attachments that do not necessarily share a common factor, so too spirituality is perhaps best considered as a complex set of themes rather than a search for some definable spiritual essence. Armstrong contends "this inner self is not defined by achievements or knowledge or accomplishments, but rather by the personal style of our approach to existence" (Armstrong, 2001, p. 50).

Teachers who are still learning about themselves, asking questions about life, seeking meaning in their relationships, not only with others, but also the relationship between different aspects of their whole lives, can provide role models for young people. It is in their "personal style of (our) approach to existence" (Armstrong, 2001, p. 50) and in the dynamic interchange of ideas and questions that the educational journey moves beyond any formal curriculum to become truly interactive, meaningful and life enhancing.

Paradoxes in Education

> The purpose of education is to show a person how to define himself authentically and spontaneously in relation to the world – not to impose a prefabricated definition of the world, still less an arbitrary definition of the individual himself (Merton, 1979, p. 3).

One of the academic challenges facing teachers in a rapidly changing global world is how to model flexible and dynamic approaches to pedagogy if they are to respond and adapt to innovation and uncertainty outside education. New global technologies have opened up growing fields of knowledge, and yet Prange reminds us that although education is an observable social process, learning is deeply personal, "invisible and strictly individual" (Prange, 2004, p. 507). The first derives from a pedagogy that is dependent on the technical demands of our time, the latter from a pedagogy of dialogue. Just as the global marketplace is beginning to recognise the importance of collaboration and relationships in sustainable growth, so too education needs to value creative learners and learners of a very different kind who can respond to the twenty-first century challenges of uncertainty and rapid change. Education is preparing learners for jobs that do not even exist today, using technology that has not yet been invented with teachers who can remember life in a "Before Google" era (McGettrick, 2008).

Current assessment structures provide the key to control in an archaic educational ideology that views knowledge as a product, whereas the complexities and ongoing mysteries of twenty-first century living challenge this model for lifelong learning.

Humans also need to embrace self-knowledge, interpersonal issues, uncertainty and choices as part of their life experience, which requires awareness of a world of interconnections that transcends what can be seen and measured. To move from acquiring the professional knowledge, skills and values that underpin teaching, to the personal and professional integration required to *become a teacher* involves the sum of the indivisible parts of the individuals involved.

Given the cacophony of conflicting messages in this new world, with its fragmentation of roles (MacIntyre, 2003) it is increasingly difficult for many to live an integrated life given the "contradictions between inner and outer reality" (Palmer, 2004, p. 14). This presents a challenge to teacher resilience (Gu & Day, 2006) in contemporary contexts for teaching. Professional integrity—that combination of attitude and outward behaviour—is being undermined by pressure to conform to the regulatory frameworks of education that do not reflect the preoccupations of teachers working within them. The voice of the teacher is generally restricted to a limited range of issues concerning curriculum and assessment. This language of prescription and control is neither the vocabulary in which teachers express meaning in their lives, nor the language of spirituality. Teachers rarely actually name and frame what they do on a daily basis outside the language of accountability and achievement.

The dissonance between personally espoused beliefs and values and relentless educational change reflects the gap between teachers' vision of professionalism and being required to deliver what they deem to be an increasingly prescriptive curriculum that denies scope for human difference and ability. I argue that a person-in-profession can develop their own authority to teach from within, using all the dimensions of their lives, which enable them to hold the paradoxes evident in education and life. Teachers who can combine different aspects of who they are, what they know, and what they do have perhaps found a way to bridge the divide between the constraints of the system and their own personally espoused beliefs. They have given themselves time to value self-awareness, and can put into words and practice what they think, feel, know and value. They make time for the relational aspects of their lives and feel they can exercise professional discernment in the best interests of their students, and make a contribution to the wider aims of education. This focus on the "how" of education, rather than the "what" is surely one important way that teachers can provide opportunities for themselves and their pupils to relate to the spiritual in the classroom.

Despite the uniformity of educational expectations, the sheer unpredictability of individual existence (Schon, 1983) means that teachers are called upon to respond immediately and spontaneously to questions about life that have puzzled philosophers since the beginning of time. McGettrick (2008) argues that "change has no tradition, and without culture we are on the high seas of change with no compass, no map, and no harbour in sight". Barnett (2000) argues that in today's quantum world of multiple interpretations and frameworks of understanding, the key challenge is now "educating for the formation of human beings" (Barnett, 2000, p. 153). This provides a very different emphasis about the purposes of education from the prevailing information society and curriculum focused education that predominates today.

Copley suggests that the spiritual dimension is "one of the few surviving 'child centred' activities within a centralised curriculum dominated by 'subjects' and 'facts' and testing" (Copley, 2000, p. 112). In 1999, 80 international holistic educators met in Chicago and drew up a vision of education for the beginning of the twenty-first century. This vision included "a new understanding of the role of the teacher" as "a blend of artistic sensitivity and scientifically grounded practice" (Schreiner et al., 2005, p. 85). They asserted the link between spirituality and education expressed through "talents, abilities, intuition and intelligence" and endorsed the notion that education was about finding meaning as well as facts and skills (pp. 89–90).

This leaves a paradox in education today—namely a schooling system driven by visible, quantifiable success and recordable, universal performance indicators which claims to educate the whole child. Sixty years ago Simone Weil (Weil, as cited in Souper, 1985) suggested that schools were busy, noisy places—where there was no time for the spiritual. The only possibility lay in new approaches to the way the curriculum was presented. She wanted to encourage *kairos*—time in the sense of awareness of the present moment; to attend to what Murray calls "the quiet air bars between the bars of our attention" (Murray, 1983, p. 2). Current education is predicated on *chronos*, i.e. managed prescribed outcomes in linear time. So the problem still exists.

Spirituality of the Child

> *I think the spirit is something you feel so strongly about you can't put into words…. I can sometimes feel that my ancestors wrote the song or poem…because it means so much to you. It can be like your heart's desire…that you don't know about (11 year old boy).*

This moving description suggests that despite exponential changes in science and technology that are changing the way we work, live and play, young people still engage with their intrinsic human spirituality. There are huge educational incentives to encourage children's intellectual, social and economic potential, and yet very little explicit reason to promote opportunities for spiritual growth. Although much of educational pedagogy is couched in terms of development, Priestley (2002) cautions against assuming spiritual maturity accompanies lifelong learning, echoing Nye's research that showed the ease and wealth of children's expression of spiritual experience that is not always accessed so confidently by adults. Nye suggests that

> Children may be the model for adult spiritual development rather than the reverse…A task…may be to recapture the child's more inclusive and all pervading sense of relations to the spiritual which means that for them it is normally "everyday" rather than dramatic (Hay and Nye, 1998, p. 137).

Priestley (2002) reminds us that the word "dimension" is simply an aspect of something that is already there, rather than an addition. This idea underpinned my own study as I argue that the spiritual is an integral part of what it means to be

human. The potential for this aspect of human existence is theoretically open to everyone, it is the realisation of that latent possibility that is not equally open to everyone as a result of continuing confusion over meaning and application. The diversity of perspectives can prevent a suitable dialogue in matters relating to the spiritual, and this can influence the nature of conversations.

One metaphor used in education is to describe education as a conversation across the generations about matters of significance. In such conversations, of course, there is a need for a shared language. Yet there is a shift in contemporary language. Young people today have access to continual communication through such diverse channels as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails and personalised web pages. This technology encourages "continuous partial attention" (Stone, 1998) which allows us to be constantly accessible, but actually makes us increasingly inaccessible to those quiet spaces in our attention. While global technology offers widening personal and educational opportunities, there is still a human being at the heart of learning. Each individual learner has human needs of relationship and meaning which merit time and encouragement in education.

Spirituality of the Teacher

If spirituality continues to cause confusion outside the educational context, it is also a term that few teachers volunteer when discussing their own professional lives. Teachers rarely get opportunities to talk about themselves, to reassess where they are in terms of their own learning journeys, or to value their own voice. Gu and Day (2006) conclude their review of VITAE research, funded by the UK Department for Education and Skills over 4 years, into teachers' work, lives and effectiveness by suggesting further research into "why and how generally teachers maintain a continuing positive contribution despite the range of experiences they encounter in their work environments which challenge their commitment" (Gu & Day, 2006, p. 13). My own research supports Rogers (1967) and Goodlad (1997) in suggesting that teachers' commitment to their professional lives is often rooted in the relational aspects of their work, which transform the work of teaching into something more akin to personal vocation. They bring more than professional skills into their daily interaction with students and colleagues, they bring themselves as relational human beings (Rogers, 1967; Sunley, 2005).

Teachers begin their careers with optimism, enthusiasm and a determination to make a difference in the lives of young people. The demands of an audit society that pays little attention to the experiences and aspirations of its teachers can soon erode this commitment. Hargreaves (2003) argues that in an educational world dominated by targets and standards there is an urgent need for teachers to recover the notion of teaching as a "sacred vocation that pursues a compelling social mission" (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 5). Perhaps more important in a quantum age is Fullan's contention that "keeping in touch with our inner voice, personal reflection and capacity to be alone are essential under conditions of constant change forces" (1993,

p. 35). In my study few teachers demonstrated the confidence or vocabulary to talk explicitly about what they might call a spiritual dimension in their own lives, echoing Hay's assertion about the privatisation of spirituality which reduces it to little more than "private comfort in times of distress" (Hay & Nye, 1998, p. 18).

There were a few comments that highlighted spirituality as an intrinsic part of human nature *it's my inner self, my personality, my spirituality – something that is necessary for me to work properly...it's like I get energy from it* and another, *it's about being human*. Two teachers recognised the spiritual in themselves as a response to nature and art. *Feel myself rising up in my seat...at almost a spiritual level* and *feeds the life in my soul, spirit and essence*. The intensity of some of the moments have similarities with Bradley's "intertwining of the natural and supernatural, the material and the spiritual" (1993, p. 37).

The irony persists that although spirituality can no longer be considered analogous with religious belief, evidence from this study shows that those with more traditional religious beliefs still find it easier to talk about spiritual matters. Perhaps a personal connection with religious vocabulary makes the spiritual dimension easier to discuss than for others who, in avoiding religious terminology, struggle to articulate similar ideas in contemporary terms. However, there is an inherent danger in dismissing the spiritual in the seeming absence of overtly expressed "spiritual language".

It is important to acknowledge that not all aspects of "the inner self" are spiritual. Much more attention might well be given to differentiating the spiritual from the emotional or the motivational or the reflective. However, it may also be useful to bear in mind that these are all human constructs of a single reality. These are man-made constructs which strive to offer ways of analysing and describing the human condition. They do not exist independently of one another. This is an issue both of language and of definition.

Some occasions are not always explicitly referenced as spiritual *something that speaks to you about innermost feelings you can't describe*. Several teachers talked about *lightbulb moments*, moments that left indelible marks on individual life stories, when *suddenly they manage to do something that for the rest of the kids is dead simple, but for them is a major step*. These are often small, incidental moments that make a huge impact on the teacher's sense of meaning and purpose. One mentioned the unforgettable smile of a boy with a visual impairment who was able to see the bright light from burning magnesium, *that was a real cracker*.

Spirituality is the philosophy of education employed by all teachers, within all their subjects and across the board, so that it becomes a way of practice. This unusually confident explanation of the spiritual dimension was exhibited by a teacher with a singular personal passion for this element of school life. It provides an insight into how and why the spiritual can be realised in education. It echoes Weill's notion that it can be an integral part of professional practice—manifest in the approach, rather than the content of the curriculum (Weill, cited Souper, 1985).While research has shown that teachers have the greatest impact on educational improvement (van den Berg, 2002), little has been written about their individual impact on the realisation of the spiritual dimension in the classroom. Just as one of the constraints on the

spiritual in schools is rooted in teachers' own lack of confidence, and reluctance, conversely, a teacher's own attention to themselves as whole human beings, with an integrated spirituality, can impact positively on students.

However, the problem of language renders the concept meaningless to many teachers. A follow-up conversation with a deputy head revealed *It's the word spiritual. It's a maligned word…in an increasing secular society. It's like political correctness is a maligned expression. There is no doubt that the sentiments behind political correctness are absolutely right*. For some the concept of spirituality is so elusive as to be rendered meaningless. Comments such as "*intellectually bankrupt*" may reflect a commonly felt, if rarely expressed views about the issue. This unfamiliarity, or discomfort, with this aspect of their own lives suggests that teachers cannot confidently model or encourage this area in the lives of their students.

Relating to the Spiritual

If teacher autonomy and professionalism is under threat, teachers' existential meanings still endorse the centrality of relationships in their lives. When their discourse is allowed to break free of the constraints of a prevailing regulatory model of education, their concerns are about contributing to the lives of whole young people, rather than achieving predetermined goals. Evidence suggests that many teachers already understand and access elements of what might be described as a spiritual dimension in education. Their thinking focuses on quality of life rather than social conditioning, economic efficiency and measurable achievement. What they lack most is self-awareness, which allows them to develop a reflective approach to life. Hay (1998) cites awareness and reflection as two critical areas in professional practice if teachers are to actively participate in the spiritual development of their pupils.

Relationships with students and colleagues are however paramount, summarised by comments such as *a healthy school is a school where relationships are as important as tasks* and *my job as a teacher has meaning and purpose by the quality of the relationships I have with students* or *relationships have to be at the core of what I am doing*. This perhaps supports the idea that it is in the relational aspects of their work that teachers are able to sustain their sense of self and personal identity (Giddens, 1992; Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000; Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Self-understanding comes through engagement with others, a discovery of "who we are face to face and side by side with others in work, love and learning" (Bellah, 1985, p. 84). This is echoed in the teacher comment *Relationships have to be at the core of what I am doing with them. My part of the relationship is to help them find out who they want to be, and to help them be that*. This relational dynamic perhaps opens a window on the spiritual dimension of our humanity.

Many teachers are deliberately and consciously illuminating their students' search for meaning, and helping them make connections with the unexplained mysteries of life. There are special moments to be derived from *sharing time and*

experiences and maybe discussing values and what's important to us. And what's important may well be different among different pupils. Sharing allows teachers to grow in their capacity to transcend self *I can put myself in the background…their growth is important to me.* In their study of children's spirituality, Hay and Nye (1998) concluded that "relational consciousness" was the best way of describing how children express their spirituality. This study suggests that adults too are consciously aware of the importance of the relational aspects of their life and work. The key findings suggest that teachers are most concerned about relationships, not only with people, but also between the different aspects of their lives. All the themes that emerged were relational in some way. While teachers are fluent in the explicit and implicit importance of the relational aspects of their lives, there is little to suggest that they necessarily see this as more than socio-cultural discourse as in this comment …*don't know that it is spiritual, maybe it isn't spiritual…maybe its cultural or social, rather than spiritual…children interacting, learning to listen to others and appreciate each other's point of view.* Here is evidence of a teacher encouraging students to really pay attention to each other, as they share and appreciate what animates their individual lives.

Whatever understanding of the spiritual is used in schools, time and space for reflection are essential ingredients if this area of the curriculum is to be realised by both teachers and students. However, as one teacher commented, *we haven't got time for reflective practice in the teaching profession.* Some of the most frequent comments related to how rarely they talked about or stepped back from their professional lives. *We don't' talk about why we are here, only time we do is at interviews.* Another commented *What a shame I haven't had this conversation with my head of department or people in my team…they would realise …why I am passionate about the things that I am, and what a shame that I don't have the time or opportunity to hear them.* Given the other measurable targets and standards that teachers are required to achieve with their students, it is perhaps not surprising that this more intangible area of school life is so often sidelined and constrained by the predominating instrumental dialogue about target setting, individualised learning and value-added scores. Even relationships suffer from a lack of time in comments such as *Never enough time to engage properly* and *regret there isn't time to build them properly….purely functional due to the sheer pressure of time/amount of things they, and I, have to do.*

The cultural shift in recent years, from lives lived according to external expectation, to a focus on subjective relational experiences (Heelas & Woodhead, 2004) is beginning to be reflected in a growing emphasis on learner-centred and personalised learning policies. However, the relational aspects of learning are still often overlooked in favour of behaviours that promote traditional institutional systems of control and management and package education as preparation for "real life" in the world outside of school. Such an approach fails to acknowledge and value the real learning for life to be found in the relationships that teachers co-create and model with their pupils on a daily basis as the cornerstone of good learning.

Listening to the voice of the teacher suggests a range of possible interpretations of how teachers might be naming and framing the spiritual dimension in their work.

1. The importance they attach to the relational aspects of their lives suggests they are often unknowingly realising a relational spirituality in the classroom, even if they do not name it as such.

2. The emphasis on relationships is teachers' way of managing within prescriptive systems which enables them to express some of their personally espoused beliefs that contribute to their efforts to achieve a congruent life. It is suggested that teachers' own focus on human relationships is one way they can continue working within limiting curricula without denying their personal identity and integrity. Teachers face increasing value conflicts as they struggle to find harmony between the competing voices prevalent in their professional and personal lives. Education is predicated on regulation, certainty and control, yet the world is an uncertain, contestable place. We are called to continually change our understanding of life as a result of dynamic interchanges with our surroundings (Windross, 2004).

3. The professional ethic is captured, not in some remote and distant set of principles, but in the relationships that the teacher has with students. It is in that relationship that we find the true spirit of the professional, and the spirituality of the professional person. This "professional spirituality" is a key feature of classroom practice. It is based on a sense of hope and optimism for the optimal development of the student, not only as a learner, but as a whole person.

4. Preoccupation with practice means there is little time, energy or inclination to stop and reflect, in the words of one teacher *a luxury perhaps we shouldn't be affording ourselves*. The perceived lack of opportunity for self-encounter was one of the most frequent comments, and highlights the emphasis on "doing" rather than "being" that teachers have in their lives. Reaction rather than reflection is the norm. It is argued that teachers need opportunities for professional dialogue and the development of a wider range of skills that encourage personal growth through reflection, conversation and relationship. The challenge is how to provide time and space for dialogue that encourages "thinking aloud" and "thinking allowed" as a regular element of school life, which is not allowed to fall victim to system pressures.

5. The demands of teaching stifle the development of a meta-language in which to discuss professional practice. Teachers rarely have reason to rehearse and practice the language of human "wholeness" in the dominant discourses of efficiency and accountability and yet they willingly engage in extra-curricular activities and creative lesson planning that constitute an additional, often self-imposed workload that enables them to realise their personal vision of education for life. Teachers are exhorted to encourage critical thinking with their students, yet feel increasingly that they are required to uncritically implement outside policies and act as mediators of new ideas and political agendas. They rarely discuss their philosophy of education with anyone. I suggest there is very little opportunity for teachers to think about or challenge constraints on the human spirit, which in England is offered by government inspectors as an element of spiritual growth (Ofsted, 2004).

6. Those teachers who are able to synthesise their experience and practice and develop their own authority to teach from within, using all the dimensions of their lives, enables them to hold the paradoxes evident in education and life.

It also allows them to understand the big issues in life which Palmer contends "always takes place at the crossroads of the personal and the public" (Palmer 1998, p. 63). Some teachers experience rapid professional growth and begin to build up a wealth of insight while others repeat similar patterns of behaviour over a teaching career. To move from "teaching" to "becoming a teacher" or educator in its fullest sense of accompanying others on the learning journey, requires a multiplicity of gifts and abilities. These include an ability to make authentic connections in all aspects of life (Fullan, 1993) and to develop a harmony or "inner congruence" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Palmer (2004) argues that a teacher who can share his or her identity with students can be more effective in the classroom than the "masked and armoured" professional who generates feelings of insecurity and inauthentic relationships that undermine students' own engagement with learning (p. 16). Those who learn to "live the questions" (Rilke, 1954) are enabled to safeguard space for the spiritual dimension in the classroom.

A newly qualified teacher is rather like a traveller in a foreign city for the first time—with only a sketchy knowledge of the language, dependent on a guide book and cautious about stepping off the marked roads. In comparison, an experienced teacher is more akin to the seasoned traveller who has learnt not only the official language but also the local dialects. They have less need for written instruction, relying more on wealth of experience and confidence acquired during previous journeys. They are more inclined to take a chance with a few unmarked paths, are ready to consider alternative destinations, and be guided by what Rogers called "a changing understanding and interpretation of (my) experience" (Rogers, 1967, p. 27). Echoing Kierkegaard, he observed that this process of "becoming" involves self-encounter and a movement from conformity towards self-direction and continual change. Continuing professional development continues to emphasise knowledge as a product, whereas the demanding contexts of life and education in the twenty-first century challenge this prevailing ideology.

Encouraging the Spiritual in the Classroom

New approaches to professional development offer ways of helping teachers take back control and become proactive in their own creative professionalism. Perhaps greater attention needs to be given to the value of sabbaticals as "breathing spaces" for teachers if they are to model "a readiness to challenge all that would constrain the human spirit" (Ofsted, 2004, p. 1). Such opportunities have been shown to impact positively on educational practice (Palmer, 2004), and can contribute to a more authentic understanding of those personal approaches to existence that it has been suggested characterise the spiritual dimension in schools. Revitalising professional commitment is vital if the haemorrhaging of professional talent is to be stemmed,

and teachers are to remain committed to relating to life in its widest sense in class-rooms of the future. Education has to be concerned not just with knowing how to live the good life, but be part of actually living one.

The spiritual dimension of education is central to living life. Whether the language used is "spirituality" or some term which encompasses a view that education is for the whole person, there is always an imperative to get beyond the here and now. Education cannot be simply motivated for living for the present with no concern for the longer term or the deeper issues that sustain all human beings. This is a concern for all human existence and human need; in short, a concern for the significance of the spiritual in the classroom.

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Chapter 42
Seeking the Spiritual: The Complexities of Spiritual Development in the Classroom

Kate Adams

Abstract This chapter explores the role of spiritual development in primary schools in the UK context, focussing on the hidden nature of children's spirituality and how teachers can provide children with opportunities within the curriculum to share and explore their spirituality. An emphasis is placed on describing the range of spiritual experiences which children have. These are often hidden from adults as society's taboos, and adult disinterest can discourage children from revealing their spirituality. This chapter encourages teachers to become more aware of children's spiritual experiences and to incorporate them into the curriculum. In doing so, children's wellbeing, and in turn their learning, can be enhanced.

Spiritual Development in a Curriculum: A Gift?

I first met an American academic who studies children's spirituality at a conference in England. It was a gloriously hot day and we talked eagerly about our work, sharing experiences of conversations we had had with children in our respective countries. There was a pause for a moment as she sighed and then said, "oh you are so lucky living and working in England. You have so many key academics in spirituality here, and all your schools address spiritual development. Your education system must be so wonderful, with all that nurturing of spirituality..." The next pause was due to me as I wondered how to phrase my answer without denting her admiration and enthusiasm. "Well, yes, there are many schools which undertake wonderful work in spiritual development. But I'm not so sure that this excellence is as widespread as you think". I could see a flicker of anxiety dash across her face. She rightly noted that spiritual development is enshrined in England's legislation, and we went on to discuss the reasons for why it is not, in practice, always given an important status.

Echoing our conversation, this chapter begins with an exploration of the status of spiritual development in England and Wales and offers a brief overview of

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the debated complexities which its requirement holds for primary schools. These include the discussions around definition and inconsistencies in the inspection of its provision. The chapter then focuses on a complexity at the heart of the issue— a lack of awareness and disinterest in spirituality among teachers. It describes ways in which children's spirituality might be expressed, and explores reasons why many teachers do not fully engage with children's spiritual development. Recommendations for ways forward are made.

Spiritual Development in the School

Spiritual development has a long history in our education system, first appearing in the 1944 Education Act which asked education authorities to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community. At that time, it referred to an explicit focus on Christian spirituality. In the late 1980s a National Curriculum was launched through the 1988 Education Reform Act which also required schools to provide for "children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development" (SMSC). This focus on SMSC has continued to remain. The Education (Schools) Act 1992 created the government inspection body, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). One of the elements which Ofsted is charged with inspecting is schools' provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

For teachers, much confusion reigned over what the term "spiritual development" actually meant. Academics were agreed perhaps on only one thing—that the definition of spiritual is not agreed upon (Watson, 2001). Teachers, of course, needed some clarification, so a discussion paper was published by the National Curriculum Council (NCC), which later became the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA). This defined spiritual development as follows:

> applying to something fundamental in the human condition which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses and/or expressed through every day language. It has to do with relationships with other people and, for believers, with God. It has to do with the universal search for individual identity – with our responses to challenging experiences such as death, suffering, beauty and encounters with good and evil. It has to do with the search for meaning and purpose in life and for values by which to live (SCAA, 1995, p. 2).

The document made clear that spiritual development should be cross curricular. It also emphasised the important role that Religious Education (RE) and the daily act of collective worship, both required by law in all schools, also have in promoting spiritual development.

When Ofsted was created and charged with inspecting spiritual development, further explanation was needed so that teachers knew what the inspectors were seeking. Ofsted (2004) subsequently offered the following definition:

> Spiritual development is the development of the non-material element of a human being which animates and sustains us and, depending on our point of view, either ends or continues in some form when we die. It is about the development of a sense of identity, self-worth, personal insight, meaning and purpose. It is about the development of a pupil's "spirit".

Some people may call it the development of a pupil's "soul"; others as the development of "personality" or character' (Ofsted, 2004, p. 12).

Both documents view spirituality as being part of the human condition, irrespective of whether or not a person has faith (Davies, 2007).

Some Difficulties With "Spiritual Development"

Whilst intending to clarify the situation for teachers, some theorists challenged their attempts. For example, Thatcher (1996) argues that these definitions do not take into account the theological foundations upon which spirituality is historically based.

Watson (2001) argues that Ofsted is offering confusing messages about spirituality's relationship with religion and Religious Education. Whilst the documents clearly state that spirituality is not synonymous with religion, she found, by studying the Ofsted reports of secondary schools in one county in England, that inspectors were strongly linking their judgements to collective worship and RE. This is surprising given that spiritual development, according to government guidance, must be cross curricular. Such inconsistencies in inspection can only serve to confuse educators further.

A further difficulty which demands attention and which has been the focus of debate is the term "development". Whilst teachers are comfortable with the notions of cognitive or physical development, the idea of spiritual development can cause significant anxieties. "Development" of course can imply a linear progression based on Piagetan views (Priestley, 1996), which is a concept that can be problematic in itself. When applied to spirituality, we need to ask how spirituality can develop. How can a teacher identify its progression? What moral right does one person have to judge another person's level of spirituality? As Erricker, Ota and Erricker (2001) and Watson (2001) observe, the spiritual is impossible to measure. This creates significant difficulties for teachers who are very much familiar with the need to assess and measure children's achievement in other aspects of the curriculum.

Hence a debate about the need to nurture children's spirituality rather than develop their spirituality has ensued (Davies, 1998; Hay & Nye, 2006). Meehan (2002, p. 291) also argues that there should be a distinction between "spiritual development" which he sees as being educational in intent and relevant to all children, and "developing spiritually" which refers to having a catechetical intent which is appropriate for some. Whilst the full extent of such debates cannot be detailed here, it is important to note Eaude's (2006) point that as the term development exists in both legislation and the inspection framework, it cannot be avoided in this context.

The difficulties outlined above are well documented in the literature. Here I focus on additional complications which teachers face—a lack of awareness and often a lack of interest in children's spirituality. Alongside the theoretical debates on definition and terminology lies another very practical problem: there is often little emphasis placed on spiritual development in initial teacher training, leaving many teachers with an inadequate understanding of what it is and how it should be addressed in the classroom (Wright, 2000). If teachers enter the profession without

an understanding of spiritual development, there is little hope that they will suddenly be inspired by the concept and seek training. Once qualified, teachers have a consistently high workload outside of the classroom, involving paperwork, lesson preparation, attending meetings, hosting out-of-hours activities etc. The emphasis on the delivery of the curriculum, argue Erricker et al. (2001), means that many teachers do not have sufficient time to give spiritual development the attention it deserves. Time to read the professional literature on spirituality is indeed scarce but Erricker et al.'s statement assumes that a teacher has a desire to learn more about children's spirituality. A wider issue comes into play here: children's spirituality is often hidden in society and, because of this, its unseen nature means that many adults, including teachers, do not give it much attention. I return to discuss the reasons for, and implications of, this hidden nature later, but first consider how a child's spirituality might be recognised.

Recognising Children's Spiritual Experience

What actually constitutes spiritual experience is, to a considerable extent, debatable and this is inevitable when there is little agreement over what constitutes spirituality. This places more onus on the adult working with children to be well informed of debates. In many ways, whether an experience is spiritual or not can be a matter of perception. For one person, the night sky with its shining stars and glimpses into other galaxies can be an incredibly emotive experience, raising questions of life on other planets, a sense of infinity and a sense of smallness in the face of the immense size of the universe. Yet another person looking at the same scene may have no reaction at all.

Seeking the Spiritual

Given that people have different perceptions and definitions of what is spiritual, identifying spiritual experience can be fraught with difficulties. However, researchers have identified commonly recurring themes in their studies of children's spirituality (see Adams, Hyde, & Woolley, 2008, for a more comprehensive discussion). A common theme, which teachers are particularly aware of due to its inclusion in government guidance (for example Ofsted, 2004) is that of awe and wonder. Daniel Scott (2004) interviewed adults, asking them to recollect childhood experiences which they perceived as being spiritual. He spoke to Joyce who recounted an evening when she was 3 years old when her older brother took her outside to look at a full moon. It was the first time that she had noticed the moon and was in awe of its beauty and was overwhelmed by the sense of her place in a vast universe. Children's engagement in moments of awe and wonder are commonplace as they explore the world around them and become enthralled by new observations and discoveries. Champagne (2001) describes such an example of a young girl being captivated by a feather floating on the tide which occupied her for almost half an hour. These two examples illustrate how children can feel connected to the natural

world. Hay and Nye (2006) observed in their analysis of conversations with children, how spirituality has a strong element of relational consciousness. Frequently, children were expressing a relational component in their conversations, and Hay and Nye identified four types. One was a child–world consciousness which embodied a child's sense of connection with the natural world around them, as exhibited in these examples of awe and wonder.

Another of Hay and Nye's (2006) categories relates to children's relationship with a Transcendent Other, sometimes named God. Such experiences are particularly relevant to teachers given the documentation's emphasis on spiritual development's special relationship to RE. A child's relationship to the divine can take many forms. For example, as Hart (2003) shows, children often report seeing angels. Some children recount instances of hearing or seeing God, some of which occur in dreams. David, an 11-year-old boy living in Scotland, reported a dream which occurred following an argument with his best friend. In the dream David was floating up through the clouds and saw a concrete path. On the path he saw a large "shining" man, whom he believed to be God, and the friend with whom he had fallen out. The shining figure floated away, leaving David and his friend together. They shook hands and the dream ended. David explained that he thought that the reason they achieved reconciliation in the dream was because the man had left them alone. This, he believed, provided them with time and space to think so that they could resolve their differences without interference from others. Shortly after the dream, the two friends were reunited. David described the dream as a special dream that showed him what God was able to do (Adams, 2003). For children like David, these dreams are not simply representations of God (or other religious characters) but are encounters with them. Whilst curriculum guidance does not see spirituality as synonymous with religion, some religious experiences can be spiritual. As Tacey (2003) and Hyde (2004) have noted, for some people connectedness with a transcendent dimension is an aspect of spirituality.

Hay and Nye (2006) also observe how children's spiritual experiences often embody relationships with others. This theme is seen in a variety of situations. A frequent recurrence is children's encounters with people who have died, whether it be to see them, hear them, dream about them, or to ask questions such as "why did Grandma die, and where is she now?" Hyde (2008) shows how children's explorations of death are often a part of children weaving threads of meaning in order to connect with those who have died. He cites examples of children living in Australia, including Emily, who asked why her uncle died at a young age, whilst her grandpa lived to be quite elderly before dying. She explained how she wished she could have had a stronger relationship with her grandpa before he died. Emily was perhaps showing a need to feel connected—connection being a recurring feature of spiritual experiences (Hyde, 2008).

A child's relationship with self is also a feature of their spirituality. Similarly Ofsted (2004) talk of how a child's spirituality refers to, in part, their sense of identity. Hart (2003) describes how a 7-year-old American boy named John was out with his father buying food when he posed the question "why am I here?" to his father. Hyde (2008) recounts a similar story of a conversation which took place in a family setting, about the time when Michael, a 9-year-old boy, got stuck in a tree

when he was young. Jane, his younger sister aged three posed the question, "Where was I when Michael got stuck in the tree?" Her mother explained that she hadn't yet been born but Jane persisted "Yes, I know, but, *where was I*?" (Adams et al., 2008; Hyde, 2008). These examples show how children's deep thinking can be expressed in seemingly unrelated contexts, which might easily be missed.

Such philosophical questions, moments of awe and wonder, absorption in an activity, dreams, sensing presences, seeing things which are unseen to others, etc. are all expressions of children's spirituality. Whilst not an exhaustive list, they usually involve a relationship to self, others, a Transcendent Other or the world and often express a sense of connectedness, or a need to feel connected (Hay & Nye, 2006). Yet many of these experiences go unnoticed by teachers and other adults. Why?

Hidden from View . . . and Other Issues for Teachers

Literature provides us with a fairly comprehensive understanding of children's experiences, yet there remains uncertainty in the classroom over recognising, affirming and nurturing the spiritual. The reasons why are complex but go beyond the basic problem of defining spirituality and ambiguities in guidance and inspection, as discussed above.

Underlying the difficulties which teachers face, is the invisibility of children's spiritual life. Hart (2003) describes their spiritual world as a secret one—one which is rich and varied but largely hidden from the adult world. This hidden nature takes different forms. For example, some of the children's experiences, such as seeing angels, are invisible to the adult eye. The experiences, such as posing philosophical questions can be easily missed. Children might also not reveal their spiritual lives as Scott (2004) illustrates. He observes how many of the adults he interviewed, who were recalling childhood spiritual experiences which had particular significance and impact, had never been revealed before. This secrecy is in part due to cultural influences. Hay (1985) shows how there is a suspicion of the spiritual in the West, which makes many people refrain from admitting to their experiences. Given that serious discussion of spiritual experiences is not common in daily discourse, children often feel a fear of ridicule or dismissal and for that reason often retreat into silence (Hart, 2003; Scott, 2004; Hay & Nye, 2006).

One might hope that with spiritual development having been on the curriculum for many years in England and Wales, that this cultural taboo might be gradually lifting, but evidence for this is not particularly apparent. Whilst Hay and Nye (2006) show that spiritual experiences are being reported more frequently than in the past, children's spiritual experiences do not seem to be openly discussed.

So, a major difficulty for many teachers is to first be aware of this hidden realm of children's lives. With its unseen and unrecognised essence, it can pass many teachers by. This is certainly the situation for those who have not yet explored their own spirituality in any depth, so before they can embark on the spiritual development journey with their pupils they first need to come to terms with their own spirituality. This involves, in part, reflection upon their own perceptions of what spirituality is; their recollection of their own experiences which they consider spiritual; their responses

to other peoples' ideas; awareness of their sense of self, identity and purpose; and careful and critical consideration of theoretical approaches particularly those which may be at variance with their own views.

But how is this to be done? The most obvious route is, of course, through teacher training but across the country provision is highly inconsistent and, as Wright (2000) observes, leaves many feeling ill prepared. This situation perhaps reflects a cycle—a lack of interest in society as a whole is mirrored by staff on many teacher training courses and by school mentors to trainees—which in turn, fails to bring it into general discourse in wider society.

Yet, interest is there. I currently lecture on an Education and Subject Studies 3-year degree programme. The degree does not give a teaching qualification but the majority of our students use the knowledge gained in education, on placements, and in their chosen subject to move onto a 1-year teaching training course. As part of our revalidation we chose to write new, optional modules to increase our portfolio and in 2007 I offered, for the first time, a module on children's spirituality. Uptake exceeded our original intended maximum and evaluations from the students were highly positive. Comments included: "I feel the topics covered helped me to reflect and develop my own spirituality"; It "opened my eyes to areas I didn't realise existed"; and "it has really changed the way I think, and I will empathise with children much more now". These students will hopefully move on to become teachers and share their enthusiasm for children's spirituality with their new colleagues. If more modules such as this can be created in higher education, the awareness of children's spiritual lives can be increased.

Whilst the reader of this book is by definition interested in exploring spirituality, just as my students were, the same cannot be said of many others who might give it little thought until the notification of Ofsted's visit falls through the school's letter box. In such schools there is a need for senior management to take a lead and secure training for a member of staff as part of their continuing professional development. It is thus important that those of us who understand the value of children's spirituality continue to encourage and disseminate good practice in the hope that more teachers will come to see its importance. Once that interest is captured, the classroom holds many opportunities for addressing children's spirituality.

Sharing the Spiritual in the Classroom

As empirical studies into children's spirituality show, many children are willing and eager to share their spiritual experiences, and seek answers to their philosophical questions through dialogue. It is paradoxical that their world remains largely hidden from view. A major cause of this paradox lies in the children's perception of the response they will receive. Those who fear ridicule or dismissal are unlikely to share their thoughts or experiences with others (Hart, 2003; Scott, 2004). Of course, most adults would not intentionally dismiss a child's experience but phrases such as "it's just your imagination" can lead a child to feel that they are not being taken seriously. Further, an adult who is simply too busy at that moment to listen can make a child feel that they are not interested.

It is thus essential that the teacher creates an ethos of openness and respect in which children who wish to share their experiences feel safe to do so, and those who choose not to share are given a right to privacy. Fraser and Grootenboer (2004), writing in the context of New Zealand's secular school curriculum which includes the fostering of spirituality, explore teachers' views on spirituality and the implications for children. They identify key features of classrooms which enhance the spiritual dimension. These include the classroom being perceived as a non-judgemental and non-self-conscious place. In these environments, the climate was one of acceptance and was encouraging of actions which were prompted by spiritual motives.

The creation of a respectful, trusting ethos is a key component of an effective teaching environment (Kyriacou, 2001; Muijs & Reynolds, 2001). This fosters not only children's personal, social and emotional development but also their spiritual development. The need for the classroom to support the latter is particularly important in Western countries where what Hay (1985) terms the "suspicion of the spiritual" exists. The stronger a society's taboo, the more the need for classrooms to create a space which values and nurtures the spiritual and allows for it to be openly discussed.

A strong ethos will also have a direct positive impact on the relationship between peers and between teacher and children. Carl Rogers (1983) argued that a teacher's empathy with children is essential to their learning and to their personal growth, as they find someone who understands them, and does not seek to analyse or judge them. More recently Goleman's (1996) work on emotional intelligence has suggested that a person with high emotional intelligence has the ability to empathise. If a teacher does this, he argues, caring, altruism and compassion can be the results.

Whilst it is imperative that a child is not coerced into sharing what they do not want to share, the benefits of being in an environment which encourages exploration and reflection are numerous. Then more children will have access to an interested and understanding person who is sincere about hearing their experiences and reflections.

Spiritual Development in the Curriculum

Once an appropriate ethos has been created, the teacher can then consider how best to incorporate spiritual development throughout the curriculum. The following offers some brief examples of how different subject areas can contribute to this aspect of children's education.

Spiritual Development and RE

RE, although required in all schools, is not in the National Curriculum (Brown, 2002). Instead, a variety of Agreed Syllabi exist. However, all include a component of "learning from religion" which can include children reflecting upon belief systems, responding to others' views and exploring their own, and pondering on

ultimate questions, such as, is there a God? Why is there suffering? What is the purpose of life? What happens after we die? For many, these questions can be spiritual and/or religious and the curriculum asks that children are given the time and space to address them. Whilst many teachers may feel uncomfortable offering their own thoughts and reflections on such matters, children are naturally very inquisitive and ask such questions themselves.

Given that some religious experiences can be spiritual and vice versa, RE offers an ideal space for children to reflect upon them—their nature, their causes, their effects upon people. Many religions have, for example, valued dreams as a potential source of divine inspiration. This type of dream—which children also report—can make for a stimulating discussion in the classroom which can have a religious focus (Adams, 2008).

Spiritual Development Across the Curriculum

Outside of RE, the curriculum offers many opportunities to engage with the spiritual. Fraser and Grootenboer (2004) include reference to how the arts are valuable for exploring spirituality. One teacher explained how the visual arts, such as painting, often create a spontaneous quietness in which children become absorbed in what they are doing, creating a piece of work which is expressing of the self. Mountain (2007), writing in the Australian context, argues that the creative arts engage children in the type of learning which is very closely related to spiritual development. She explores how the arts can be used to foster imagination in spiritual development, involving self-understanding, relationships and a sense of connectedness. As Hart (2003) suggests, children have a natural creative expression which needs to be harnessed and given outlets.

Whilst the arts might seem the obvious place for spiritual development, opportunities arise in other subjects too. In mathematics, awe and wonder can be experienced when realising the infinity of numbers. In science, children can gasp as they first hold up a prism to the light and see it refracted into the colours of the rainbow. Throughout the curriculum though, it is essential that teachers give children the time and space for reflection and contemplation. This is vital in a world that is so busy, in which silence can be difficult to find (Adams et al., 2008).

Conclusion

I fear that I had sorely disappointed my American colleague who had previously been in awe of England's education system. Whilst I assured her that there was excellent practice taking place in some schools there was much progress to be made in many others.

Whilst the term spiritual *development* will always raise issues, the term is enshrined in legislation and so remains in our vocabulary and the debate over the

definition of spirituality will continue. However, if teachers are well prepared to recognise children's spirituality in all the forms it may take, and to acknowledge and nurture it, then their relationships with the children will be enhanced. As literature has shown, many children seek to share their spiritual experiences but do not do so because of a fear of ridicule or dismissal. If a teacher can provide a safe environment for those who wish to share, then children will have an outlet to explore and reflect upon their own experiences. In so doing, this area of their life will be acknowledged, affirmed and nurtured, in turn strengthening their relationships not only with their teacher and their peers but also their relationship with self. Before that can happen, however, teachers must first reflect upon their own spirituality. Teacher training/education across the country needs to provide consistent provision for teachers to address this vital component in the education of children. The inclusion of spiritual development in legislation and the inspection of it are not sufficient to ensure that children's spirituality is genuinely affirmed and nurtured. Whilst society perpetuates the hidden, secret nature of children's spirituality, it is for those of us who recognise and value it, to continue to pass the message on.

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Chapter 43
Responding to Difference: Spiritual Development and the Search for Truth

Jacqueline Watson

Abstract If schools are responsible for the spiritual development of all their pupils, how can we make sense of this responsibility given the range of worldviews pupils' families may belong to and the range of spiritual truths children and young people may hold or reject? Constructing a form of spiritual pedagogy compatible with the broader expectations of education in a liberal democracy is problematic.

This chapter discusses various spiritual pedagogies put forward to develop children and young people's spirituality in response to this problem. The chapter argues that a spiritual pedagogy promoting holistic learning and wellbeing must balance spiritual truth claims with sensitivity to difference in the spiritual life journeys and choices made by individual children and young people. The chapter suggests an approach to spiritual pedagogy which draws on the principles of inter-faith dialogue and the dialogic epistemology of Mikhail Bakhtin. Such an approach aims both to recognise and respect the reality and diversity of spiritual truth claims and to encourage a form of spiritual development which is compatible with a holistic approach to learning and the promotion of children's spiritual wellbeing.

Although the discussion in this chapter is very much grounded in the context of the English school system, the problem of how to square positive teaching for spiritual development and wellbeing with the reality of spiritual diversity is very much an international, human problem.

Introduction

> [W]e passionately believe that it is the duty of all schools to address issues of "how we live together" and "dealing with difference", however controversial and difficult they might sometimes seem (DfES, 2007, foreword).

This chapter discusses the notion of spiritual development in the context of state schooling in England (and Wales), where all schools are legally responsible for

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the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and students. Often referred to as "SMSC", these elements of personal development are the responsibilities of all teachers across the curriculum and are subject to inspection by the schools' inspectorate.

As indicated in the quotation above, from a recent report for the Department for Education and Skills (renamed the Department for Children, Schools and Families in late 2007), there is now an acute concern in England, as elsewhere around the world, about how to respond to religious and cultural difference. But this is a concern that has long perplexed those who want to make sense of *spiritual development* for state schools in England. For, if schools are responsible for the spiritual development of *all* their pupils, how can we make sense of this responsibility given the range of worldviews pupils' families may belong to, and the range of spiritual truths children and young people may hold or reject?

Although the discussion in this chapter is very much grounded in the context of the English school system, the problem of how to square positive teaching for spiritual development and wellbeing with the reality of spiritual diversity, is now very much an international, human problem. Hopefully, therefore, the problems raised here have a resonance for readers involved in other countries' education systems. For education to promote holistic learning and wellbeing, disagreement over spiritual truths must be presented honestly to children, but children must also be able to develop their own spirituality in an integrated and positive way.

This chapter discusses the various spiritual pedagogies which have been put forward to develop children and young people's spirituality in response to this problem and, as will be seen, in this context spirituality is sometimes associated with religion, but often not. For the context of state schooling, spirituality is best understood as broadly as possible and, as I explain in more detail below, I have personally come to the view that spirituality has to do with those beliefs, values and experiences which give meaning to human life.

This chapter is divided into three sections. In section "A Brief History of Spiritual Development in England (and Wales)", I discuss the recent history of spiritual development for state secular schools in England (and Wales). I describe various ways in which educationalists have developed inclusive forms of spiritual development for state schools. I discuss the complexities of trying to achieve this and explain the reasons I find these solutions unsatisfactory. In section "Reconciling Spiritual Truth with Spiritual Diversity", I examine the approach to spiritual pedagogy developed by Andrew Wright, who tackles the problem of the reality of spiritual truth and diversity of claims to truth through the application of critical realist theory. I closely examine the philosophical approach to truth taken by Wright and, again, explain why, in the end, I find his approach to spiritual development unsatisfactory. In section "Spiritual Development as Inter-faith Dialogic", I put forward my own approach to spiritual development, drawing on the principles of inter-faith dialogue and the dialogic epistemology of Mikhail Bakhtin. I suggest that this kind of approach is best suited both to recognising and respecting the reality and diversity of spiritual truth claims, and to encouraging a form of spiritual development which is compatible with a holistic approach to learning and the promotion of children's spiritual wellbeing.

A Brief History of Spiritual Development in England (and Wales)

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher introduced significant changes to state schooling in England (and Wales), but also continued and strengthened the requirement that schools give attention to spiritual development. Since then, there has been a lengthy conversation among education academics and practitioners about what is intended by schools' responsibility for the spiritual development of children and young people in the context of state schooling.

The notion of spiritual development was originally introduced to schools through the 1944 Education Act, but the Conservative government caused renewed debate because they made significant changes to the wording of legislation and guidance. The 1944 Education Act had placed a duty on the local education authority "to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development *of the community*" (Education Act, 1944, Part 2, Paragraph 7, my italics). The 1988 Education Act stated that a school curriculum must promote "the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development *of pupils at the school and of society*" (Education (Reform) Act, 1988, Part 1, Chapter 1, Section 1, my italics). The 1992 Education Act introduced a new schools' inspectorate, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), and Ofsted required school inspections to "evaluate and report on the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development *of all pupils* . . . [and] . . . to evaluate what schools actively do to promote *pupils' development*" (Ofsted, 1995, 5:3, my italics). As can be seen from these quotations, legislation and guidance shifted from a concern with the spiritual development of the community to a concern with the spiritual development of the individual. Debate was also fuelled by the fact that this was happening in the context of a changed demographic in Britain, which had introduced a wider range of worldviews to the country and its schools.

Jack Priestley has documented how, even in 1944, diversity sensitivity led to a political decision to use the word "spiritual" rather than the word "religious" in the 1944 Education Act: the word "spiritual" was felt to be more inclusive (Priestley, 1997, p. 29). However, in 1944, spiritual development was nonetheless understood as having relation to religion and, in particular, to Christianity. By the 1980s, demographic change meant there was greater sensitivity to the fact that pupils came from diverse religious backgrounds, as well as a recognition that possibly a larger number of children came from families with no religion.[1] Furthermore *The Swann Report*, published in 1985, raised awareness of an urgent need for school education to promote greater religious and racial tolerance. In response, the 1988 Education Act broadened the religious education curriculum to include a wider range of religions, but an inclusive approach to the (personal) spiritual development of pupils was much more problematic, raising questions about what was expected of spiritual development within the broader expectations of education in a plural, liberal democracy.

> In liberal democratic societies we are confronted by people holding many different, and often incompatible, views of life as a whole. . . . From a "liberal democratic" philosophical

perspective, however, there is no objectively conclusive way of determining which, if any, of these "holistic" view of life – or "thick" theories of the good – is correct (McLaughlin, 1996, p. 14).

In the state, secular school, it was not going to be possible to spiritually (or morally) develop children and young people within any privileged holistic view of life. Some method was needed to provide a holistic approach to spiritual development that would suit the spiritual wellbeing of children from a diverse range of spiritual backgrounds.

The Common Approach to Spiritual Development

Very soon after the 1988 and 1992 Education Acts were passed this substantial problem was tackled head-on in two discussion papers published by the National Curriculum Council (NCC, 1993) and the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted, 1994). The documents established that spirituality was something different from religion and that opportunities for spiritual development should be available across the whole curriculum, and not just in religious education and collective worship as might have been expected. In particular the documents stated

> The potential for spiritual development is open to everyone and is not confined to the development of religious beliefs or conversion to a particular faith (NCC, 1993, p. 2).
> "Spiritual" is not synonymous with "religious"; all areas of the curriculum may contribute to pupils' spiritual development (Ofsted, 1994, p. 8).

A cross-curricular, humanistic or secular approach to spiritual development became the official form of spiritual pedagogy, to be inspected by Ofsted. Not surprisingly, this also became the common form of spiritual development adopted by educationalists advising teachers on how to teach for spiritual development.

Although this approach to spiritual development had the huge advantage of being inclusive, a number of educationalists, particularly those who were more religiously conservative, objected to the adoption of a humanistic approach to spirituality (for instance, Mabud, 1992; Shire, 1997).

> Such a universalist and syncretistic approach blurs the significant differences between religious traditions and often assumes a Western Rationalist position. This is in contrast to a close examination of the variety of understandings of spirituality in distinct religions (Shire, 1997, p. 53).

Certainly, and odd though it may sound, in my view spirituality itself was marginalised in this cross-curricular approach. What do I mean by this?

I take the view that spirituality has to do with those beliefs and values which human beings develop to give meaning and purpose to their lives in response to their experience of the human condition. These are often thought of as religious beliefs but, and speaking as an atheist myself, in my view a spiritual response can equally be non-religious. The common approach to spiritual development does include spiritual beliefs and values, particularly referring to their important place

Table 43.1 Spiritual development's areas of concern

Creativity: celebrating and encouraging imagination and creative endeavour.
Reflection: including space for reflection in all curriculum subjects.
Self-esteem: encouraging self-respect along with respect for others, and finding a voice.
Relationships: fostering good relationships and community within the school.
Relationship with the natural world: fostering positive responses to the natural world.
Insight: encouraging insight or understanding alongside the acquisition of knowledge.
Cohesion: making it clear that all subjects are related so that they become part of a holistic understanding of the world.
Challenge: encouraging the questioning of received wisdom and knowledge and the status quo.
Wellbeing: establishing an environment in which all pupils are protected and do not suffer.
Meaning: providing opportunities for pupils to learn from, as well as about, other pupils, other people, and other religions and world views, so that they enter the process of developing beliefs and values of their own to give meaning and value to their lives.

in religious education and collective worship, but beliefs and values are merely one element in what is a much broader spiritual development umbrella. The approach places greatest emphasis on a range of pedagogical values, such as the importance of promoting children's wellbeing, self-esteem and creativity, and of activities such as reflection and critical thinking.

Table 43.1 gives a summary of the kinds of elements usually found in descriptions of spiritual development. The table was drawn up through an analysis and synthesis of descriptions of spiritual development from literature advising teachers how to teach for spiritual development. (See Watson, 2007, p. 130, for original, more detailed version of this table.) Descriptions are not always exactly the same but they are surprisingly similar given the number of claims made by educationalists that spirituality is difficult to define.

While all of these elements have a bearing on spirituality, it is only the final element on the list which properly addresses the spiritual dimension. The other elements of this common construction of spiritual development say more about the pedagogical problems educationalists were trying to address as a result of the political changes that had been made to education in the 1980s and 1990s. The list describes a range of pedagogical values that had been pushed out of the curriculum by the Conservative government's education reforms. As I have argued at greater length elsewhere, spiritual development was used as a way of reinstating these pedagogical values—though not very successfully—by the back door (Watson, 2007).

It is, I think, becoming increasingly difficult to carve out a place for this form of spiritual development (Watson, 2006a). The pedagogical values rejected by the Conservatives are now being re-introduced by the New Labour government. Their education policies are keen to promote, for instance, a child-centred approach to teaching and learning, greater child and young people participation and voice, environment education, emotional literacy, a holistic notion of the child and their

wellbeing, and a holistic approach to the curriculum. As the values of spiritual development appear in these new forms there is no need to use spiritual development as a vehicle for their inclusion, and perhaps less need to refer to spiritual development at all. It is interesting to note that, as the government was developing its new vision of the (national) curriculum during 2007, through the work of its Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, spiritual development actually disappeared from an early working draft of its curriculum "Big Picture", although it did eventually reappear in the final version (QCA, 2008). However, although the government's *Every Child Matters* project takes a holistic approach to the child, promotes a connected approach to their care, and seeks their overall wellbeing, the programme has never made reference to children's *spiritual* wellbeing, and spirituality did not appear in the DfES's *Every Child Matters Outcomes Framework* (DfES 2005).

This form of spiritual development, then, had the huge advantage of being inclusive. However, this was achieved by giving insufficient weight to the spiritual and, as its immensely important values are reinstated through new education policies, the common form of spiritual development looks increasingly fragile.

Alternative Spiritual Pedagogies

Spiritual development has been the subject of much discussion, however, and a variety of alternative spiritual pedagogies has also been suggested, more often linked with religious education, by important religious educationalists such as David Hay, John Hull and Jack Priestley. Like the common form of spiritual development, each of these spiritual pedagogies is based on an understanding of spirituality that can apply to all pupils in state schools. Educationalists writing in this field are well aware that they must address the issue of diversity and develop an inclusive form of spiritual pedagogy. Speaking broadly, these educationalists relate spirituality to questions of meaning but conceive it as, in some sense, the essence or constant underpinning the diversity of religious and non-religious worldviews.

Unlike the official or common form of spiritual pedagogy, discussed above, these alternative approaches have the advantage of having a proper concern with the spiritual domain. However, as I have argued elsewhere (Watson, 2006b), there is nonetheless a problem here. Each of these pedagogies (including the official form) is based on a claim to have established the one true account of what spirituality is yet, collectively, they represent a variety of understandings of spirituality. Collectively, then, they undermine each claim to universality. Only one of these accounts of spirituality can be true and, therefore, only one of these spiritual pedagogies could be appropriate for the spiritual development of all pupils in state schools. This brings us back to the fundamental problem of diversity and how we choose between competing claims to truth.

Varieties of Spirituality and the Problem of Truth

It seems that the word "spirituality" bears the hallmarks of an "essentially contested concept", as defined by W.B. Gallie in the 1950s.

> When this kind of situation persists in philosophy (where some disputant continues to maintain against all comers that there is one and only one proper sense of the term "substance" or "self" or "idea") we are inclined to attribute it to some deep-seated and profoundly interesting intellectual tendency, whose presence is "metaphysical"... I shall try to show that there are disputes, centred on the concepts which I have just mentioned, which are perfectly genuine: which, although not resolvable by argument of any kind, are nevertheless sustained by perfectly respectable arguments and evidence. This is what I mean by saying that there are concepts which are essentially contested, concepts the proper use of which inevitably involves endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users (Gallie, 1956, p. 169).

Gallie puts forward certain criteria for establishing an "essentially contested concept" and "spirituality" is a close match. Essentially contested concepts are, he says, "appraisive" (Gallie, p. 171): spirituality is usually characterised as a positive phenomenon and darker spiritualities (for instance, the spirituality of Nazism) are generally conveniently forgotten or ruled out. Essentially contested concepts have "an internally complex character", are "variously describable" and "'open' in character", (Gallie, p. 171) allowing "considerable modification in the light of changing circumstances" (Gallie, p. 172): educationalists have commented, for instance, "The terms 'spirituality' and 'spiritual development' are often used loosely or defined in various ways" (Woods, 1996, p. 31) and spirituality is a "weasel word . . . a convenient catch-all, suitably vague and elusive of definition" (Brown & Furlong, 1996, p. 4). Gallie observes that proponents of a particular understanding of an essentially contested concept will use evidence and argument to try to persuade others to their point of view but, in the end, there is no evidential mechanism for resolving disputes.

If spirituality is an essentially contested concept and if, therefore, no single, universal conceptualisation of spirituality could be established for spiritual development in the context of state schooling, what then follows? Gallie's pessimistic answer to his question is a little daunting:

> So long as contestant users of any essentially contested concept believe, however deludedly, that their own use of it is the only one that can command honest and informed approval, they are likely to persist in the hope that they will ultimately persuade and convert all their opponents by logical means. But once let the truth out of the bag – i.e., the essential contestedness of the concept in question – then this harmless if deluded hope may well be replaced by a ruthless decision to cut the cackle, to damn the heretics and to exterminate the unwanted (Gallie, pp. 193–194).

In the case of spirituality, this line of argument leads me to the conclusion that an inclusive spiritual pedagogy, appropriate to the state school context, must begin with an acceptance of the contested nature, not just of religions and worldviews, but also of understandings of spirituality.

To sum up, then, I have argued that it is vital to recognise that spirituality, while it may have links with the pedagogical values referred to in Table 43.1, is an important area of discourse and a human endeavour in its own right, which is focused on those beliefs and values which address our struggle to make meaning out of human experience. I have also argued that attempts to develop spiritual pedagogies which do properly address the spiritual run up against the problem of spiritual diversity. Therefore, in order to establish an inclusive form of spiritual pedagogy for state schools in a liberal democracy, it is essential to accept two related points: the contested nature of spirituality, and the inappropriateness of attempting spiritual development within *any* spiritual pedagogy that is based on a universalist understanding of spirituality. And so we return to the conundrum of diversity. A spiritual pedagogy based on one privileged holistic view of life is not acceptable, yet a spiritual pedagogy based on diversity raises the spectre of relativism. A spiritual journey is, in some sense, a search for truth. Somehow, an inclusive form of spiritual development must reconcile spiritual diversity with spiritual truth if it is to promote holistic learning and spiritual wellbeing rather than a fractured vision and cynicism.

Reconciling Spiritual Truth with Spiritual Diversity

The Critical Realist Response

I want now to turn to the work of Andrew Wright who has done more than most to champion the cause of truth in spiritual pedagogy. Wright closely equates spiritual pedagogy with religious education. He recognises the reality of religious *and* spiritual diversity but insists that *truth* is at the heart of religion and spirituality. Wright argues that worldviews, both religious and non-religious, make different claims about spiritual reality and truth, and that spiritual pedagogy should enable children and young people to develop an understanding of this diversity. In all of these important respects I find myself in agreement with Wright. In particular, I think it is vital to recognise that spirituality does deal with truth, and with competing truths, and spiritual pedagogy should reflect this.

Where I disagree with Wright is in the philosophical approach he takes to understanding the nature of spiritual truth and the way in which he characterises people's relationship with spiritual truth claims. And this also means that I disagree with the way in which his spiritual pedagogy presents and encourages children and young people to respond to spiritual diversity. Wright's argument is complex and this section attempts to summarise his position before putting forward a detailed argument against it.

Wright is a critical realist. Critical realist theory draws on the ethos of science, owes much to the thinking of Carl Popper and Bertrand Russell, and its development in the United Kingdom is most closely associated with the work of Roy Bhaskar. In opposition to the non-realist stance of postmodernism, the theory claims that we can have knowledge of reality and seek the truth about it. However, in seeking

knowledge, we need to be aware that our observations of reality can be open to interpretation and, as a consequence of this, our truth claims should be treated as provisional until dialogue with others in the field achieves agreement. For the critical realist, knowledge is potentially achievable and the truth is indeed out there; but knowledge and truth are often larger than our ability to comprehend it. As Andrew Wright puts it, we need to proceed on the basis that, "This is the best sense we can make of reality at present. Now let's see if we can achieve anything better" (Wright, 2000a, p. 173).

Critical realist theory is usually associated with the philosophy of science, but there is a branch called "theological critical realism" (Shipway, 2000) and there are those who follow a similar line of reasoning under a different name, so Alistair McGrath refers to the theoretical basis of his work as "scientific theology" (McGrath, 2006). Andrew Wright does not refer to himself as a *theological* critical realist but, like McGrath and theological critical realists, he applies critical realist theory both to material reality and truth *and* to spiritual reality and ultimate, or spiritual, truth.

Wright has applied critical realist theory to spiritual education and, based on this approach to truth and reality, he has argued for a spiritual pedagogy which would "provide pupils with the skills and sensibilities . . . that will enable them to begin to learn to bring their lifeworlds into an appropriate relationship with the order of things (the traditional, though currently unfashionable word for which is, of course, 'truth')" (Wright, 2001, p. 132).

> The educational task needs to be seen in terms of developing the literacy of individuals and of society as a whole so as to enable the collective spiritual pilgrimage towards proper relationship with that which is indeed ultimately true and of ultimate value. . . (Wright, 1998, p. 92).

Wright argues that the diversity of spiritual truth claims made across the diversity of worldviews is accounted for by differences in interpretation of reality. By working together, much like a scientific community, we will eventually work towards better interpretations of the order of things and ultimately to the actual, ultimate truth. Spiritual pedagogy, therefore, or religious education, should equip children and young people with the skills of spiritual literacy as well as an appreciation of and sympathy for difference of view. In this way spiritual education can help human beings collectively work towards finding out the truth about the spiritual order of things and achieve a proper relationship with ultimate reality.

The Persistence of Fundamental Truths

Critical realism well describes the contemporary philosophical approach to difference of opinion in science. We are content, or scientists are content, to agree to disagree over understandings about material reality, collectively debating opposing opinions about reality and seeking to disprove opponents' theories about the truth. However, observation of human behaviour suggests that our relationship with truths

about spiritual reality *feels* different to the one we have with knowledge claims about material reality. So, while it may be the case that the variety of competing spiritual truth claims *could* be explained as mere difference of interpretation on the way to establishing the actual truth, that is not how it *feels* to those who make spiritual truth claims. Many spiritual beliefs will be open to question and change, but *certain* truths will be understood as *fundamental – now*. In debate between people from different faiths or worldviews such fundamental beliefs will not be considered provisional or open to change through reasoned argument.

Human spiritual behaviour may well be perverse for, as Wright says, it *must* indeed be the case that some of these "truths" do not coincide with the "order of things" with "reality" as it actually is; and, as Wright says, "It is not an unreasonable conclusion to draw that a spiritual life integrated with the way things are in the world is preferable to a life dislocated from reality" (Wright, 2000b, p. 109). Critical realism's emphasis on the *provisionality* of truth claims leads to the clear logical conclusion that a large proportion of us *must* be living our spiritual lives dislocated from reality. Yet, for all that, many of us are not content to live a spiritual life on the basis that (all) our spiritual truth claims are provisional: we are not (all) willing to be agnostic about everything.

As a consequence then, I do not accept that spiritual debate—in general or in the classroom—can begin from the premise that all spiritual truth claims are provisional, and that convergence of opinion is the ultimate, long-term goal. A theist, however liberal, is unlikely to enter into a debate on the grounds that their belief in God is provisional. A Muslim and Christian would be unlikely to enter into spiritual debate on the understanding they may, as a result of that debate, reconsider the truth, as each sees it, about the divinity of Jesus or the prophet Muhammad being the last prophet of Allah. As a humanist, I would not enter spiritual debate under an expectation that I may change my opinion about the non-existence of God. We each hold beliefs about what we consider to be *fundamental* spiritual truths that are not going to be "up for grabs" and this is precisely because we do not consider these truths to be provisional, equivocal or mutable. In my view then, it would be inappropriate to apply the same kind of methodology to the generation of spiritual knowledge as to the generation of scientific knowledge; and equally inappropriate to base spiritual pedagogy on such a methodology.

And anyway, what is the community in this context; who are "we"; and can "we" be seen as collectively seeking for agreement on truth in a similar way to a scientific or theological community? The area of human endeavour we are discussing is neither of these. We are talking about a community made up of people from *different* worldviews, not a community who share theological assumptions.

Critical Realism and the Epistemic Fallacy

Through the work of Roy Bhaskar, critical realist theory has developed the principle that different sciences—or, more broadly for our purposes, different human endeavours—should use different methodologies to establish their different forms of

knowledge, and these will be based on their different objects of study. Bhaskar states the principle in the following way: "It is the nature of the object that determines the form of its possible science" (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 3). And as Alister McGrath explains, applying the principle to scientific theology:

> The Enlightenment tended to assume that all sciences were committed to using the same working methods and assumptions; a scientific theology insists that the distinctive identity of the object of a science is reflected in its response to that object (McGrath, 2006, p. 114).

In other words, it is important to establish *what* we are studying before we decide *how* we will study it. This means that physics, chemistry and psychology, for instance, will each use different methods to study reality because they study different aspects of reality. So, although critical realist (or scientific) theology argues for a form of parity between the theological and scientific enterprises, it also emphasises that it would not be sensible to use the same methods for theology as for, say, physics, chemistry or psychology. When people try to use the same methods in different contexts, and do not base their epistemology on the ontological reality they are studying, critical realism refers to this as a mistake which it calls the epistemic fallacy.

Wright explains the epistemic fallacy in the following way: "Epistemology, our way of knowing the world, does not have priority over ontology, the way things are actually in the world" (Wright, 2000b, p. 108). Ironically, perhaps, I found Wright's exposition of the fallacy particularly helpful in identifying where the nub of the problem lies in the way in which he applies aspects of critical realist theory to spiritual pedagogy.

Following the critical realist principle, theological critical realism must establish the ontology of God, and of a God-given reality, before theological discussion and knowledge generation can begin. Within a given theology this may make sense. Alistair McGrath, for instance, is involved in theology, and Christian theology to be more precise, and within that "science", or human endeavour, participants could be expected to agree ontological starting points. In discussing spiritual pedagogy, however, we, including Andrew Wright, are talking about a *different* endeavour from theology, one which involves a community of debate *across* religious and non-religious world views. Within such a multi-faith community we do not always agree on ontology. For instance, the Trinity (God as three persons in one), Tawhid (the oneness of Allah) and atheism (the denial of God's existence) describe three different possible ontologies for God and, as a consequence, different ontological realities. Of course, within a multi-faith community there will be many areas of agreement where shared knowledge can be built, but there will also be certain "truths" about the nature of reality on which there is fundamental disagreement. We must recognise, to put this in critical realist terms, that it is in the nature of this "science" that, uniquely perhaps, it proceeds *in the absence* of an agreed ontology.

Summing up, then, this area of human endeavour—or "science"—is different from science or theology. And it has certain distinct features which need to be recognised in its methodology. It is inappropriate to treat certain truth claims as merely provisional or to assume that the community should always expect to work towards

increasing levels of agreed knowledge generation. Indeed, part of this "science's" methodology involves working out which truths can be treated as provisional and which must be treated as immutable. Many of our beliefs about spiritual truths will change over time through the process of dialogue and reflection, but some disputes, which in the sciences might be resolved through experiment or in theologies might be resolved through revelation or prayer, cannot admit of verification except perhaps through end-time or after-death revelation. So it is in the nature of this human endeavour that we must "make do" with our present fundamental beliefs about spiritual truths and recognise, not so much their provisionality, but their invulnerability to proof or reason.

As Wright says, spiritual pedagogy needs to get across that spirituality is (often) about truth and that spiritual truth claims are diverse and sometimes incompatible. However, unlike Wright, I am arguing that we also need to accept that it is the nature of certain spiritual truths that they are understood by people to be immutable despite their (presumably) *actual* provisionality. Engagement in a community of debate about such competing spiritual truths should not be treated as engagement with mere differences of opinion but neither can it be treated as working towards a resolution of relative or provisional truths. So this community of debate or human endeavour cannot be presented in this way in the religious education classroom—at least not in inclusive schools.

Spiritual Development as Inter-Faith Dialogic

The human endeavour or "science" we are talking about looks most like inter-faith dialogue and, in this last section, I want to argue for a spiritual pedagogy modelled on the principles of inter-faith dialogue. I also want to draw on the idea of dialogic to argue for a transformative spiritual pedagogy for personal spiritual development.

I must emphasise, here, that I am using the word "faith" in a very broad sense, and probably a wider sense than practitioners of inter-faith dialogue usually do. So I am using the word "faith" to include non-religious as well as theistic worldviews, and I am also using the word to denote personal, idiosyncratic worldviews which may be the faith developed by individual children and young people, as well as by adults. "Inter-worldview dialogue" might be a more accurate phrase, but it is less elegant.

While inter-faith dialogue does seek areas of commonality, crucially it respectfully acknowledges that some spiritual truths are essentially contested and that, in such cases, there is no mechanism for deciding which is privileged or correct. While inter-faith dialogue searches for areas of understanding, it recognises the reality of fundamental beliefs and sets up principles to ensure we respect others' beliefs and sustain our own. These principles are explained by Marcus Braybrooke:

> There are various levels of dialogue and it is a process of growth. An initial requirement is an openness to and acceptance of the other. It takes time to build trust and to deepen relationships. . . . We have to learn to enter another world that may seem alien and which has different presuppositions. We have to allow our deepest convictions to be questioned.

... It is important for those venturing into dialogue to be secure in their own faith. They need to beware of becoming marginalised in or alienated from their own religious tradition (Braybrooke, 2007).

Spiritual pedagogy based on the principles of inter-faith dialogue would recognise the reality of truth and diversity of truth but would establish an ethical framework for dialogue that safeguards participants' spiritual integrity and wellbeing. Classroom spiritual pedagogy in state schools must include many voices but it must do this without falling into presenting truths as relative and unserious and without undermining children and young people's present spiritual beliefs.

Spiritual development, however, suggests an aim to *change* children and young people. Inter-faith dialogue on its own could be seen as merely education for multi-faith or multi-cultural tolerance. In order to move beyond that, to something personally transformative, I want also to draw on the idea of dialogic.

The Russian philosopher, Mikhail Bakhtin, introduced the word "dialogic" to explore the notion that we develop much of our knowledge, including our idea of our self, in a continuing process of dialogue with each other. Generating knowledge, on this view, involves constantly responding to what others say and think, and creating meaning through dynamic relationship with others' different ideas.

> The dialogic world is one in which I can never have my own way completely, and therefore I find myself plunged into constant interaction with others – and with myself. In sum, dialogism is based on the primacy of the social, and the assumption that all meaning is achieved by struggle (Holquist, 2004/1990, pp. 38–39).

For Bakhtin, "dialogic" or "dialogism" means "double-voicedness" and is not merely about dialogue (Vice, 1997, p. 45). Dialogic is an epistemology which explains that new meaning is created out of the coming together of speaker and listener and, for Bakhtin, this can involve relationship with the past and the future as well as the present. Individuals generate meaning for themselves through dialogical relationship with the other. Dialogic explains that language is multi-layered, with each person's utterances or ideas stemming from a rich history of experience, and constantly being reshaped through social discourse.

> The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. After all, the utterance arises out of this dialogue as a continuation of it and as a rejoinder to it – it does not approach the object from the sidelines (Bakhtin, 1994/1981, pp. 276–267).

Bakhtin's ideas are notoriously difficult to penetrate but his notion of dialogic has a resonance for this discussion, in particular that we develop our sense of who we are through social relationship. I take from him that dialogic involves dynamic encounter, with the coming together of peoples' ideas generating change, and the nature of change depending on the people involved. Applied to the classroom, if one child talks about their own spirituality, an "utterance" expressing something true for them, the children in the classroom listening to the speaker will each respond differently depending on their own history of experience. The same would be true if

they heard about adults' spiritual ideas or ideas from a text. Each child will generate meaning for themselves based on the coming together of the new ideas with their own. They will be transformed, but the transformation will look different for each child depending on their own beliefs and values and those of their family.

In summary, then, spiritual pedagogy should start from the principles of inter-faith dialogue and encourage spiritual development through a reflexive dialogic between the changing child and diverse spiritual truths. Young people would explore the different spiritual truths they find in the classroom, from other pupils, teaching staff, visitors and texts, voicing their own spirituality and listening to the voice of the other, and reflecting their discoveries about themselves and others back on themselves. By applying the principles of inter-faith dialogue children could give voice to their individual spirituality in a safe, non-competitive learning environment that anticipates and is respectful of difference. Individuals' beliefs about spiritual truths could be challenged, enriched, rejected or deepened in this process. Such a spiritual pedagogy would encourage children and young people to engage in a dialogical relationship with spiritual truth claims and to use these claims reflexively in developing their own spiritual meanings. This would involve engagement of the whole child, and respect and build on their beliefs to ensure their spiritual wellbeing.

Religious Education for Spiritual Development

In England, three recently published education documents see religious education having an increasingly vital role in responding to current anxieties about religion, both nationally and globally. Collectively, these documents also demonstrate a rapid shift towards religious education taking greater account of inter-faith dialogue. The documents also collectively recognise the need for schools to encourage pupils to develop strong personal identities, including spiritual identities, within the context of diversity. So, for instance, the *National Framework for Religious Education* (QCA, 2004) says in its opening preamble:

> Religious education encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging. It enables them to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community.

The 2007 *Curriculum Review: Diversity and Citizenship* states similarly

> Exploring and understanding their own and others' identities is fundamental to education for diversity, essential as pupils construct their own interpretations of the world around them and their place within that world. All pupils need to feel engaged and committed to a wider multiethnic society; they need also to feel included and respected (DfES, p. 29).

Although *Diversity and Citizenship* is primarily a review of Citizenship Education, it emphasises the important contribution religious education makes to education for diversity and citizenship. This document also introduces the notion of "pupil voice", arguing for a change in teaching methods to place greater emphasis on engaging children and young people in articulating their views in the classroom:

It is an area which needs considerable work if we are to meet our objectives of developing active, articulate, critical learners who understand the value of difference and unity and have the ability to participate and engage in current debates (DfES, p. 68).

This sentence is repeated in Ofsted's report on religious education, *Making sense of religion*, also published in 2007. Ofsted's document calls for a shake up of religious education in the face of the global wave of interest in, and concern about, religion and religious and cultural diversity. It builds on and strengthens *Diversity and Citizenship's* call for a change in pedagogy. Teachers are told to change their approach to teaching and learning, to admit greater opportunities for pupil voice and encourage pupils to engage at a deeper level with the realities of the difficult terrain of inter-faith dialogue.

In 2004, the *National Framework for Religious Education* recommended that inter-faith cooperation should be an important aspect of religious knowledge, suggesting pupils be made aware of the value of inter-faith cooperation in "promoting racial and inter-faith harmony and respect for all, combating prejudice and discrimination, contributing positively to community cohesion and promoting awareness of how inter-faith cooperation can support the pursuit of the common good" (QCA, 2004, p. 15). By 2007, Ofsted's *Making sense of religion* does not merely want pupils to *learn about* inter-faith understanding, it wants them to develop the skills of inter-faith dialogue, including the ability to reflect on personal beliefs and cultural identity in the context of diversity, and gaining some understanding of the emotional power of religion. The review states the following:

It is widely recognised that children and young people need to develop a more profound understanding of the significance of religious commitment and diversity. They need the opportunity to reflect on issues about personal identity, meaning and truth. . . . Pupils have opinions, attitudes, feelings, prejudices and stereotypes. Developing respect for the commitments of others while retaining the right to question, criticise and evaluate different viewpoints is not just an academic exercise: it involves creating opportunities for children and young people to meet those with different viewpoints. They need to grasp how powerful religion is in people's lives. RE should engage pupils' feelings and emotions, as well as their intellect (Ofsted, 2007, pp. 39 and 40–41).

Of course, these documents call for greater emphasis on inter-faith dialogue because of anxieties about religious conflict and a desire for "community cohesion" (Ofsted, 2007). But my point is that this new emphasis on the inter-faith dialogical model in RE simultaneously provides an opportunity to reappraise and make greater sense of spiritual pedagogy for spiritual development.

Conclusions

A question underlying this chapter has been—How can we encourage pupils to respond to diversity of spiritual truth claims in order to encourage spiritual development rather than cynicism? This is important given the aim of this book, which is to encourage education to promote holistic learning and the wellbeing of children and young people.

In this chapter I have argued that spiritual pedagogy needs to confront young people with the reality of diverse and competing truth claims. But this needs to be understood and presented in the context that we are all human and have our own ways of making meaning for our lives. Our spirituality, including our beliefs about spiritual truths, may be determined by religion, non-religious and even political ideologies, or perhaps more simply based in our relationships with family, community or the environment.

I have argued for a spiritual pedagogy based on, what I have called, inter-faith dialogic. This is because, first of all, the principles underlying inter-faith dialogue get to the heart of the problematic relationship between spiritual truth and spiritual diversity. Inter-faith dialogue begins from the premise that diversity of spiritual truths does not mean truths are relative and choices are light: it acknowledges choices are significant, weighty but also personal. Inter-faith dialogue *expects* difference and respects the right of individuals to hold on to their own spiritual beliefs, even in the face of reasoned argument. However, a spiritual pedagogy based on inter-faith dialogue alone would not be sufficient for spiritual development. Inter-faith *dialogic* would go further, offering the possibility of transformation, by encouraging a reflexive engagement with the diversity of spiritual truths, and nurturing the spiritual meanings of the children and young people—and adults—involved in spiritual pedagogy.

Such an approach would address the reality of the spiritual dimension of human experience, the reality of spiritual truth, and the reality of diversity, while promoting children and young people's holistic learning and spiritual wellbeing. Although, of course, schools and spiritual pedagogy cannot develop young people's spirituality on their own; they can only lend a helping hand.

Note

1. The British Humanist Association's website cites a 1995 survey of 13,000 13–15 year olds by Revd Professor Leslie Francis and Revd Dr William Kay which showed that 61% of teenagers considered themselves to be atheist or agnostic: http://www.humanism.org.uk/site/cms/contentviewarticle.asp?article=1820&splash=yes. The BHA website has further statistics on young people's beliefs at: http://www.humanism.org.uk/site/cms/contentViewArticle.asp?article=1826.

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Chapter 44
Reaching Out: The Subversive Nature of Touch in the Kindergarten Schoolroom

Sheri Leafgren

Abstract As young children make sense of the world by being in it, not moving through it, they reflect the beliefs and norms of those wisdom cultures espousing a life in the world, in the moment. Yet, in school, the deeply encountering, spirited child is likely to be wrapped securely in the swaddling clothes of the rules, procedures, and surveillance of the schoolroom. In the course of a recent research project analyzing children's resistance to these structures in kindergarten classrooms, a particularly striking finding was related to the children's ingenuity in finding ways to engage in physical contact with one another. This chapter details the means by which the young children apply their tacit understanding of the workings of the schoolroom, in order to subvert the structures keeping them apart.

Introduction

In kindergarten classrooms, children are kept apart. Structures, procedures, rules, and norms serve to explicitly and implicitly place children in the "right" place at the "right" time, and, especially, apart from one another. Walking in lines with hands at sides or clasped behind backs; standard school-wide rules such as "keep hands, feet, and other objects to yourself"; assigned places on gathering carpets;—all are in place to preempt opportunities for touch. As Tobin (1997) notes, "Children's spontaneous, enthusiastic bodily expression and pleasure are contained and traded for the adult's sense of order, propriety and control" (p. 63).

Yet, children find ways to surreptitiously connect, using said "hands, feet, and other objects" to do so. As school places children in close proximity—in clear view of one another—the children see, and so desire. Desiring in revolutionary, productive ways (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983), children join and so create new connections in the classroom space. This chapter examines the ways that children learn to recognize unsurveilled places and unsupervised times in the early childhood classroom, and how they find in this temporary freedom, a space to connect flesh

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to flesh. In these secret touches, children find spiritual pleasure and erotic pleasure: an "Eros born of Chaos, personified [by] creative power and harmony. . .a lifeforce manifested in a capacity for joy, intense feeling, and a deep sharing with others" (Lorde, in Phelan, 1997, p. 87).

As young children make sense of the world by being *in* it, not moving *through* it, they reflect the beliefs and norms of those wisdom cultures espousing a life *in* the world, *in* the moment. Yet, in school, the deeply encountering, spirited child is likely to be wrapped securely in the swaddling clothes of the rules, procedures, and surveillance of the schoolroom. In the course of a recent research project analyzing children's resistance to these structures in kindergarten classrooms, a particularly striking finding was related to the children's ingenuity in finding ways to engage in physical contact with one another. This chapter details the means by which the young children apply their tacit understanding of the workings of the schoolroom in order to subvert the structures keeping them apart.

The Study: Disobedience and Resistance in Kindergarten

The chapter is derived from a larger study of disobedience in kindergarten (Leafgren, 2007) that combined Eisner's (1998) qualitative inquiry and the method of rhizo-analysis (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; MacNaughton, 2004, 2005) toward presenting possibilities of an authentic, spirited, and disobedient childhood. In inquiring into the ways that kindergartners' moments of disobedience also serve as opportunities for acting out the possibilities that a spiritual childhood provides—possibilities such as reverence, awe, wonder, reflection, imagination, and purpose (Greene, 2006; Miller, 2000; Quinn, 2001)—this study begged the question of what children were about in their acts of schooled disobedience beyond mere naughtiness. The value of considering what those moments of disobedience hold lies in opening fresh possibilities in adult response to such moments.

During the study, "texts"[1] of children's disobedience were generated via transcriptions of videotaped moments of classroom disobedience and interrogated in order to seek surprises toward "disrupt[ing] the familiar and obvious" (MacNaughton, 2004) in what is known and so to form a new logic about what is happening within the text of the child's moment of disobedience while building new understandings of its relationships to other texts. Within these texts, then, it is possible to "experience something we did not know before" which would allow true inquiry into "the humbling phenomena of difference and what *might* be" (Greene, 2001, p. 82).

The study was conducted in two Midwestern American public school kindergarten classrooms. Mrs. Krinkle's[2] kindergarten, set in a large urban district, was a full-day program with 23 children. Mr. Scott's kindergarten, set in a nearby suburban district, was a half-day program with 22 children in his morning kindergarten. Data collection for the study took place during Fall 2006 for approximately 3 h per day, 2 days per week for 4 weeks per site; three of those 4 weeks included videotaping.

Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative inquiry guided the means and value of direct observations of the actual interactions among children and their teachers during the daily activities and routines of their kindergarten classrooms (Leafgren, 2007, 2008). This study worked to "see" through experienced and concurrently fresh eyes qualities worth experiencing in a kindergarten classroom and to express these qualities via what Eisner (1998) describes as *educational criticism*: "an art of saying useful things about complex and subtle objects and events so that others can see and understand what they did not see and understand before" (p. 3). In this study, qualitative inquiry serves to provide a unique perspective on children's negotiation of spiritual–moral opportunities in the schoolroom. "To know what schools are like... we need to be able to see what occurs in them, and we need to be able to tell others what we have seen in ways that are vivid and insightful," claimed Eisner (1998, pp. 5–6) for schools

> ... have moods, and they too display scenes of high drama that those who make policy and those who seek to improve practice should know... The means through which such knowledge is made possible are the enlightened eye—the scene is seen—and the ability to craft text so that what the observer has experienced can be shared by those who were not there (pp. 22, 30).

In this study, qualitative inquiry (Eisner, 1998) applied to observations of kindergarten children in the context of their kindergarten classroom will provide opportunities to orient "rhizomatic logic" to the readings of the children in order to "build complex and diverse pictures of 'the child', of 'observation' and of 'research'[and will offer] a tool for critically reflecting on how meaning is produced through the choices we make about what we use to map" the readings of children's texts (MacNaughton, 2005, pp. 144–145).

Rhizomatic Analysis

Rhizoanalysis builds from the theories of Deleuze and Guattari, using the contrast between rhizome (rhizomatic) and tree (arborescent) as a metaphor of the contrast between two forms of logic. In challenging the dominant structure of thought as "tree logic," Deleuze and Guattari (1987) apply a metaphorical description of the tree's structure—from roots through the trunk to the branches—to a "fixed, determining and linear" logic used to explain in terms of cause-and-effect relationships. In contrast, the "lateral" structure of the rhizome's collection of mutually dependent "roots and shoots"—is a metaphor of a more flexible and dynamic logic that "encompasses change, complexity and heterogeneity" (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 120).

The conceptual tools of rhizoanalysis provide a means to explore the nuances and politics of the texts constituted of kindergarten observations in order to create new texts. These newly constructed texts explore "how it means; how it connects with things 'outside' of it, such as its author, its reader and its literary and non-literary

contexts; and by exploring how it organizes meanings and power through offshoots, overlaps, conquests and expansions" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21).

The merit of rhizoanalysis as the analytic perspective for this study lies in Deleuze and Guattari's notion of rhizomes as "*articulated tactics of resistance to domination*" (in Rosenberg, 1994, p. 288). Children's living, breathing disobedience—their own "resistance to domination"—implies a rhizomatic, deterritorializing interaction within the enclosed and partitioned structures of the classroom, and therefore manifests a nomadic penchant for resisting the restrictive techniques of power. The sedentary, partitioned, and designated spaces of the dominant culture's (adult's) classroom environment are challenged, disrupted, and reimagined by children as "malleable, living, permeable, and ambiguous microspaces and spaces" (Patton, 1996, p. 288). There is a fit here: rhizoanalysis resists (Leafgren, 2008).

Findings

Classroom Constraints and Surveillance

> Miss Juste's police whistle rent the air with two awful blasts. . .Obediently, the green rompers milled about and found their appointed places in regular lines the length and breadth of the gymnasium. . . Miss Juste waited till every movement in the lines should cease. As usual, it was Edith Polizetti who could not find her place. Edith Polizetti who, under the terrible eye of Miss Juste, tried to squeeze her way anywhere into a line (Highsmith, 1941/2002, p. 53).

"Under the terrible eye. . ." Just as in Highsmith's rendition of Miss Juste's gymnasium, there are places in school—for instance, The Line, The Carpet, The Tables—where children are "under the terrible eye," the inescapable eye. These places share their own kind of time and space: surveilled, constrained, and highly restricted. The restrictions usually include some reference to noise, but much more often than not, a prohibition related to touch.

Disobedience, in this study, describes an action or interaction that appears to disregard or defy structured expectations. Of the three moments of disobedience that comprised the findings of the larger study, only the moment of Moby's touching titled, *Behind Her Back*, will be shared later in this chapter. Discussing this particular moment of disobedience as one of "possibilities"—as potentially a moment of humor, engagement, empathy, imagination, and abandon—challenges the unquestioned power of controlled order and techne' and so works to alleviate the pain of morally and spiritually swaddled kindergarten children in their tightly partitioned (although not as tightly partitioned as some might think) classrooms.

Setting Boundaries

To set the stage for telling the tale of Moby's moment of disobedience, the following descriptions of events in both Mr. Scott's and Mrs. Krinkle's classrooms and school hallways include examples of ways that boundaries are set. In order to recognize the

spaces in which boundaries are stretched and made malleable, the reader should be aware of the means by which boundaries are drawn and maintained. What follows are examples of from both classrooms of these boundaries and what they mean to the children and their teachers.

The arrangement of Mrs. Krinkle's and Mr. Scott's classrooms (and any kindergarten classroom) reflects the expectations of each space. Table arrangements—the placement of the tables as well as the distributions among them—determine whether and with whom children may interact during the times the children are directed to sit at those tables. In both classrooms, spaces for gathering—the carpet and the lesson areas—are open with a designated teacher chair to cue the children where they should direct their attention. In each of the two classrooms, some center areas—the block area, the library, make-believe, and the math tubs area—are somewhat hidden. Placed in corners or against walls with furniture dividing the spaces from clear lines of vision in the classroom—these places offered the children opportunities to act without consistent supervision. Field notes documenting the children's interactions while working in these areas of the classrooms often included a range of bawdy or bathroom talk (whispered, snickering comments about butts or heinies, giggling, and pointing out pictures of partially naked characters in books like *In the Night Kitchen* and *I'm Going to Run Away*, and one gasped-filled, mouth-covering conversation about whether or not Mr. Scott poops), as well as physical interactions that included sword play (with snapped together math cubes), paddling one another with the long wooden blocks, and, on a more gentle note (but just as frowned upon in school) laying on top of one another and stroking hair.

However, while children recognize these spaces as places of relative freedom from surveillance, it is the teacher who generally arranges the spaces and determines who may go to these spaces and when. While kindergarten is unusual among school classrooms in the relatively generous allotments of "free" space, classroom arrangements are still "designed to maximize the teacher's ability to keep an eye on students" (Nespor, 1997, p. 133). This is true in Mr. Scott's and Mrs. Krinkle's classrooms, too.

Slipping Surveillance

I recall long ago, in elementary school, the teacher would sometimes leave the room. Without discussion, one child would immediately go to the classroom door to serve as the "look-out." While remaining, for the most part, *in* the room, the look-out would keep close watch on the hallway for the approach of any adult and still manage to take part in the goings-on of the classroom. The worst of these goings-on were merely conversations taking place out of our seats, and a periodic peek at what was on the teacher's desk, but I can still recall the feeling of release—until—"SHHH!! She's coming!!!" There were always a few of the children who remained sitting quietly in their seats and look on disapprovingly, and a few who would look on longingly—but none of them ever "told."

A similar "release" occurred in Mr. Scott's kindergarten during the transition between snack and recess. Lemmie and Mason had finished their clean-up and were

seated at their table awaiting the call to line up. As they waited, they engaged in hand play—each taking turns laying a hand flat on the table, palm up so that the other could smack it, if they could time it before the hand-on-table person snatched it away. As an indication of her awareness of the possibility of surveillance, before the hand-play began, Lemmie committed three checks—turning her head to gauge Mr. Scott's attention. As she made her first two checks, Mr. Scott was looking in her general direction. She remained still. On her third check, Mr. Scott had turned to the door to look for stragglers coming from the bathroom—and instantly, without committing another check, Lemmie reached across the table with both hands and gently smacked them on top of Mason's. He snatched his hands back and she laid hers out on the table, Mason, without checking, smacked hers carefully, too.

This exchange is typical of those where children seek out time and spaces that will permit them to physically connect. In this instance, Lemmie and Mason were in one of the most public places in the kindergarten—at their tables. Yet, because it was a transitional time when Mr. Scott was partially occupied with other children, Lemmie and Mason sensed a space for illicit physical play.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1979) described the way in which docile bodies are induced to discipline themselves through practices of rituality "in which they take on the monitoring, scrutiny and appraisal of their own practices as if they are constantly subject to the gaze of unseen others" (p. 9). Thus, the classroom enjoins the children's progression from what Bakhtin (1968/1984) described as the "grotesque body," one with "shoots and branches [and] all that prolongs the body and links it to other bodies or to the world outside" (pp. 315–317), to the "civilized body. . .an entirely finished, completed, strictly limited body" (p. 320)—so the kindergartner's body becomes a civilized body. Nespor (1997) named the civilized body a "schooled body, one that stays silent, walks in line, keeps its hands to itself, and doesn't get out of its chair and walk around the room" (p. 131).

A vivid example of the civilized kindergarten body involved Fireman, a child in Mrs. Krinkle's class. One day, as the children in the class were cleaning up and then preparing to line up for dismissal, Fireman, who had cleaned up very quickly, helped other children and then gathered his belongings, and stood "in line" to await the other children. Because the other children were taking so much time, he stood for several minutes, alone. And because his "place" in line was toward the end of the line-to-be, he was standing in an odd place: toward the end of the carpet and right in the path of the children as they move from clean-up to the cloakroom and back out to their tables to gather more items. Minutes ticked by. Finally, he said, as if to himself, "I'm standing in line for nothing." But still he stood.

Touch/Swaddling

As structures are put in place to separate children from one another for a familiar kind of order, the effect is often dehumanizing. As adults wrap or bind babies in swaddling cloths, they do so for multiple purposes. One swaddles a baby to protect the infant and to keep it close. Women in many cultures carefully swaddle their

infants in order to keep the child safe, secure and as close as possible, sharing warmth, breath, and heartbeat. Swaddling in this manner allows the child to participate in the day-to-day doings of the mother—to observe what she does and know/feel cared for in the most fundamental sense.

Swaddling is also a means to restrain and control the child. Mead (1951) described the swaddled Russian child: "Hands that were tightly bound inside the swaddling bands could not explore. . .experiencing but never touching the teeming, vivid, highly charged world around it, being in it, but not of it" (np).

In studying the normalizing practices of the schoolroom, I have applied the term *moral swaddling* (Leafgren & Ambrose, 2005) or *spiritual swaddling* (Leafgren, 2007) to represent the constraints placed on children via "a range of norms, decisions and social practices" (Giroux, 1983, p. 59) and pre-emptive school procedures and rules. These constraints serve to not only protect the children from harm and offer security and predictability—but also prohibit fully "vivid and highly charged" interactions with other children and their environment, and so interfere with children's potential to connect socially, tactilely, and spiritually. Buber wrote extensively of the relational nature of the human spirit and cautioned that nurturing the spirit-self is not passive or restrained, but that the "human child. . .gains his world by seeing, listening, feeling, forming. It is in encounter that the creation reveals its formhood; it does not pour itself into senses that are waiting but deigns to meet those *that are reaching out*" [emphasis mine] (Buber, 1958/1970, p. 76). "Reaching out" implies the freedom to do so.

In this study, spirituality is *not* considered transcendent in the sense that one becomes removed from (above) what is grounded and solid. Rather, spirituality is transcendent in the sense that it involves a way of being in the world where one is connected to other beings (which includes ones' community, people, and "other parts of creation") and allows one to move from inward to outward action and to seek that which lies beyond ourselves. In this vein, Phenix (1974, cited in Kimes-Myers, 1997) described "spirit" as the word that names the "property of limitless going beyond" (p. 13).

Moral/spiritual swaddling operates in conflicted complexity. It is a metaphor used not to reduce uncertainty, but to complicate and so possibly enhance understanding. While the practice and act of swaddling *may* come about as an act of care, the unintended consequences of the practice include a muted, disengaged experience with the world. It is for the "good of the child" that adults swaddle (constrain, protect, remove from one another). This recalls the words of Tommy Trantino writing from New Jersey's death row regarding his own time in school:

> I liked to be around the other kids and I used to look at the sky out the windows of my classes and smile at the women across the street looking out of their prison tenements and sometimes we'd catch each other's eyes but they hardly ever smiled back and sometimes I would wave to them but the teachers would say VERBOTEN. People were being kept apart and we were keeping ourselves apart and we were all hurting like a motherfucker but no one was telling (Trantino, 1972, p. 23).

Trantino notes "being kept apart" *and* "keeping ourselves apart"—both functions of the constraints, order, and normalizing function of the schoolroom. This recalls

the "schooled body" of Fireman—keeping *himself* apart from the others and the goings-on of the classroom. Yet, even in the carefully drawn and surveilled boundaries of the schoolroom, children find and make spaces for reaching out. As we shall learn from Moby in his text of disobedience that follows.

Behind Her Back

Mrs. Krinkle's kindergarten children "come to the carpet" for lessons. The children have assigned places to sit on the carpet in three rows. An expectation is that the children stay in their assigned places—and so, apart. Of course, though, the children *do* touch. On this day, the children were seated on the carpet in their rows facing Mrs. Krinkle's chair while she cut into bite-sized pieces a sweet potato the class had grown in their garden.

   Line

1. Mrs. Krinkle: Bumblebee—did you get to feel the potato?
2. Mrs. Krinkle: I am going to peel off the skin.
3. Mrs. Krinkle: Is it hard like a brick?
4. Mrs. Krinkle: Please sit. . . look how nicely Clark is sitting. Thank you Clark.
5. ((Most of the children shift on the carpet, sitting straighter, placing hands on lap to await their chance to touch the potato making its rounds to touch; and then to receive their cut piece of potato to taste.))
6. Mrs. Krinkle: Look how nicely Scrappy is sitting, too.
7. Moby: I want some potato.
8. ((Moby is at his proper space on the carpet but is on his knees. Mrs. Krinkle continues to slice off pieces of potato and hand to children, but not yet Moby.))
9. Mrs. Krinkle: Sit down and you'll get some. Take a seat. Take a seat and you'll get one.
10. Mrs. Krinkle: Oh I love the people I heard saying thank you.
11. Moby: Thank you!
12. ((There is a general murmur as children exclaim over their taste of potato and/or worry over when theirs is coming. Mrs. Krinkle gives a slice to Bruce Wayne (not Moby, yet) and then is out of potato.))
13. Mrs. Krinkle: Hold on! ((to Dora who was next)). Hold on! ((to class, in general)).

   Mrs. Krinkle walked away from the carpet to get another potato. The classroom is large, and so Mrs. Krinkle's walk to corner of the room took her slightly out of earshot and—as long as she was walking away from the carpet and looking for the potatoes—out of eyeshot.
   What occurred next is a striking example of the children's awareness of their teacher's presence and the impact of her surveillance (and lack of). Mrs. Krinkle had not taken more than six steps away from the carpet when the spaces between children disintegrated and the rows collapsed into piles of children. Dre', Scrappy,

Jacob, and Peter wrestled each other; Cinderella, Princess, and Briona tickled, twitching, and flinching as the others tickled them; and Gabriella, Tommy, Mr. Police-man, and Bumblebee, still in their places with hands on lap, quietly watched them, Bumblebee with pursed lips of disapproval. Leela, NewYork, Dora, Bruce, and Moby wrestled and rolled on the corner of the carpet closest to Mrs. Krinkle.

The shift from the children sitting, straight, and silent to the state of crumpled and intersecting was instantaneous. Nearly as one (except for the ones who watched and frowned), the structure of the carpet imploded. Mrs. Krinkle had her back to the children for less than 70 s and she continued to talk to them as she walked and bent over the bag. Those seconds were full of action and interaction.

Then, just as Mrs. Krinkle began to turn back to the carpet, at that very moment— as if the children were one entity perfectly attuned to their teacher's anticipated movements—the structure of the carpet reasserted itself.

Except for Moby. Moby somehow missed the message of Mrs. Krinkle's impend-ing turn back toward the carpet. He continued to bury his head into Bruce's stomach, joyfully kneading it. The other children merely sat straighter, some looking forward at the teacher's empty chair—the others looking toward Mrs. Krinkle as she began walking to the carpet. Bumblebee shook her head even while looking straight ahead at Mrs. Krinkle's chair.

Moby lifted his head from Bruce's tummy and smiled at him, puzzled. It was then that he must have noticed that all of the children had returned to their carpet state— and just as he began to form an approximation of a listening position, Mrs. Krinkle, three steps into her return—sang out, "Oh, Moby!" while the rest of the children gave no indication of their participation in the breakdown of the carpet.

Within this moment lay evidence of the children's collective awareness of the teacher and her gaze; the willingness of children to risk that gaze in order to phys-ically, sensually, and playfully connect with one another; the role of surveillance in children's opportunities to physically interact; the role of the complaints in the group; and the willingness of the class to sacrifice one on the outer perimeter (like a zebra to the lion) to the teacher's gaze.

Laying a Picture Book Text

Rhizoanalysis reconstructs a text by creating new and different understandings; and it does so by linking it with texts other than those we would normally use. Here, Moby's disobedience text is linked with a popular children's text to reconstruct the understanding of disobedient touch. Burbules (1986) discussed building understand-ings of ideologies on models of literary texts. He demonstrated this approach by laying texts of "school" beside texts of the classic 1945 children's text, *Tootle*. In his analysis he considered how the assumptions and values of a particular social worldview "underlie a seemingly simple and innocent text" (p. 343) and argued that *Tootle* "presents an account of schooling that cheerfully endorses some of the most repressive aspects of the process by which schools restrict the impulses and aspirations of children" (p. 331).

Like the character of Tootle, Moby's "sensitive, emotional and relational qualities are not 'relevant' " to the work of kindergartners and actually impede it, therefore, it is "clear which must give way" (p. 340). Burbules asks, "What can we learn about ourselves and our culture by examining the kinds of books we produce for our children [and ourselves] to read?" (p. 331).

Engaging with this question via a more current popular children's text, *David Goes to School* (Shannon, 1999), one finds the character, David as the joyful, spirited dissident, an autobiographically cartooned version of the author/illustrator, David Shannon. He begins: "David's teacher always said... NO, DAVID! No yelling. No pushing. No running in the halls." Even so, David, the disobedient child was represented in the pages of the book in variations of:

- Out-of-seat behavior ("Sit down, David!")
- Talking out ("David, raise your hand!")
- Touching the red-haired girl sitting in front of him ("Keep your hands to yourself!")
- Daydreaming ("PAY ATTENTION!")
- Cutting in line ("Wait your turn, David!")
- Noisiness ("Shhhhh!")
- Having to go to the bathroom ("Again?!")
- And vandalism via drawing on the school desk ("That's it, Mister! You're staying after school!").

One might recognize the teacher in this book, although we never see her face. Her invisibility serves a purpose. The faceless power of the teacher contributes to the panoptic quality of her control. She *may* always be watching. As well, the reader may be enjoying David's transgressions—especially as depicted by Shannon's wildly joyful and scribbly drawings—and, if the teacher were to be shown, with the disapproving face and posture which surely must be the case given David's perseveration in willful disobedience, we may resent her and so resent the voice of reason that must present the inviolate rule of order. Since we cannot see who is behind them, these unquestionable rules are as Burbules (1986) noted, "abstracted from any social context or set of conventions—they just are" (p. 340).

David's naughtiness—his fully present and active engagement with what he sees, feels, and desires in the space of his school and classroom—is a problem to be addressed via verbal admonishments; reminders of likely rules ("keep your hands to yourself" mirrors the oft-stated school rule: "Keep hands, feet and other objects to yourself."); and peer pressure toward Foucauldian normalization as on several pages, Shannon depicted the children in the class viewing David's antics with disapproval. Examples of these normalizing behaviors include

- The red-haired girl was depicted with an expression of despair as she raised her hand while David called out
- Children in the lunch line who were passed by as David took his turn before theirs were drawn with anger, shock, and confusion on their faces

- Children trying to study in spite of David's noisy pencil tapping looked at him with down-pointing, furrowed eyebrows, and frowning mouths
- And finally, a punishment and reward

After his act of vandalism, David stayed after school and worked to please his teacher by washing all of the desks in the classroom. Shannon illustrated David's face and demeanor in this drawing as one seeking approval: eyebrows slanting upward, very slight smile, arms open and palms out as he held the sponge, and quietly begged the teacher's attention to the shining desks. At last, the teacher was shown—actually only her blue-dressed torso—as she awarded David a sticker representing her gold-starred approval ("GOOD JOB, DAVID!") and he is released. *Finally* happy, David skipped home and passed on the sidewalk the red-haired girl who now deigned to smile and wave at him. His compliance had earned her approval, too. As Burbules (1986) concluded about *Tootle*, "It appears that the child's desire for a happy ending can be satisfied only when [he] learns to follow the rules" (p. 335).

Surveillance

Enacting their understanding of surveillance, many children, especially "disobedient" ones, do not act (or fail to act) on the assumption that they are being watched when they are not. In this way, children are perhaps more savvy about surveillance than are adults. Nespor (1997) wrote that while a teacher's perspective is a problem of organizing, managing, and controlling children's bodies in classroom and school spaces, the children view the classroom and school as "negotiable terrain. . .there is surveillance, but it is hardly suffocating" (p. 131). Teachers cannot monitor most of what children do and children are acutely aware of this. The disobedient ones operate under the latitude provided by this fact—that while much effort is made by the adults to carefully order the time and space of school to provide the tight and standardized control, the free spaces are there. Not much is required in time or space to take advantage. As demonstrated in Moby's carpet incident, the public, teacher-controlled space of the carpet became a free space when Mrs. Krinkle turned her back for only a moment, as the children acted out their resistance to "constraints placed on their spontaneous natures" (Pace & Hemmings, 2007, p. 4).

As Fifield (2008) commented of Moby, he was "not so much an innocent victim coercively domesticated by school, but was a creative, flexible and accommodating participant in the construction of school life" (p. 3). Rather than resistance as open disobedience, Fifield noted a system of reciprocal surveillance, in which teachers are every bit as much under the eye of children, as children are under the eye of teachers. Although teachers and students are partners in surveillance, "they are up to different things." While teachers' surveillance of students seeks to homogenize space and time in school, placing children under rules of conduct that apply across space/time, the children seem to experience a much more fine-grained space/time. They are

in the moment, sensitive to fleeting opportunities that open and close possibilities. Fifield further clarifies

> Phenomena like the instantaneous reassembly of crystalline social order from chaotic bodily collisions on Mrs. Krinkle's classroom carpet reflect this reciprocal surveillance. This was not so much a broad strategic resistance to institutional control, as a lack of sustained presence in any single regime, a facility for being present in multiple regimes, purposes and identities nearly simultaneously. Even as these Foucauldian children are induced to discipline themselves through practices of rituality, they use the rituals for purposes and pleasures of their own. I wonder if the children's touch would have been so pleasurable, without the opportunities that surveillance of bodies paradoxically affords? (p. 4).

Laying a Pleasure/Sensing/Spirit Text

As they enter the school building, children are to leave their bodies at home. School personnel lament the inconvenience of feeding, watering, and elimination as the most difficult portions of the school day to manage. And the functions and desires of the body—to move, to touch, to be touched is an anathema to the adults who are there to ensure that "nothing goes on." Poor Tootle, the train in Burbules' (1986) text analysis of the children's text, *Tootle*, he of the loud toots, meadow frolics, and races with horses off the rails. . .leads the children who read his story to infer from the lessons he learns

> Attempts at independent judgment, sensual investigation, and peer-group formation are at best naïve; at worst, they interfere with the important task of becoming responsible and productive adults. Becoming an adult. . .means learning. . .self-denial; it means foregoing childish pleasure; it means accepting tasks and constraints that one may hate; it means suppressing certain emotions and desires; it means abandoning play and learning to work in a compulsive manner; and it means accepting without question the discipline of externally imposed rules (p. 345).

The surveillance described above plays an important part in ensuring that self-control and self-denial is learned. The erotic, "the lure of human beauty that releases pleasure" (Browning, 1998, p. 96), in early childhood classrooms is public. In other words, touch is monitored explicitly with the implicit understanding that "sexuality exists in the classroom and is antithetical to compliance, obedience, and conformity" (Broadway, Leafgren, & Gilbert, 2007).

Beyond direct admonishments and reprimands, teachers carefully prepare the time and space elements of the classroom toward separating and controlling the children and their bodies. Note that Mrs. Krinkle has assigned places in three straight rows on her carpet with sufficient space in between each child that touching takes an effort to do. "From birth, children construct themselves subject to the 'civilizing' controls of adults" (Elias, 1978).

In the case of Moby, head buried into the soft belly of Bruce, he had gone too far. He not only missed the returning surveillance, but he crossed the invisible fences between children. If Moby could not control his body, Mrs. Krinkle's decision

to partition him away from other children who might touch or be touched would control it for him. Moby's need to be physically close and engage in body play with other children, is as Buber (1958/1970) noted, the "reaching out" that permits one to relate to the other.

Grosz (1994) delineated "two kinds of approaches to theorizing the body' – one, 'inscriptive,' a notion of the social body upon which 'social law, morality, and values are inscribed' [and] the 'lived body', [which references the] lived experience of the body, the body's internal or psychic inscription" (p. 33). Grosz suggests that, while we are becoming adept at naming the inscriptive details of the body, we tend to shy away from the messiness of the corporal body—the lived experiences. . .especially sex. Practically all children indulge or are prone to indulge in sexual activity; and that, being. . .at the same time, "natural' and "contrary to nature,". . .posed physical and moral, individual and collective dangers; children were defined as "preliminary" sexual beings, on this side of sex, yet within it, astride a dangerous dividing line (Foucault, 1980, p. 104).

As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) described the body as "not simply a sign to be read, a symptom to be deciphered, but also a force to be reckoned with," so did the children's bodies and the connections made manage to "align themselves to other things produce what [is] called a machine. . .in itself, the body is not a machine; but in its active relations to other social practices, entities and events, it forms machine connections. . .[and] is itself an assemblage of organs, processes, pleasures, passions, activities, behaviors linked by fine lines and unpredictable networks to other elements, segments and assemblages" (p. 120).

In one more backward look at Mrs. Krinkle's walk away from the carpet, her body's distance and position was the catalyst linked by "fine lines and unpredictable networks" to the carpet—and like a Rube Goldberg machine put into motion the series of actions and interactions that included every child in the room—tickler, wrestler, or watcher.

As shahjahan (2007) enjoined, the spiritual path is not an "individual path, but a communal one." Children's state of intense awareness and wide-awakeness engages them in what Kimes-Myers (1997) named a "spirituality of caring," a fully present way of being, knowing, and acting which includes a relational, dialogical connection in which things become other body subjects, rather than just objects of perception. Buber (1958/1970) referred to this as an "I–thou relationship" in contrast with an "I–it" relationship in which the other has no "subjectiveness" and exists only as an object."

Hart (2004, in Ambrose, 2005) described Buber's "between the I and you" as "a relational understanding of spirituality in which the spiritual is lived out at the intersection of our lives; in the 'between'. . . as a 'spirituality' that develops between one and others communally" (p. 94). As Buber wrote, "Spirit is not in the I but between the I and you. It is not like the blood that circulates in you, but like the air in which you breathe" (1958/1970). Hart (2004) suggests that relationships developed in early childhood classrooms are in fact spiritual and that the "air in which you breathe can become the community in which you share lived experiences" (in Ambrose, 2005, p. 94).

Conclusion

breathing in, I am so happy to hug my child breathing out, I know she is real and alive in my arms (Hanh, 1990, p. 36).

As young children make sense of the world by being *in* it, not moving t*hrough* it, they reflect the beliefs and norms of those wisdom cultures espousing a life *in* the world, *in* the moment. As Hanh (1990) writes of the *lotus sutra*

The one who "looks at all beings with eyes of compassion" is Avalokitesvara, the *bodhisattva* of compassion. In the sutra, this line reads: "Eyes of loving kindness look on all living beings." Love is impossible without understanding. In order to understand others, we must know them, "be inside their skin." Then we can treat them with loving kindness. The source of love is our fully awakened mind (pp. 3–4).

Yet, in school, the deeply encountering, spirited child is likely to be wrapped securely in the swaddling clothes of the rules, procedures, and surveillance of the schoolroom. Happily, we can find in analyzing children's resistance to these structures in kindergarten classrooms examples of the children's ingenuity in finding ways to engage in physical and spiritual contact with one another. Moby *was* acting disobediently as he playfully burrowed his head into Bruce's tummy. Moby was messing about, stirring up Bruce, and distracting other children. He was also responding to Bruce's presence and finding joy in that.

In considering my own choices in how to respond to what I have learned from the children in this research, I have decided on pursuing a fuller understanding of the spaces in school for deep connectedness, the joy of touch, and regard for others. I worry that the harshness of our culture is mirrored too accurately in the places where our children live. It matters to me that children are nurtured as our kin; that they have spaces to move, touch, and connect with one another; and that they are cared for and have opportunities to care for others.

I have come full circle in this decision. In one of my very first doctoral classes, only 3 weeks or so into the course, my professor said to me, "Your problem is that you don't think there's enough joy in school." I was stunned at that time, but after some consideration, realized that he was right. I had never thought of this, but found that when naming my "issues" with school, with teachers, with the system, most could be traced to a lack of joy.

At times, this lack of joy translates into a harshness that is uncalled for, into a humorlessness that would appear to be the least likely characteristic of a place in which children come to stay, and into yawning chasms among those who share the space—distances larger than the arm's length between or the imaginary "bubble" which serves as force fields to prevent touches. All of this, even while we likely know that "if we want to develop and deepen the capacity for connectedness at the heart of good teaching, we must understand—and resist—the perverse but powerful draw of the 'disconnected' life" (Palmer, 1998, p. 35).

Notes

1. "Texts" here are descriptions of selected moments of disobedience to be "read" or interpreted by the researcher and by the reader. In order to disrupt the traditional reading of the familiar text of kindergarten disobediences, other texts—from literature, history, pop culture, etc., can be laid against the text of disobedience in order to influence the reading of it.
2. The participants in the study chose their pseudonyms and those choices are used here. Please note that some children named themselves as non-children (such as Fireman).

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Chapter 45
Spiritually Intelligent Kids: Children Using SQ to Enhance Holistic Learning and Wellbeing

Brendan Hyde

Abstract While there is much focus on the development of the cognitive, social and emotional dimensions in relation to wellbeing in Australian education, the spiritual dimension is, notwithstanding the rhetoric, often brushed over or neglected completely. However, new theories concerning intelligence in promoting the social and emotional development in children within the classroom have a pertinent place in this discussion, particularly the notion of spiritual intelligence (SQ). Drawing upon the author's own research into the spirituality of children, this chapter will explore how children's SQ might be drawn upon and nurtured within the classroom context as a means by which to enhance holistic learning and a sense of wellbeing.

Introduction

Recently I attended a local forum on student wellbeing in the Australian primary education sector. The day was well attended, and the workshop presenters most adept and renowned from within their various fields of expertise. For the most part, their focus was on the development of the cognitive, social and emotional dimensions in relation to wellbeing in Australian education. One of the presenters went further by noting the importance of the spiritual dimension in relation to wellbeing. Excellent, I thought. But my sense of anticipation quickly became one of disappointment as this particular presenter returned to a discussion of the social and emotional dimensions without elaboration upon the importance of the spiritual. One or two of the other presenters in the workshops I attended alluded to the spiritual dimension and its importance to wellbeing, but none elaborated further. One presenter spoke about the importance of classrooms as relational spaces and environments—relationality being a hallmark of the spiritual dimension—but did not link this explicitly to the spiritual. Another spoke about schools as places of connectedness, but again did not place this within the context of the spiritual dimension.

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In one sense, this is perhaps not surprising in the Australian context. There has been a reluctance to use the word "spiritual" in official legislating documents in relation to education (Hodder, 2007). However, it is also surprising given that the spiritual dimension has, in recent times, been given a high profile in relation to the resilience and wellbeing of Australian young people generally (Eckersley, 2004), and in particular in relation to the role of the school environment and school community in facilitating the development of young people's wellbeing (Rowling, 2008).

It seems to me that, not withstanding the rhetoric, at the practical level, the spiritual dimension is often brushed over, or neglected completely in the discourse surrounding student wellbeing in Australian education. However, new theories concerning intelligence in promoting the social and emotional wellbeing and development of children within the classroom have a pertinent place in this discussion. For instance, Gardner (1983, 1993, 1999) speaks about the notions of interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence and the possibility of existential intelligence. Goleman (1995), Mayer and Salovey (1997) and Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2000) discuss the plausibility of emotional intelligence. The work of these scholars has begun to make an impact in the area of wellbeing in promoting social and emotional development of individuals. Another theory concerning intelligence which has particular pertinence for wellbeing is the notion of spiritual intelligence— SQ. In recent times, the concept of spiritual intelligence has been investigated and well documented (see, for example, Emmons, 1999, 2000; Sinetar, 2000; Zohar and Marshall, 2000). This chapter will explore how children's SQ might be drawn upon and nurtured within the classroom context as a means by which to enhance holistic learning and a sense of wellbeing.

Spirituality

When using the term "spirituality" in this chapter, I am not referring to religion, but rather to something which is more primal than religion (O'Murchu, 1997). I am referring to the sense of connectedness and relationality which individuals may experience in relation to Self and everything Other than Self (see for example de Souza, 2006a; Hart, 2003; Hay & Nye, 2006). For some, this sense of connectedness may be experienced as Ultimate Unity (de Souza, 2006a; Hyde, 2008) in which Self and Other become one. Although the mystics and sages of various religious traditions have experienced this throughout the ages, contemporary research also suggests that people who do not necessarily belong to or practice any formal system of beliefs are capable of apperceiving states of Ultimate Unity, albeit for short periods of time (de Souza, 2006a; Hyde, 2008; Newberg, d'Aquili, & Rause, 2001).

While some people may choose to give expression to their sense of connectedness through a formal religious tradition, their spirituality is not dependent upon institutional religion. In exploring the concept of spiritual intelligence within this chapter, I am not presupposing that a person's sense of the spiritual is in any way dependent upon a formal system of values and beliefs—religion. I am referring to the sense of connectedness (and in some instances, unity) which a person may experience in relation to Self and everything which is Other than Self.

Intelligence as the Ability to Solve Problems

It needs to be acknowledged that the concept of spiritual intelligence is a contested notion. Writers such as Fontana (2003) and Mayer (2000) have remained cautious about the plausibility of such a concept. Mayer, in particular, warns about the danger inherent in applying the word "intelligence" to non-cognitive concepts, arguing that it seems to raise their prestige and importance, while at the same time diminishing the status of intelligence itself. He also suggests that the notion of spiritual intelligence is not highly distinguishable from spirituality itself, and that spiritual intelligence could be simply a re-labelling of spirituality. However, and as will be discussed, contemporary research does suggest that it is plausible to conceive of spirituality—a person's sense of connectedness with self, others, the world, and in some people's views, with a transcendent dimension—as a type of intelligence (see, for example, Adams, Hyde, & Woolley, 2008; Hyde, 2004).

Although the literature which explores the concept of intelligence is complex and represents a diversity of opinion, one of the hallmark characteristics of intelligence with which scholarship appear to be in agreement is that it involves the ability to solve problems. For example, Ruzgis and Grigorenko (1994) have maintained that one of the features of intelligence is "practical problem solving ability" (p. 263). Chiu, Hong, and Dweck (1994) have defined intelligence as "the level of skills and knowledge currently available for problem solving" (p. 106). Walters and Gardner (1986) have held a similar view of intelligence, maintaining that it is "a set of abilities that permits an individual to solve problems or fashion products that are of consequence in a particular cultural setting" (p. 164). Zohar and Marshall (2000) have further stated that intelligence pertains to the ability to address and solve problems involving logic, emotion, meaning and value.

If spirituality is to be considered a form of intelligence, then it must enable an individual to address and solve problems encountered by that individual within their particular cultural context. While not overtly using the term spirituality, or spiritual, some writers have indicated that an individual's religious experience may act as a mechanism for problem solving. In his classic work *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James proposed that "personal religion" (or spirituality, as this term would be understood today) may be used by an individual as a means by which to find solutions to problems of meaning and value in life. James' (2008, original work published 1902) concern with religion was not in the institutional structures of formal systems of belief, but rather in the psychological experience of the individual. James believed that people were able to draw upon this as a mechanism for confronting and finding solutions to issues of meaning and value in life, and thereby increase their own sense of wellbeing. In his conclusion, James argued that the varieties of such spiritual experiences are valid and hold authority for those individuals who undergo them. They are private and individual, and function so as to lead people to act upon them and seek solutions to problems of meaning and value according to each person's different life circumstances.

Similarly, Maslow (1970) recognized the validity of the individual's religious (spiritual) experience. He coined the phrase "peak experiences" to describe such revelations and mystical illuminations. Of relevance to this discussion is Maslow's

contention that peak experiences were common to all, or almost all people, although he recognized that many individuals in western culture repress or suppress such experiences, and so do not draw upon them as a source of "personal therapy, personal growth, or personal fulfillment" (p. 29). Maslow went on to argue that peak experiences have immediate effects, or after effects on the individual, thereby enabling them to find solutions to problems of meaning and value in life. That is, they can act as a problem-solving mechanism. As the result of a peak experience, a person "feels himself [sic]... to be responsible, active, the creative centre of his [sic] own activities and of his own perceptions, more self-determined, more a free agent, with more 'free will'" (p. 67).

In essence, the types of experiences referred to by James (2008) and Maslow (1970) —not uncommon to people living in western culture (Hart, 2003; Zohar & Marshall, 2000) —are able to be drawn upon by those who undergo them to address and solve problems related to meaning and value in life, thereby increasing their own sense of wellbeing. Since the notion of problem solving is one of the central themes of intelligence, this suggests the plausibility that spirituality could be conceived of as a form of intelligence.[1]

Spiritual Intelligence

Among the more contemporary and well-known proponents of spiritual intelligence are Zohar and Marshall (2000) who have drawn on neuroscientific and psychological research to argue in favour of the existence of this form of intelligence which, in their view, complements the rational (IQ) and emotional (EQ) categories of intelligence. They argue that a key feature of spiritual intelligence is its unifying function which integrates IQ and EQ, thereby making possible a dialogue between reason and emotion. Following this line of thought, Zohar and Marshall describe SQ as the mental aptitude used by human beings to address and find solutions to problems of meaning and value, and to place their lives and actions into a wider, richer, meaning-giving context. This supports the findings of other scholars from the neuroscientific field who have argued that the human brain has evolved with structures that may enable people to attend to the goal of addressing issues of meaning and value from within their life contexts (see, for example, Newberg, d'Aquili, & Rause, 2001; Ramachandran & Blakeslee, 1998).

Zohar and Marshall (2000) propose that it is spiritual intelligence which is "our potential for growth and transformation" and which enables "the evolution of our human potential" (p. 13). They outline 10 characteristics of highly developed SQ:

- The capacity to be flexible (actively and spontaneously adaptive)
- A high degree of self-awareness
- A capacity to face and use suffering
- A capacity to face and transcend pain
- A quality of being inspired by visions and values
- A reluctance to cause unnecessary harm

- A tendency to see the connections between diverse things (being "holistic")
- A marked tendency to ask "Why?" or "What if?" questions and to seek "fundamental" answers
- Being what psychologists call "field independent"—possessing a facility for working against convention
- Someone who is responsible for bringing higher vision and value to others, in other words, a person who inspires others (servant leader) (pp. 15–16)

It is possible to recall instances in which children in classroom contexts may have displayed many of these types of characteristics. The literature on children's spirituality abounds with examples in which children could be described as exhibiting such characteristics, and in some instances, these have been directly linked with their spiritual intelligence (for example, Hyde & Adams, 2007; see also Adams & Hyde, 2008).

Specifically in relation to wellbeing and resilience, de Souza (2006b) notes that some of the characteristics of SQ as outlined by Zohar and Marshall—the capacity to face, use and transcend pain and suffering—have been drawn upon by children and adolescents who suffer from ill arising from family breakdown, physical and substance abuse, materialism and the accompanying sense of helplessness—which in turn may lead to depression and other issues of mental ill health. In this sense, such children may have used their spiritual intelligence to make sense of and transcend their experience of pain and suffering.

Also arguing in favour of spiritual intelligence is Emmons (1999, 2000) who draws on theories related to motivation and personality, as well as the influence of Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. While arguing that spirituality does in fact meet Gardner's criteria for intelligence, he also cautions that perceiving spirituality as an intelligence does not imply that spirituality is little more than problem solving or that spirituality is used only to attain goals. In drawing on the discourse arising from theories of motivation and personality, Emmons maintains that spirituality is a rich and diverse construct.

Of particular relevance is Emmons' (2000) assertion that the ability to draw on spiritual information is a component of intelligence, and that spiritual intelligence consists of a set of at least five capabilities, or competencies, which lead to problem-solving behaviour:

- The capacity to transcend the physical and the material
- The ability to experience heightened states of consciousness
- The ability to sanctify everyday experience
- The ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems
- The capacity to be virtuous.

According to Emmons (2000) people can display differing levels of proficiency or sophistication in relation to these spiritual abilities or competencies (in the same way that people can display different levels of ability and adeptness in relation to other intelligences). Further, he argues that such capabilities may enable an individual to adapt and to function effectively in a wide range of life endeavours.

Again, it is possible to relate these five capabilities to those which may be displayed by children in the classroom context. For example, the capacity to be virtuous may be displayed by a child who, in recognizing a peer's difficulty in reaching the spout on a drinking fountain, suggests that the teacher might fetch a stool so that the child's young friend might reach the spout and have a drink of water (Hyde, 2008).

Another view of spiritual intelligence is offered by Sinetar (2000), who describes spiritual intelligence as inspired thought which animates people of all ages and in all kinds of situations. She notes that in children it can be signalled particularly in their actions to explore and to cultivate their own innate gifts and creative energies. That is, their introspective abilities shape their outward expressions. Sinetar uses the term "early awakeners" to describe young children who show signs of a developed spiritual intelligence. She goes onto outline a series of qualities which are displayed in early awakeners. These include

- Acute self-awareness, intuition, the "I am"—power (a built-in sense of authority)
- Broad worldview (the ability to see self and others as interrelated)
- Moral elevation, strong opinion (the ability to live by one's convictions)
- A tendency to experience delight (aesthetic preference)
- An understanding of where one is headed (to have a sense of destiny)
- "Unappeasable hunger" for selected interests (promoting solitary pursuits)
- Fresh, "weird" notions (whereby we might ask "where did you get that idea?")
- Pragmatic, efficient perceptions of reality (which often, but not always, produce healthy choices and practical results).

Adams et al. (2008) recount a classroom episode, described by a primary school teacher, which seems to match Sinetar's description of SQ. The teacher told of a particular incident in which a child sought to explore and to cultivate his own creative energies, and in which he displayed both a tendency to experience delight as well as an unappeasable hunger in a solitary pursuit:

> Early in my career, I introduced my class to printing. We cut patterns and pictures into linoleum blocks and produced two-tone designs. Shane developed a representation of a railway locomotive using yellow and black ink. The result was attractive and appealing; I still have a copy. At the end of the lesson Shane would not clear his materials away. In the end I cleared up for him, but he sat with the sharp linoleum cutter in his hand, picking away at the block all through the time when I read the end of day story. To say that I was nervous would be an understatement. He was sitting next to my desk with a sharp tool, appearing to be frustrated or angry, and throughout my reading I wondered what he might do with his frustration—presumably felt as a result of me ending the lesson. Needless to say, he went home peacefully at the end of the day having cleared away the remainder of his equipment. With hindsight I have gained a sense of how much he enjoyed the lesson, that he felt a sense of creativity and freedom of expression, and that he wanted to carry on when I ended the activity. As he left my classroom he turned back and gave me his artwork. I thought he would want to take it home to show his family, but he was insistent that I should keep it. This is why I have always kept it; as a reminder of the day when he enjoyed being in school and expressing himself (p. 54).

Of relevance also is that Sinetar maintains spiritually intelligent children tend to be lively, vibrant and creative children who can tire adults out with their focused

energy. Their strong zeal for independence should not be viewed as a sign of rebellion or disruptiveness. According to Sinetar, these children are not deliberately trying to test the patients of adults. Rather it is their "seeking of unity that is spiritual" (p. 10).

Each of the above perspectives on spiritual intelligence has some commonalities. Not only does each relate to problem solving in relation to issues of meaning and value in life, but in particular, they highlight the relational dimension of a person's life—to Self, to Other in community, to Other in the non-human world, and for many, to a Transcendent Other. A person's relationship to Self may entail knowing the "inner Self", that is, who one really is, or being comfortable with one's Self, or being accepting of Self. A person's relationship with Other in community may entail a sense of caring, empathy and compassion for other people. Relationship with a Transcendent Other could involve an awareness of mystery, a sense of being a part of something greater, and perhaps an awareness of a Life Force, or Ultimate Ground of Being, which many have named as God.

Spiritual Intelligence and Wellbeing

Given that the concept of spiritual intelligence is plausible, and that the various positions and descriptions of it discussed above have clear commonalities, it can be argued that SQ has a definite role to play in a person's sense of wellbeing and that it should sit alongside the notions of social and emotional wellbeing. If an individual has a sense of connectedness with others, and is able to draw upon this as a spiritual resource in addressing issues of meaning and value in life, then this will surely impact upon the resilience and general wellbeing of that individual. If schools are envisaged as places of connectedness, where the quality of relationships between all members of the school community are valued and nurtured, then again, this enhances the notions of resilience and wellbeing, since those belonging to the school community are able to draw upon this as a spiritual resource to increase their sense of wellbeing.

To be fair, much of the discourse on wellbeing and resilience does in fact recognize the importance of connectedness (see, for example, Bond et al., 2007; Libbey, 2004; McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002; Osterman, 2000). This is particularly true in relation to primary education. The difficulty is that it is not explicitly named as pertaining to the spiritual, and in not being named as such there is every possibility that it will not be adequately addressed by those in schools who have a responsibility for the area of wellbeing—classroom teachers as well as those in coordinating positions.

In Australian education too there is also the key understanding that a sense of wellbeing contributes positively to improved outcomes for all students, as well as to students' achievement of learning outcomes across the curriculum. That is, if students experience a sense of connectedness with others, if they feel safe in their environment, if their physical and emotional needs are being considered, and if the curriculum is differentiated so as to take account of the students' various learning

styles, needs and abilities, then this will lead to improved outcomes for all students. This being the case, the above discussion of spiritual intelligence is particularly pertinent since an education of the whole child includes not only development in the cognitive dimension of learning, but also in non-cognitive areas, such as the social, emotional and spiritual dimensions. These cannot be ignored. Each of these domains is interrelated (de Souza, 2006a; Hyde, 2006). They do not exist as separate entities. In adhering to such a view, theorists such as Bredekamp and Copple (1997) have argued that development in any one of these areas influences and is influenced by development in the other realms. If the focus of development remains solely in one area, the others are violated. If this is so, and in drawing upon the theories concerning intelligence, then each of the areas in which a child learns and develops needs to be considered. These include not only the cognitive, social and emotional realms, but also the spiritual.

Children Using SQ to Contribute Positively to Wellbeing

In this section, I offer some examples which emanate from my own research (Hyde, 2008) as well as with research colleagues in which children in the primary school context appear to have drawn upon their SQ as a means by which to enhance their own holistic learning and wellbeing. The intention here is to create an awareness of how educators might consciously and intentionally plan activities and experiences which may address and develop their students' SQ as a means to enhance holistic learning and a sense of wellbeing.

Keepsakes of an Older Sister

Michelle was a 10-year-old child. She and her younger brother, Tom, attended a Catholic primary school in a rural area of Australia. She had an older sister, Kim, who had died when Michelle herself was quite young. On the three occasions when I met with her as a part of my research, Michelle was quite open and honest in speaking about Kim. In fact, it was Michelle who would bring Kim into the conversation. In one particular meeting, I asked what it was that really, really mattered to her. Michelle replied as follows:

> The stuff we have left of Kim, and mum's journal that says what we think about Kim. . . When Kim died, dad, mum and I [and Tom] used to have a lot of dreams about Kim, and mum used to write them down in a journal. When we go on a big holiday, mum gives the journal to [a family friend] in case anything happens while we are away. . . I've [also] got a teddy bear that she used to love a lot, and some of her ornaments (Hyde, 2008, p. 126).

It is possible in the above instance that Michelle was drawing on her SQ. In particular, she appears to have exhibited three characteristics of spiritual intelligence— the ability to sanctify everyday experience (Emmons, 2000), a tendency to see the connections between diverse things (Zohar & Marshall, 2000), and possibly the pragmatic, efficient perceptions of reality, which may lead to healthy and practical choices (Sinetar, 2000).

First, Michelle was able to take ordinary, everyday objects and keepsakes such as a teddy bear and some ornaments, and attach significance to these. For Michelle, these objects were sacred because she associated them directly with her deceased older sister. They were revered, and seemed to operate so as to put Michelle, and her family, in touch with Kim. In doing this, Michelle was also able to see the possible connections between what may appear as quite diverse objects. A teddy bear and some assorted ornaments by themselves hold little significance. But when placed into a wider framework of meaning in which Kim was central, these objects became connected and held special significance for Michelle and her family.

The journal kept by the family is particularly noteworthy. In it were recorded the intimate and private thoughts about Kim as recorded by each of the family members, including Michelle. The care of this specific memento led to pragmatic and practical choices in terms of keeping it safe. When the family left for holidays, the journal was left in the care of trusted family friends. For Michelle, as for the rest of her family, this is significant. She would not have bothered to mention it otherwise. Practical means were sought by which the journal would be protected during the family's absence.

In the above example, it could be argued that Michelle has drawn upon her SQ as a means by which to enhance her own sense of wellbeing. As well, she appears to have learnt the significance of such keepsakes and the role they play in enhancing a sense of connectedness with a deceased family member. In the present climate of school education, dominated by cognitive approaches to curriculum and the achievement of observable, measurable outcomes, learning of this nature tends to be ignored and neglected—overlooked in the business of attempting to cover a utilitarian curriculum. However, the type of learning in which Michelle has been engaged—as the result of drawing upon her SQ—is holistic and has almost certainly enhanced her own sense of wellbeing.

An Epiphany

On another occasion during which I met with Michelle and some of her peers, Michelle recounted an incident in which she had experienced the presence of her deceased older sister, Kim. Michelle recounted the epiphany as follows:

> Sometimes we used to go to Port Fairy [for holidays] with my sister Kim before she died. . . and one time when we went back there after she died I thought I saw her walking behind me. . . I was amazed. . . that I actually saw her again because I was young and I thought I wouldn't see her again until I was really old and had died. . . I think she had a pink dress on. . . but she was like a faded cloud, sort of—she didn't look alive—it was like a spirit sort of—I was walking behind [my family] and Kim was behind me (Hyde, 2008, p. 115).

Again, it can be argued that Michelle has drawn upon her SQ to enhance her sense of wellbeing, and to address an issue of meaning and value in her own life. Michelle was convinced that she had seen, or at the very least experienced her sister in a profound way in this event, and this enabled her to reassure herself of

Kim's presence and of her own sense of connectedness to Kim—that is, an issue of meaning and value for her. This enhanced her perception of her own wellbeing. There are two particular characteristics of SQ displayed by Michelle in this incident. First, Michelle seemed to exhibit a high degree of self-awareness (Zohar & Marshall, 2000) particularly in terms of her relationship with Kim, which links also with Sinetar's (2000) notion of acute self-awareness and intuition. Through the conversations with Michelle on each of the occasions on which I met with her, her continuing relationship with her deceased older sister was apparent. She would speak about Kim *in the present tense*. She appeared to have reached a heightened awareness of the relationship between themselves which exceeded the boundary between physical life and death. Michelle seemed to define who Kim was, and reciprocally, Kim defined Michelle. Although each child was unique and gifted with her own particular talents, likes and dislikes, it was as though without Kim, there was no Michelle, and without reference to Michelle, there was no Kim.

Following and linked to the above point, it seemed that Michelle also displayed the characteristic of spiritual intelligence described by Emmons (2000) as the ability to experience heightened states of consciousness. Whether Michelle, in fact, actually and physically saw Kim in the same way that a person sees an object such as a chair or table is unknown. It is, however, immaterial. She *believes* and is convinced that through this epiphany she has experienced the presence of her older sister Kim in a profound, yet, real way. This accords with the work of James (2008) who, as discussed previously, argued that in the psychological occurrences of individuals, people apperceive a variety of such spiritual experiences which, for those who experience them, are real and they carry significance and authority. On this point, Priestley (2001) notes that those who undergo such experiences frequently claim that they have resulted in absolute intellectual certainty. For example, a person may claim that she or he has never been more certain of anything in their life, and that from that moment, their life was changed in some way. Crucially, Priestley also notes that "the things about which we are most sure are those upon which we try to act; they become part of our being" (p. 190).

Michelle appeared to have experienced a heightened state of consciousness in which she experienced in some way the presence of her older sister Kim. In this experience, and in using her SQ, Michelle was able to enhance her own sense of wellbeing by reassuring herself that she remained connected to her sister. Such reassurance also helped her to address an issue of meaning and value, that being her relationship with her deceased older sister.

Wishing Well for Others

Amina and Charlotte were both 8-year-olds, and were a part of a small group of children with whom I met in an inner city primary school. The area in which the school was situated was surrounded by council housing commission high-rise apartments, the inhabitants of which were often unemployed, and in some cases, poverty

stricken. I asked the children what they might wish for if they were to be granted three wishes. The conversation proceeded as follows:

> Charlotte said, "I'd wish for a happy future, that my family stays together, and that the poor become rich, well, not rich, but average, so they don't have to go around asking for money and they live a good life."
>
> "Like no one's poor in the world", added Amina.
>
> "Why might that be a good thing to wish for?" I probed.
>
> "Cause its doing something for another person," replied Amina confidently (Hyde, 2008, pp. 127–128).

These two children appeared to have displayed three of the characteristics of SQ: moral elevation and strong opinions, the ability to see self and others as related (Sinetar, 2000) and a reluctance to cause unnecessary harm (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). Amina's sense of conviction is strong and positive: wishing well for the plight of the poor was a positive action which she, as an 8-year-old child, could take. She could not alleviate poverty, but she was aware that she could *do* something. She was able to empathize and to wish well for them. In being able to empathize with them, Amina and her companion Charlotte were able to see themselves and others—the poor—as related. They were aware of a sense of connectedness, although they would in all probability not have been able to express this using this type of language. Nonetheless, the words they have used give insight to this particular characteristic of SQ. As well, both of these children display a reluctance to cause unnecessary harm to those who are less fortunate. The display of these three characteristics of SQ enhances a sense of wellbeing. Both girls experience a sense of connectedness with others in their immediate community, and being in a position to do something—albeit the simple yet genuine act of wishing others well—provides a sense of empowerment. Both know that there is action which can be taken, and this would also enhance a sense of wellbeing. It may also lead to other affirmative and concrete action which could be undertaken within the school community. A teacher exploring this with students could be instrumental in devising ways in which the school could offer practical support to those less fortunate in the community through, for example, shared lunches and breakfasts, visiting those who are ill, and perhaps even fundraising. All of these would enhance holistic learning and a sense of wellbeing.

Showing Kindness to Others

It has been shown that some children experience dreams which bear for them particular significance, and which are remembered for significantly long periods after the dreaming episode (Adams, 2003, 2008), and that some children may respond to their dream using spiritual intelligence (Adams & Hyde, 2008). For example, Hyde and Adams (2007) recount the dream of Thomas, an 11-year-old boy living in a Scottish city. He had a dream which had occurred when he was 4 years old and had made a significant impact upon him, such that it had been remembered for 7 years. Thomas explained that when he started going to school he had been bullied by some

of the other children in his class. In his dream, set in heaven, Thomas was a teenager, surrounded by lots of small children, and he (Thomas) was being unpleasant towards them. The children were crying for help, and Thomas was ignoring them. But then he remembered what it had felt like when he had been bullied, and so he "decided to start being nice to the wee ones" (p. 39).

Thomas experienced two emotions in his dream. The first was anger, which stemmed from his initial dismissal of the children's cries for help. He explained that he was angry with himself for having behaved in that way. The second was happiness, which arose from his being surrounded by other children.

While identifying an explicit connection to his experience of being bullied at school, Thomas also understood the dream to represent how he should be behaving at school—to help other children who were being bullied. In interpreting his own dream, Thomas appeared to have displayed four of the characteristics of SQ: the quality of being inspired by visions and values, a tendency to see connections between diverse things, a reluctance to cause unnecessary harm (Zohar & Marshall, 2000) and the ability to be virtuous (Emmons, 1999). First, Thomas was inspired by a value he believed to be represented in his dream—of being compassionate to those younger than himself. From discussion with Thomas, it seemed that this was a value he would be aspiring to live out in his own life. This also has links with one of Sinetar's (2000) characteristics—moral elevation, the ability to live by one's convictions. Second, Thomas was able to see the connection between his own dream in which he displayed empathy with younger children, and the message contained in the dream, that is, how he should behave at school in terms of helping those children who were being bullied. This also links to the third characteristic. Through his empathy, Thomas displayed a reluctance to cause unnecessary harm to his younger schoolmates. And finally, in heeding the message he perceived to come from his dream, Thomas indicated that he would try to display the capacity to engage in virtuous behaviour in his own life—specifically that of being compassionate towards those who were younger.

Thomas used his dream to address an issue of meaning and value in life—how he should treat others, especially his schoolmates who were younger than him. It can be argued that his dream resulted in a sense of wellbeing for himself personally, as described above, and certainly for his younger schoolmates, since they would not suffer the humiliation and ridicule of being bullied at school.

Dreaming of the Deceased

In some instances, children experience dreams about deceased loved ones. While such dreams may be initially distressing for children, research suggests that such dreams among children are not uncommon (see, for example, Siegel & Bulkeley, 1998; Mallon, 2002; Adams, 2004). Research also suggests that these children may in fact apply their spiritual intelligence to the dream enabling them to enhance their

sense of wellbeing through addressing issues of personal meaning and value in their own lives. For example, Adams and Hyde (2008) recount a dream experienced by an 11-year-old girl, named Claire, who had dreamt about her friend who had died 3 years earlier. She narrated the dream as follows: "It was this big golden tunnel and I was walking through it and she was at the end of it and, em, she was there and I was just talking to her and I says, 'what's happening?'" (p. 63). The girls continued to have a brief conversation, during which Claire's friend described how happy she was with new friends and Claire told her about events at school, before the dream ended. Claire said that she thought the tunnel was the "gate to heaven" (p. 63).

Claire described two emotions she experienced during the dream—happiness, because she had been able to see her friend again, and fear, because in the dream, she was uncertain as to exactly what was going to happen next. However, upon waking, she explained that she felt happier because she new that her friend was safe and well, and that she had made new friends.

While Claire could have viewed the dream as one that simply brought back memories of her friend, she appeared to have made meaning from the golden tunnel (as being the gateway to heaven), as well as from the conversation she had with her friend. For Claire, this dream certainly had religious connotations and dealt with issues of life after death. Rather than simply perceiving the dream to have been a combinations of images derived from memories of her friend, Claire found meaning in that dream which, as well as embodying a transcendent dimension, served to increase her own sense of wellbeing. The descriptions of spiritual intelligence as put forward by Emmons (1999) and by Zohar and Marshall (2000) are applicable to Claire. Through the application of SQ, she has at least partially resolved a problem of meaning in her own life, as well as finding reassurance that her friend appeared to be, in her understanding, still alive. In particular, Claire seemed to exhibit two of the characteristics of spiritual intelligence. Firstly, she was able to see connections between diverse things (Zohar & Marshall, 2000) since she interpreted her own dream as indicating her friend as being safe in an afterlife. In her mind, these two things were connected. Second, she was able to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems (Emmons, 1999) since she was to reassure herself of her friend's happiness and wellbeing in an afterlife.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The examples above suggest that children of primary school age do in fact draw upon their spiritual intelligence to address issues of meaning and value in their own lives, as well as to enhance their sense of resilience and wellbeing. If a key purpose of education is to promote holistic learning, in which both the cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions of learning are addressed, then attention needs to be given to all of the various areas in which learning occurs, including the cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual dimensions. Indeed, attention to each of these promotes and

enhances the wellbeing of the whole child. The theory of spiritual intelligence may enable educators to give due attention to the spiritual dimension in learning.

The question then arises as to how educators might achieve this in practice, given the already overcrowded nature of the curriculum. Following are some suggestions and guidelines for encouraging and developing the use of SQ among students in the context of the primary school classroom. They are by no means exhaustive, but are offered in the hope that the reader might discern other ideas and suggestions which may be applicable.

- Plan activities and experiences which may enable students to develop self-awareness. Activities involving the arts—drama, mime, movement, painting and music are particularly useful for this purpose. As well, educators such as Kessler (2000) and Phillips (2006) have developed activities and strategies which could be drawn upon and adapted to help achieve this purpose.
- Ask students to name and to focus on others for whom they may feel compassion and empathy.
- Provide opportunities to use journals as a means by which to engage with issues of meaning and value. These can provide a valuable means by which students can work through and articulate their thoughts and feelings. Remember, however, that for a journal to be effective, the contents need to remain confidential. Any attempt to collect them, to read them or "correct" them invades the privacy of the students, and the activity will cease to have any real benefit. The students will only record what they perceive the teacher wants to read—the exception being if a student *chooses* to share her or his reflections with the teacher. Even here, ethical sensitivity is required. Is the student freely choosing to share a journal entry, or does the student perceive this to be a requirement of the activity?
- Provide opportunities for solitude and silence to enable students to engage with issues of meaning and value. Build such opportunities into the classroom programme.
- Take advantage of quiet places throughout the school. Many schools have established quiet areas—garden spaces, multi-purpose rooms, and the like. Utilize these spaces for quiet reflection.
- Where appropriate provide opportunities for children to discuss and talk about dreams. Some caution needs to be stressed here. Teachers are not psychoanalysts or dream interpreters and should not attempt to adopt such a role in the classroom (see Adams, 2008). However, and as shown in the examples in this chapter, children themselves are quite capable of discerning and finding meaning in their own dreams. The concept that some dreams can have meaning could be explored in the classroom, leading to opportunities for students to reflect upon their own dreams themselves, rather than have dreams being interpreted publicly.
- Read or share stories in which people have been able to overcome, or transcend pain and suffering.
- Provide opportunities for students to make connections between seemingly diverse things. This could be achieved in a number of different subject areas, and would be particularly effective as a part of an integrated approach to curriculum.

- Everyday moments and experiences can be understood as being sacred. Teach students the value of such moments and events, and provide opportunities for them to experience what may appear to be ordinary and mundane things—the warmth of the sun, the feel of autumn leaves, the rain falling upon a window pane and so forth.
- Plan to teach about particular virtues, such as compassion, empathy, hope, love, and the like, and share stories about people who have displayed such qualities. Teaching about them doesn't necessarily mean that students will show a capacity for them, but unless such virtues are made explicit, students may not experience them.

Note

1. For a detailed discussion of the plausibility of spiritual intelligence, including references to more recent psychological and neuroscientific research, see Hyde (2004).

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Chapter 46
Narratives of Everyday Spirituality: Pedagogical Perspectives from Three Early Childhood Settings in Aotearoa New Zealand

Jane Bone

Abstract Early childhood settings in Aotearoa New Zealand are informed by an internationally recognised curriculum, *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996). This whāriki, or woven mat, includes references to the spiritual; the principle of kotahitanga/holistic development intersects with the strand of mana atua/wellbeing. Qualitative case study research in a Montessori casa, a private preschool, and a Steiner kindergarten found the concept "everyday spirituality" illuminating. Three themes were identified: spiritual withness, spiritual in-betweeness and spiritual else-where. These relational spaces are proposed as a way of reconceptualising holistic approaches to pedagogy and wellbeing in early childhood educational contexts.

Introduction

Sometimes when going into early childhood settings in Aotearoa New Zealand I try to look around with fresh eyes. I wonder what makes them unique and what it means to be involved in early childhood education in this special place in the world, a thought that challenges me to engage with the layers of meaning that are apparent in these settings: the language, notice boards, layout, indoor/outdoor flow, curriculum, philosophies and pedagogical practices. Symbols of indigenous Māori culture that give New Zealand its unique identity are visible: art includes patterns in black, white and red, colours with specific meanings in terms of *tino rangatiratanga* (Māori self-determination); in one setting a distinctive *waka* (canoe) is the subject of a mural; in another *te reo* Māori (the Māori language) can be heard. Sometimes these markers of a culture are less obvious and I am able to discern where I am simply through the distinctive ways of doing things that have become taken-for-granted practices. Of course, there are also the markers of Western or *Pākehā* (not Māori) culture, often framed by individualistic and child-centred approaches to education and underpinned by the discourse of developmental psychology. These structural forces require me to engage with the politics of early childhood education. In these

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ostensibly bicultural (Māori/*Pākehā*) contexts there are children from all over the world and I contemplate, again, the question of how we all live together here and what that means for our children.

This question was pertinent to research that explored how the spiritual experiences of young children are supported in different early childhood settings. Spirituality is a dimension that requires me, in Levinas' (1999) phrase, to engage with "the face of the Other". This is a phrase that requires some consideration to be given to the meeting of self and Other, particularly in terms of pedagogical practice. The focus of this chapter is how a spiritual approach to pedagogy can support holistic learning and wellbeing. My research (Bone, 2007) includes links to pedagogical concepts and to cultural theories of everyday life (de Certeau, 1988; Rogoff, 2003). The context and curriculum that form a background to the study will be described and the working definition that was formulated in order to bring clarity to the process of research (Ratcliffe & Nye, 2006) is presented.

A Definition

The following definition guided my research:

> Spirituality connects people to each other, to all things, to nature and the universe. Spirituality is a way of appreciating the wonder and mystery of everyday life; it alerts me to the possibility for love, happiness, goodness, peace and compassion in the world. (Bone, 2007, p. 9)

Aspects of this definition may inform some religious beliefs and it upholds a specific and inclusive view of the spiritual. It implies an appreciation for all things and is the ground for the concept of *everyday spirituality* that emerged in the research. This concept exploits a tension between spirituality as an inner process and its outward manifestation as a way of life (Bone, 2007).

Contextual Background and Early Childhood Curriculum

In Aotearoa New Zealand the founding document, *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*/The Treaty of Waitangi, is a document that in 1840 began a process of negotiation and partnership between different peoples, Māori as indigenous people and *Pākehā* (not Māori), a process that is still contested today. With regard to this constitutional base, as a *Pākehā* person I must be willing to engage pedagogically with spirituality in order to recognise my obligations to the treaty and to the bicultural curriculum that applies to all early childhood settings. In any country with an indigenous population my argument is that spirituality is, in Derrida's phrase, "always already" (Spivak, 1998). This stance is upheld by the United Nations' adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2007). The freedom to explore spirituality in New Zealand is a privilege supported by Article 4 of the Treaty of Waitangi that refers to religious tolerance (Ritchie, 2003). This was important at the time and it still is, given that religious and spiritual beliefs are, in many places in the world, grounds for discrimination or persecution.

The early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996), encapsulates the idea of partnership. It came into being after a long period of consultation and aims to be inclusive and to reflect many different perspectives and philosophies. The metaphor for this curriculum is the *whāriki* or the woven mat. The symbol of the woven mat has significance for people in the Pacific and certain protocols and meanings are attached to the art of weaving. The *whāriki* as curriculum includes principles and strands that intersect to form a base that supports the hope that young children (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 9) will

> grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society.

The principles are *whakamana*/empowerment; *kotahitanga*/holistic development; *whanau tangata*/family and community; and *nga hononga*/relationships. They mesh with the strands of *mana atua*/wellbeing; *mana whenua*/belonging; *mana tangata*/contribution; *mana reo*/communication; and *mana aoturoa*/exploration.

This curriculum has been recognised internationally (Brostrom, 2003) and when acknowledging *Te Whariki*, Penn (2000, p. 3) noted that "minority world assumptions about childhood could no longer be taken for granted". This is something that sociocultural approaches to curricula and pedagogies have to take into account because it is no longer acceptable to "universalise" the child within conventional educational systems and structures. My approach, and the starting point (Nye & Hay, 1996) for the research, was to access "local knowledge" (Geertz, 1983) rather than to look for a universal idea of what might be spiritual. I used the metaphor of landscape to reflect layers of meaning and the unique aspect of each setting; this enabled a position to be taken that was grounded and contextual (Bone, 2007; Tacey, 2004). In this landscape the concepts of holistic learning and wellbeing take on particular meanings and are represented by local models.

Holistic Approaches to Early Childhood Education

In Aotearoa New Zealand Rangimarie Rose Pere (1994) advocated for a holistic approach to education. She described the concept of *ako* (1994) that brings together learning and teaching as a reciprocal process connected to all aspects of culture and heritage. Pere (1991) also introduced the model of *Te Wheke*, the octopus, as a symbol of holism; the tentacles are multi-faceted and include dimensions that relate to the whole. In this model the emphasis is on what is "intertwined" rather than on "clear cut boundaries" (Pere, 1991, p. 3). Ideas that relate parts to the whole and take a holistic perspective are also included in local models of wellbeing.

Wellbeing/Mana Atua—Local Understandings

A model frequently used to promote contextual understandings of wellbeing is Mason Durie's (1994) *whare tapawhā*. This model is conceptualised as a four-sided house or *whare*. The four walls are *taha whānau* or social wellbeing; *taha hinengaro*

which is mental and emotional wellbeing; *taha tinana* or physical wellbeing; and *taha wairua* or spiritual wellbeing. Each side of the house must be strong or the entire structure is threatened. The whole house is worth more than the sum of its parts, and it symbolises shelter, safety and security. This model of wellbeing is widely recognised in Aotearoa and provides a way to think about wellbeing that is holistic and includes the spiritual dimension (Bone, 2008a).

The strand of *Te Whariki* that represents wellbeing/*mana atua* supports an image of the child as a being of "unique specialness". Tilly Reedy, a very influential Maori educator who was instrumental in the construction of *Te Whariki*, stresses the spiritual dimension and presents a holistic view of the child that recognises "the spark of godliness in each human being" (Reedy, 2003, p. 72). Reedy (2003, p. 51) also makes a plea for practices and curricula "that enhance the lives of *all* children" (her italics). This research required me to take a position in terms of where I stand as an inhabitant of Aotearoa; it demanded that I take a holistic approach and engage with research in a way that is "decolonising" (Smith, 1999). It is from this background that the question of how the spiritual experience of young children is supported in early childhood settings emerged.

In order to address this question I went to early childhood settings that reflect my language and background. There is plenty of scope because early childhood settings in Aotearoa reflect diverse interests and philosophies. Research took place in a Montessori *casa*, a private preschool and a Rudolf Steiner kindergarten. Maria Montessori's educational philosophy shows an interest in physical and emotional wellbeing and is concerned with body and spirit. She referred to the child as a "spiritual embryo" (Montessori, 1988, p. 55) in her taxonomy of development and noted that young children are "exceptionally endowed with spiritual insights" (Montessori, 1972, p. 172). It has been usual in recent times to recognise "the whole child" (J. J. Siraj-Blatchford & I. Siraj-Blatchford, 1995). This "whole child" approach was taken by the private preschool and a focus on holistic practice and wellbeing was something all three case studies had in common. The educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner is always linked with holistic understandings of education and supports engagement with the whole child. Trostli (1998, p. 7) suggests that together with parents and teachers the Waldorf (Steiner) kindergarten promotes "a holistic approach to child rearing and early childhood education that is truly nourishing to the child's body, soul, and spirit".

Holistic Approaches to Research

Qualitative case study research was set up in three different early childhood educational settings: a Montessori *casa*, a Rudolf Steiner kindergarten and a private preschool. Each case study involved a semester, or 10 weeks, when I was a participant observer with the children, interviewed teachers, had focus group interviews with parents and also took photographs. I asked the teachers to make a video of the practices they thought were spiritual. This multivocal approach acknowledged a contextual meaning of holistic as *kotahitanga* or "unity of purpose"

(Hemara, 2000, p. 73) and this was important in terms of participation and transparency.

Pedagogical Approaches

Pedagogy as the practice of teaching and learning becomes holistic when, in Bell Hook's (1994, p. 21) words, it engages learners and teachers who are "wholly present in mind, body and spirit". In the New Zealand early childhood context, it also affirms the partnership with parents and involvement with the wider community. The pedagogical approach proposed in this research emphasises *everyday spirituality* as a means of active engagement with the spiritual. This concept arose from my first encounter within these early childhood settings (Bone, Cullen, & Loveridge, 2007). Van Manen suggests that "pedagogy itself is a mode of life that always and by definition deals with practical action. We must forever and ongoingly act in our living with children or with those for whom we have pedagogic responsibility" (van Manen, 1990, p. 154). Thus everyday spirituality ties pedagogy to living daily action and a practical approach to spirituality.

Theoretical Perspectives

It is important to acknowledge the far-reaching effects of the educational enterprise. Valsiner (2000, p. 267) points out that the purpose of education is to build "personal cultures" and he gives examples of certain spiritual practices that promote a "we feeling" (Valsiner, 2000, p. 267) in the individual as part of a specific educational community. This view is in accordance with that of Bruner (2006, p. 89) who describes education as "culture-creating". Spirituality is inevitably linked to culture and is constructed in the daily life of educational settings.

Theoretical support for *everyday spirituality* is supported by de Certeau's (1988) analysis of the culture of everyday life. In this analysis spirituality becomes a tactic whereby the everyday is constructed and even subverted. A tactic is used by the individual to negotiate the strategies that construct institutions and mechanisms of control, what de Certeau (1988, p. 1) calls "the framework of levelling rationalities". It is a contention of this chapter that early childhood educators and the children they work with continually negotiate tactics and strategies. Within these complexities and in every action there is an opportunity to recognise the spiritual and to connect with "a daily practice of loving kindness" (Hooks, 2000, p. 43). How this is done in terms of *everyday spirituality* is the focus of the following discussion.

Three Spiritual Spaces

When analysing the data generated throughout the research process it became obvious that certain themes emerged from each case study. By using thematic analysis and writing as a means of discovery (Richardson, 2000), it was possible to become

a *bricoleur* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In research terms this means someone who combines different perspectives or who strives to recreate an experience or construct a new text from an abundance of original materials. Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 6) call this being "workmanlike" and a means of engaging the craft of research. In this process, both complex and absorbing, I became aware of spaces where the spiritual could be reconceptualised as relational and transformative, supporting a pedagogical approach that is holistic and acknowledging the spiritual dimension.

These spaces are not discreet, they overlap and remain open ended. They are rhizomic (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). The rhizome is a metaphor from Deleuze and Guattari (1987) that is non-linear, "it has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (*milieu*) from which it grows and which it overspills" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21). The rhizome may present as something unexpected. To be rhizomic is to engage with "becomings" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21) and these spaces try to articulate becoming as an aspect of the spiritual. They are not predictable; in practice this may be challenging. In a phenomenological sense van Manen (1990, p. 103) points out that "we become the space we are in" and these spaces collapse separations, they are about connectedness. They reflect the complexity of spiritual pedagogical practice.

In the following narratives I introduce these spaces with supporting data. These narratives are taken from all three case studies, the Montessori *casa*, Steiner kindergarten and private preschool. They include the voices of children, teachers, parents and my own as a researcher; they are a personal interpretation and represent a re-ordering of words into poems or different narrative forms in order to convey a sense of the spiritual. They are descriptive pieces, *bricolages*, intended to represent pedagogical moments that are holistic in the sense of having a physical, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual dimension. The narratives are represented in italic font and they are surrounded by interpretations of pedagogical processes described as aspects of *everyday spirituality*: spiritual withness, spiritual in-betweenness and the spiritual elsewhere.

The first space to be presented is that of spiritual withness (Bone, 2008b); this is a form of intersubjectivity and is linked to understandings of the mind. The second is the spiritually in-between; this is a liminal space that is supported by rituals and rites and is also a feature of personal epiphanies. Finally, there is the space of dreams and imagination, the spiritual elsewhere.

Spiritual Withness

The concept of spiritual withness addresses the question of proximity in the pedagogical relationship (Bone, 2008b). It implies a form of closeness that in a holistic sense may be physical, cognitive and emotional as well as spiritual. Shotter discusses cognition in relation to "withness thinking" (Shotter, 2005, p. 146). He is clear that this does not mean a distant relationship, instead when thinking with another person "we come into contact with their utterances, their bodily expressions, their words, their 'works'". Spiritual withness, the giving and receiving of attention

between self/Other, is a form of intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity is what Bruner (2006, p. 168) defines as "a meeting of minds".

In the private preschool I noticed that children were quite happy to discuss what was on their minds. This is an aspect of metacognition with which they are sometimes not credited (Donaldson, 1992). I particularly noticed this in my relationship with Ali. Ali is a 4-year-old girl who instantly became my confidant and guide in the private preschool. When we met she said that she could read my mind and I realised that this was a way of inviting me to connect with her. In terms of sociocultural theory, Vygotsky (1986) described the zone of proximal development, a site of potential and discovery. In a spiritual sense perhaps this zone is something that can become a shared space, not in an intrusive sense, but in the sense of acknowledging spiritual withness as a sense of connection (Bone, 2008b).

Children do not see their minds as bounded or limited, quite the contrary, and Ali was sure that we were able to access each other's thoughts. She was not bound by the material world and speculated with me about the big existential questions of life and death (Bone, 2007). Perhaps her mode of thinking reflected practices in the preschool that supported the idea that learning and being together are sustained through talking about thinking. Teachers said things like "I know you can do this" and "I know what you're thinking". They asked the children to guess certain things about themselves as teachers, for instance "guess what colour I like the best?" Teachers said that they were doing their best "to stimulate and extend (the children)". They saw this as a spiritual aspect of the school and their version of spiritual withness reflects this.

Teresa's Pedagogical Perspective

Teresa was an experienced teacher and in her opinion encouraging thinking and learning is the reason for being a teacher. Her dedication in pursuit of this is demonstrated in the following narrative. The narrative is constructed from her interaction with two girls aged 4 years, Sally and Ali. The conversation was recorded on video.

> The Parrot narrative
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> One of the popular characters in the preschool is the budgerigar. This bird is quiet when necessary and gets excited when noise rises. Perhaps the song of the budgie attracted a new bird because one day another parrot, green and red, very handsome, turned up in the preschool much to the delight of the children. He was put in a cage in the garden to wait for someone to claim him. Later on in the afternoon Teresa, one of the teachers, asks the two girls questions about the parrot. The conversation is about birds and making the connection with eggs and origins. Teresa stays "with" them for a long time. The questions and answers go backwards and forwards. The conversation continues for about 20 minutes despite the fact that she was also using the video camera. They all seemed to forget about the camera and it focuses on the girls, their facial expressions and records their speech. Teresa stays "with" the children, listening and responding, encouraging and challenging them to make meaning and connections.
>
> They discuss the bird's emotions. The girls think that he might feel sad or frightened. Sally says "I feel ashamed of him" because he has been captured. Her sympathy for him and her meaning (that it is a shame he has been caught) is clear. They discuss being caged and the different states of being wild or a pet. Sally says that the parrot must feel especially

sad because he does not have his mother. Teresa encourages them to take another look at gender, why the bird might have blue feathers and be a girl. Ali says "he looks like he's a girl". They talk about difference and why the bird is different from the budgerigar. They also wonder why a parrot is like a duck but not a duck. Finally they decide that the parrot may have come from an egg although he is not a chicken.

Teresa stayed with the thoughts of the two girls. She did not correct speech or grammatical mistakes. Instead they discussed a stream of thoughts, addressed new concepts and she challenged them to make new discoveries. Teresa's conception of what is spiritual demonstrates spiritual withness in the context of the preschool. Teresa spoke about her high expectations and said "I would not be who I am today as a teacher if I did not have those values and expectations, you couldn't, you wouldn't. . .that's the beauty of having so much diversity in one centre and we can give that—that's awesome". She related this to her own childhood experiences and told me that the children she is with are "so lucky" to be learning in a centre that has "diverse ways of looking at things". Teresa describes herself as a devoted teacher who upholds a promise to children that they will be helped to fulfil their potential. From this perspective the kind of sparkling intellectual exchanges that Teresa enjoys with the children is a form of spiritual withness.

Parent Perspectives

Parents appreciated the focus on holistic education in the private preschool. Sally's mother talked about the parrot conversation when she saw the video and said that she thought that this episode was spiritual because it made her think about Sally's personality. She saw it from her perspective as a parent. For her it was clear that

> there's a history, things that I teach her that my parents didn't teach me, things like how babies are born, my mother would never have talked to me about that, yes – so I see history, ancestors, so that is it for me.

This parent refers to a specific contextual understanding of spirituality as a link with the past. This is usually understood in Aotearoa as *whakapapa*, a concept that refers to genealogies and origins (Barlow, 2002).

The words of parents in each setting reflected a sense of withness in terms of the expectations that they had of their particular early childhood setting. This was particularly true of the Steiner kindergarten where parents made a commitment to the philosophy of the school before they entered. In this episode spiritual withness implies congruity, shared understandings and closeness. The following narrative describes the process of being spiritually in-between.

Spiritual In-Betweenness

In terms of spirituality I am proposing that the spiritual in-between in early childhood settings is a form of "liminal space" (Turner, 1982), that is, a place of ambiguity, "betwixt and between", constantly changing, as children and adults act

and react with the environment and with each other to create new opportunities for meaning making. It appeared to me that by acknowledging the spiritual in educational contexts teachers and parents make the construction of liminal space a possibility.

Tangaere (1997, p. 48) recognises the liminal in education and draws attention to the "plateau" between encountering new knowledge and full understanding and says that time is a factor in learning as is the cultural context that supports the child. To be in a liminal state, then, is to be between knowings. Early childhood settings engage spiritual in-betweenness through a variety of rites and rituals that reflect the community. In a personal sense the spiritually in-between may be felt as a moment of epiphany, a spiritual moment or pause in the day. Certain environments support a sense of spiritual in-betweenness.

Transforming the Environment

An important aspect of pedagogy is realising that the construction of the environment supports the holistic educational experience. In the Steiner kindergarten the parents and teachers altered the interior of the kindergarten in order to create a ritual that would surprise the children. For this specific ritual the children were not involved in the preparation, instead they came in one morning to experience the kindergarten transformed into a ritual space.

The ritual was a celebration of Midwinter, *Matariki*, the Māori New Year, the shortest day of the year in Aotearoa. It is worth noting that this ritual happens every year in the kindergarten and is part of the usual planning that constructs everyday life in that setting. It was a very memorable event and this narrative is my personal response to being spiritually in-between. I was invited to participate with the children and on entering this changed environment my surprise, like theirs, was genuine. We waited outside together on a cold winter morning and were then invited into the kindergarten:

> The Midwinter Festival
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> Eyes wide, we gaze at the room that has been completely transformed. The furniture has been pushed back and it seems as if the entire floor is covered in a spiral of greenery. The spiral starts at the edge of the room and is made of dark green leaves and branches. There is a scattering of pink camellia flowers and berries. In the centre of the spiral there is a swirl of dark blue cloth with a really large golden candle in the middle and only this candle is alight. The benches are placed so that we can sit down on the outer edge of the spiral. We walk around and then sit down in silence and look. . .and look. There are dark yellow beeswax candles all around the edge of the spiral in star-shaped holders on golden paper.
>
> Sylvia sits opposite me at the opening of the spiral. She reaches for a wooden box. Inside, there is something wrapped in a lavender cloth. She unwraps a lute, a small stringed instrument. The silence is amazing, like crystal. We all concentrate on what she is doing. She begins to play very softly, just stroking the strings. Everyone listens and the silence settles again as Sylvia puts down the lute and picks up one of the candles in front of her and begins, very slowly, to walk the spiral. She walks into the centre of the spiral and lights her candle from the one in the middle. She walks back, puts her candle down and sits in her place. She then gestures to Katie next to her who picks up her own candle and begins her walk. Every child, the parent helpers and teachers walk the spiral, one by one. When the

children return Sylvia holds her arms out but does not touch the child. She gestures to them to walk around and go back to their place and beckons the next child forward so that there is continual flowing movement.

When it is my turn, it feels so peaceful. I find myself really reflecting on my life, the beautiful spiral and my hopes for the future. I, also, suddenly become conscious of the wonderful spicy smell of the greenery and candles. Walking the spiral seems to take a long time. I remember that, in rituals, time changes, it stretches and contracts. Even as this time lengthens there is also a sense of time standing still and a feeling of being separate from the outside world. This is liminality. I have crossed a "threshold" and am "in-between".

When everyone has walked and the candles are all lit we sit in the circle quietly until Sylvia stands. She begins to sing very softly, the children join in and then we begin to move back outside. The children eat some fruit and begin to talk and go off to play in the garden. The adults inside tidy up, shifting the leaves and branches nearer to the middle of the room so they take up less floor space. They all move quickly and work hard. The candles are put at each child's place on the table. Parents had made biscuits in the shape of stars. They are different sizes and dusted with icing sugar. Sylvia stipulates that they go on white plates next to colourful plates of oranges. Instead of the usual bowls the children have pretty china today and cranberry juice instead of water. When everything is ready the children are called in for the feast.

In terms of ritual, this festival fulfils all the rules that govern the construction of a liminal space. In this particular ritual the season of the year and the cycle of the seasons are reflected. The progress of the ritual moves from darkness to light symbolising winter days that will become lighter after the shortest day of the year. The greenery that has been brought inside blurs boundaries and transforms the usual and expectable environment. The ritual itself is broken by a feast. This is a way of going from sacred to profane, from the ritual space back into everyday life. The sense of being in a sacred space is broken by eating food. The rules that govern the ritual are part of cultural knowing for many people.

Rituals are a way of bringing people together and in the kindergarten they are a focus for children, parents and teachers. Rituals attend to holistic learning and wellbeing as they involve all the senses, the emotions and the spirit. As an approach to pedagogy this is not achieved without some effort as the above narrative makes clear and inner transformation in this space is only possible because of changes made to the environment as a practical pedagogical act that involves everyone in the early childhood community.

Epiphanies—Transformation of Self

As well as a collective or community spiritually in-between space there are also personal experiences of spiritual in-betweenness, realised in moments of epiphany. To experience an epiphany is to be at a certain point just before moving on into the future. In the following poem the words of Carol, a teacher at the Montessori *casa*, describe this moment. She suddenly sees her surroundings with heightened clarity and "as if for the first time". Her words were spoken as part of her inter-view with me and they are represented as poetry. This is another way to convey the spiritual through the medium of words. In order to do this there was negotiation,

movement, playing with space, a process that mirrors the spiritual in-between as I engaged with Carol's words. This poem is constructed purely from her words and, as *bricoleur*, my role was to reorder them and alter the spaces between these words and produce another layer of meaning through this representation of her words. In this poem Helen is the team leader and Carol clearly identifies a shift in relationship and a new pedagogical awareness that arises as she reflects on this spiritually in-between moment, suspended between "knowings"; experiencing a compression of past, present and future:

Carol's epiphany—her poem

The other day Helen said to me
"open up the doors to go outside".
I bent down to get my shoes and just looked up.
There were 28 children in that classroom—I could hear the murmur
– all busy.
I thought if I open up the door they'll all run outside.
The murmur of voices, the light shining, they were all content.
It all looked beautiful,
the crystals shining,
just for a little minute –
. . .something driving them (is it the spirit?)
I thought – we made this environment for them
an environment providing for inner peace.
The power of the environment.
I set up the environment.
I can see spirituality happening there.
But I can't see it to grab it.
I don't have to go to church every Sunday to have an understanding of the word
    spirituality.
I can't pinpoint what about me is spiritual
Something just drives me.
Some people don't want to. . .
But I like to get deep.
I like deep.

In this fragment, Carol's words describe spiritual in-betweenness as an opportunity for what she calls "deep". As a teacher she is reflective, she draws on her life experiences and articulates her attitude to a committed pedagogy. She is able to articulate her role and pinpoints exactly this moment of realisation as her thoughts crowd in and support her decision not to open the door, not to disturb the children. The spiritual in-between space is powerful and supports this kind of pedagogical decision making, the kind of decision that is not about obedience to rules but comes from a place deep within the self. Parker Palmer (1998, p. 66) calls this "paradoxical thinking. . .a view of the world in which opposites are joined, so that we can see the world clearly and see it whole". These spiritually in-between times may be planned (rites and rituals) or may come unexpectedly as epiphanies; in whatever guise, they provide rich opportunities for fresh pedagogical insights.

The Spiritual Elsewhere

The spiritual elsewhere is a transformative space for the imagination, a place for dreaming and creativity. It is most obvious in children's play. Children often show a sense of deep connection to living things, to artefacts and to each other in their play. Recognition of the spiritual elsewhere supports a pedagogy that can go beyond the materialistic and challenges the notion that young children have solely "concrete" understandings of the world. On the contrary, in their play, and in the imaginative worlds that they created, the children who participated in this research demonstrated metaphysical understandings about themselves and the world.

In the Steiner kindergarten there is an emphasis on play, and people interested in this philosophical approach to early childhood education discover that "imaginary play is considered the most important 'work' of the young child and the activity through which the child grows physically, intellectually, and emotionally" (Edwards, 2002, p. 4). In the kindergarten prolonged and complex interactions are common and the acknowledgement of play is part of pedagogical decision making on the part of teachers who engage with the ideas of Rudolf Steiner. For instance, in the choice of materials and artefacts Steiner's influence is noticeable. He disliked toys that simply represented reality and felt that children are able to fill in the gaps with their own imaginations. Therefore, there are dolls with featureless faces, baskets of natural materials and piles of pastel-coloured muslin cloths in the kindergarten. Everything is ready to be transformed and the artefacts available reflect pedagogical decision making from a philosophical tradition that always includes the spiritual dimension.

In every session the space was transformed by the children. They were not involved in a whimsical world; such a world only reflects prejudiced thinking about the Steiner environment. Instead, children became bankers, office workers, doctors, vets, princesses, dogs, helicopter pilots and horses. The teachers support this play and do not interrupt unless directly approached although they were aware of what was going on. It is part of their pedagogical practice to intervene only in a way that supports the holistic wellbeing of the child and in this example the relationship with the parent was essential in building up the whole picture about what was happening in Tamara's imaginative world. This world is part of the spiritual elsewhere, a fantasy, a drama and a world of hopes and dreams for the future.

The Hobby Horse

Sylvia, the teacher in the kindergarten, works in a way that honours a spiritual pedagogy and, like the other teachers, she is devoted to her work. She reflects on an esoteric level and is supported by the anthroposophical philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. One day Sylvia tells me about the process of "ensouling" a hobby horse. The hobby horses have corduroy heads with manes of thick wool, large buttons for eyes and the head is fastened to a pole with reins. The children sit astride the pole and walk, trot or gallop. They call the horses by name and they are very much part of the kindergarten. One day a new horse's head arrives. As yet it does not have eyes

or a name and is not attached to a pole. As part of the process of "ensouling" the horse Sylvia and the children chose eyes from the button box and she prepares to sew them onto the horse's head.

This narrative shows the attention that is paid to the wellbeing of each child in the spiritual elsewhere. The spiritual elsewhere is a space where children create a self in relation to what is available in their world. This is Tamara's story told by Sylvia. Sylvia's narrative is enriched by her relationship with Tamara's family. The hobby horse she refers to is the new horse's head, described above:

Tamara and the horse

Tamara's process was to do with hopes for her own adulthood. So she (Tamara) didn't tell me this when the horse arrived but when she grows up she wants her family to have a circus so the family have entered into this and they will tell you that they will have a circus and Tamara will ride the white horse.

So when the first horse arrived, when the horse arrived without eyes, we went through the buttons to find eyes that were right for that particular horse and it took 25 minutes.

I had the horse in my arms like a baby with the needle and thread and was positioning the eyes and her (Tamara's) whole body moved. She was feeling the needle at a soul level, she was in tears and said that the horse would be blind and it had to hurt the horse that it would be blind and it wouldn't be able to see. And I didn't know about the circus. It took 3 weeks for the circus to come out and her mother told me, that this is Tamara's plan for when she grows up and she played circus tricks, looked after the horses, made other people look after them. And that's how the horse came into the morning circle (the Pony song), I wrote it for her. This was a new morning circle to support the possibility of Tamara getting what she hopes for in adult life and it probably won't be a circus but I have given her the possibility that her heart's desire will become real.

Sylvia's commitment to Tamara in a pedagogical sense is clear. She realises that this is a significant moment in Tamara's spiritual life. She talks about Tamara's "intention" for herself and knows that in the spiritual elsewhere Tamara will be in a circus and ride a white horse. Once she realises this Sylvia is able to meet Tamara on this spiritual level and to work with her wish for the future. Although she did not tell her, Sylvia created a special song for Tamara to enjoy and in the morning circle the Pony song is sung and everyone trots around and the pony is shod. As these actions are performed the children become part person/part horse, just as they are on the hobby horses. These movements are inspired by eurythmy and according to Trostli (1998, p. 284) these exercises are what Rudolf Steiner called "ensouled gymnastics". Eurythmy incorporates movements that are "a living synthesis of speech and music expressed through the whole human being in body, soul and spirit" (Trostli, 1998, p. 285). In these ways a synthesis of pedagogical practice, holistic development and learning and attention to wellbeing is incorporated into the life of the kindergarten and experienced by everyone involved in this story about Tamara's "heart's desire".

The spiritual elsewhere is an aspect of play in early childhood settings. Play, and how it is supported, involves pedagogical decision making. The imaginative world of children becomes visible through play and can be observed by adults. Play is a window into the spiritual life of children. Adults are sometimes invited to join this world, at other times the spiritual elsewhere is a place of escape, of day dreaming;

it is a private world. Escaping the real world in a spiritual sense may be seen as the ultimate tactic (de Certeau, 1988) that can be supported when teachers work with subtlety and respect, recognising the special inner world of children. A sensitive pedagogical approach is needed in this space in order to engage in the spiritual elsewhere with young children.

Making Connections

The concept of *everyday spirituality* is proposed as a way to reconceptualise pedagogical practice to include the spiritual. It is incorporated into practices that are intentionally significant because attention to holistic learning and wellbeing is ensured as mind, body and spirit are involved in this educational approach. The above narratives describe instances of spiritual withness, the spiritually in-between and the spiritual elsewhere. There were overlaps and these transformative spaces were not seen as discreet or exclusive. An emphasis on the spiritual can be critiqued as this implies a separation from the whole so a sense of the spiritual as part of the holistic paradigm is important. A pedagogical approach to the spiritual is also respectful of connections between children, parents, teachers, the wider family and community. These links support a sense of wellbeing and in the context of Aotearoa it is relevant to note that the past (as the ancestors) and the future are also included in this connectedness. As *Te Whariki* (1996, p. 46) notes "adults should acknowledge the spiritual dimension and have a concern for how the past, present, and future influence children's self esteem and are of prime importance to Māori and Tagata Pasefika families".

People, Places and Things

The early childhood curriculum, *Te Whariki* (1996), celebrates the relationship between people, places and things and a pedagogy that includes the spiritual supports this. The transformative spaces of spiritual withness, spiritual in-betweenness and the spiritual elsewhere have a focus on relationships (people), the environment (places) and artefacts (things), respectively. Each narrative gives a glimpse of what a spiritual pedagogy might look like in action. The emphasis on the mind in relationship to others is affirmed as spiritual withness; this is illustrated by the interactions of children, parents and teachers. Reflections about the environment as something that becomes transformative in terms of rituals or that might support personal epiphanies demonstrate the power of the spiritually in-between space. The spiritual elsewhere is the imaginative space, the world of play inhabited by young children. A pedagogy that recognises the spiritual elsewhere does not trivialise this space and seeks engagement with the hopes and dreams of children. These narratives themselves represent the "multiplicities of becoming" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 505) possible in certain transformative spaces.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have introduced the early childhood curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand and outlined specific and local conceptualisations of holistic practice and wellbeing. The New Zealand curriculum emphasises *kotahitanga*/holistic learning and development and this principle is interwoven with the strand of *mana atua*/wellbeing. The curriculum advocates for the inclusion of spirituality in early childhood education, stating that "adults should recognise the important place of spirituality in the development of the whole child" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 47).

In terms of pedagogy many teachers who reflect on spiritual withness, the spiritual in-between and the spiritual elsewhere will have different experiences that they can contemplate or share with others. The stories presented here describe what happened at a specific time; to return to the metaphor of the rhizome, there is a lot of activity underground; an understanding of narrative presupposes that the view from elsewhere may be different from our own. Diversity in the population is reflected in the families that attend early childhood educational settings in Aotearoa and this requires attention to be given to an inclusive spirituality that reflects different worldviews. It is my belief that in New Zealand spirituality has been kept alive by Māori as *tangata whenua* (people of the land) who act as *kaitiaki* or spiritual guardians of indigenous spirituality and the spirituality of others. In terms of the research this meant that the ground was "always already" prepared and this can be seen in the models for wellbeing and holistic development and learning that always include the spiritual dimension in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Research contextualised to this particular landscape explored the way that pedagogy in early childhood settings might support the spiritual experience of young children. This research aimed to be holistic in that it involved everyone in each setting and children, parents and teachers participated. Each of the qualitative case study settings followed holistic principles and philosophies. Narratives from the research are drawn from a Montessori *casa*, a private preschool and a Rudolf Steiner kindergarten. These narratives are rhizomic, that is, they are fluid, shifting and open up unexpected perspectives.

I do not wish to "re-universalise" pedagogical practices that relate to young children; these narratives are not intended to describe a static or unchanging child or to propose practices that fit all situations. Instead, I have emphasised transformation. Three transformative spaces of spiritual withness, the spiritually in-between and the spiritual elsewhere have been discussed that have relevance to the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. In the UK, Hay and Nye (1998) present awareness sensing, mystery sensing and value sensing as categories that support the spiritual. Working in Canada, Champagne (2003) proposed sensitive, relational and existential spiritual modes in research with young children. The three spaces presented in this chapter add another cultural perspective.

This chapter presents another set of themes; it is hoped that people who are involved in the education of young children will use them as a means of reflection

and a guide to pedagogical practice that includes the spiritual. It is a goal of committed education to create spaces that are transformative (McLaren, 2005), supportive of difference (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2007) and ethical (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). It may also include the spiritual. I argue that commitment to education is definitely illustrated in these narratives that introduce *everyday spirituality* as part of daily pedagogical practice.

Holistic Learning and Wellbeing—The Future

As an aid to reflection on the past in order to move into the future it is possible to consider whether moments of spiritual withness have been experienced; to wonder if intersubjectivity and shared attention has been felt as an aspect of spirituality; a merging of I/Thou (Buber, 1958). Perhaps certain rites or rituals have celebrated the spiritual in-between space, a space of liminality and discovery. Alternatively this space may have been felt as a personal moment of epiphany or spiritual realisation, a threshold moment. It is also possible to ask how young children have been supported in the spiritual elsewhere and what practices have affirmed their spiritual freedom expressed in play and the imagination. All these questions relate to the practice of *everyday spirituality* as a pedagogical aspect of these transformative spaces. When reflection is translated into action it becomes possible to meet daily pedagogical challenges concerning holistic learning and wellbeing. Levinas (1999, p. 24) describes the face of the Other as "that face facing me, in its expression—in its mortality – summons me, demands me, requires me". This chapter proposes a pedagogical, practical and spiritual response to this challenge.

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Chapter 47
Grappling with Spirituality in the Classroom

Anne Kennedy and Judith Duncan

Abstract This chapter discusses the spiritual dimension of education in Catholic primary schools in New Zealand, based on the findings of a recent, small, qualitative study. The views held by the teacher–participants on spirituality beyond the religious framework of their upbringing and work context enabled them to discuss the variety of ways spirituality can be understood and expressed. Teachers grappled with these understandings as they faced the challenge of including spirituality equally alongside the other dimensions of education, so their classrooms can be places of holistic learning for children. The influence of the teachers' own spirituality on how they respond to children's spiritual expressions, the spiritual potential of all areas of the curriculum, the teacher–child relationship and the spiritual climate of the classroom were important issues which will be dealt with in this chapter.

Introduction

Catholic schools in New Zealand are part of the government system of schooling, described in the Integration Act (1975) as

> [A]Roman Catholic school in which the whole school community, through the general school programmes and in its religious instruction and observances exercises the right to live and teach the values of Jesus Christ. These values are as expressed in the Scriptures and in the practices, worship and doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church as determined from time to time by the Roman Catholic bishop of the diocese. (New Zealand Catholic Education Office, 2004, p. 13)

This statement underpins the role and responsibilities of teachers in Catholic schools. Although not specifically mentioned, the spiritual lives of children are inherent aspects of what teachers are expected to attend to as part of teaching Catholic values, practices and doctrine. It is also expected that the spiritual dimension of education will be given equal emphasis in the same way as the intellectual, social, emotional and physical dimensions. It is attending to all of these dimensions

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of education that enables Catholic schools to claim they provide "holistic" education. The issues related to spirituality that teachers are grappling with, discussed in this chapter, were identified in a small qualitative study carried out with teachers in Catholic schools in the lower South Island of New Zealand.[1] New Zealand is a multi-cultural Pacific Island country of approximately four million people. Despite the differences in the geographic, cultural and social contexts for teachers, the questions New Zealand teachers raised about spirituality in education are similar to those reported in literature from Australia and countries in the northern hemisphere, such as the United Kingdom and the United States. Spirituality is an area that is being grappled with internationally in education, as teachers become alert to wider perspectives that go beyond traditional religious understandings. These changes in understanding offer schools opportunities to provide for the spiritual lives of children in ways not previously considered.

What is Spirituality?

Over the last decade interest in spirituality has been growing. This can be seen by the attention given to spirituality, not only by educationalists, but by health and social care professionals as they recognise the place of spirituality in care plans that cater for the "whole" person (Crompton, 1998). Spirituality is also being explored in the media, and as a theme in writing, in film, in art and television (Julian, 2004; Scott, 2004). This widening interest in spirituality is part of an international change in the way spirituality is being understood (Liddy, 2002). However, a key question is: What are we talking about when we use the term "spirituality"?

Traditionally, spirituality was described in religious language and recognised in religious expressions, such as prayer. Until recently spirituality and religion were seen to be the same thing and this meant that a spiritual person was someone who believed in God and was affiliated to a religion. The developing interest in the spiritual dimension of life in the Western world is enabling spirituality to be "teased apart" (Scott, 2004) from religion, and allowed to "float free" (Thatcher, 1999) from "religious tethers" (McLaughlin, 2001) to be understood in new ways. Membership of a religious association is no longer required to be able to understand and experience spirituality. Being religious is one way of "being" spiritual but not the only way. Such shifting boundaries have allowed spirituality to be embraced not only by those within a religious framework, but by those who are seen to be, or who may feel, outside of it. The benefits of a wider interpretation of spirituality enable it to be recognised by people who do not wish to be part of a religious structure or institution but are interested in seeking answers to some of the big questions of life, such as: people's relationships, identity, meaning of life and what, for them, is of ultimate value in their lives. This shift in thinking about spirituality requires a change in language because as spirituality is viewed through a wider lens, the religious language previously used is no longer enough to express what it means. Finding appropriate language that can describe a wider understanding of spirituality is something those who research and write about spirituality have to, and have been, grappling with.

Some of the most commonly used concepts to describe spirituality recorded in the literature include an innate human quality and an awareness of relationships with one's self, with others, with the earth and, for some, with God. In addition, spirituality is understood to be based on beliefs and values and helps to define identity and make meaning of life (see Coles, 1990; Darragh, 1997; Eaude, 2001; Fisher, 1999; Hay & Nye, 1998; Liddy, 2002; Palmer, 2003; Scott, 2004; Witham, 2001). These concepts expand the meaning of spirituality and enable it to be described in wider terms. Descriptions of spirituality abound in the literature as writers struggle to explain the term in ways that include the many layers of meaning that are now being attributed to it.

For the purposes of this chapter, we have chosen a "thumbnail" description of spirituality by Neil Darragh (1997, p. 303), a New Zealand writer, who argues that spirituality is "the combinations of beliefs and practices which animate and integrate people's lives". This description represents the starting point of our thinking and captures the perspectives taken by the teachers in the study.

In order to examine more closely how teachers are dealing with this rediscovery of spirituality, a small qualitative research study was carried out. The purpose of this project was to capture New Zealand children's spirituality from teachers' perspectives. The study was carried out with 10 Catholic teachers who taught children aged from 5 to 13 years in Catholic primary schools in New Zealand. The data was gathered using two focus groups and individual follow-up interviews. The teachers were invited to bring an artefact they used in the classroom to evoke and nurture children's spiritual lives. The descriptions of these items formed part of the discussion. The discussion began with the teachers exploring their own understanding of spirituality and was followed by how they recognised and responded to children's spiritual expressions.

Teachers' Descriptions of Spirituality

The discussion in the study began with the teachers making a list of key words or ideas that came to mind when they thought about spirituality. The eight key ideas that teachers ranked as essential to describe spirituality continued to recur throughout most of the areas of exploration that followed. These ideas came under three broad headings: religious (the presence of God and mystery), personal (getting to know yourself—identity), challenging yourself (the essence and core of being and values and beliefs) and relational (relationships and a sense of belonging). As these ideas were unpacked the teachers identified spirituality as an invisible thread that brought together the religious, personal and relational dimensions of a person and enabled them to live in a holistic, integrated way.

From the outset of the discussions it was clear that all of the teachers' understanding and experience of spirituality was shaped by their religious tradition. A belief in, and relationship with God is foundational in Catholic tradition. The centrality of this belief and relationship imbued the teachers' understanding of their spirituality. The values and attitudes that flowed from this belief and relationship influenced all of the dimensions of their wider understanding of spirituality.

For most of the teachers, viewing spirituality as a separate part of life that was reserved for religious expression, no longer made sense, and as they shared their ideas a change in thinking emerged. The teachers recognised that spirituality was a multi-layered concept that included religious experiences but also went beyond them. This was a considerable shift in thinking for the teachers and it illustrated that, while still acknowledging the importance of their religious beliefs and values, they were also experiencing the gradual "teasing apart" (Scott, 2004, p. 175) of spirituality and religion referred to earlier.

What became obvious was that the religious language that was used to express spiritual ideas in the traditional sense was no longer enough to describe a wider view of spirituality. During the process of the discussion the teachers experimented with language to describe different types of spiritual experiences. For example, they identified that "spiritual experiences" could be planned or unplanned. Planned experiences were described as traditional religious experiences, such as Mass or a funeral service. These were designed to be spiritual but the teachers agreed they were not always experienced as spiritual. Unplanned experiences were described as relational or in the outdoors and were often unexpected experiences, such as the sudden awareness of the depth of friendships or the feeling of wonder at being in a wide open space. The unexpected recognition of a person's spiritual qualities, such as kindness, was also identified as an unplanned spiritual experience. It became clear that once teachers grasped that spirituality went beyond religion, they discovered the language to express it. This did not mean religious language would not be used but that it would be used along with the language that emerged as they grew more familiar with a wider interpretation. Recognising that spirituality integrated a person's values and beliefs with how they lived and responded in relationships was a clarification from the discussion for most of the teachers.

These new interpretations of spirituality are not unique to the New Zealand teachers. Similar findings have emerged from a study carried out by Eaude (2001) with British teachers and by Fisher (1999) with teachers in Australia.

The Spirituality Issues Teachers Face with Children in the Classroom

As the teachers in the study came to terms with the change in their thinking and their evolving spiritual language, they became aware of the challenges this would present for them in the classroom. They questioned the effect the change would have on their personal spirituality. From there they then questioned their professional responsibilities for nurturing children's spirituality as part of their teaching role. Most agreed it was a good thing for them to re-think their own spiritual lives and they believed that a new interpretation of spirituality would not replace the Catholic spirituality of their childhood. Instead they saw it as an extension and were excited about the potential it offered them to explore spirituality in their everyday life experiences. What they did grapple with was how this expanded thinking could be transferred to their teaching

in a Catholic school where they were expected to provide for children's spirituality in a more traditional framework.

The teachers spoke about the challenge they already faced with passing on the traditional beliefs to children in Catholic schools. Most of the teachers struggled to make religious concepts meaningful and relevant to children who no longer associated with the Church on a regular basis apart from the connection they have through the school. The expectation that children would be actively involved in the religious activity of the Church through their parish is no longer a reality for most of the families who attend Catholic schools. The fact that most parents claimed to be Catholic and continued to enrol children suggested they valued the religious dimension of the school but did not see they are responsible for any regular Church involvement to support it. It appeared they leave most of their children's religious education and spiritual formation to the school where it becomes the responsibility of teachers.

Most teachers in Catholic schools are Catholic themselves and accept responsibility for nurturing children's spiritual lives and are professionally trained to do this. The problem for teachers is how to meet the responsibilities of their employment to make religious language, rituals and symbols meaningful and spiritual for children who, at the same time, are unfamiliar with them because they do not experience them regularly. What was initially perceived as a challenge for teachers can now be reframed as an opportunity. It may be that working within a wider framework of understanding spirituality teachers may be more able to help children recognise the spiritual dimension of everyday life. In other words, they may be able to use the wider spiritual framework in the classroom and apply it to traditional spiritual experiences and make them part of everyday life. The questions are: How can teachers blend spiritual and religious ideas to nurture children's spirituality in their classrooms? How can they help children to recognise the spirituality of ordinary things?

Spiritual Contexts in the Classroom

Teachers are conscious of the influence of the two contexts of the classroom, that is, the Catholic "religious" context and the New Zealand context that reflects the children's way of life. Every country has its own cultural contexts, lifestyles, values and interests that are unique and shape people's lives. These become so embedded in the way of life that those living within them take them for granted. It is often only through deep reflection that people notice the powerful impact they have on their lives. New Zealanders are no exception to this. The teachers, in this study, were asked to bring an artefact that represented the context of the children's lives that they used in the classroom to initiate spiritual dialogue with children. Neither the religious nor the New Zealand context was mentioned, and some teachers admitted being confused about what to bring. As they prepared to share what they had brought, there was a brief discussion about whether there was such a thing as "New Zealand spirituality", and the teachers were unsure about this. However, out of 12

artefacts that were shared the teachers were surprised to see that only three artefacts represented the religious context of the school, while seven were examples of the New Zealand context. This challenged the teachers to wonder whether spirituality is expressed in a uniquely New Zealand way by New Zealanders. They became more convinced about this after the teachers who brought the three religious artefacts spoke about how they used them, illustrating that teachers encouraged children to recognise their religious identity alongside their New Zealand identity. An example of this was a teacher's use of a Paua shell, which is a multi-coloured shell from New Zealand.[2] The teacher reported how the shell was seen as a sacred symbol by the children and part of their New Zealand identity. The shell was used in class prayer rituals to hold holy water for blessing or as a candleholder and at class Masses for the distribution of communion.

Another example was shared by a teacher who spoke about using a picture from a New Zealand calendar of a road winding through mountains that were familiar to most of the children. The teacher used the road as a symbol of the journey of life and the children were invited to talk about their own life journey and the significant milestones they had experienced so far. The children were also invited to think about the important relationships they had with people who were part of their journey. The teacher encouraged the children to relate their experiences of climbing mountains to facing struggles in life and they were able to draw analogies with their lives about other aspects of the picture. The teacher reported how all the children were able to reflect on the significance of events and people (including God) who were part of their lives and the lesson concluded with a time of silence and prayer. The value of such an activity from the teacher's perspective was that it helped children to stand back and look at their lives in a bigger picture and to recognise deeper meaning in their ordinary life experiences.

Examples such as these enable children to make connections between the New Zealand and the religious context of their spirituality. They strengthen their identity in both contexts and helped them to see the relevance of everyday things that help them to make meaning of their lives and to recognise that God's presence can be found in created things, such as mountains and shells. These examples showed that teachers' developing awareness of "what is spiritual" can be transferred into the classroom and how they can adjust their teaching practice and resources to benefit the spiritual learning needs of children.

The teachers recounted a variety of examples such as these which illustrated the planned and unplanned spiritual experiences mentioned earlier. Some examples of planned spiritual experiences that combined the New Zealand and the religious context of the school that teachers described were creating a prayer place in the bush and praying together with the children while on school camp and using a piece of pounamu (New Zealand greenstone) as a touchstone and symbol of peace and reconciliation in the classroom during times of conflict. Unplanned spiritual experiences teachers spoke about children demonstrating their spiritual qualities such as staying after school to help tidy up of their own accord, standing up for others and children caring for and including their classmates with disabilities. While the teachers had noticed these examples of children expressing their spirituality, they

pointed out that they were initiated by the children. The teachers concluded that they were becoming more sensitively attuned to children's expressions of spirituality and their new understanding was helping them to recognise it in how children behaved with their peers in the classroom.

A teacher can become spiritually attuned to children by using a strategy called "noticing, recognising, and responding" developed by Bronwen Cowie (2000) (cited in Ministry of Education, 2004). We have taken the liberty of adapting this strategy to what teachers do in the classroom regarding children's spirituality. It is Cowie's belief that when teachers *notice* and *recognise* children's learning engagement and learning "moments", a teacher can *respond* in a more meaningful and successful way to enhance learning opportunities. This strategy fits very well with a proposed spiritual framework which could be used to clarify teachers' observations of children's spiritual expressions. Drawing on Cowie (2000 cited Ministry of Education, 2004), the Ministry of Education (2004) has used exemplars to help teachers *recognise* what they *notice* as learning. Sometimes *recognising* the learning occurs in retrospect after the event which limits how the teacher can *respond*. The purpose of exemplars is to help teachers recognise the learning when it occurs and to respond immediately. We propose the idea of preparing exemplars of children's spiritual expressions in the classroom to assist teachers, particularly as they develop a deeper understanding of interpreting how children express their spirituality in a wider framework. As Cowie (2000) suggests, this would enable teachers to respond at the moment of recognition and we propose that it would allow children to feel their spirituality is recognised and affirmed by their teacher.

The Spirituality of the Teacher

There are few guidelines for teachers to follow about how to deal with spirituality in the classroom. In Catholic schools they are expected to provide activities that will nurture children's spirituality in keeping with the Catholic tradition. Teachers accept this but realise there needs to be more than this, given the changing realities outlined earlier. What the teachers discovered is that to be able to recognise children's spirituality, they must first be aware of their own spiritual life. For teachers in Catholic schools this means having some personal acceptance and appreciation of Catholic values, beliefs and practices that underpin the other layers of spirituality. The next step for teachers is to do what Palmer (2003), an American writer and teacher, describes as being able to connect "their soul to their role". For teachers to do this is both a personal and professional challenge which involves letting their own spiritual life flow into and shape their teaching practice. Palmer (2003) believes that you teach who you are; you cannot teach who you are not. Therefore, a teacher who is not a spiritually aware person cannot help children to be spiritually aware.

Throughout the discussions the teachers showed a deep awareness of the impact their personal spirituality had on their role as teachers and on the children they

taught. They saw themselves as spiritual role models and guides, in keeping with Groome (1998, p. 9) who argued that: "Our attempts to be spiritual guides must surely be grounded in our own spiritual journey. It is not possible to lead people out (e-ducare) if we are not travelling in that direction ourselves". The teachers made this same connection and also recognised the lasting effect of their influence on children and the challenge being a spiritual role model was for them as teachers as illustrated in this piece of dialogue from the study:

Catherine: I think teachers have a strong influence on children. I don't know how you would measure that or how you would actually see it but it is who you are. So in that respect you as the teacher bring to your job a different awareness of your role within the children's lives. You know you are not just there from nine till three. Your influence on those children goes far beyond that and their experiences with you at school go far beyond the time that they are with you. It's part of their spiritual development. Well, you are part of their spiritual development.

Denise: It was quite daunting really when you think of the responsibility of it, because children will remember who you were—they mightn't remember what you taught them.

Catherine: I think we owe children that... I think we are the model of spirituality to our children as well in how we interact with our other staff members and with the children and how they see us react to things. Like Denise was saying, they might not see that at home. It might be something they never experience except with us at school. So I think that's really important.

Some teachers recognised that an important part of being a spiritual role model for children was letting children see that they live by the values they promote and the challenge this presents for teachers in the classroom. This was explained by Patricia:

I think that the really important thing for yourself is how you live. Children will notice that more and they will remember more about that than the things that you actually teach them or teach them how to do. I think you need to be very conscious of the fact that you need to be leading by example, and living out your own values even though there are times when stress or something might counteract the way you would normally act. . . .You say sorry and that shows that you are human and you can actually come back with that response. I think that's important as well, and children need to learn that's ok.

The teachers agreed that the key attitude that was needed in the classroom was respect as Molly stated: *Just respecting all children as individuals, respecting their individual characteristics and needs*.

The respectful attitude towards children that was emphasised by the teachers resonated with the emphasis Nye (2002) placed on fairness when dealing with children and spiritual matters. Several of the examples the teachers gave, such as the efforts they made to celebrate milestones and special events in children's lives, demonstrated the respect they had for children and illustrated they were already following Nye's (2002, p. 109) suggestion that teachers, "cast the net more widely" and are sensitive to children's spiritual expressions in "their feelings, thoughts, attitudes, actions and even fantasies".

The Challenge for Teachers to Respond to Children at a Spiritual Level

The teachers recognised that respect comes from awareness (noticing) and as they became more aware of the multi-layered levels of spirituality and how this is expressed, the teachers recognised (recognising) that the depth of their own awareness of spirituality would enable them to respond (responding) to children's spiritual expressions in the classroom. Throughout the discussions teachers talked about how it was a challenge to notice, recognise and respond at a spiritual level. At times the teacher made an encouraging comment, spoken or written which lets children know their spirituality was noticed and affirmed. All teachers had used "teachable moments" with the whole class to draw attention to children's expressions of particular spiritual qualities. Some teachers gave examples of telling children stories around a situation that called for a spiritual response. There were times when some teachers challenged children to look beyond the surface of a situation to find a deeper meaning. Helping children to transfer what they had learnt in one situation to deal with another situation and encouraging children to have higher expectations were other such examples. Several teachers talked about the importance of talking with children at a spiritual level. This was done on a one-to-one basis with children to reinforce or challenge values and behaviours. At times the teacher dealt with an issue with the whole class to draw attention to a situation that needed a spiritual response such as special care of a child who was experiencing a crisis. These examples demonstrated the awareness of teachers who are nurturing children in a holistic way. However, the teachers agreed that in the current educational climate where cognitive outcomes are the focus they are challenged to respond to children at an affective level. The teachers believed that when they were able to do this it enabled children to realise that expressing their feelings and spiritual qualities, paying attention to relationships, searching for the meaning of life and affirming people's identity are equally important in the learning process.

All of the teachers felt that creating opportunities for children to recognise their own and others' spiritual qualities and experiences was another way teachers increased children's spiritual awareness. The mutual spiritual awareness between children and teachers helped to create a classroom climate that was attuned to the spiritual dimensions of their lives.

Grappling with Creating a Classroom for Holistic Learning

The classroom is the place where learning takes place and the teachers agreed that it is the classroom climate that creates the environment for holistic learning. The teacher enables this to happen by the way he or she gets to know the children, identifies their learning and sets up appropriate pedagogy. The systems the teacher establishes for the learning to proceed influence the classroom climate. Such classroom systems are designed to encourage children to work collaboratively rather than competitively, the learning activities and resources are inclusive of all

children regardless of their abilities, and the reward systems recognise both effort and result.

According to teachers the climate of the classroom was dependent mainly on the teacher. If it is to be a spiritual classroom this depends on the teacher's spiritual alertness. It is the teacher who shows concern for children's total well-being and who has to decide how she or he can achieve the balance between the areas of the curriculum to provide learning for the "whole" child. It is the teacher who faces the daily challenge of ensuring that his or her classroom is a place where spirituality is not treated as a side issue but is given equal emphasis alongside children's intellectual, social, emotional, physical and spiritual development. The examples that the teachers shared illustrated the spiritual environment in their classrooms where children express their spirituality in their relationships, especially through demonstrating their spiritual qualities such as respect, tolerance and creativity. Qualities such as reverence, sincerity and thoughtfulness were also noticed when children prayed. High levels of spiritual alertness were also evident in the contributions children made to discussions and role plays in different areas of the school curricula, particularly Religious Education. Sustaining this level of spiritual alertness in a classroom amidst all of the other demands is a challenge for teachers. It is easy to see how it could be lost and it is only through teachers own commitment that spirituality can underpin what happens in classrooms.

While the relationships children have with their classmates are important, the relationship that influences children the most is with their teacher. The teachers were both conscious of this and challenged by it. They spoke about times when for various reasons they let children down through misjudgement or impatience and how they apologised to the class to make up for their mistakes. The teachers recognised there were times in the classroom when their relationship with a child was strained and they had to find ways to put it right. It was at times such as this the teachers were conscious of modelling how to build good relationships. They were aware that children noticed how teachers behaved when relationships were tested not just with the teacher but among their classmates. For example, the teachers reported incidents that showed how children challenged and comforted each other, encouraged each other to take pride in their identity and expressed their concerns for each other in prayer. Another challenge teachers spoke about was generating a sense of belonging among all the children in the class, including children who pushed behavioural boundaries and caused trouble. It was in situations such as these that teachers used their personal spiritual qualities to work through the issues openly and honestly with children to re-establish a peaceful classroom climate.

Many of the teachers' stories illustrated their deep connectedness and concern for the wellbeing of the children in their class which went well beyond a narrow instructional model of teaching and beyond the compartmentalised view of spirituality. This connectedness and concern was clearly illustrated by one teacher who shared a moving account of what happened in her class when one of the children had a life-threatening illness. Her description of how she dealt with the children's sadness and concern for their classmate showed how deeply her soul was connected

to her role and how her spirituality was expressed through the relationship she had with her class.

It was evident from the examples the teachers shared that it was through observation of children's life experiences in the classroom that they were able to learn about children's spiritual lives. Unfortunately, this is not as straightforward as it sounds. Teachers spend much of their time observing children but often the focus of their observation is not spiritual. The emphasis on "learning" in the present educational climate is on children's intellectual progress. Teaching and learning are geared towards mastering progressive achievement objectives in each learning area. The emphasis of teachers' reporting is on children's cognitive achievement. There are few opportunities for teachers to discuss children's spiritual experiences. The challenge for teachers is to raise the profile of spirituality and find ways to engage parents and colleagues in discussions about children's spiritual lives. When parents and teachers come to realise how important the spiritual lives of their children are, they will become more aware of the contribution it makes to their cognitive development and also the positive influence it has on their total wellbeing and personal growth.

When teachers recognise that spirituality is not a separate component of life but is embedded in life experiences, their classroom observations take on a focus at a deeper level. The idea of learning about children's spiritual lives through observation is reinforced by Scott's (2004, p. 168) comment that "paying attention to children's experience" is the key to understanding their spirituality. But teachers also need to pay attention (notice) and observe their own spirituality (recognise) in order that they too become more spiritually alert.

So what can a teacher do to become more spiritually aware? The findings of another study carried out by Fraser and Grootenboer (2004) with New Zealand teachers speaks about the benefits of engaging teachers and children in "spiritual dialogue". This involves providing opportunities for people to talk together about spirituality and spiritual matters. But as with all areas of personal wellbeing, spirituality is a personal responsibility. Thus, taking time to reflect on your personal spiritual life, talking and reading about spirituality are helpful ways of becoming more connected to your own spiritual awareness. Teachers can request that their schools provide opportunities for them to have professional development with a spiritual focus. The challenge most teachers face is finding time to do these things. However, when spirituality is the starting point of what is done in the classroom then the spirituality of the teacher and the children can grow (Suhor, 1999).

For something to grow it is necessary to create the right conditions. Spirituality grows when the teacher is attuned to the children at a spiritual level, that is when he or she *notices* and *recognises* spiritual language and actions. These can be noticed in relationships, especially the teacher/child relationship. Hay and Nye described spirituality as "an unusual level of consciousness or perceptiveness" which they termed "relational consciousness" (Hay & Nye, 1998, p. 113). They identified this in children who showed particular types of awareness in relationships. The same could apply to teachers who pay special attention to how they respond in relationships with children. When asked about how they do this, four teachers cited examples

such as: saying sorry to children when they had made a mistake, respecting the unique identity of each child, naming and affirming each child's spiritual qualities, and by using inclusive teaching strategies that promote collaboration rather than competition. The classroom where teacher and children are spiritually aware creates a climate of mutual spiritual growth and this begins with the establishment of appropriate relationships. In classrooms that operate at a spiritual level, children's personal qualities are viewed as spiritual qualities. Teachers and children are able to name the qualities of each person and refer to them as a generous boy, or a compassionate girl or a thoughtful friend.

There is a number of other ways that teachers nurture children's spirituality in the classroom and this is through the curriculum. The curriculum sets down the achievement objectives in each learning area at each level. While some curriculum areas offer more opportunities for spiritual dialogue, teachers are experimenting with all areas of the curriculum to find ways to engage with children at a spiritual level. This is the level where children ask questions which require deeper thinking about topics such as the meaning of what life or death is. Questions can be seen as an indicator of spiritual awareness (Champagne, 2001). Children use them to get information and to search for meaning from others, especially their teachers. These questions are, as Palmer (2003) writes, not about the narrow notion of spirituality concerned with creedal formulas and faith traditions, but those questions concerned with the "largeness of life" (p. 2). Teachers should be encouraged to *notice* the children who ask these deep questions and show them by the teacher's *response* that they *recognise* what is happening when questions such as these are asked. Children who ask deep questions can lead others to do the same.

Using literature to generate questions about spiritual matters is another way teachers use the curriculum to nurture children's spirituality, although having time to research the wide range of children's literature for stories with spiritual messages is at times a challenge for teachers. Art, music and drama are other areas of the curriculum teachers use to enable children to express their spirituality through their creativity. Once again teachers struggle to have time to explore the potential of these curriculum areas and to find resources to help them do this. Opportunities for teachers to share suitable resources could help solve this problem.

Scott's (2004) advice about paying attention to children's experiences as a means of noticing their spirituality can be applied not only to observing them directly but also observing them indirectly. This can be done through listening to the stories children tell and the experiences they recount that indicate their spiritual awareness. Children express their spirituality through their emotions and their interactions with people. Their spiritual selves can be seen in the language and gestures they use. Paying attention to the way children speak or write, the words they choose and how they describe events, can reveal much to teachers about children's spiritual lives. The challenge for teachers is to pay enough attention to these things and to do it regularly enough so they can get to know each child's spiritual identity. The question and the challenge for each teacher as they grapple with their day-to-day teaching is: How important are the spiritual lives of the children in my class and how well do I notice, recognise and respond to them?

Conclusion

New Zealand teachers are not alone in the challenges they face to create classrooms with a spiritual focus, where holistic learning can take place. Eaude (2001) and Fisher (1999) found teachers in the United Kingdom and Australia had similar experiences in educational systems where cognitive learning outcomes are the priority and in which the spiritual dimension of learning is treated as a background rather than a foreground aspect of education. Therefore, what the teachers found could be usefully applied in classrooms beyond New Zealand and beyond Church schools. What needs to be acknowledged is that achieving the balance between all aspects of learning in schools today is "easier said than done" and is a matter requiring on-going attention from not only classroom teachers but also schools principals and communities.

The confusion between religion and spirituality has contributed to spirituality being neglected and in some cases omitted altogether in schools. However, the developing interest in spirituality is enabling a move beyond the religious framework and in descriptive terms more relevant to everyday life. This expanded view is supporting teachers in Church schools to overcome the challenge of making religious spirituality meaningful to children whose Church connections are tenuous, or non-existent, as they discover the spirituality of ordinary life in the classroom. It is also encouraging secular schools to consider thoughtfully the spiritual dimension in classroom programmes and to engage in dialogue about this with colleagues (Fraser & Grootenboer, 2004).

For teachers to create classrooms where children's spirituality is noticed, recognised and responded to, they must first grapple with their own spiritual awareness. It is through this that they are led, as were the teachers in this study, to understanding spirituality in a wider framework. The challenge that follows is for teachers to apply this awareness to their teaching role in their classroom. Through their own spiritual alertness teachers discover the mutuality of spirituality. In the process of becoming alert to children's spirituality teachers' own spirituality lives are also nurtured. Teachers become alert to expressions of children's values and beliefs, their spiritual qualities, their search for meaning and identity and their relationships. This mutual spiritual growth enhances the teacher–child relationship, which is the foundation of a classroom climate with a spiritual focus.

While incorporating spirituality into the classroom climate sounds straightforward, it places additional demands on teachers. These demands include: finding suitable language to describe to children what is meant by spirituality; recognising each child's way of expressing their spirituality; dealing with classroom issues in ways which model the teacher's values and beliefs; creating classroom systems that encourage children's spiritual and holistic growth; choosing and using artefacts that affirm children's identity and enable them to search for deeper meaning; and not only responding to children's spiritual expressions but initiating opportunities for them to ask spiritual questions. Arguably, the biggest challenge teachers face in the midst of running a busy classroom is having time and opportunities to uncover the spiritual potential of all the curriculum areas and to find suitable resources to use

to encourage children's spiritual growth, to engage with colleagues and parents in dialogue about the importance of spirituality and finding opportunities to nurture their own spiritual lives so they can be attuned to the spiritual lives of the children in their classroom.

As teachers become more alert to the spiritual needs of children, schools and education authorities could assist them by providing opportunities for sharing resources, exemplars of best practice and guidelines to use in the classroom. In the meantime teachers will continue to find ways to provide for children's spiritual and holistic wellbeing within the everyday pedagogy of New Zealand classrooms.

Notes

1. This study was undertaken as a Masters qualification at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand (2007).
2. A Paua shell is similar to an Abalone shell found in other countries.

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Chapter 48
Spiritual Confidence and Its Contribution to Wellbeing: Implications for Education

Philip Hughes

Abstract Recent research among more several thousand Australian secondary school students in the "Schools Spiritual Project" has shown that 80% of them say that, at least sometimes, it is hard to know what to believe about life and the world. This lack of confidence is illustrated by the fact that many say they have no idea what to believe about God, reincarnation or astrology.

The research shows that a lack of confidence is related to lower levels of ontological wellbeing, as measured by the sense of purpose, sense of identity and self-esteem. It has its roots in contemporary Western culture in which the "self has become a reflexive project", an ongoing story of a series of experiences and relationships, rather than the self being formed through location within a particular community or tradition. Nevertheless, a stable sense of self-identity contributes to the individual's capacity to "keep the story going" and wellbeing, particularly when it is achieved through an evaluation of options.

Spiritual education can contribute to skills of thinking and decision making in the religious or spiritual sphere that will enhance the development of confidence in beliefs about life and world. It should assist young people in dealing positively and constructively with the plurality of ideas, beliefs and practices that are found in contemporary Western societies. Knowledge of some of these options is important, but even more important are the skills of evaluation and of developing those beliefs into a clear sense of purpose and direction for life.

Introduction

Much research in religion and in religious education has focussed on what is believed and practised. Research in Australia that began in a project known as "The Spirit of Generation Y", and was continued in the "Schools Spirituality Project", has

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shown that the *forms* of spirituality may be distinguished from the *content*. Among the formal characteristics of spirituality are:

- the strength of belief: the passion and commitment with which beliefs are held and practices are followed;
- the eclecticism with which people put their beliefs and practices together and the extent to which they draw on a range of sources, crossing the boundaries, not only of denomination but also of religion; and
- the confidence with which beliefs are held.

This chapter focuses on the third of these characteristics and shows that it has a relationship with wellbeing independent of the relationship between wellbeing and the content of beliefs. On the basis of this research, it will be argued that one aim of education in relation to religion and spirituality should be to help students attain higher levels of confidence in what they believe.

In "The Future of Religious Education in a Post-Traditional Society" (Hughes, 2007a), I argued for a "spiritual literacy approach" to religious education. The aim of such education would be to help young people evaluate, develop, clarify and commit to specific ways of living in the world. I argued that the development of spiritual literacy should include developing:

- the knowledge of options, resources and possibilities in the area of spirituality;
- skills of evaluating options, resources and possibilities in the area of spirituality; and
- skills of translating spiritual commitment into action.

This chapter builds on that spiritual literacy approach by arguing that one of the aims of evaluation is the development of confidence in what is believed as a basis of commitment.

There are, however, different foundations for confidence in belief. The research findings suggest that if "confidence" is developed in the form of dogmatic assertion, rather than as the confident conclusion of an examination of the options, it may have detrimental effects. Confidence in belief should be achieved through the process of questioning and evaluating rather than through an uncritical approach to beliefs. These findings about the achievement of confidence in the area of spirituality provide some important clues for the future directions of spiritual education, especially within the context of a pluralistic society.

The Research

The research on which this chapter is based was conducted between 2002 and 2007. Part of the research was a project known as "The Spirit of Generation Y" which was carried out by the Christian Research Association in conjunction with researchers from Monash University and the Australian Catholic University. This project involved approximately 140 face-to-face interviews and a telephone survey

of 1,200 young people randomly dialled. This research project sought to provide a general description of the nature of spirituality among young people in Australia. That description has been explored in two books, *The Spirit of Generation Y* by Mason, Singleton, and Webber (2007) and *Putting Life Together: Findings from Australian Youth Spirituality Research* by Philip Hughes (2007b).

Apart from the interviews and surveys conducted in The Spirit of Generation Y project, the Christian Research Association conducted 210 additional face-to-face interviews in schools and surveyed, mostly through web-based questionnaires, approximately 5,000 secondary school students. This additional research was undertaken under the heading of the "Schools Spirituality Project".

The schools which participated in the Schools Spirituality Project were, in most cases, Catholic and Lutheran, chosen by the school system taking part in the project to represent a range of the schools within their system.

While these additional surveys in schools do not provide a generalisable picture of all Australian young people, as does the National Telephone Survey which was part of the "Spirit of Generation Y Project", they have allowed us to ask a range of additional questions beyond those included in the National Survey. As a result, the "Schools Spirituality Project" has allowed us to explore the dynamics of belief and practice and other aspects of life in ways which were not possible within the compass of the initial project.

Lack of Confidence in Belief: Initial Evidence from Interviews

The first part of the interviews, conducted in both the Spirit of Generation Y Project and the Schools Spirituality Project, focussed on the personal life of the young person: what they enjoyed doing, what were their goals, and how they coped with difficult times in life. Most young people said they wanted to enjoy life and have fun. We asked them what enjoying life meant for them and to describe their experiences of having fun. We asked them who they admired and why, and how they themselves would like to be remembered. Through this part of the interviews, we were listening to whether religion or spirituality was mentioned and for clues as to what part it might play in their lives. It was notable that, in this part of the interview, few young people referred to religion or spirituality.

In the second part of the interviews, we asked more explicitly about spirituality and what it meant to them, what they believed about God and about life, and whether they prayed or worshipped, or engaged in other spiritual or religious practices. In responding to these questions, it was evident, not only that young people varied in the content of their beliefs, but that they also varied in the ways they talked about spirituality and religion. Some young people, most frequently those who had been raised in a specific religious tradition and those who rejected religion, had clear ideas about what they believed. Many other young people were not at all clear about what they thought.

Analysis of the interviews began by trying to place young people into three categories (Mason et al., 2007). There were those who were "religious", identifying with a particular religious group and, apart from the Buddhists, believing in God. There were those who were into the exploration of "spiritual alternatives" to traditional religion, such as New Age ideas and believing that there was some sort of Higher Being or Life force. Then there were those who were "secular", rejecting the existence of God or any sort of Higher Being or Life force.

However, a lot of young people did not easily fit into any of these categories. There were two major reasons. The first was that many were not at all sure what they believed about God a Higher Being or Life force. They neither rejected nor affirmed any of the alternatives. They simply said they did not know what to believe. The second major reason was that it was not important for them to have such a belief. Belief in God or a Higher Being simply was not something on which they felt they needed to have a firm opinion, any more than whether there is life on Mars. They did not see these issues as having an impact on daily life. The question of the existence of God or a Higher Power was peripheral to their lives.

A 14-year-old girl with a Catholic background said, for example,

The spiritual side of life is not very important to me. It probably will be in the future.

Another girl said she was not sure if spiritual life was important to her. She spoke of God as an "energy or a silhouette, perhaps just like a normal person".

Another student said:

I'm still not quite sure about what I believe in. I certainly believe in something higher than that, whether it's the Christian God or something else, I'm still not quite convinced. I'm still on a journey to finding what my true beliefs are. (15-year-old female)

In response to a question about the importance of spirituality, a fourth student responded:

That's a tough one. Mum is spiritual. I'm questioning faith in God and stuff. Currently I'm an agnostic. I can believe in God, but not in Christianity. I don't think there is a single God. (16-year-old male)

It is simply not appropriate to characterise these students as "religious", "spiritual" or "secular". The category in which some of these students fit is better described as "don't know". Indeed, even for some of those who said they believed in God, it is hard to categorise them as religious. For example, in talking about God, one student said:

God is different for everybody. He is what you want Him to be. There is no right God. God is what they want. When you die, it's what you make it. (16-year-old female)

It was not evident from these interviews whether the confidence in belief related significantly to their sense of wellbeing or not. Some of those who were not confident in what they believed seemed to be happy with their lives, while others were not so happy. However, the web-based surveys in schools have enabled us to explore the extent of the lack of confidence in belief and how this relates to various measures of wellbeing.

Lack of Confidence in Belief

In the web-based surveys in schools that were part of the Schools Spirituality Project, we noted again that, when asked about various beliefs, many students simply responded "I do not know".

Table 48.1 shows that, in relation to the listed items, between 19 and 33% of students indicated that they did not know. Between 30 and 46% responded "probably" one way or another. Between 34 and 41% were definite in their response. Averaged out over these seven items:

- thirty-seven per cent had a definite answer;
- thirty-six per cent had answered "probably" and
- twenty-six per cent said they did not know.

Table 48.1 Responses to various beliefs by secondary school students (% for each item of belief)

Belief items	Definitely not	Probably not	Don't know	Yes, probably	Yes, definitely	Number of students responding
Angels	20	13	25	23	18	4, 269
Astrology	34	20	25	12	7	4, 038
Demons/evil spirits	21	16	27	21	14	3, 715
Jesus Christ is truly God	11	9	33	21	26	1, 722
Miracles	22	14	19	32	12	4, 270
Power of psychics and fortune tellers	32	22	23	13	8	4, 042
Reincarnation	25	16	27	18	11	4, 587

Source: Schools Spirituality Project (2005–2007). Note that different items were asked in different versions of the surveys. Hence, the total number of students responding to each statement was different. Students were also given the option of responding "I don't understand what it is". A few responded that way to most items, which means that the percentages do not always add to 100%.

The question about belief in God was asked in a different way from questions about other beliefs as we gave students the option of saying they believed in a higher being or life force rather than in God. The responses, however, are indicative of the wide range of understandings of God and of the lack of certainty in the responses (Table 48.2).

In later surveys we added an item to test the overall confidence of belief. We asked students to respond to the statement:

It is hard to know what to believe about life and the world.

Spirituality is much more than the affirmation of beliefs and is often seen in terms of connectedness or in the search for something which transcends this world. It is seen experientially in terms of an experience of the unity of the world. Spirituality may also be conceived as a particular level of relationship with self, close others,

Table 48.2 Students' responses to the question "Which of the following statements is closest to what you personally think about God?"

Statement about belief in God	Percentage of students ($n = 4,253$)
There is a God who is a personal being involved in the lives of people	41
There is a God who created the world but is not involved in it	6
There is some sort of spirit or life force	22
I don't really know what to think	22
I don't think there is any sort of spirit, God or life force	9

Source: Schools Spirituality Project (2005–2007).

the wider society, the natural environment and "the universe" (Hughes, 2007b). For some people, spirituality is found in the search, rather than in achieving a particular set of beliefs or even a stable relationship. This was well illustrated in Wuthnow's description (1998) of the movement in contemporary Western cultures from an approach to religion and spirituality in which one looks for somewhere to "dwell" to a focus on the "journey". Nevertheless, having some beliefs about the nature of the universe or what life could be is fundamental to the journey and to a sense of connectedness.

The responses from 2,863 secondary school students about the difficulty in knowing what to believe are presented in Table 48.3.

There was a small variation from one-year level to another as shown in Fig. 48.1. Some students in their second year of secondary education (year 8) were less confident about "what to believe" than were students in their first year. There was a small increase in the level of confidence in years 11 and 12, the final years of secondary schooling. At all year levels, the proportion of students indicating that they were confident in what to believe about life was less than 20%.

Table 48.3 Responses to the statement "it is hard to know what to believe about life and the world" among secondary school students in Australia

Response	Percentage ($n = 2,863$)
Definitely true that "it is hard to know what to believe about life"	16
Generally true	28
Some true, sometimes not	34
Generally not true	10
Not true at all	6
Don't know	5
No answer	1
Total	100

Source: Schools Spirituality Project (2005–2007).
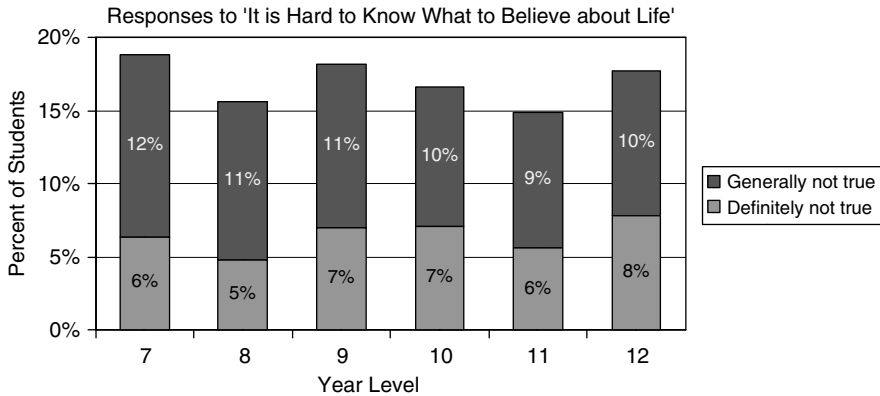
Fig. 48.1 Responses to "it is hard to know what to believe about life" by school year level
Note: In these schools, year 7 was the first year of secondary schooling, entered when the student was about 12 years of age.
Source: Schools Spirituality Project (2005–2007).

The difference between males and females was small. There was a slight tendency for males to express a little more confidence than females: 19% of males rejected the statement that "it is hard to know what to believe about life" compared with 14% of females.

Among those who indicated they were uncertain what to believe about life there were various responses to the question on belief in God:

- 39% said they believed in God;
- 23% believed in some sort of spirit or life force;
- 8% did not believe in a God, spirit or life force; and
- 30% did not know what to think about whether there was a God or not.

Of those who were confident in their belief,

- 47% said they believed in God;
- 13% believed in a spirit or life force;
- 26% did not believe in God or any sort of spirit or life; and
- 10% did not know what to think.

Hence, those who were confident were more likely to believe in God and more likely to reject belief in God. They were less likely to indicate belief in a spirit or life force and less likely to respond saying they did not know what to think.

Similar responses were found in relation to other matters of belief. Those young people who said it was hard to know what to believe were more likely than others to say that they did not know what to think about miracles, astrology, reincarnation or other matters of belief. Among those who were confident in their beliefs were some who accepted and some who rejected the various items.

Origins of the Lack of Confidence

Why do students lack confidence in the beliefs about life? The simple explanation would be that they had not met these ideas before or had not been encouraged to think about them. However, the large majority of these students had attended Christian schools and had had many years of religious education.

All the students were well aware that they lived in a pluralistic society: that people around them had a great variety of opinions about religious and spiritual matters. In many cases, they were aware of the varying levels of confidence in their parents' beliefs. Some students referred to the fact that their mothers and fathers had different beliefs. They were aware that their friends had their own beliefs as did their teachers. They are aware through the media and through their various connections with the wider culture that there are many options out there. (For a contemporary account of the variety of influences on the development of spirituality in young people, see Benson 2006.)

Perhaps more importantly, however, many young people indicated strongly that they would have to make up their own minds. They must work out for themselves what they believe. One statement by a 15-year-old student in a church-run school put this very clearly:

> [Religion at school] confuses me. We're told to believe in things sometimes. Like at our assembly last year our principal pretty much told us we had to believe in God and the Church. Kind of annoying because we all feel that we want to believe in what we want to. I was kind of confused. I just kind of thought we don't have to do that because you tell us to.

This teenager was not simply pretending to be independent in her thinking. She believed that her beliefs in the religious and spiritual realm were her personal responsibility. It was not appropriate to simply accept the teaching of a religious community. She had to make up her own mind what she believed. In a similar vein, a study of non-churchgoers in the United Kingdom reported that many of them criticised churchgoers for not thinking for themselves about life, for simply accepting "an old-fashioned diet of dogma" (Hunt, 2003, p. 162).

Individualistic forms of thinking are found throughout post-traditional Western culture. In many areas of life, from an early age, children are taught to think for themselves. Parents ask them what they like and what they want to do. Schools teach them to express their own thoughts and feelings. The good piece of literature is not a copy of a great author. The good painting is not considered to be a perfect copy of the work of a great artist. Rather, in Western culture, self-expression is affirmed. The measure of what is good is what is authentic: what truly reflects the ideas and creativity of the individual. Within this context, young people come to believe that they must develop their own religious and spiritual beliefs in a way that feels right to themselves.

Indeed, in contemporary Western societies, as Anthony Giddens has argued, "the self is seen as a reflexive project, for which the individual is responsible. We are, not what we are, but what we make of ourselves" (1991, p. 75). The individual finds the self not by identifying particular categories or communities to which he or she belongs, but through an unfolding story, an on-going biography. Giddens argues that the formation of the self is a trajectory, but it is also continuous.

The spiritual self, then, will also be an on-going story of those experiences and relationships that relate to the inner-most self or contribute to the integration of that story. It will not be the location of the self within specific traditions or identifying oneself with particular communities. Rather, it will be in the on-going development of lifestyles and life plans.

Nevertheless, Giddens suggests that a stable sense of self-identity is related to "the capacity to keep a particular narrative going". In other words, there needs to be a sense of purpose, a sense of direction. Part of this is provided by the ways in which the individual handles the very basic existential questions about the parameters of human life (1991, pp. 54–55). Giddens notes that a sense of self-identity may be sufficiently robust to weather the tensions and transitions in one's social environment, or it may be fragile, just one story among a range of potential stories that might be told about one's self (p. 55).

From another perspective, Emmons, Cheung, and Tehrani (1998, pp. 413–414) have argued that spirituality may foster wellbeing through a reduction in conflict in a person's goals. Having spiritual goals in life facilitates congruence, integration and wholeness of the person. Because the spiritual is about the "ultimate" level of concern, it gives depth, direction and unity to other concerns. In other words, it gives a sense of unity to the goals and strivings of the person. In such ways, it leads to a higher level of personal integration and, hence, to higher levels of subjective wellbeing, or how one's feels about one's life.

There have been many studies of the relationship between religious commitment and subjective wellbeing. The results have varied somewhat depending partly on the measures used of religion and/or spirituality and have demonstrated the complexity of the issues (Emmons et al., 1998). It has been shown, for example, in the United States, that measures of extrinsic religiosity and intrinsic religiosity relate differently to measures of wellbeing (Ventis, 1995). Again, this chapter cannot present a full picture but focuses on the relationship between confidence in belief and wellbeing.

Student Wellbeing

In order to investigate the impact of the level of confidence in beliefs, several measures of wellbeing have been used. Following general trends in wellbeing research, we asked students to respond to a simple question about how satisfied they are with life as a whole on a scale of 1–10. By asking about satisfaction with life rather than happiness, this question better measures the long-term feeling about life rather than the present mood.

Another item, which measures wellbeing in a different way, was the responses to the statement:

Deep inside I'm hurting and nothing seems to help.

The responses to this statement related strongly in a negative way to the question about how satisfied people were with their lives. The average score of satisfaction in life among those who said they were hurting deep inside was just 5.7, while those

who said they were not hurting deep inside had an average score of satisfaction of 8.1 out of 10.

We have also looked at the "sense of purpose and place": the extent to which young people affirm that their lives have a purpose, that they fit into some larger scheme of things and that they have a sense of belonging. We found that several items in this area of purpose and sense of place related strongly together and formed a scale. These items were:

> My life has a sense of purpose
> My life fits into some sort of great scheme of things
> I feel I don't really belong anywhere. (Reverse coded)

While this sense of "purpose and place" is not a measure of the satisfaction of life in itself, it is closely related to it. Most people who have a strong sense of purpose and place also have a strong sense of satisfaction in life.

Our hypothesis is, then, that confidence in what people believe contributes to the sense of purpose which, in turn, leads to greater personal wellbeing as measured by the overall level of satisfaction in life and in the rejection that "I am hurting deep inside".

Confidence in belief, of course, is not the only factor in the level of satisfaction. Most hurt occurs because of broken relationships with family and friends rather than because of a lack of confidence in belief. Yet, confidence in belief, we propose, is a factor.

There is one further factor to bring into consideration. How do young people arrive at the level of confidence? There are some young people who like to think for themselves. They ask questions and consider various possibilities, developing gradually what they think. There are others who are attracted to a sense of certainty. For some, it is a matter of personality. There are some personality types who like to be very clear about everything. They find it hard to cope with confusion and with uncertainty.

There are others who have been taught that they should not question the beliefs of the church or their parents. This is particularly true in some non-Australian cultures. I interviewed a number of young people born overseas in various countries in Asia, Africa and Oceania who said that it was wrong to question the beliefs of the church.

Hence, our question is not just about the level of confidence in belief, but the means of achieving it. Is there a difference in the levels of wellbeing if belief is achieved by reflection, or whether it is achieved because the person does not question?

The Relationship Between Confidence in Belief and Wellbeing

In general the people who indicated that they were not sure about what to believe about life indicated lower levels of satisfaction in life as shown in the following table. They also scored lower in the scale of purpose and place and in the scale of denial that they were hurting deep inside and nothing seemed to help.

Table 48.4 shows that, for each measure of wellbeing, the score was higher among those who had higher levels of confidence in what they believed. Those who felt more confident in their beliefs were more satisfied with their lives, they had a stronger sense of purpose and place, and they rejected more strongly that they were "hurting deep inside and nothing seems to help". In other words, young people who felt confident in their beliefs felt more positively about life.

However, the relationship was not linear. Those who had the highest levels of confidence had lower scores on satisfaction with life and purpose and place. Part of the explanation of the lack of linearity lies in the ways in which certainty is achieved.

Table 48.5 shows that those who felt that one should question one's beliefs scored lower on the scores of satisfaction in life and purpose and place than those who felt that one should just accept one's beliefs. Those who were more dogmatic in their approach or were less open to questioning their beliefs had a stronger sense of purpose and felt more satisfied with their lives as a whole.

It would seem that this table displays something of the attraction of certainty: why some young people are attracted to those religious faiths that offer them a sense

Table 48.4 Mean scores of wellbeing by different responses to the statement "it is hard to know what to believe about life"

Levels of confidence in belief based on responses to "it is hard to know what to believe"	Satisfaction with life ($n = 2,516$)	Purpose and place ($n = 2,876$)	Not hurting inside ($n = 3,183$)
Definitely confident in beliefs	7.6	7.6	8.7
Generally confident in beliefs	8.0	8.0	8.5
Sometimes confident in beliefs	8.0	7.9	7.7
Generally not confident in beliefs	7.8	7.6	7.1
Definitely not confident in beliefs	7.6	7.3	6.1
Don't know whether one is confident	7.6	6.7	6.6
Overall population	**7.8**	**7.6**	**7.4**
Significance level of difference	0.0	0.0	0.0

Note: All three scales of wellbeing were from 1 to 10.
Source: Schools Spirituality Project (2005–2007).

Table 48.5 Mean scores of wellbeing by different responses to the statement "one should not question one's beliefs"

Response to "one should not question one's beliefs"	Satisfaction with life ($n = 2,516$)	Purpose and place ($n = 2,876$)	Not hurting inside ($n = 3,183$)
Definitely question one's beliefs	7.2	7.2	7.5
Generally question one's beliefs	7.6	7.6	7.8
Sometimes question one's beliefs	7.7	7.8	7.4
Generally do not question	8.2	8.1	7.3
Definitely do not question	8.4	8.0	6.7
Don't know whether one should question	7.3	6.5	6.1
Overall population	**7.7**	**7.6**	**7.3**
Significance level of difference	0.0	0.0	0.0

Note: All three scales of wellbeing were from 1 to 10.
Source: Schools Spirituality Project (2005–2007).

of certainty and encourage them not to question. Having put aside the questioning, some young people feel they can embrace life more readily. They know what life is about for them.

Yet, strangely, the measures of wellbeing do not all score in the same direction. The scale indicating that people were not hurting inside actually worked in the opposite direction. The people who indicated most that they were hurting inside were those who felt one should not question one's beliefs.

Similar results were found in relation to the responses "One should not question the authority of the church". Those who agreed that one should accept the authority of the church scored higher in relation to purpose and place. But they indicated that they were "hurting inside" more than those who were willing to challenge authority.

Overall, only 8% of 2,261 young people who responded to this question affirmed strongly that one should not question one's beliefs. Similarly, only 12% of 4,243 young people affirmed that one should not question the authority of the church. The sense of direction that is found in the acceptance of authority only works for some young people. Deep down, it would appear that among that group there are some who are hurting despite their certainty. Perhaps, in the acceptance of authority, these young people have pushed aside the big questions for the time being. Yet, at some level, they feel that something of their individuality or personal responsibility has been compromised. Another possibility is that the acceptance of authority has occurred because these young people were hurting and they saw it as a means to overcoming the pain that existed for them in the anxiety of uncertainty. On the basis of research that has been done to this point, it is not possible to know which of these explanations is valid.

The high scores on life satisfaction that were found among those people who did not question authority may suggest to some that all young people should be urged to accept authority. All young people should be encouraged to give up the questioning. They will find purpose and direction for life if they do that.

While recognising that this does seem to work for some young people, it is not an option for most. They must find their confidence in what they believe through a process of questioning. When I asked young people in interviews whether it was right to question one's beliefs, many of them responded, "Of course it is right". How else can people find the truth?

In contemporary Australian society, there is wide affirmation that "truth" is found through a process of analysis, through asking questions and through working through possibilities. While some young people are attracted to people who speak with authority, to a proclaimed certainty, this is sometimes an escape route. It is an easy solution with which many people feel uncomfortable. On the other hand, many young people who are part of immigrant families in Australia have grown up in a social context in which the acceptance of authority has been emphasised since early childhood. For these young people, accepting authority is not an escape, but a result of normal patterns of socialisation within their context (Hughes, 2004).

What then does this mean for spiritual education?

Some Implications for Spiritual Education

As has been noted, some young people will be attracted to those forms of spiritual education that give them answers and offer them certainty. They will find confessional approaches to religious education that propound a particular tradition helpful. They proclaim the faith on the basis of the authority of the Bible or on the authority of the Church. Some young people accept the authority and appreciate the certainty that this gives them. One young person in a church-run school suggested that most religious education was a waste of time, until one had converted everyone first. That must be the way to do it, she said. When people accept the authority of faith, then they will find meaning in the worship and the religious instruction, in the study of the Bible and the exploration of the meaning of the Christian faith.

However, as we have noted, there are very few young people willing to accept religious traditions on the basis of authority. The society puts many options before young people. They live in a pluralistic world, and despite the best attempts of parents and schools, the variety of life options can only be hidden for a while without extreme measures of separating people from the wider community.

It is easy, within the pluralism of contemporary society, to say to young people "You believe what you want to. Whatever turns you on is fine". Sometimes spirituality is treated as if it has no greater import than a person's choice of colour. It is a matter of personal preference. Many young people, not knowing what to believe, regress into the immediate. They turn to the feelings and purposes that are most apparent to them in the present.

What young people believe about life and the world does make a difference. What people believe about life and the world can give stability and coherence to life. It can give purpose and direction. Spirituality education should assist young people in working through the big questions of life and the nature of the world in which they live. It should assist them in working on the basic existential questions of life and death, of reality and unreality and of good and evil. The pluralism of contemporary society makes spiritual education even more important. For it will help young people to deal positively and constructively with that plurality.

For most young people, this will not occur by asserting authority. Indeed, for some young people, the stronger authority is asserted, the stronger will be the reaction to do it. However, it is possible to help young people towards a confidence in what they believe in other ways. One can do it through the processes of helping them to think for themselves. The person who knows the options and who understands how to evaluate between the options is in a position to move towards some certainty in their belief.

There have been many statements of a philosophy of religious education that reflect this aim. Wright (1996), for example, argues that

> the mark of the religiously educated child… would be his or her ability to think, act and communicate with insight and intelligence in the light of that diversity of religious truth claims that are the mark of our contemporary culture (p. 175).

However, some of these philosophies assume that young people come to the educational situation with a background in one or other religious traditions. While this is true for some Australian children, many come without a clear background in any religious or spiritual tradition. Education cannot begin with their religious background. It must begin with the more basic questions of human existence.

Such education will need to look at the various traditions and the responses they give to the basic existential questions. But the emphasis in education will not be on such knowledge. Rather, it will be on the ways of evaluating these, not only cognitively, but also affectively, as the traditions are related to human experiences, as one looks at the consequences of different approaches to life. Such education will need to examine the nature of commitment in relation to the different approaches to life. Perhaps, as many young Australians have indicated, some "immersion experiences" in these approaches to life will be helpful: giving young people the opportunity to experience them and to find themselves in relation to them.

The aim of spiritual education should be spiritual literacy which enables young people to develop for themselves some confidence in their approach to life. It should help them to develop some clear sense of purpose and direction for life. Stability in identity and clarity of purpose contributes to the experience of wellbeing and a greater capacity to meet the challenges that life offers.

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Chapter 49
Youth Work, Informal Education, and Spirituality

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Abstract Informal educators work in a range of youth and community work settings and seek to facilitate experiential learning through developing conversations, opportunities, environments, activities, and programs, where significant experiences may occur. For young people's holistic wellbeing to be developed, it is vital that the spiritual dimension is taken into account. A range of ways of promoting the wellbeing of young people through informal educational activities that enhance spiritual development are explored.

Introduction

Informal education is the core pedagogical approach in youth and community work and involves facilitating experiential learning through developing conversations, opportunities, environments, activities, and programs where significant experiences may occur. For this to lead to holistic development it is vital that the spiritual dimension is taken into account. In this chapter, I discuss spiritual development in the context of youth and community work, analyze the concept of informal education, and explore some of the different ways informal educators engage young people in spiritual development. I write this from the perspective of someone working and researching predominantly in England whose main job is as a lecturer in youth and community work and practical theology on an ecumenical course and who is researching youth spirituality and Christian youth work that is done in a community context (as opposed to primarily church context). Who we are, and who our young people are with regard to issues such as gender, ethnicity, and class impacts what we think, do, and feel. Who I am, my experiences, the young people I have worked alongside and the youth workers I have learned with have all shaped what is offered here. Reflexivity is an essential part of being a good educator.

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Youth Work

In formal education settings spiritual development is legislated for. The 1996 Educa-
tion Act requires schools "to provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum that
promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at
the school and of society" (DCFS, 1995–2008). However, spiritual development is
not enshrined in the core purpose of youth work in this way, it is seen as a possible
option according to recently published occupational standards (Lifelong Learning
UK, 2008):

> The key purpose of youth work is to "Enable young people to develop holistically, working
> with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them
> to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential". This
> statement refers to the holistic development of young people, recognising that personal,
> social and educational development *can* also include, for example, physical, political and
> spiritual development (p. 3, my emphasis).

Thus, although there is a standard to "Encourage the spiritual development of
young people" it is not mandatory for those in a youth work context as it is in
schools. This reflects the ambivalence there is in some parts of the youth work world
toward spirituality, often because of the close links between it and religion.

An encouraging development has been the way that the National Youth Agency,
on behalf of a government department, undertook a consultation on youth work and
then published a summary paper (Green, 2006) and a resource book for practitioners
(Bullock & Pimlott, 2008). One of the triggers for the consultation was the secular
spiritual debate and the sensitivities engendered by this, particularly in the politi-
cal climate in Britain after the terrorist incidents in New York and London known
as 9/11 and 7/7 and the focus on social cohesion and the role of faith groups in
promoting this.

However, government policy and official publications are not the only thing that
shape youth worker's perception of their role. Their own experience and theorists
from a range of disciplines influence them. Young's (1999) book will feature on
most youth work training course's reading lists. According to her, the purpose of
youth work is to enable and support young people "to ask and answer the central
questions of self—'what sort of person am I?' 'what kind of relationships do I want
to have with myself and others?', and 'what kind of society do I want to live in?'"
(p. 2). These are questions that have a spiritual dimension and when young people
are exploring them an approach that denies this is not facilitating the holistic devel-
opment that young people need. For example, when answering the question "What
sort of person am I?" the Christian youth worker may want a young person to at least
consider the idea that they are a person who is made in the image of God. By helping
young people encounter and marvel at the diversity of God's creation and helping
them see that they are part of this creation can impact who they see themselves as.
An Easter sunrise service, looking at the moon and stars far away from street lights,
exploring rock pools on a beach, climbing a mountain all are simple activities that
are fun but help young people engage with a sense of transcendence.

Informal Education

Learning can take place anywhere and everywhere but there are a range of professionals whose main focus is to facilitate learning. Youth and community workers and others who work in non-formal settings are no less concerned about education and learning than those who work in schools, colleges, and universities. The profession uses the term "informal education" to describe their approach to education. Jeffs and Smith have been at the forefront of academic writing about youth and community work, they assert that informal educators seek to "foster learning in the situations where we work. It entails cultivating environments in which people are able to remember significant experiences, and to work at understanding them. It also means creating situations where people can experience new things" (1999, p. 19). Batsleer (2008, p. 6) notes that whereas the engagement in formal education with young people is building up a body of knowledge, with informal education it is the young people's development and their lifeworld.

Informal education as it is practised in the British context draws on a range of educational theorists such as Dewey (1933), Freire (1972), and Kolb (1984). This leads to an approach to informal education that is reflective and experiential in methodology and liberating in its intent. Young (1999, p. 81) defines the process as "a reflective exercise which enables young people to learn from their experience, develop their capacity to think critically and engage in 'sense-making' as a process of continuous self discovery and re-creation." Carl Rogers, whose theories have been influential in youth work, writes about this from the role of the educator:

> When I have been able to transform a group—and here I mean all the members of a group, myself included—into a community of learners, then the excitement has been almost beyond belief. To free curiosity; to permit individuals to go charging off in new directions dictated by their own interests; to unleash the sense of inquiry; to open everything to questioning and exploration; to recognize that everything is in process of change—here is an experience I can never forget (1993, p. 229).

The work of Freire (2005, p. 5) provides a challenge to the informal educator to have the courage to love those they work with, understandable from a Christian perspective but a difficult word to use in many contexts (because of the danger of the word being interpreted through the lens of sex) where safeguarding those who are vulnerable is rightly at the forefront of policy. As part of a research project which focused on Christian community-focused youth clubs (Christian Consciousness Project undertaken with Dr. Sylvie Collins-Mayo and Rev. Dr. Bob Mayo and this is what I refer to when I use the term "our research") we asked young people why their youth workers did the job. Their responses ranged from youth workers being there because they wanted to help young people or help them get better or because they liked kids or for the money! One responded with

> I reckon it's just the fact of helping change the environment, like making youth of today happy. I mean, even if the youth of today don't want to get into God they are still having a fun place to socialise and interact with other people.

What is encouraging about this response is that it implies that the young person feels accepted for who he is and has a sense of belonging regardless of where he is on a journey toward faith. Informal education is not about proselytizing and spiritual development is not just about conversion.

In my research and experience five key elements of informal education have emerged and I use these concepts to think and plan holistically:

- *Conversation* is the essential building block of informal education, it is about being there with and being there for another to listen, care, respect, affirm, and trust. Often what is valued about an encounter is that we feel someone really heard us, they may not have said much but their presence and active listening have helped us and moved us on.
- *Reflecting on shared experience* is the opportunity to draw out meaning and learning from an experience, to deal with issues and feelings that arise, to evaluate that experience and integrate the learning and/or change that results. Often it will have been the youth worker that has helped create this experience for the young person.
- *Space* involves creating an environment conducive to learning that is accessible, welcoming but with appropriate boundaries so that young people feel safe to be and safe to explore.
- *Fun* is the challenge to provide an environment and activities which are "fun" but which help young people to fulfill their potential and experience "life in all its fullness" (John 10:10). In our research when we asked young people why they attended the youth club, to have fun was one of the main reasons and most young people are looking for something that feels different to school.
- *Journeying with*—building relationships with young people based on a commitment to their development, a desire to represent Christ to them, and an understanding of the youth worker as role model. Although this has similarities to what I have said about conversation, this emphasizes the need to build relationships with young people in the longer term. Some of our research suggested that it was the longevity of relationship that led to some of the most meaningful interactions with young people, particularly those who find it hard to trust adults because of their previous experiences. A metaphor that I am continuing to explore in this regard is that of "odyssey guide".

The first three of these areas are particularly pertinent in helping young people explore spirituality and I discuss them further here.

Conversation is the foundational methodology of informal education. One of the things we most readily observe when reading the Gospels is that Jesus regularly engaged people in conversation, often with profound effect (e.g., Zacchaeus, Lk. 19.1–10; the woman at the well, Jn. 4.1–42; Peter, Jn 21.15–23). Wolfe helpfully comments that "The word 'conversation' is based upon two Latin words meaning 'to turn' and 'with'. I want to suggest that through conversation we turn around our ideas and experiences with each other on a formal, social, or ritualistic level and we, thereby, also re-view those ideas and experiences" (2001, pp. 129–130). Conversation is the building block for all other youth work. It happens in every

type of youth provision and with a skilled reflective practitioner can be a powerful educational tool. In using conversation we do well to follow the example of Jesus in being intentional in our conversation helping others to grow, learn about themselves, feel important, experience belonging, and acceptance or one of many other possible outcomes. Young (1999, p. 90) concludes that conversations with young people are predominantly about helping them to make sense of themselves and the world and that youth workers provide opportunities for young people to consciously and deliberately explore the meanings they are constructing for their lives. This is very much part of the agenda of spiritual development.

Reflecting on shared experience is another facet of informal education. This is the opportunity to draw out meaning and learning from an experience, to deal with issues and feelings that arise, to evaluate that experience, and integrate the learning and/or change the results. Doyle identifies the significance of our experience when she says

> [When] thinking about our past, incidents surface. They might be times of great joy or sadness. More often than not they are significant or special to us in some way. Perhaps they had some lasting effect or helped us define who we are. We may only think of these things occasionally, but they are there, ready to be called upon (2001, p. 11).

Youth workers help to create such memories by facilitating experiences that help young people learn more about themselves, others, their community, the environment, the transcendent, and so on.

Having a space where they feel secure and have a sense of ownership is clearly important to young people. The challenge for Christian youth workers is what that space is and could be. Dewey identified that "Whether we permit chance environments to do the work, or whether we design environments for the purpose makes a great difference" (cited in Jeffs & Smith, 1999, p. 13). In my experience a lot of energy is given to create a conducive environment for youth worship events but that less often is a similar amount of energy devoted to turning the youth group or club room into a welcoming and hospitable environment. Palmer, although not writing specifically for a youth work context, has identified three elements of a Christian learning space: openness, boundaries and an air of hospitality (1993, p. 71). Reflecting on what I have heard young people say, these three elements seem to get to the heart of what they are looking for in Christian youth work. However, I would frame it in terms of accessible (drawing on the inferences that word has in terms of equal opportunities), hospitable, and with appropriate boundaries in place.

Spirituality

Spirituality and young people is increasingly a topic for academics and researchers (e.g., Tacey, 2004; Rankin, 2005; Smith & Denton, 2005; Savage, Collins-Mayo, Mayo, & Cray, 2006; Hughes, 2007; Mason, 2007; Ota & Chater, 2007). Indeed, Sheldrake (2007, p. xi) suggests that "Spirituality has become a word that defines our era." This is, perhaps, why writing on spirituality sometimes attracts attention

from the mainstream press. The Times (London) had a double page spread about *Making Sense of Generation Y* (Savage et al., 2006) and headlined it "Church seeks spirituality of youth... and doesn't like what it finds." Concerns arising from the findings of that research led to the establishment of the Christian Consciousness Project mentioned above.

Spirituality is a term that sparks much debate and where there is no universal understanding or definition as Holmes notes "Attempts at a single definition [of spirituality] are, therefore, increasingly problematic, because any definition must take account of many disciplines, numerous research methodologies and an increasing range of domains of practice" (2007, p. 24). Various authors identify key elements of spirituality which is a helpful approach for informal education as it provides ways in or hooks to help young people explore their spirituality. Swinton (2001, p. 25), for example, offers five central features of spirituality: meaning, values, transcendence, connecting, and becoming. Kessler (2000, p. 17) describes seven gateways to spiritual development: the yearning for deep connection, the longing for silence and solitude, the search for meaning and purpose, the hunger for joy and delight, the creative drive, the urge for transcendence, and the need for initiation.

Research demonstrates the benefits of helping young people to engage with spirituality. The New England Network for Child, Youth and Family Services researched agencies working with troubled young people who used spiritual activities with them, either secular or religious. They concluded that "agencies already using spiritually oriented activities offer remarkably similar testimony about their benefits, consistently claiming that they calm youth, help them focus, help them think more clearly about their lives, and help them let go of bad memories and painful relationships" (Wilson, 2002, p. 58). Their research also suggests that young people find everyday activities spiritual. Young people mentioned activities such as talking with friends, listening to music, and watching the stars as being spiritual because they contribute to a young person's sense of wellbeing and wholeness, a sense of transcendence and oneness with the world and others (Wilson, 2004, p. 41). Wilson (2004, p. 41) thus, suggests that young people can be helped to see the spirituality in their lives by reframing ordinary events as essentially spiritual, and that such events can be soul enriching, are always available and have genuine benefits to offer them.

In a major American study completed on behalf of Associated Press and MTV, it was found that spirituality was significant in young people's happiness. While 60% of young people who say spirituality is not important in their lives report that they are generally happy with their lives, the figure for those who say that spirituality is the most important thing in their life is 80% (Knowledge Networks, 2007). While there are encouraging pieces of research such as these, spiritual development can be a contested term with confusion over the extent that people use "spiritual" but actually mean "religious." This means that workers from non-faith-based traditions can be suspicious of the term and also assume that "spiritual" incorporates "religious" when it may not, even in the practice of some faith-based workers. In a research project designed to explore common ground between community-based and faith-based workers in America, the National Collaboration for Youth and Search Institute (Garza et al., 2007, p. 16) found the greatest disparity between the two groups

was in agreeing that "Helping young people to develop spiritually" was an essential competency for youth workers (77% of faith-based and 14% community-based agreed). Furthermore, not many youth workers felt prepared to help young people develop spiritually (27% faith-based and 8% community-based). Part of the issue is that there are no universally agreed definitions of spirituality either so discussions around the topic are not necessarily coming from the same place. Moss (2005, p. 13) offers a very simple but useful definition of spirituality: "what we do to give expression to our chosen world-view." He goes on to assert that "any human services practitioner... who fails to take the spiritual dimension of people's lives into account, or who fails to take it into account for their own lives is not meeting the demands of best practice, and is not likely to be able to offer anything like the holistic service to which people are entitled" (Moss, 2005, p. 14).

An alternative way of framing spirituality is taken by Francis and Robbins (2005) who use the term "spiritual health" in their quantitative study of urban adolescents in England and Wales. They conceptualize the term (which they have drawn from the work of Fisher) relationally and see it as incorporating right relations with self (personal domain), others (communal domain), the physical and human world (environmental domain), and God (transcendental domain). Within each of these domain's, Francis and Robbins note areas of concern that youth workers should be aware of and which suggest that below the surface impressions of happiness, there are areas that need attention and intervention that have a spiritual dimension (2005, pp. 39–54). For example, 52% often feel depressed, 27% have considered committing suicide, 61% often long for someone to turn to for advice, 51% worry about their relationships with other people, 28% live in fear of being bullied, only 50% find it helpful to talk about problems with their mother and 32% with their father, 32% feel that immigration should be restricted, 26% feel there is nothing they can do about world problems, only 26% rejected belief in God with 27% feeling that the church was irrelevant for life today. While these latter two statistics are perhaps lower than might be expected the other statistics suggest that there is much scope for spiritual development and the use of spiritual practices to help young people develop a sense of purpose, resilience, and strategies for coping with life.

Green (2006) proposes that the growing popularity of the term "wellbeing" in British government policy is an attempt to incorporate some of the facets of spirituality but using a word that would have a much greater degree of acceptance. She talks about how the word "seems to be inspired by a deep sense of okayness" (p. 12) that resonates with what she found people said about spirituality.

Because of the myriad of meanings of the term spirituality I think it is helpful to focus specifically on one approach to provide a framework for exploring spirituality in the context of informal education. Thus, in the subsequent discussion on facilitating young people exploring spirituality I am going to use the definition of transformative spirituality proposed by Savage et al. as the underpinning concept. They offer this in contrast to what they call formative spirituality which they regard as involving such things as relationality, mystery, meaning making, and value sensing which they believe are inherent in humanity and often operate on an implicit level (2006, p. 12). Transformative spirituality, however,

involves the individual in deliberate practices (whether overtly "religious" or not) which aim to foster mindfulness of the [transcendent] Other (howsoever conceived—e.g., God, Self, Universe) and help maintain a sense of connectedness. This spiritual mindfulness then has significance for the individual in so far as it permeates daily life, guides his or her decisions and provides a continued appreciation of the Other. (Savage et al., 2006, p. 12).

I have chosen to use this definition as I believe it fits best with the idea of informal education being purposeful and seeking to engage young people in learning, it relates well to the idea of spiritual development and incorporates the possibility of both religious and non-religious practices which can be used across a variety of contexts.

Exploring Spirituality with Young People

Good youth work practice involves starting where young people are at. As Hughes (2007, p. 201) suggests youth workers will need to find points of contact to enable them to engage young people in spiritual activities and this will involve discovering or working with such things as their ideas, priorities, constructs, interests, places, relationships, experiences, and music. What this and other studies seek to do is explore the worldview of young people. Worldviews need to answer four key questions: "Who am I?," "Where am I," "What's wrong?," and "What's the remedy?" (Walsh & Middleton, 1984, pp. 31–36). Worldviews need to explain reality and are learned (Burnett, 1990, pp. 16, 20). Part of the purpose of helping young people engage with spirituality is to help them as they explore their worldview and begin to shape and own something, that was largely inherited, for themselves. Rankin researched young people's views on spirituality by going out and talking to gathered groups in public spaces across the British Isles. He discovered that "Many young people suggested that they weren't spiritual or had never talked about such things, but when in conversation with those same young people something 'buried' came to the fore" (Rankin, 2005, p. 48).

A model of spiritual development that fits well within the context of developing worldviews and informal education is offered by the Quakers (cited in Green, 2006, p. 46). They have four quadrants exploring inward, outward, upward, and downward. Inward is about awareness and explores the questions "Who am I?" and "Why am I?" Outward is about connection and explores the questions "Who are you?" and "How do I relate?" Upward is about mystery and explores the questions "Do I experience God?" and "What is it all about?" Downward is about values and explores the questions "How should I live in this world?" and "How will I act?" Such models help in developing a curriculum or program and provide an opportunity to think about different dimensions of spirituality that need to be explored. Examples of this in practice include what Kessler (2000, p. 6) calls "mysteries questions" or "symbolic expressions" or sharing groups. "Mysteries questions" involve people anonymously sharing their personal mysteries, writing them on pieces of paper. If you know the young people's handwriting then it may be worth asking someone else to type them up so they can be genuinely anonymous and then the next week

all the questions are read out. What happens with them after this may depend on the group and the context, and wrestling with the need for young people just to feel they have been heard but also needing to help them explore concerns that are held so deeply such as "Why am I so angry?" and "Why am I so alone?" (Kessler, 2000, pp. 10–13). Symbolic expressions involve such things as working with clay to show how you are feeling right now (Kessler, 2000, p. 8). Sharing groups involve responding to questions that reveal something of who we are and what has shaped us, such as talk about a time in your life where someone was really there for you or a precious moment from your childhood you never want to forget (Kessler, 2000, p. 14).

Informal education offers a process to help develop learning opportunities that are relevant (Jeffs & Smith, 1999, p. 65). The first stage involves assessing what may be going on with a person and considering what our role may be. The second is engaging with the person. As an informal educator that may be primarily through conversation but it may be that there are activities or experiences that may be appropriate too. The third stage is exploring questions that may be raised by the first two stages. The fourth stage is discerning answers to these questions in relation to what makes for human flourishing. We may want to reframe this depending on what our intended end result is. The fifth stage involves developing a response to the process thus far. Evaluation would follow and lead back into a further assessment and working through the process again. It is important to understand the need for a measured approach to spiritual development and not to rush into more overt evangelism, as Savage et al. note "Formative spirituality needs a genuinely unpressured space—of indeterminate length—in order for an authentic movement from formative spirituality towards a committed transformative spirituality to occur" (2006, p. 121). The role of adults in this is noted by Wilson (2004, p. 41) who suggests that spiritual growth in adolescents is nurtured by adults who are willing to ask questions about spirituality, listen to answers, and respond to what they hear.

Activities

There are a range of activities that are used and can be used to engage young people in exploring spirituality. Spiritual development can happen through starting points that occur in everyday life (J. Pimlott, N. Pimlott, & Wiles, 2005). These include things like times of joy and sorrow, creativity, "wow" moments, often in the outdoors, silence and pondering, tolerance and respect, and the worldview type questions mentioned above. It may also be helpful to have a framework which you bear in mind when reflecting on spirituality. Bullock and Pimlott (2008) offer awareness of self, awareness of others, big questions, awareness of "an other," and responses as categories for spiritual development. Wilson (2005, p. 36) notes that activities can be simple and relatively cheap and in her experience (researching institutions working with troubled young people) included such things as charity fundraising, visits to nursing homes, meditation, listening to music, discussion

groups, nature, and journaling. In another study (Wilson, 2004, p. 41) young people mentioned looking at stars and talking with friends as spiritual things. A common approach is that of "stations" (Bullock & Pimlott, 2008) where there are a variety of activities, often around a particular theme that encourage you to think, reflect, and respond either on your own or with the help of a facilitator. Helping young people engage in social action may also be a spiritual activity. For example, in our research one young person expressed a desire to be able to help others who were in need, something had touched him and yet the youth worker reported that from her perspective that young person was probably as much in need as those they had been working with. Residentials are significant in youth work and offer a prime opportunity to engage young people with spirituality through choice of location and the experience of being together for a longer than usual time. As opportunities for transformative spirituality they should be considered as almost an essential part of a youth work program. A particular element to note is that participation in such activities should be voluntary (as should all good youth work) and where possible young people should be involved in putting together the activities or, at least, in expressing choices and preferences about particular options.

Exploring in Groups

Often we may want to encourage young people to explore spirituality in a group context as working in groups helps the development of shared meaning as people build on ideas and contributions of others. Good practice in group work suggests that we set ground rules or boundaries to help young people feel safe and secure in what may be a place of vulnerability. Usually you would draw the ground rules out of the group themselves so they can own and agree to the conditions in which they will be working. What you do in these groups may well be influenced by whether you are looking to explore formative or transformative spirituality. For example, you may ask people to bring something to the group that is important to them (formative) or you may ask them to bring something to share that has been significant on their faith journey. The latter activity has the potential to be more transformative because it focuses on exploring spiritual mindfulness and as you listen to one person sharing their insights it often shapes and enhances your own. Another example of how you might use an activity from a formative or transformative perspective is "Mirrors" (formative version in Bullock & Pimlott, 2008, p. 141). Ask the group to look at themselves in the mirror. Then show them two lists that might relate to how they see themselves, truth and lies. Lies include such things as I'm ugly, I'm useless, my nose is too big, I'm worthless, no one could love me, others would like me better if..., I'm sure people think I'm stupid, I am nothing special. Truth includes things like I am unique, I am special, I am an individual, I respect myself, I am valuable, I am lovable, I am a beautiful person. In order to make this more transformative, the truth list could be more overtly based on what God says about us, like for instance, us being made in the image of God and using passages such as Psalm 139.

Wonder

One way of framing an exploration of spirituality is to consider wonder. If we spend any time with young children we see that sense of wonder at things we often take for granted. I will always remember the smile on my nephew's face as the sandcastle emerged from the bucket and as the sea filled the moat around it. It was an ordinary, regular holiday activity but imbued with wonder and that wonder was infectious. Starkey describes wonder like this "Wonder means using all our senses with a fresh acuteness. It means having a fresh curiosity about the world we encounter through these senses. We are filled with awe before the things we find, a sense of gratitude for them all, and a comment to them" (1999, p. 32). One of the things to which we need to be alert is those moments of wonder as they occur in the everyday. We can try and facilitate them as informal educators but sometimes they just emerge, like when we spot a spider building a web in the corner of the room or when the light falls at just the right angle and forms a rainbow as it is refracted through some glass. Starkey (1999, p. 132) encourages the use of sense days where we choose one of our senses and spend that day focusing on it and seeking to become more aware of our surroundings and experiences. It makes the phrase "Wake up and smell the coffee" have a whole new layer of meaning! Those working with young children will recognize this as a common approach but sometimes it feels we have lost this element in work with young people or perhaps have a diminished capacity for wonder within ourselves which makes it harder to encourage it in others.

Nature

For many people encountering different aspects of nature can be a spiritual experience. One of the ways we do this with young people is through awareness walks. On an awareness walk you would use each of your five senses and look, touch, listen, smell, and taste focusing until almost the familiar becomes the unfamiliar because you are encountering it anew. Often we will suggest bringing something back to remind you of the experience and that helps you answer questions such as "Where is God in what I am experiencing?," "What can I learn about God?," "What could God be saying to me through this?," and "What can I learn about myself?" A further option is to take young people to see something specific, for example, a sunset (but have a contingency for a cloudy day!) and then reflect on issues that connect with this. These are some examples. Sunsets signify the end of a day, in what mood do you like ending the day? It was once said "Do not let the sun go down, while you are still angry," why do you think this was written? Do you agree with the advice? (from Bullock & Pimlott, 2008, pp. 28–29). A colleague shared with me an example of letting nature speak to young people. A youth worker took young people up onto the side of a mountain and with a few instructions left them to encounter and become aware of the presence of God (or not). The feedback on the trip showed that this was one of the most profound experiences and as my colleague

comments, it reminds us of the need to respect the discernment of young people and their capacity for self-reflection in such circumstances.

Bible Stories

One of the dilemmas some youth workers face is to what extent to use the Bible in settings where young people are not Christians. There is a fear of being seen as proselytizing and that the very mention of the Bible could be off putting. However, story is a very familiar medium to young people and many now have little understanding of the biblical narrative. Ultimately, what is transforming is seeing how our story fits in the wider story of God's salvation and seeing our identity through an understanding of who we are and why we are here. Savage et al. (2006, p. 76) believe that youth workers don't need to be reticent in sharing Christian stories and that they can be used from early on in a relationship as long as they are used in a non-prescriptive and non-judgmental way. They argue that the Bible can be used to develop Christian awareness and offer insight and reflection into young people's experiences and that there may be a gradual process of discovery of spirituality and faith rather than a moment of revelation or realization. In our church recently, the youth worker did a series of Bible studies with our (all female) youth cell group on women in the Bible. Through this process the young women were encouraged to explore who they were as Christian women and how they could make their faith meaningful in the everyday. The fact that not everyone's life was perfect resonated with them and learning that you can mess up but still carry on and be used by God is a great lesson to learn. The section on guided imagery and meditation below also talks about using the Bible.

Meditation and Guided Imagery

Meditations and guided imagery are used in many different contexts and can be both formative and transformative in their intention and result. One that I use frequently is based around John 21 where Peter encounters the risen Jesus and is able to at least begin to resolve some of the issues arising from his denial. I would tell the story slowly, encouraging people to see Jesus preparing breakfast for them on a beach and then ask them to reflect on what Jesus would say to them at this time and how they would respond. You can also use more everyday images and ask young people to reflect on what God is doing in their life or what is happening in their life. I use a tree for this—everyone understands what I am talking about and you can use pictures or actual leaves or twigs to help people focus. When you think of each part of the tree you reflect on something different. For example, roots relate to what gives us nourishment and to think about what roots us in times of change or difficulty; the trunk is about strengths; buds are about what is new in life, what is bringing hope, whereas leaves are about what is dying or things we need to let go of; the bark is what comforts and protects. As Wilson notes, "introspective activities can

give them [young people] a way to access the deepest part of themselves" (Wilson, 2005, p. 36).

Some ways of reading the Bible are meditative in approach. Lectio Divina is one approach that can be used with young people or others. It is a slow reading that savors the words of the passage, some describe it as listening with heart. Step 1. Silencio. Begin with a period of silence to still yourself before beginning the exercise. Step 2. Lectio. Choose an appropriate passage. Read it through several times then... Step 3. Meditatio. Begin to read slowly, as soon as a word or phrase or thought leaps out at you or resonates with you then stay with it, let it permeate your subconscious. Step 4. Oratio. Pray, respond, dialogue, reflect to let the word, or image do its work in you. Continue to be open to what God is staying. Step 5. Contemplatio. Spend a while resting in God's presence.

Popular Culture

Interestingly, Savage et al. (2006) found that young people used soaps and films to engage in formative spirituality, in meaning making, a moment of wonder or mystery but that there was little evidence of them having a transformative effect in their daily lives. However, youth workers will take a clip to explore a particular issue and the ensuing discussion and exploration may then make this a transformative experience or it may be that the context it is shown in makes it transformative, the safe space to explore emotions. An example would be to show the scene from the film *Armageddon* starring Bruce Willis where a group of astronauts have drawn lots to see who should be left behind to blow up the meteor that would otherwise hit the earth and cause widespread destruction. The future son-in-law of Willis draws the short straw but as he is about to go and complete the task Willis pushes him out of the way and takes it on himself. You see him talking to his daughter and explaining how much he loves her before he goes off to die saving the world, he made the sacrifice for her, for her future with the person she loved. It is an extremely powerful metaphor for the cross and one which never fails to bring tears to my eyes when I see it. Even thinking about the scene as I write this brings back the feelings and I am aware in a fresh way of the love of Jesus for me and his willingness to sacrifice. The story hits me in a fresh way.

Talking About Faith

If we work in a faith-based setting there are times when we will want to explore spirituality from that perspective. As Purnell (2003, p. 106) reminds us that if we ask people to tell stories of their own experiences rather than discuss abstract concepts then we give them power in the conversation. This can be particularly important in empowering young people as it is easy for them to feel intimidated when confronted with someone they think is an "expert" in matters of faith. Conversations and discussions are likely to be in five key areas (Purnell, 2003, pp. 106–109): significant people on your faith journey, spiritual resources and practices, cultural

influences, encounters with others including events, services, etc., and moments of transcendence.

An approach that we piloted in the Christian Consciousness Project was to use a tool that can be used on an ongoing basis to help young people reflect where they are in relation to a range of issues relating to faith and spirituality. We devised a board that young people were given and marked themselves and then had a conversation with their youth worker to unpack their answers. For each question there was a 1–10 scale with 1 meaning not interested and 10 very interested. The important thing to ascertain was why they had chosen a particular number rather than the actual numerical value marked:

Spirituality: "How interested are you in spiritual matters?"
Purpose: "How sure are you that life has an ultimate purpose?"
Prayer: "How likely are you to pray?"
God: "How aware are you of God (or some sort of Higher Power) in your life?"
Decisions: "How much are your decisions influenced by your beliefs about God?"
Christianity: "How interested are you in Christianity"

This approach can be adapted for a range of contexts choosing the questions that are pertinent for a particular group. If using it at regular intervals the main point for discussion is any changes in the numbers they chose. The board was part of a wider research project but just using it was beneficial to youth workers as this feedback suggests: "I really enjoyed it and I felt that it was really fascinating because you really talked to young people more and in quite a direct way about what they believed in . . . It was really useful in talking to them about what they believed."

Space and Place

A vital part of engaging young people in potentially transformative spiritual activities is space and place. This is a key feature of informal education but one which may have been a little neglected. In a fascinating piece of research Pearmain (2005, p. 281) has identified the characteristics of what young people identified as a "safe haven," a place where they engaged in spiritual education that was transformative for them. She categorized them into three areas: significant threshold aspects, significant opportunities for feeling free and safe, and significant community structures. In the first category the experience of welcome and inclusion, sustained experience of acceptance and no judgments were significant. Opportunities for feeling free and safe included opportunities for sharing in small groups, fun and games, spiritual space for reflection, integration, depth of being and connection, and the encouragement of a sense of freedom and spontaneous expression. The significant community structures they valued included firm ground rules, shared values, consistency of structure over a sustained period, and a sense of belonging in a group or community. These findings give us insight as to how to structure youth work to

help create an environment where transformative spirituality may occur. What is interesting about the research is that it focused on two summer school events. This is encouraging for youth workers involved in running residentials or camps as it suggests that careful thought about structure and process can help create an environment where young people may experience transformation. An interesting phrase is noted by Wilson (2005, p. 38) who describes a chaplain creating an "unconditional love zone." Whether you like this term or "haven" or something else working out what type of emotional and physical environment you are trying to create is one of the foundations for trying to engage young people at a spiritual level.

Conclusion

Authentic informal education offers a diversity of opportunities for engaging young people in spiritual development or facilitating them exploring their spirituality. Often this will be in the realm of formative spirituality and in some contexts this may be the more appropriate approach and also gives a way of looking at spirituality that can be shared by people with any faith perspective or none. While experiences that we thought of as formative can be transformative for particular young people we may need to be more overt in the way that we talk about faith and help young people see and experience their connection to the transcendent and offer them ways that they can do this that work for who they are, where they are. The range of activities and examples discussed above offers a glimpse into the many ways of engaging young people in spirituality and our understanding of our role and vocation may mean that as well as spiritual development we are interested in both faith development and religious formation, however, these latter two areas are outside of the scope of this chapter.

Spirituality like many things in life is contextual and the better we know our young people the more likely it is that we can offer opportunities that are genuinely engaging and potentially transformative. As the Message version of the Bible says "Life doesn't have to be like that—Jesus came to bring life in all its fullness" (John 10.10). That's my hope as an informal educator seeking to offer people pathways into living life to the full as holistic human beings with an active and engaged spirituality.

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Part IV
Integrating Spirituality, Care and Wellbeing in Educational Settings

James O'Higgins-Norman

Part IV of this handbook brings together many of the conceptual themes that have been explored in the previous three parts and relates these themes to the reality of practically applying theories of spirituality, care and wellbeing in a number of educational settings. While it is usual in a publication of this type to arrange chapters into coherent sub-parts this is not the case in this part of the handbook as most of the chapters have taken an approach in which education for spirituality, care and wellbeing is presented as an integrated process whereby the overall wellbeing of a student is understood as intrinsically linked to the spiritual dimension of his/her personality and the extent to which s/he is cared for within an educational setting. Thus this whole part of the handbook offers a collection of essays underpinned by an understanding of education as a process that is inseparable from human fulfilment.

The eclectic professional background of the various contributors, psychologist, theologian, teacher, counsellor, sociologist and so on, in itself reflects the approach I have taken in this part in that no one profession is allowed custody of the human spirit.

Holistic Education

Each contributor to this part relies on terms like spirituality, care and wellbeing to carry forward the idea that education is an integrated process in which all aspects of the person are developed and promoted. More than anything, this part of the handbook counters the purely utilitarian paradigm which tends to dominate much of the modern experience of education. It is of course perfectly acceptable to argue that education has to serve particular purposes in society or the economy as long as we do not forget that the acquisition of skills alone does not complete the human person.

In this part of the handbook education and particularly schooling is understood as something which is ordered towards the wellbeing of the whole person. As I write I can already anticipate the critique of some colleagues when they point out that too often those who argue for a holistic approach to education are merely flag-waving in support of an idea that really does not stand up within the reality of modern schooling. And they are correct in so far as the modern preoccupation with openness, transparency and accountability increasingly results in teachers

and lecturers having to account for the minutia of teaching and learning through module aims and objectives, indicative syllabi and regulated reading lists. Such an approach, apart from being somewhat anti-intellectual, in that it is prescriptive in terms of what the student will learn, restricts the process of education reducing it to the acquisition of bits of knowledge rather than the development of the wellbeing of the whole person. When education stops being about the development of the whole person, body, mind and soul, then the possibility of new ideas and the advancement of knowledge becomes less likely. Elsewhere, Kevin Williams (2007) reminds us that regardless of the limitations that context and resources put on the advancement of human knowledge it is still only a person of ability who can intelligently negotiate these limitations and thus education should always allow for creativity:

> Within any practice there are limits to what we are prepared to count as innovation and beyond these limits lie the eccentric and the incomprehensible. Moreover, in seeking a solution to a problem which is genuinely novel and without precedent, we must have recourse to the resources of the activity or the practice that provided the context in which the problem has arisen. It is only through our familiarity with these resources of the practice in question that we can find solutions. But in any activity, in science, in politics or in architecture, for example, it takes a person of genius to find them (p. 159).

The *genius* Williams refers to here has to do with *excellence of ability* but not in a narrow purely scholastic sense, more in the way that the ancient Greeks understood wellbeing (ἀρετή–arete) characterised by an accord or harmony between all the constituent parts of the human person (see Guthrie, 1997, pp. 306–308). If students are to obtain such ability or as Williams calls it "genius" there is an urgent need for those of us who argue for a more holistic approach to education to move beyond the rhetoric and the flag-waving and to begin to develop practical approaches ordered towards the delivery of teaching and learning which promotes the development of ability in the form of critical thinking, physical and mental wellbeing and a sense of one's place in the world. All the chapters in this part of the handbook carry forward this notion that the person of ability is a person who has achieved an integration of body, mind and soul and in the achievement of such excellence s/he can be really said to be a genius in the truest sense of the world.

Wellbeing

It goes without saying that there is considerable diversity in what is understood as "wellbeing" in educational discourse. For some wellbeing is related to notions of the good life, while for others it has to do with physical health and others again a balance in mind and emotions. Regardless of the various understandings that exist in relation to the concept of wellbeing, it has in recent decades been firmly established in the minds of policy makers and practitioners alike as an ultimate goal in education. For example, while it does not explicitly refer to wellbeing,

The Education Reform Act (1988) provided the basis for a new national curriculum in the United Kingdom and clearly states that the curriculum of a school satisfies the requirements of the act if it is a balanced and broadly based curriculum which

(a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and
(b) prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (Chapter 1:1.2.2).

Similarly in Ireland, in its first piece of educational legislation since independence *The Education Act* (1998) obliges schools to "promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them" (9.d). It is clear that both these legislative instruments view schooling as something that should contribute to the wellbeing of the person. Although *The No Child Left Behind Act* (2001) has come under much criticism in the USA for, among other things, its overreliance on standardised testing, it does contain explicit provision to set aside federal funding to provide for counselling in the promotion of children's wellbeing in schools (Title V, Part D, Subpart 2). Furthermore, when the Australian national government introduced its new *Education Act* (2004) it was even clearer in terms of the holistic aims of education in that it stated that the purpose of schools was the development of the "emotional, physical and intellectual wellbeing of students" (3:1.111).

Given that all the above legislation either states or infers that wellbeing is a desired outcome in education, the lack of precision in our understanding of this concept is worrying especially when it is being included as a legislative goal in outcomes-driven education systems. White (2007) argues that policy makers need help in giving valid substance to the ideal of wellbeing, thus detaching it from interpretations that fail to stand up to rigorous assessment (p. 17). He goes on to argue that wellbeing is linked to culture and that what we consider to be a "flourishing life" is influenced in many ways by the society in which we live.

Given the widespread involvement of the Catholic Church in schooling across the globe, it may be helpful to consider their understanding of the goals of education in relation to wellbeing. An examination of some of the educational documents of the Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council (1963–1966) reveals an understanding of wellbeing as something that is related to the personal integration of faith, culture and life. Here the Catholic Church articulates its belief that the aim of education is to develop harmoniously students' physical, moral and intellectual qualities, helping them to devote themselves willingly to the promotion of the common good (*Declaration on Christian Education*, 1965, p. 2). The document goes on to expand on how wellbeing can be achieved through a partnership between parents, teachers and the State. While the document teaches the importance of introducing young people to the tradition and heritage of previous generations it also articulates the belief that young people should be provided with the opportunity to understand and respect those of other cultures and faiths (1965, p. 6). In essence the *Declaration*

on Christian Education (1965) reflects the idea of an open education and a belief that education has to do with the development of the whole person, promoted by an integration of a person's faith, culture and life. A more recent major Catholic document on education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1998) continues many of the same themes. Once again, it identifies the "synthesis between faith and culture" as a distinguishing characteristic of wellbeing in a Catholic school. It goes on to develop the importance of what it calls the "educating community" in the Catholic school. This document describes the Catholic school's ethos as constituted by the interactions of those who make up the school community, naming in particular the students, parents, teachers, administrators and non-teaching staff (1998, p. 1). In an Aristotelian sense, this document highlights the importance of the habitual nature of ethos in a Catholic school. Consequently, the Catholic Church attaches a particular significance to the quality of the relationships that contribute to the atmosphere in which the student's wellbeing is achieved:

> . . .a student needs to experience personal relations with outstanding educators, and what is taught has greater influence on the student's formation when placed in a context of personal involvement, genuine reciprocity, coherence of attitudes, lifestyles and day-to-day behaviour (1998, p. 1).

The document concludes by placing the primary responsibility for creating the positive ethos of the school with the teachers, saying that it depends chiefly on them whether the Catholic school achieves its purposes regarding the wellbeing of young people. Once again, similar to the goals of the education legislation referred to above, we can infer from these two important Catholic documents that wellbeing in education is understood as existing in a person who is integrated and able to maintain positive relationships in society.

Another source that may assist us in our quest to define the concept of wellbeing is the emerging field of *positive psychology* as outlined for us by Paul King elsewhere in this handbook. Peterson and Park (2003) argue that this overarching field in psychology has brought together previously disparate lines of research and theory on wellbeing and in doing so a clearer understanding of human flourishing is emerging. Subjective wellbeing in this field refers to what people think and how they feel about their lives "to the cognitive and affective conclusions they reach when they evaluate their experiences" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 9). Research in the USA and Australia into the concept of wellbeing has demonstrated that through specific interventions it is possible to be happier, to feel more satisfied, to be more engaged with life, find more meaning and have higher hopes regardless of one's circumstances (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). However, if wellbeing is subjective as the positive psychologists argue then it is probably not possible to develop an objective or precise definition separate from context. In this regard, the various contexts in which each of the contributors to this part of the handbook is writing, representing countries as far apart as Chile and Canada, Kenya and Greece, Ireland and Israel, as well as the USA, England and Wales, further strengthens the breath of knowledge and experience regarding wellbeing represented in this part of the handbook.

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Chapter 50
Ethical Leadership in an Age of Evaluation: Implications for Whole School Wellbeing

Gerry McNamara and Joe O'Hara

Abstract The evaluation and inspection of many public services, including education, has become increasingly common in most countries in the developed world (McNamara & O'Hara, 2004; MacBeath & McGlynn, 2002). There are various reasons why this may be the case. It can be argued that it is, on the one hand, part of the movement towards low trust policies derived from the ideology of neo-liberalism which seeks to apply the values of the market to the public sector. On the other hand, it can be argued that increased evaluation is a necessary and defensible component of democratic accountability, responsibility and transparency (O'Neill, 2002). The research reported here sets out to explore the idea of a personal vision or core of ethics as being central to educational leadership, through in-depth interviews with a number of school leaders. The chapter begins by briefly placing educational leadership in the modern context, characterised by the paradox of apparently greater decentralisation of responsibility to schools being in fact coupled with a further centralisation of actual power and greatly increased surveillance of performance (Neave, 1998). Relevant developments internationally, and then specifically in the context of Ireland, are described. It is suggested that in Ireland the modern educational context may indeed be creating difficult ethical and moral dilemmas for leaders to face. To see if this is so in practice, five in-depth interviews with school principals are reported. The evidence arising from these interviews indicates that school leaders do feel guided by a strong moral or ethical compass.

Introduction

The evaluation and inspection of many public services, including education, has become increasingly common in most countries in the developed world (McNamara & O'Hara, 2004; MacBeath & McGlynn, 2002). There are various reasons why this may be the case. It can be argued that it is, on the one hand, a part of the movement towards low-trust policies derived from the ideology of neo-liberalism

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which seeks to apply the values of the market to the public sector. On the other hand, it can be argued that increased evaluation is a necessary and defensible component of democratic accountability, responsibility and transparency (O'Neill, 2002). What cannot be denied is that this process, both at the level of nation states and through the policies of influential organisations such as the OECD, the EU and the World Bank, continues to gather pace. Equally, however, there is also a growing debate regarding the appropriate extent of such evaluation particularly as research increasingly shows that external monitoring of an intrusive kind can seriously damage the autonomy and morale of professionals and organisations (Hansson, 2006).

In consequence, a worldwide debate continues as to the balance to be achieved between accountability and professional autonomy and between professional development and external judgement. Resolving these conflicting demands has become a major burden on school leaders, often caught between requirements for external accountability on the one hand and their roles as staff motivators and developers on the other (Bottery, 2004). Research is increasingly pointing to the importance of an ethical framework which can provide leaders with a secure base from which to defend the educational philosophy and practices which are important to them (Fullan, 2004). In addition, new models of educational decision making which emphasise the centrality of distributed leadership (De Jong & Kerr-Roubicek, 2007) to the creation and maintenance of whole school wellbeing (Kilpatrick, Falk, & Johns, 2002), clearly identify the importance of the school leaders' ethical framework to the creation of a professionally rewarding and personally enriching school community.

The research reported on here sets out to explore the idea of a personal vision or core of ethics as being central to educational leadership, through in-depth interviews with a number of school leaders. The chapter begins by briefly placing educational leadership in the modern context, characterised by the paradox of apparently greater decentralisation of responsibility to schools being in fact coupled with a further centralisation of actual power and greatly increased surveillance of performance (Neave, 1998). Relevant developments internationally, and then specifically in the context of Ireland, are described. It is suggested that in Ireland the modern educational context may indeed be creating difficult ethical and moral dilemmas for leaders to face. To see if this is so in practice five in-depth interviews with school principals are reported. The evidence arising from these interviews indicates that school leaders do feel guided by a strong moral or ethical compass. There is also evidence, however, of both internal contradictions and feelings of conflict with the essentially pragmatic nature of much of the decision making required by the realities of day-to-day life as a school principal in twenty-first century Ireland.

Leading in the Age of Evaluation

In an article entitled "I audit, therefore I am" in The Times Higher Education Supplement (THES, October 18, 1996, quoted in Simons, 2002, p. 17) Michael Power, Professor of Accounting at the London School of Economics, defined our era as

"the age of inspection, the evaluative state and the audit society". He went on, "whatever term one prefers, there can be little doubt that something systematic has occurred since 1971. In every area of social and economic life, there is more formalised checking, assessment, scrutiny, verification and evaluation". The intense push to develop systems of accountability and increasing concerns with obtaining value for money that have accompanied this emergence of an "evaluative state" (Neave, 1998, p. 265) have had a significant impact on education. The roots of this movement are varied. On the one hand it is clear that much of this tendency can be closely connected to the dominant political ideologies of recent times, particularly Thatcherism, Reaganomics and Neo-Liberalism (McNamara & O'Hara, 2008). These ideologies tended to distrust the public sector and to progress an agenda of making such services responsive to the realities of the market (Giddins, 2004). Interestingly however, even as the political authors of these policies have faded from the scene and more moderate politicians have come to power much of this self-styled "reform agenda" has been retained and even further developed. This appears to be because it has become widely accepted that public services, including the activities of hitherto relatively autonomous professionals, should be more accountable in a democratic society (O'Neill, 2002).

In the case of education these policy directions have been compounded by the immense importance which governments worldwide attribute to student achievement and school effectiveness. A vibrant education system is now widely seen as an essential component of economic success without which countries cannot hope to compete for the mobile capital which characterises the modern economy. In consequence in virtually every country in the developed world, and increasingly in the developing world, the State has systematically sought to improve the quality of education and training, not only as in the past by increased expenditure, but also by attempting to increase "output" through systems of evaluation and surveillance (Bottery, 2004). However, it is important to note that these same developments are being increasingly challenged in society in general and particularly in education as the serious consequences of such policies gradually become apparent (Elmore & Fuhrman, 2001; Moos, 2003).

The complex arguments, both philosophical and practical, in relation to the evaluation of schools and teachers which have exercised researchers both within education and beyond in recent years (McNamara & O'Hara, 2005) are largely outside the scope of this study. However, a brief contextual summary of the main points of the discussion is necessary for an understanding of the rest of the chapter. It can be argued that much of the policy direction described above is founded on two fundamental flaws. The first of these is that evaluation systems, which by their nature must be founded on data and information acquired through social science research methodologies, can never in fact produce clear, unambiguous and implementable results, policies or plans. This is simply because, as a great deal of work in the social sciences in the past 30 years has shown clearly, complex systems with wide and various goals such as education are hugely resistant to quantifiable measurement (Elliott, 2004; Pring, 2004; Peters, 1973). The second fundamental flaw alleged against the neo-liberalist approaches to evaluation and appraisal is

that these policies downplay or totally ignore the serious side effects inherent in unduly interfering in the reasonable exercise of professional autonomy by groups such as teachers (Slattery, 2003). It has become increasingly apparent that, in a nutshell, such policies when implemented in certain forms do more harm than any demonstrable benefits that may arise (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005).

This latter point is important and has resulted in what can be accurately described as a reconsideration of evaluative policies. One of the reasons for this is that in most of the developed world, outside of the English-speaking countries, there remains a strong antipathy towards undue or overweening interference in professional autonomy. This is also true of some countries which might be regarded as belonging to the Anglophone world such as Ireland and Scotland (McNamara & O'Hara, 2006). In most of these countries there has been, admittedly, a significant move towards greater processes of school and teacher evaluation. Arguably, this has a great deal to do with the fact that such policies have been adopted and strongly supported by influential international agencies particularly the OECD and to a lesser extent the EU. However, as developed in each individual country the emerging evaluation systems are in fact a compromise between imported ideologies and strong local traditions of school and teacher autonomy and independence. Therefore, what has emerged in most countries is a series of compromises which involve significant increases in the evaluation of schools and teachers but which are based fundamentally on the premise that these groupings should primarily evaluate themselves with a degree of external oversight (McNamara & O'Hara, 2004). This concept, usually referred to as self-evaluation, was virtually unknown 10 or 15 years ago but has now become the dominant force in the discourse on school and teacher evaluation (Nevo, 2002). In consequence most evaluation systems have now become a hybrid involving internal or self-evaluation by individual teachers or entire schools with a greater or lesser degree of external moderation (Simons, 2002; Meuret and Morlaix, 2003; MacBeath, 2006).

In essence what we are seeing is an attempt to produce a series of compromises which will somehow allow for schools and teachers to evaluate their own performance and improve their work while at the same time providing a basis on which judgements regarding efficiency and effectiveness can be made and political and public demands for accountability be met. Of course reconciling these different purposes is extremely difficult since, naturally, professionals respond differently to a system that is primarily developmental than they do to a system that is primarily judgemental. Increasingly, the responsibility for reconciling these at times contradictory systemic impulses is falling on the principal working within a school community.

The challenge being faced by principals in this area is a daunting one and makes many demands, both personally and professionally. Arguably the neo-liberal reform agenda discussed earlier has reduced and narrowed both the aims and practice of schooling and consequently the scope for vision, innovation and leadership among educational professionals (MacBeath, 1999; Thrupp & Willmott, 2003). As the definition of achievement and success within education narrows

it follows logically that the understanding of what defines a healthy educational environment becomes redefined. The notion of wellbeing in the school context is often inextricably linked to the easily measurable, and at times quite limited, academic attainments of the students. It is therefore unsurprising that the challenges of leadership in this hostile context have become the focus of considerable attention in the educational literature (Bottery, 2007; Woods, 2007; Dunphy, 2007).

A good deal of recent research in the area of school management has come to focus on "the moral imperatives of school leadership" (Fullan, 2004). That is to say, it is now increasingly understood that school leaders require inner resources, a kind of guide or compass, in the form of a set of values, morals or ideals, which inform their leadership and decision making. Many researchers have tried to tease out further how such a moral compass might be defined. Day, Harris, Hayfield, Tolley, and Beresford (2000, p. 27) speak of "a personal vision. . . and a core of personal ethics" as central to educational leadership. Briggs (2007) identifies personal values as being a key component of professional relationships, while Ball (2003, p. 215) speaks of "the soul of the teacher". Woods (2007, p. 136) describes this guiding framework as "the bigger feeling" or "spirituality", which she defines as "an area of the human experience which involves heightened awareness of something of profound significance beyond what is normally taken as everyday experience". Woods' research suggests that the wellspring of this feeling or awareness may be religious, but need not necessarily be so. Interestingly, in her research sample the majority of those of her respondents who defined themselves as atheist, agnostic or humanist also reported having a spiritual (as defined above by Woods) element to their resources for leadership (2007, p. 146). Quite a number of other descriptions of this "bigger feeling" are to be found in the recent literature. However, for the purposes of this research, it was decided to conceptualise "spirituality" in terms of Day et al.'s (2000) notion of a personal vision and core of ethics rather than in a more overtly religious way such as that put forward by Woods. This is because it was felt that the latter might tend to lead the respondents to interpret the research in largely religious terms.

In summary it can be argued that the research reported above suggests that the ethical framework adopted by the school leader is of central importance when the school community as a whole tries to define for itself the core elements of the concept of wellbeing. While the emergence of an educationally narrow and at times destructive definition of accountability has obviously had an impact on how leaders act out their values in schools, the parallel emergence of a collegially focused, empowered and distributed leadership model has gone some way towards ameliorating the impact of this on the quality of the school community. In the next section we will explore the emergence of an Irish system of school evaluation with a view to examining how the lived experience of Irish school leaders was actually effected by the introduction of an accountability framework and perhaps more importantly, how they felt this influenced their own and their colleagues' core values.

School and Teacher Evaluation: An Example from Ireland

Schools and teachers in Ireland have a long history of being evaluated by a centralised inspectorate, a division of the Department of Education and Science (DES). However, by the early 1990s this system had broken down to a significant degree. The inspection of primary schools had become sporadic and rather idiosyncratic but still existed. In secondary schools inspection had nearly ceased entirely and in fact the largest teacher union supported its members in refusing to teach in front of an inspector.

The reasons for this decline in inspection are varied and need not detain us here. What is interesting is that the impetus for a new approach to inspection and school evaluation in the mid-1990s came from external sources rather than from any pressing domestic demand. This is made clear in the evaluation report prepared by the Department of Education and Science after the first Whole School Evaluation (WSE) pilot project from 1996 to 1999 (DES, 1999). For example, the introduction justifies the development of the WSE pilot scheme by noting that "across the European Union a wide range of approaches is evident to the assessment and evaluation of schools" (DES, 1999, p. 8). On page 9 we read that "there is now a growing tendency across Europe to see external and internal school evaluation processes as being inextricably linked". Later on the same page it is suggested that "there is an increasing effort to encourage schools to review their own progress in a formal way . . . to engage in their own development planning".

The external influences made explicit in the above quotes show clearly that, as Boyle (1997) argues, EU policy in the direction of new public management systems such as strategic planning and systematic evaluation has been a key driver of change in the Irish context. As Boyle (1997, 2002) suggests, it was not so much any domestic policy or ideology that drove this process, but rather a migration of EU evaluation policy, together with a strong sense that, as these developments appeared to be happening everywhere else, it was potentially dangerous to lag behind. It is no coincidence that in other areas of education, and indeed across the public sector as a whole, the last decade has witnessed similar developments. Rapid change in the Irish education system, and influential research, has moved school development planning and school and teacher evaluation from the periphery to the centre of education policy (Government of Ireland, 1998).

In May 2003, the DES in Ireland published twin documents entitled *Looking At Our School, an aid to self-evaluation in primary schools* and *Looking At Our School, an aid to self-evaluation in post-primary schools* (DES , 2003a, 2003b) (these documents, although designed for different levels of the education system, are so similar in content that they can be treated as one and are referred to hereafter as LAOS and referenced hereafter as DES (2003a). The publications contain a very detailed framework for the inspection and evaluation of schools and teachers, including 143 "themes for self-evaluation" which schools and teachers are invited to consider in preparation for an external evaluation by the inspectorate. The methodology suggested for using these themes "while engaging in a self-evaluation exercise" is described as follows:

A school may decide to focus on an area, an aspect or a component. The school will gather information in relation to the theme or themes under evaluation. Having engaged in a process of collecting and analysing this information and evidence, the school will be in a position to make a statement or statements indicating its own performance in the relevant component, aspect or area (DES, 2003(a), p. x).

The type of statement regarding each area, aspect or component evaluated which schools are invited to make is described as "a continuum consisting of a number of reference points representing stages of development in the improvement process" (DES, 2003(a), p. x). This continuum is to be represented for each item by describing the situation discovered by the self-evaluation as one of the following:

- Significant strengths (uniformly strong)
- Strengths outweigh weaknesses (more strengths than weaknesses)
- Weaknesses outweigh strengths (more weaknesses than strengths)
- Significant major weaknesses (uniformly weak)

Here then is a system of evaluation that at its heart seeks to create a framework of quality assurance that relies on internal processes but is ultimately validated externally. Whatever about the practical operation of the system, the introduction of these structures marked a profound change in Irish education, change that needed and indeed needs to be managed. Not surprisingly the onus for ensuring the successful transition to a new context fell and continues to fall, for the most part, on the school principal. As these approaches to change management, namely external inspection and school planning, have become more dominant, certain tensions have emerged. For example, there are obvious contradictory pressures for centralised government control through inspection and evaluation on the one hand and decentralised responsibility for implementation, resource management and self-evaluation at local level on the other. According to Hopkins, Ainscow, and West (1994) the key challenge is "to find a balance between the increasing demands for centrally determined policy initiatives and quality control and the encouragement of locally developed school improvement efforts" (p. 68). From the perspective of the school leader, balancing these contradictory impulses while at the same time enhancing the sense of wellbeing in the school community as a whole creates what are at times considered to be ethically challenging situations.

Squaring the Circle: Leading the Staff and Delivering Accountability

In describing the impact of the rise of new public management on school leaders, Bottery (2007) identifies what he calls "many commonalities perceptible in most of the western world". These, he suggests, include

economic rationale for educational change, increased criticism of educational institutions, decentralization of responsibility but not power, pressure to increase achievement through greater testing and the publication of results, oversight systems to measure compliance and

managerialist methods for driving change, such as performance management, performance related pay, inspection and evaluation, strategic planning and target setting (p. 89).

Not surprisingly, these developments have substantially changed the nature of teaching and teacher perceptions about their profession. The work of Andy Hargreaves demonstrates increasingly negative attitudes to the reform agenda among teachers in North America (Wolf & Craig, 2004). Hoyle and Wallace (2007, p. 15) summarise research in the UK on the impact of recent developments there on the teaching profession.

1. Teachers feel directed away from the core task of teaching.
2. Teachers feel vastly increased pressures, resulting in stress, less job satisfaction and greater workload.
3. Teachers feel a high degree of dissatisfaction with the bureaucratic and managerial aspects of the reforms.
4. There are increasing problems with recruitment and retention.

Research in Ireland by Sugrue (1999) also indicates negative responses among teachers to what they perceive as external interference and enforced collegiality.

In this context, the staff leadership challenges facing school principals are daunting. Gibton (2004, p. 90) describes school leaders as being caught between the rhetoric and reality of the reform agenda. The rhetoric emphasises "the reprofessionalising of the teaching profession, including raised standards and democratic accountability", while the reality involves "deprofessionalised teachers, reductionist and utilitarian education and centralising cumbersome bureaucratic modes of surveillance". It has been suggested by McNamara and Kenny (2006) that as a result of the corporatist nature of politics and the power of the teacher unions, the reform agenda has impacted less on Ireland than on other Anglophone countries. Nonetheless, as we have seen, the outward and visible signs of the new public management are gradually emerging in the Irish education system in the form of collaborative planning, inspection, evaluation and standardised testing.

Interestingly, in the week in which this chapter was written, two newspaper reports illustrated the direction of public policy in education. In the *Irish Times* of October 5th, it was suggested that school inspection reports published online by the DES and which up to now have been regarded as extremely bland and cautious are now becoming "more robust, noticeably more critical of schools and school departments" (p. 11).

A few days earlier, in the *Irish Times* of October 1st, it was reported that the DES was about to propose that school principals would be required to deal with underperforming teachers by reporting on their work to the school board of management and recommending sanctions up to and including dismissal. In theory the quality of teaching and the supervision of teachers have always been a matter for school principals, but in practice poor performance is rarely confronted and when it is, it is largely left up to the inspectorate. The vehement negative response of the principals' associations and the teacher unions is instructive in respect to the theme of this chapter. Both groups were in agreement that actually operationalising the

supervisory role of principals over teachers would severely damage the collegial relationship between the two groups. The post-primary teacher unions added that only peers with a specialist knowledge of the particular subject area could exercise such a role, if it were necessary at all, and principals do not have the necessary expertise. Finally, the unions also suggested that difficult personal relationships could influence principals' decisions regarding underperforming teachers and that impartiality would prove impossible.

How, then, do school leaders conceptualise and respond to these challenges? Fullan (1982) suggested that turning policy into good practice stems largely from the ability of those implementing policy being able to translate it into a particular context and thereby provide new meanings to it. Bottery (2007, p. 190) proposes that this means practitioners being able to "critique, mediate and if necessary actively resist some policy developments". Work by Day et al. (2000) and Gold, Evans, Earley, Halpin, and Collarbone (2003) suggests that most school leaders hold a personal vision of education and a set of core personal ethics which guide how they react to external policies and initiatives. Wright (2003) is not so sure, arguing that school leaders are so constrained by external regulations and pressures that the best they can do is uncritically implement policies. Roche (1999), cited in Begley, identifies four strategies used by school principals in coping with ethical dilemmas, namely avoidance, suspended morality, creative insubordination and, rarely, taking a moral stance. In contrast, Woods (2007) suggests that school leaders respond through "transformational and democratic leadership", which she defines as "getting people working together to raise one another's awareness towards higher ethical purposes and to the importance of working for the achievement of these in the life of the organisation" (p. 152). Clearly, therefore, different researchers have come to varying conclusions regarding the ethical framework and constraints within which educational leadership is exercised. To explore these ideas further, it was decided to seek the views of a number of principals of Irish schools around the ethical challenges of leading in the current age of evaluation.

Leading Through an Ethical Framework? School Principals Respond

The research that is reported here was conducted with the principals of four post-primary schools and one primary school, all situated in the greater Dublin area. They were chosen only because each had recently undertaken a course of postgraduate study at Dublin City University. Three of the four post-primary principals were men, one was a woman and the primary principal was male. Each was relatively new to the job, all falling within a range of 2–6 years as principal. A semi-structured interview approach was used, involving a schedule of four questions, but allowing for replies to be clarified and a range of follow-up questions to be asked as appropriate. Each interview lasted between 30 and 40 minutes.

The purpose was to explore the perceptions of these school leaders and the personal concepts and frameworks which guide their approach to leadership. It should

be noted that in advance of each interview the respondent was told that the research was primarily concerned with the new policy environment as outlined earlier in this chapter, including issues such as inspection, evaluation, testing and accountability. It was made clear that the research was intended to focus specifically on staff relations and organisational development. The interviewees were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality.

The data is reported by response to each of four questions and the respondents are referred to as A, B, C, D and E. The basic questions asked were:

1. In the context of this research as outlined to you, do you feel that the new policies on school planning, evaluation and inspection involve you in difficult ethical or moral dilemmas?
2. Do you feel a personal vision or core of ethics is important to your work?
3. Do you feel that external pressures are influencing your decision making more or less than in the past?
4. Do you feel that the environment for school leadership is improving or disimproving?

Ethical and Moral Dilemmas

In general there was a noticeable tendency at first for the respondents to down-play what they saw as the rather dramatic terminology in which the question was framed. A spoke of what he called "the cult of the lone leader" and said that "the ethos of the school and the various processes for making decisions—for deciding on admissions and suspensions, for example—tended to clarify most decisions". C said that certainly there were hard decisions with moral and ethical implications, but he doubted if these had changed very much over time—"principals make much the same kind of decisions as they have always done, the difference is that it is within a very complex legal and bureaucratic framework which makes you cautious—if you make a mistake or do not follow due process nowadays you are on your own". This emphasis on making decisions through established processes and procedures, the importance of the traditions and policies of the schools, and the idea of not acting without taking advice, was common across the responses.

On reflection, however, the respondents began to come up with examples of ethical questions and dilemmas which they were facing. A common theme here was the perceived pressure for short-term goals, particularly academic achievement, to dominate school life. This manifested itself in increased criticism of particular teachers and demands for pupils to be placed in certain classes or moved to another class because of alleged teacher failings. B said: "this is becoming increasingly tough, and despite all the rhetoric about the wider goals of education, results are everything". E, principal of a primary school, agreed, saying that, "with standardised testing all this results pressure will get worse, yet the DES wants everything from road safety to global warming covered in an already crowded curriculum and more children

with special needs. I have had to take some tough decisions refusing special needs children when I think a class could not take another one, even with an SNA [Special Needs Assistant]. Teachers and the parents are very reluctant to have more than one or two in a class".

A second ethical concern mentioned was the conflict between maintaining collegial solidarity with teaching staff and while at the same time seeking to confront unacceptable practices and poor teaching. Respondents saw this as becoming more pressing, not only with the rise of school and teacher evaluation but also as parents became ever more critical of poor standards. The respondents displayed an interesting degree of pragmatism. B said that "we don't take criticism well, so it is well that the Inspectorate is not going down that route. It is clear that principals and schools are going to be left to deal with weak teachers as always, but you have no power, and you can cause trouble for no gain. You just follow the old approach, giving certain teachers certain classes and so on". Similarly, D suggested that there were contradictions in emerging official policy on schools—"there is a huge emphasis on collegial and collaborative effort, meetings, planning etc, this is good, gets people working together, but you are also supposed to tackle poor performance, where you can easily turn people against you. It is not easy". Finally, on this theme A said: "there are poor teachers in every school, and kids get short changed, which I hate to see, and parents complain year in, year out, but you can only intervene in really bad cases, and even then you are in a weak position and may do more harm than good—our system has neither carrot nor stick, you need to remember that before you do something irrevocable".

It became clear in the responses to Question 1 that the ethos (a word that came up often), policies and mission statements of the school were deemed a kind of protection for decision makers, and principals are careful not to stray outside these boundaries. For example, C said: "the school policy emphasizes the whole person and a broad curriculum, and so I am able to hold the line and insist that all students, even in exam years, take religious education, social and personal education, PE and so on. Often teachers and parents want to use this time for the main subjects, but we would be just a grind school then".

Personal Vision and Core of Ethics

Given the somewhat pragmatic and cautious tone to Question 1 above, it was interesting that the five respondents all claimed to be guided by a personal vision and core ethical principles. It will be remembered that this form of words was chosen as opposed to any reference to spirituality in order to avoid the question being interpreted in a purely religious sense. Four of the five principals are leaders of Catholic schools, and the fifth of a Community (State) school, of which a Catholic religious order is a Trustee.

In defining the vision which informs their practice, all five respondents spoke of two related themes: care and commitment to the pupils in their charge, and passion

for education and its benefits. A said: "it is a difficult job, and getting harder. You would only do it for the kids. You feel a commitment to each one". C said: "every decision is for the boys, you want to see each reach his potential, you go the extra mile". E said that "treating the children with respect, listening to them, valuing them, is a bottom line for me. I have had to compromise on other things, but not that".

Although all five principals stress that this commitment to the pupils was about more than academic achievement, there was, nonetheless, a notable difference of emphasis between school types. Principals A, C and E stressed all round achievement, and said that their goal was each single pupil succeeding to the best of their ability, whatever that may be. C specifically said that his vision was "one of all round development for each student, but most of all to be good citizens and indeed people". B and D are the principals of two academically strong post-primary schools, and while their replies also stressed wider goals than the merely academic, there was a noticeable concern with what B described as "excellence, high standards, high academic and sporting achievement". B remarked: "we have a very long tradition of excellence here, as a result we get a certain intake, parents and students expect high standards". D said: "we put a lot of effort into high academic and sporting standards, I think that pursuit of excellence is a good thing. We need not to lose sight of it, not only as a school but as a society".

Although spirituality or religion was not specifically raised, it nonetheless became clear that some of the respondents felt that the foundation of their commitment came from a spiritual source. B said: "well this is a Catholic school, and it stands for something, a Catholic ethos, something I believe in and want for the children". D, in a similar vein, commented: "it sounds old-fashioned, but for me more important than anything else in the school, is passing on the faith, that is why we are here really". Interestingly, in the current climate of mass immigration, E, principal of a primary school, said: "this is a Catholic school, and that is important to me, staff and most parents—we will continue to take newcomers, but we will not become non-denominational, or multi-denominational, or anything like that. We will remain a Catholic school".

In terms of their vision of education, the principals interviewed were strongly resistant to any agenda which might reduce education to a pragmatic or instrumentalist level. This is a danger they perceived in the current reform agenda. A said: "there is a danger in all this talk of competencies, testing, etc that we'll end up with a list of boxes to tick, and that is not what I mean by education. It hasn't happened yet, but there are straws in the wind, and we must resist it if we can". C said: "we need to maintain the best elements of the system as it is. It provides a good general education, which has served us well. I think this is understood, and I do not think we will end up with lists of competencies and targets, like elsewhere, but it is a danger". Along similar lines, E said: "a lot of the new agenda—inspection, planning, evaluation, testing etc.—can be very positive and useful, but it could also be very misused, for example, testing could bring in competition between primary schools, which is not there now, something I would strongly resist".

External Pressures

All five respondents indicated, in one way or another, that external agencies exerted significant pressure which was increasing. It was noted that normal parental pressure had now been augmented by pressure from other sources. These included the media, with regard to numbers of students going on to achieve college entry and from the state, through inspection, evaluation and mandated strategic planning.

The principals interviewed were uniformly hostile to parental and media pressure, for better and better academic achievement. A said that "we must not lose sight of the mission of education, it is spelt out in the White Paper on Education, a philosophy that includes moral, spiritual, social, personal and physical education, not just academic—I do not know if whoever wrote this believes it, but I do".

Interestingly, however, and in contrast to the reported feelings of head teachers in England (Bottery, 2007), the principals interviewed were largely positive about the manifestations of the reform agenda in Ireland, including school planning, inspection and evaluation. Principal B mirrored the response of the others when saying "as a result of these initiatives teachers, subject departments and so on are meeting far more regularly and planning together—very much a new development". Principal D concurred—"it is remarkable how these requirements have gotten the staff working together, I am amazed at the support I have received, even if it comes from a kind of 'closing of the ranks against outsiders' mentality". A final positive point in this regard was made by several of the respondents, to the effect that the new modes of school evaluation presented opportunities for greater teacher involvement in decision making and created opportunities for distributed and democratic management. Principal B said "working on the school plan and preparing for inspection gives a role to everyone, and, just as importantly, gives me a mechanism to consult and share power and responsibility for plans and decisions".

Once again, principals showed a pragmatic streak in their ability to use external pressures and processes such as inspection to provide, as it were, cover for difficult decisions. Principal D remarked, "the re-emergence of external inspection has had a major effect—it is possible to get a lot done on the grounds that the inspectors will demand it. Surprisingly, teachers are very concerned and influenced by inspection, they treat it like the Parousia (the second coming of Christ)". In similar vein, Principal C used the inspection process to lead in a direction which her ethical principles suggested but which she perceived as almost impossible otherwise: "the inspection report queried our strict streaming policy. I was delighted, I was long against it, but with this behind me I can say 'we have to tackle this' and parents, teachers and the board will at least have to consider it". This last point confirms a feeling which arose from the interviews in general, which is that, regardless of their own values, no matter how firmly held, principals in the Irish context are very constrained by the power of other stakeholders such as religious Trustees, the DES, teachers and, to a lesser extent, parents.

In terms of ethical concerns and difficult decisions arising from the application of new public management methods to Irish education, the principals interviewed

were more concerned with possible future problems than with current realities. Principal B remarked "this is not Britain, but we have a tradition of following them and making the same mistakes a decade later, but I do not think you could end up with an OFSTED (the inspection body in England) system here—everyone knows it is a disaster". Nonetheless principals feared being forced by future developments into serious ethical dilemmas. Principal A said of school inspection and evaluation: "you get the feeling the DES are moving with caution, and principals will be caught in the middle. At the moment they are really only evaluating us, the managers, but when they start identifying teachers the fur will fly". Principal E, leader of a primary school, was concerned about the trend towards national standardised testing—"I am totally against judging children so young, we do testing now for our own purposes, but any competitive or divisive use of testing would be a serious ethical thing for me".

The Environment for Leadership

In answer to this question, the replies of the five principals were largely similar and to the effect that the pressure to make decisions that did not conform to their values and ethics arose more from resourcing issues than from the new models of planning and accountability. Principal A said: "we have more responsibility, more work, but very little power. I have no control over fixed costs, pay and so on, and a very limited budget outside of this, so I have to prioritise spending, and this is often very difficult".

The principals perceived that it was unstated but unmistakable DES policy to decentralise more roles and responsibilities to schools. This created a dilemma for while, as we have seen, principals are largely supportive of the new architecture of school governance and are willing to work with it, they equally feel ill-used by the steady increase in workload without any increase in administrative help. Principal B spelt this out: "I think that all the new initiatives are good things in themselves, but in the end it all comes back to my door, and there is a limit". Principal E agrees: "most primary schools are finding it hard to get people to go forward for principal—it is not surprising. I probably would not do it again if I could roll back the clock".

As already indicated, and at odds with research elsewhere, these five principals were more concerned that the moral climate for decision making might decline in the future, as opposed to feeling that they currently face serious ethical dilemmas. Principal B stated: "I think that developments such as increased emphasis on accountability and teacher and school performance will eventually lead to clashes between different values and ethics. At present, the atmosphere is largely collegial, but that may change". Principal D said much the same. "If we go down the route of greater accountability, tensions will arise between desirable but conflicting requirements, such as working as a staff team, as against imposing higher teaching standards or similarly between defending teachers and alienating increasingly critical parents". Principal E concluded with two interesting remarks which summarise much of what the other principals implied—"in our system, the principal does not

have all that much power. He or she is still *primus inter pares*, not CEO", and "a lot of decisions are made for you by very limited resources. If you had more money, you might have more ethical dilemmas about spending it".

Conclusion

The data emerging from these five interviews suggest a number of inter-related findings. First, it is clear that these particular principals perceive themselves to be guided and supported by a framework of ethics—spirituality, if you will. In three of the five cases, the respondents clearly indicated a religious dimension to this ethical framework. Analysing these ethics or values, a number of things become clear. In the first instance, in defining their educational ethics, the remarks of these principals were very similar to the research reported in other countries. They were concerned primarily with doing the best possible for each child, respecting the individual pupil, seeing education as a broad developmental process, which should not be reduced to purely academic achievement, and more specific to the Irish context, perhaps, seeing faith and faith formation as a key goal of schooling. Also deemed important were ethical concerns in favour of collegial and collaborative practices, allowing the sharing of responsibility with the school staff. Also significant was concern with other stakeholders, particularly the Church, religious orders, parents and the State.

The religious dimension identifiable in these ethical frameworks concerned the importance of faith and its transmission to the next generation and the pursuit of excellence perceived by some of the principals as a keystone of Catholic education. It was clear that these principals saw values-driven leadership as a sine qua non, suggesting that anyone lacking this attribute or quality could not or should not be doing this work. Finally, in contrast to research in England, it was notable that external pressures such as school inspections were not yet seen as the key influence on their decision making.

Secondly, and somewhat paradoxically, alongside their concerns with ethics, the principals interviewed displayed a strong element of pragmatism in their decision making. They perceived that external pressures and expectations were stronger than they had been in the past, and that these had to be managed and accommodated rather than resisted or subverted. The principals saw the advantages of using policies in the making of key decisions and were acutely aware of the danger of being exposed by moving outside protective structures and frameworks. In this, as well as pragmatism, they also displayed considerable realism in being aware that in the Irish system the power of leadership is limited by the strength of the other stakeholders. They understood that support from the religious orders, school patrons, boards of management and teaching staff is required if any initiative is to be implemented successfully, or indeed if even the day-to-day activity of the school is to run smoothly. Very astutely, the principals also showed an awareness of how to use external pressures, particularly those arising from inspection and evaluation as a lever to engineer change in their schools.

In relation to questions of ethical pressures on decision making, one might summarise the views of the five principals as follows. Most cases where they encounter such dilemmas at present arise largely from the lack of resources in schools, resulting in difficult choices having to be made. These dilemmas are therefore more resource and structure based rather than arising from interpersonal management and organisational concerns. However, it was largely agreed by all five respondents that the policy trend towards greater accountability and increased external monitoring and surveillance will generate future ethical dilemmas and conflicts.

Finally, and rather interestingly, although these principals were drawn from different sectors of the education system, and each professed a clear education vision and ethical framework, yet the pragmatic nature of most of what they said gave the impression that deliberation and caution would be key watchwords in their practice. The limitations of leadership in terms of power and the danger of getting too far ahead of other stakeholders were very clear to these principals. In short, they perceived their roles—to paraphrase the well-known categorisation applied to Irish prime ministers—more as chairmen than chiefs.

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Chapter 51
Wounding the Body in the Hope of Healing the Spirit: Responding to Adolescents Who Self-Injure

Amelio A. D'Onofrio and Julie Balzano

Abstract Self-injurious behavior (e.g., cutting or burning of the skin, or otherwise inflicting harm to the body) has become a growing phenomenon in the non-clinical population of children and adolescents. School personnel encountering students who engage in such self-destructive behavior are often at a loss as to how to make sense of these usually non-lethal but seeming horrific acts of self-mutilation. This chapter outlines the sociocultural, psychological, and developmental conditions that may predispose an individual to self-injure; explores the subjective phenomenological experience of the behavior for the self-injuring individual; and offers guidelines for school counselors for engaging, assessing, and providing care to these individuals who often suffer in silence and feel voiceless, disconnected, and alone.

Introduction

In recent years, educators and mental health professionals have seen an appreciable increase in the number of adolescents who intentionally engage in non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI). Cutting oneself, burning the skin, and other forms of self-mutilation, behaviors that were once relegated to an inpatient psychiatric population, have now become commonplace in schools and in the community (D'Onofrio, 2007; Plante, 2006; Walsh, 2006). As an intentional and dramatic act of violence upon the body, self-injury constitutes a powerful way of communicating one's psychological pain. In the act of cutting into the skin, self-injurers seek comfort and relief from that which they are rarely able to articulate in words. Often victims of emotional neglect or maltreatment, self-injurers become victims again, but this time their victimization is carried out with their own hands. In the act of cutting into their bodies, they carry the secret hope of finding healing for wounds that lie buried deep within.

Self-injurers are often characterized by a deep sense of inner chaos and the act of wounding the body actually constitutes a creative, life-affirming act of attempting

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to bring order and coherence to that chaos. In a sense, the act of injuring oneself can be seen as an attempt to quench one's thirst for connection, belonging, and wholeness—a thirst that is, at once and at the same time psychological, emotional, and spiritual. The emotional wounds of self-injurers have, in essence, led to the fragmentation of their sense of self and, in that process, they have lost the hope of ever being validated as a human being and feeling safe in the world. They feel alone and lost and wander in search for a renewed sense of integrity as persons. Self-injury is an implicit attempt to soothe their feelings of meaninglessness and seek to find connection in their lives. Their acts represent both the symbolic expiation of their own internalized guilt and the hope of finding a means to heal themselves. The shedding of their own blood suggests a primal, desperate, and perhaps even sacrificial attempt to transcend their spiritual alienation as well as their disconnection from self, others, and the world (Pinks, 2003). Through these violent acts upon their bodies they seek to find personal significance, to more palpably prove to themselves that they actually exist, and that they have a place in the world and a right to belong.

The increase in NSSI among adolescents has consequently created a crisis of confidence for teachers, counselors, nurses, ministers, and other frontline professionals. These first responders are frequently caught off-guard when confronted with young people who intentionally cut into their bodies. They report feeling inadequately trained and ill prepared to understand and work effectively in assisting these individuals (Best, 2005; McAllister, 2003; Rayner, Allan, & Johnson, 2005; Roberts-Dobie, 2005). While in many cases these professionals may be the only adults to whom troubled adolescents disclose their problems and turn to for help (Froeschle & Moyer, 2004), they are frequently at a loss for how to actually be of help. In fact, a recent survey of the members of the American School Counselor Association, the largest school counselor organization in the United States, found that most of the respondents (81%) reported having dealt with at least one student who self-injured. Only 6% of these counselors, however, reported feeling "highly knowledgeable" in ways to intervene effectively with the self-injuring student (Roberts-Dobie, 2005).

The problem is clear: while adolescent self-injury is on the rise, many educators and mental health professionals are at a loss for how best to intervene with individuals who wound their bodies with a seeming indifference to the pain and scars they create. As a result, educators and counselors must not only become better informed about the nature and dynamics of self-injury, what it is and why people do it, but they must also develop, at the very least, a rudimentary sense of how to assist these individuals in the short term so that they can begin to receive the care they need. To this end, this chapter provides a broad overview of the nature and character of self-injury as well as guidelines for helpers on how to begin to connect with these individuals who are typically difficult to engage and who are often rejecting of the help offered by others. Strategies for containing and responding to self-injurers' behavior are offered and a formal protocol for conducting a comprehensive assessment of the self-injurer is presented. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the issues involved in creating effective pathways to care within the school setting.

The Nature and Features of Self-Injury

Adolescent self-injury defies simple explanation. It is a complex and multi-determined phenomenon that is manifested in different ways in different individuals (Farber, 2000). Borrowing from Walsh (2006), we define self-injury as the intentional, non-suicidal act of bodily harm performed directly by the individual or by a collaborator, which is of a socially unacceptable nature and is performed to reduce psychological tension or emotional distress. In considering self-injury, it is important to be clear about the following point: self-injury is not a failed suicide attempt. In fact, self-injury is antithetical to suicide (D'Onofrio, 2007; Farber, 2000; Lloyd-Richardson, Perrine, Dierker, & Kelley, 2007). While individuals who attempt suicide seek to permanently end intense and unendurable psychological anguish, self-injurers can manage and modulate their distress through their self-injuring behaviors because they are not without hope. Unlike suicidal individuals, most self-injurers believe that, someday, they may actually find more consistent relief from their situation (Walsh, 2006). While there is some evidence that chronic self-injurers have a higher risk of eventually becoming suicidal (e.g., McAllister, 2003), their intent is not to die but rather to find a way to go on living and self-injury provides that hope through the immediate yet temporary relief it offers.

Individuals who impulsively injure themselves are usually unable to talk about, let alone tolerate, feelings that overwhelm them and have learned that the most expedient way to deal with their distress is to ventilate it by creating wounds (or *vents*) on their bodies. The cycle of destructive behaviors is often initiated in response to increases in psychological tension or emotional distress emerging from conflict in relationships. For example, in the aftermath of an argument with a friend or parent or in the face of real or imagined abandonment, an individual may experience an escalation in intolerable affect. As this occurs, a concomitant urge to self-injure, which is experienced as a salve for the emotional wounds the person feels, also emerges. The individual then develops a preoccupation with harming oneself physically, attempts to forestall the behavior, but is unable to resist the impulse. An increasing sense of psychological tension is then experienced which leads the individual to finally act on the urge to self-injure. The act is often accompanied by partial or total analgesia (i.e., numbness) that is then followed by a sense of relief from the mounting tension (Simeon & Favazza, 2001).

Many self-injurers eventually learn to use a variety of methods to harm themselves, and while cutting the skin, burning oneself, and headbanging tend to be among the more popular methods, interfering with wound healing, scratching oneself to the point of bleeding, biting oneself, sticking oneself with needles or pins are also methods used (Conterio & Lader, 1998; Farber, 2000; Smith, Cox, & Saradjian, 1999; Walsh, 2006). The parts of the body toward which self-injurers tend to strike most are the wrists and arms, but some vary the location of their wounding to include their abdomen, legs, chests, head and neck, and even their genitals (McAllister, 2003).

Despite the increase of anecdotal reports from school counselors and school administrators concerning the rise in adolescent self-injury, the epidemiological data

are still scant and the reported prevalence rates vary widely (Jacobson, 2007). In the late 1990s, Conterio and Lader (1998) estimated that there were approximately 1,400 self-injurers per 100,000 people in the United States. Other reviews suggest prevalence rates of 14% among high-school students (Yates, 2004) and 12–17% in the college age population (Whitlock, Eckenrode, & Silverman, 2006). Noch and Prinstein (2005) estimate rates ranging from 14 to 39% in adolescent community samples and 40 to 61% in adolescent psychiatric settings. Skegg (2005) reports that between 5 and 9% of adolescents in Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom have self-injured with few of the acts being bona fide failed suicide attempts. Alzenman and Jensen (2007) report incidence rates among college students to be as high as 41% in some samples and note that self-injurious behavior for these individuals often began between the ages of 10 and 14.

While self-injury has been seen mostly in young women, prevalence rates for male self-injurers appear to be on the rise in recent years (Whitlock, Eckenrode, & Silverman, 2006). Self-injury is becoming more common in males, according to McAllister (2003), "perhaps because more males are identifying as surviving childhood abuse; males are becoming socialized to be emotionally literate; and society is becoming less tolerant of acting out behaviors such as verbal and physical abuse" (p. 181). The implication here is that while men have traditionally externalized their emotional distress through *acting out* behaviors—aggression directed outward toward others—we are seeing a greater incidence of them turning their aggression inward by using methods once preferred primarily by women. While we primarily use the feminine pronoun throughout this chapter to refer to self-injurers, we do so more out of literary convenience than to purposefully exclude males from being at risk for self-injury.

The Development and Phenomenology of Self-Injury

An adolescent's decision to turn to self-injury as a means of expressing one's distress and managing his or her pain has no single determinant. It is a complex phenomenon that is emerging in the lives of individuals from all backgrounds and socioeconomic classes. Self-injury can be said to result from a unique combination of factors: the person's genetic vulnerabilities, the quality of his or her caregiving relationships and childhood environment, and the traumatic experiences to which he or she may have been exposed (D'Onofrio, 2007). This being said, what we do know is that self-injurers who present for treatment typically tend to be women in their twenties or early thirties who usually began to self-injure in their early teens. They tend to be from middle and upper class socioeconomic backgrounds and tend to be intelligent and well educated. While generally articulate, these individuals paradoxically seem to lack a language for their inner, emotional life. Additionally, they have difficulty in forming and maintaining intimate relationships, suffer from a host of other issues such as depression, anxiety, mood swings, eating disorders, poor impulse control, low self-esteem, anger, and feel profoundly disappointed in themselves.

Most important of all the characteristics, however, is that many self-injuring adolescents report having experienced some form of childhood maltreatment, neglect, or trauma (Conterio & Lader, 1998; Farber, 2000; Hodgson, 2004; Noch & Prinstein, 2005; Stone & Sias, 2003; Walsh & Rosen, 1988). While the scope of this chapter prohibits an in-depth discussion of the host of developmental factors that can contribute to the emergence of self-injurious behavior, it will address what we believe to be the cornerstone in the development of self-injury, that is, the exposure to trauma in its many and varied forms (Schore, 1994, 2003a, 2003b).

Rethinking the Notion of Trauma

We know that the exposure to trauma, especially in childhood, can have a profound effect on the biological, psychological, and interpersonal development of the individual (Briere & Spinnazola, 2005; Cicchetti & Toth 2005; Cook et al., 2005; Farber, 2000; Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, & Target, 2002; Paivio & McCulloch, 2004; van der Kolk, 2005). The exposure to trauma—both in its acute and chronic forms—can derail normative developmental patterns in children and can provide the neuropsychological groundwork for dysregulation across primary domains of functioning.

Trauma is typically understood as resulting from the exposure to an acute event that involves the possibility of incurring serious injury or death or where one's physical integrity is threatened. Being physically assaulted, raped, or shot at would all be examples of acute events that may lead the victim to develop symptoms of post-traumatic stress such as depression, anxiety, fearfulness, and withdrawal.

Not all self-injurers, however, experience acute traumatic events. Rather, the trauma to which they may have been exposed is more frequently of a subtle and chronic nature that takes place within the home and that colors their day-to-day existence. For example, a child may have a depressed mother who, because of her own condition, is prevented from being psychologically and emotionally available to the child in early life. As a result, the child is not able to attach securely to a caring other and develops fearfulness and dread in being in the world. She comes to believe that the world is a precarious place and must learn to protect herself from it. She must also learn to make sense of her situation on her own as others are not able to help her manage her survival. The child comes to believe that her needs cannot be fulfilled through the intimate relationships in her life—that she will not find soothing or comfort by reaching out to the caregiver as the caregiver is not emotionally present and attuned. She feels left to her own devices and learns that she must manage her fears and anxieties alone. The child may also have the experience of being raised in a home where an alcoholic father is verbally or physically abusive and, as a result, must be forever on guard to avoid being victim to her father's rage-filled episodes. There is rarely a moment when the child can feel safe in her own skin as she must remain vigilant to the dangers that come from the unpredictable parent.

The chronic nature of the abuse that can take place in the home, whether sexual or physical, in the more extreme forms, or neglect and emotional maltreatment,

in the more subtle forms, is highly traumatizing for children. Maltreating families traumatize their children through the very nature of relationships in the family, the trauma is interpersonal (van der Kolk, 2005). Caregivers need not be acutely traumatizing, that is, there is no need for the parent to ever lay a hand on the child for the relationship to be abusive. Rather, it is the nature of their presence, or lack thereof, and the words they use to relate to the child that traumatize. These early social interactions within the family setting become "imprinted" onto the child's developing self and serve as templates for all subsequent emotional interactions with others. Parents' active verbal abuse or their emotional disengagement and failure to acknowledge and attune to the inner world of the child communicates a powerful message. Unlike the child who emerges from secure caregiving relationships where the parents clearly communicate in their interactions that the child deserves to be protected and cared for, and where the child learns to do the same for herself, the child who has experienced an invalidation of the self hears something very different. The implicit message that is communicated is that she lacks inherent worth and is not deserving of the caregiver's attention and kindness. In other words, the real self of the child is essentially disconfirmed. As a result, the likelihood is increased that she may become depressed, vulnerable to medical illness, and that she develops dysfunctional ways of solving problems and coping with the vicissitudes of everyday life (D'Onofrio, 2007).

The experience of maltreatment ultimately invalidates the child's personhood. By dismissing and trivializing the child, maltreatment communicates that his or her inner life and private experiences are unacceptable. From this experience, the child internalizes the message that the neglect she receives is somehow brought on by her own character and personality defects, that she *deserves* it (Linehan, 1993). The child comes to believe not so much that she has *done* something wrong but that she *is* something wrong. And, when one questions the realness of one's inner world and one's own right to *be*, turning to the body becomes an attractive recourse for some of these individuals to prove to themselves that they exist. Feeling invalidated by others, self-injurers attempt to validate themselves through the pain they inflict and the blood they cause to flow from their own bodies.

The Developmental Effects of Exposure to Trauma

The exposure to trauma is the most highly correlated factor with non-suicidal self-injurious behavior (Connors, 2000; Conterio & Lader, 1998; Favazza, 1996; Walsh, 2006). However, not all individuals who have been traumatized become self-injurers. While trauma, especially developmental trauma, may set the conditions for NSSI, caution is nonetheless warranted in assuming a cause and effect relationship. It remains important, however, to note the many ways in which trauma impacts the various domains of functioning on the lives of children and adolescents. Cook and colleagues (2005) identify seven domains of impairment in children who have been exposed to developmental trauma. These domains include: *Attachment*,

Affect Regulation, *Dissociation*, *Biology*, *Behavioral Control*, *Cognition*, and *Self-Concept*.

To briefly summarize, Cook et al. (2005) report that children exposed to complex trauma have difficulties in forming healthy attachments to others. Their distrust and suspiciousness of others and problems in maintaining boundaries create significant interpersonal problems. Additionally, these children typically have difficulty with perspective taking and in being attuned to the emotional needs of others. They have difficulty regulating their emotional lives. That is, they have trouble identifying and labeling their feelings and struggle with communicating their wants and needs. Furthermore, these children have a tendency to dissociate—they shift states of consciousness when emotionally distressed and disconnect from feelings experienced in the moment. They tend to not feel "real" at these times and have impaired memory for the emotionally charged aspects of their experiences.

Children exposed to trauma tend to also suffer from sleep disturbances, eating disorders, substance abuse, depression, and anxiety. They have increased medical and somatosensory problems, and tend to experience emotional difficulties at the level of the body. Common too is difficulty in managing their impulses, their aggression toward others, and in following rules. In terms of their cognitive development, children exposed to trauma demonstrate attention deficits, lack a sustained sense of curiosity, and have problems focusing on and completing tasks. They have difficulties in processing novel information and exhibit delays in language development as well. Finally, and perhaps, most problematic of all is that children who are developmentally traumatized lack a continuous, predictable sense of self; they have a poor sense of where they end and others begin. They suffer disturbances in body image and general low self-esteem and are often wracked with a sense of shame, guilt, and self-loathing.

The Psychological Functions of Self-Injury

Self-injury serves a number of psychological functions. First, self-injury is often used to regulate one's affective states (D'Onofrio, 2007; Farber, 2000; Favazza, 1996). As noted above, self-injuring adolescents enact their destructive behaviors when in a state of emotional turmoil where they feel overwhelmed by escalating anxiety and unpleasant feelings. After they injure themselves they report feeling a deep sense of relief and find themselves returning to a state of emotional equilibrium. In this sense, self-injury is a way of soothing their upset or agitated emotional states.

Second, self-injury is a way of managing dissociative states. That is, many self-injurers report that immediately before they injure themselves they feel as though they exist outside of their bodies. They report an "emotional deadness"—a numbness to their feelings and to their internal emotional states. The act of cutting the skin jolts them out of the numbness and enables them to feel again. It serves the paradoxical function of actually making them feel alive.

Given that many self-injurers have been victims of trauma, another major function of self-injury is to gain mastery over one's past trauma (Farber, 2000). One of the more devastating effects of being relationally traumatized is the lack of control the victim feels over the abuser. The victim, the child, was powerless over the sexually abusing adult or the neglectful or violent parent. Victims of chronic abuse or trauma, in effect, often develop an attachment to the state of being traumatized. The act of wounding one's own body, then, functions as a recapitulation of the original trauma. It keeps the psychological attachment to the pain of the past trauma alive, but, the control of the pain in the present is in the victim's hands. Therefore, self-injurers unconsciously repeat the trauma they experienced by attacking their bodies; however, in contrast to the original abuse, the trauma is controlled and managed by them which, on some level, makes the wounding safe and permissible.

Self-injurers also tend to have difficulties in developing and maintaining healthy attachments in their relationships. Due to the nature of their insecure early attachments and difficulties in relationships, they generally have poorly developed methods of communicating thoughts and feelings. Perhaps, rather than being met with a receptive ear or a warm hug when upset, these children may have been met with further invalidation or abuse. As a result, they never developed an emotional language that could communicate to others the state of their inner lives, their feelings, thoughts, and needs. Self-injury, then, becomes a powerful way to communicate the emotional pain one is in. It is dramatic, shocking, and provocative and it often elicits reaction from others. More often than not, such reactions are of disgust, fear, and revulsion. But for the individual who feels voiceless and powerless, who does not feel as if there is anyone who will take her (and her pain) seriously, the communicative elements of scars on her arms are indeed powerful. These visual shouts communicate two simultaneous messages from the self-injurer: she sends out a cry for help to others and, at the same time, she confirms to herself, as others pull away as a result of her behavior, that she is not worth helping (D'Onofrio, 2007; Farber, 2000; Suyemoto, 1998). Her actual behavior and her fantasy of her own worthlessness fuel the self-fulfilling prophecy that plays out very poignantly.

Finally, the act of self-injury serves as a transitional object of sorts between the inner world of the empty self and the hope of connecting with others on the outside (Suyemoto, 1998). That is, it represents the desire to be heard, nurtured, and validated by others. It is a means of searching for an identity and for a sense of belongingness, both of which the self-injurer desperately seeks. In fact, being a self-injurer becomes an act of self-definition. Many self-injurers lack a coherent sense of who they are, they experience their "sense of self" as "empty", and it is through the act of self-injury that they legitimize their identity. They want to assert that they are human beings, people who have been wounded and abandoned. And, by continuing to wound their bodies they create for themselves the identity of outsiders: people who are different and "don't fit in." Lacking a clear sense of self, the self-injuring adolescent turns to the body and uses her physical being to bring greater coherence to her emotional life in an attempt to reconstruct her personal narrative and find integrity as a person.

Engaging and Assessing the Adolescent Self-Injurer

Self-injury is an effective short-term method utilized by some individuals to soothe their psychological pain. This pain is rarely articulated through words; it is a pain that is often experienced by the individual in amorphous and non-verbal ways. It is somehow known and experienced but is unformulated and inexpressible. It is processed through unconsciously motivated actions and experienced through the sensations stored in the body (van der Kolk, 2005). Because self-injury is an effective short-term response to the tension buildup in the body, it can often take on an addictive quality. As such, it is self-reinforcing because it removes the discomfort of intolerable affective states, and, as with any addiction, relinquishing the behavior that in some distorted way satisfies the body's thirst for relief, is a terrifying proposition. Therefore, adolescents who have come to rely on self-injury as a primary means of self-soothing resist engaging with others who seek to help them give up these behaviors.

Another issue complicating the relationship between the helper and self-injurers is that these individuals have a preexisting history of unstable relationships fueled by the belief that no one really cares for them. As a result, they generally have great difficulty in trusting those who approach them with offer of help. The helper's attempts at engaging the self-injurer are further complicated by the nature of the act itself. Cutting one's body and drawing blood pushes people away! It is a primitive and disturbing behavior that can test even the most seasoned counselor to remain engaged in spite of being repelled by the acts. In order to be effective, the helper must begin by understanding that the starting point for engagement is making contact with the individual behind the behavior. While the behavior itself may be repulsive and distancing, the focus should be placed on the person who is in pain, and not the behavior. In being willing to make contact with the person obscured by the behavior, we become, what Miller (2005) calls, *compassionate witness*es to the difficult life journey that the adolescent has been on and represent for her hope for the possibility of real connection and healing in the future.

The Primacy of Relationship

In *I and Thou*, Martin Buber (1958) reminds us that "All real living is meeting" (p. 11). Meeting an individual who perhaps has never been authentically met is a monumental task. How does one meet and be present to one who desires a connection with others yet, at the same time, vehemently rejects it? As a start, it is imperative that the helper does not approach the individual from the "I'm going to help you fix this problem" stance but rather with the intention and attitude of wanting to listen. The helper should want to listen to and learn about the hidden life of the individual. The helping process begins with a willingness to *be there*, to listen to her voice (however muted it may be), and to communicate the desire to want to know her. It is difficult to trust others who may have an agenda for us or want to "fix" us. Those who may simply want to know us, on the other hand,

may create greater transparency. Knowing and loving are essentially inseparable. Therefore, approaching the self-injurer with an openness to receive her is an act of welcoming and by adopting a stance of unconditional receptivity we may welcome the adolescent into "being" as she may have never been welcomed before.

Guidelines for Engagement

Creating a space where the adolescent can tell her story and begin to rewrite her personal narrative does not ensure that she will engage in return. In order to be effective, the helper must have some sense of what roles he or she can play, what can be expected from the self-injurer, and what kinds of responses would be counterproductive in the engagement process. First, the helper must understand that self-injurious behaviors are usually well-entrenched rituals in the adolescent's behavioral repertoire. To expect that the behavior will end quickly will lead to disappointment. The initial goal for the frontline responder is not to "fix" or "cure" but to engage and understand. It is important to note that because the behavior is so well established and deeply rooted, the school counselor should not take on the individual for ongoing counseling or therapy. While the groundwork for the counseling process is typically laid by those who initially respond to the self-injuring adolescent, we know that the work of healing is intense, may require years of treatment, and is, therefore, beyond the scope of the mental health professional working in the school (D'Onofrio, 2007; Walsh, 2006). The role of the school counselor is to help establish links with appropriate avenues of care for the student, which usually means helping the student connect with consistent, ongoing treatment with a therapist in the community who understands the nature and processes of self-injury.

In the course of engaging the self-injuring adolescent, one can expect a number of reactions from the injurer, some of which can be quite unsettling. First, it is unrealistic to expect an adolescent to speak openly about behaviors that are emotionally charged and filled with shame. Rather than exert pressure on the individual to speak, one can adopt a stance of what Conterio and Lader (1998) refer to as "helpful empathy." The adolescent should not be interrogated but, instead, should be listened to. The fundamental message to be communicated to the injurer is that of concern and that the helper is willing and interested in learning more about what is going on in the adolescent's life. It is merely an invitation. If the adolescent has a closer relationship with a colleague and is willing to speak further to that colleague, then the helper's role is to encourage that option and facilitate the connection (D'Onofrio, 2007).

The frontline responder can also expect extreme forms of relating from the self-injurer. In other words, because self-injurers typically have a history of unstable and volatile relationships, the helper may experience a wide range of reactive engagement behaviors from the adolescent. At one moment she may seem attached, committed, grateful and, at the next, distant, angry, disengaged, and rejecting of help (Linehan, 1993). The helper who is unprepared for the mixture and intensity of feelings may feel as if on an emotional rollercoaster ride from which he or she might

wish to disembark. Bateman and Fonagy (2004) suggest that remaining engaged while maintaining boundaries with the client is the starting point for managing these extreme affective states. They recommend that the helper be direct with the self-injurers to help them become aware of their inner states, help them begin to label their feelings, and help them recognize the impact their affective highs and lows have on others. They further recommend that the helper not react to interpersonal hostility by retaliating or closing off communication. Self-injurers can be highly volatile individuals and may test the patience of even the most seasoned professional. It is imperative, therefore, that helpers seek consultation and ongoing support from colleagues and supervisors throughout the process so as to reduce the likelihood of burnout in working with such a difficult population.

Furthermore, there are several counterproductive responses that helpers should avoid. First, it is unhelpful to "demand" that the self-injurious behavior stop. This behavior often has an addictive quality and is performed because the individual experiences some relief for their distress. To ask her to stop leaves her without a viable alternative for emotional soothing and demanding this change can often turn into a power struggle (Connors, 2000).

Second, it is recommended that the helper not "rescue" or do for the self-injurer what she might need to do for herself. Self-injurers live a painful life and have, more often than not, suffered from neglect or abuse or, at the very least, from emotional detachment. Their pain may be communicated in both subtle and powerful ways. For those in the helping professions who may have a special sensitivity to others' pain, the desire to want to remove that pain from the sufferer can take on a driven quality and consume the individual. It is important to resist the urge to take the pain away quickly. Rather, the work with self-injurers is about establishing a collaborative relationship where the injurer has some sense of control over her own healing process (Connors, 2000; D'Onofrio, 2007). It seems counterintuitive to place some of the control over the healing process in the hands of someone who actively cuts into his or her body. Treatment is most productive when the self-injurer comes to trust that the helper will honor her pace and her personal approach to her own recovery.

Third, it is important for the helper not to respond to the self-injurer from a place of shock, fear, or revulsion at the behaviors themselves. To be overly reactive to the potentially provocative behaviors can communicate to the injurer that "I am easily flustered by your behavior and I can't tolerate you or your pain." This may again inadvertently communicate to the adolescent that no one can handle what she has to offer and that she is alone in her journey.

Fourth, it is counterproductive to attribute self-injury to "manipulation" and to respond in kind. Self-injurers do not know how to communicate well with others and have not learned how to have their needs met in direct ways. Instead, they have learned that to get what they want or need, emotionally or otherwise, they must do it indirectly and, perhaps, even surreptitiously. The reality is that they are the way they are for a reason and the work of the frontline professional is to begin to make contact with the person hidden behind the manipulative or self-destructive behavior. Appreciating this perspective allows the helper to be less ego-involved in

the engagement process and to be less reactive to what may appear to be personal slights, attacks, or manipulations.

Finally, the effective helper approaches the self-injurer with the understanding that the problem lies in the unspoken suffering behind the self-destructive acts and, as such, the helper can become a sort of "compassionate witness" for that suffering person. Presence and attentiveness, the ability to draw firm but flexible boundaries, the ability to tolerate the dark and destructive sides of human nature, and the belief that one's ability to help is greater than the self-injurer's resistance to that help are some of the essential ingredients needed for the successful engagement of these individuals (Connors, 2000; D'Onofrio, 2007; Farber, 2000).

The Assessment

The intervention process with self-injurers, particularly in a school setting, consists of four central components: *containment, engagement, assessment*, and *planning next steps*. This section presents a general framework for conducting a comprehensive assessment of self-injurers which includes a brief description of each of the core components of *The Self-Injury Assessment Checklist (SIAC)* (see D'Onofrio, 2007). It is important to note that these components are not necessarily discrete, sequential phases. In fact, there is significant overlap in how they are carried out. However, for purposes of organization and clarity, they are presented below as distinct processes.

Containment

Self-injurers may come to the attention of frontline responders in a number of ways in the school setting. They may present directly to the adult and ask for help, a fellow student may approach an adult out of concern for their friend who is cutting, or, as is also sometimes the case, an adult may accidentally see the scars or burns on the adolescents arms or legs and report it to the school nurse or counselor. Regardless of the manner in which a self-injurious adolescent is identified, the first part of the assessment process is to determine whether the situation is an immediate crisis. Has the individual just injured herself? Is she bleeding? How serious are the wounds? What level of medical attention does she require? Might this have been a suicide attempt? Have other members of the school community been exposed to this act of self-harm and been vicariously traumatized and, therefore, might they need attention as well? Who needs to be identified to assist with the situation (e.g., parents or other school personnel)? The purpose of the containment phase is to triage the situation, secure the safety of the self-injurer and other members of the community, and contact the appropriate people in order to prevent the incident from escalating into a larger crisis.

Engagement

Should the self-injurer be brought to the frontline responder's attention in a non-crisis situation, the responder needs to remain cognizant of the importance of the

issues regarding engagement discussed above and to adopt a stance of what Walsh (2006) refers to as a "respectful curiosity." He notes that "curiosity" conveys an "attitude of wanting to know more about a problem rather than wanting the problem to go away quickly. To be helpful, curiosity has to be tempered and respectful. Interest that comes across as prurient or thrill seeking is aversive (or too reinforcing) for most self-injurers" (p. 77). The adolescent's own language should be used to discuss the behavior and the self-injurer should be allowed to take the lead in the discussion. The primary goal of this phase is to encourage continued conversation. The helper's implicit communication to the self-injurer that he or she is interested in learning more and hearing what the adolescent has to say sets the groundwork for developing trust and finding some initial leverage in being able to help the student. The subtext of the communication should be that the helper is willing to be present and wants to engage the self-injurer and that he is knowledgeable about self-injury and will not be shocked or horrified in discussing the behaviors (for sample interventions to be used in the engagement process, see D'Onofrio, 2007).

Assessment

The purpose of the initial assessment of a self-injurer in a school setting is to gather information about the individual and his or her situation so that the helper has as complete a picture as possible of the individual's assets, liabilities, and supports in order to effectively and expediently plan next steps in his or her care. It is important that the frontline responder obtain the needed information in an assertive yet compassionate manner. A balanced style will communicate confidence and competence that may be helpful in sustaining that sense of emerging trust (D'Onofrio, 2007). A comprehensive assessment should include exploring the core domains of functioning. These domains include the *Behavioral Domain*, *the Affective Domain*, *the Cognitive Domain*, *the Biological/Psychiatric Domain*, and *the Environmental Domain* (Walsh, 2006). (For an extended discussion of the assessment process as well as a listing of sample questions, see D'Onofrio, 2007.)

Assessing the multiple domains of the self-injurer's life assists in determining the severity of the problem, its history and course, and the particular forces in the individual's life that both maintain the behavior and that can serve as resources to help in the resolution of the self-injurer's struggles. It is imperative that the helper remain conversational, flexible, and collaborative in gathering the information and should communicate receptivity to whatever the self-injurer may have to offer (Connors, 2000; D'Onofrio, 2007).

Planning Next Steps

The final step of the process for the frontline responder is to plan for next steps and be ready to take action. Next steps may range anywhere from seeking immediate medical care as the wounds were made recently and require urgent attention to deciding to meet with the adolescent the next day or later in the week to continue

the conversation as the issues are clearly not acute. Ultimately though, beginning with the initial contact, the helper needs to focus on ways to facilitate a referral for appropriate treatment.

Making treatment referrals for self-injurers can be challenging, however. A strong enough connection with the adolescent must be made such that she trusts that the helper has her best interest at heart and that the clinician to whom she is being referred can also be trusted. To ensure a smooth transition, the helper should have identified clinicians in the community who have an expertise in treating self-injury and who are available to take on new clients. Goodness of fit early in treatment is essential in preventing the client from terminating prematurely. Obviously, in working with minors, helpers must also engage their parents and enlist them in the process. This, unfortunately, can be a challenge in itself as some parents may be resistant to working with school personnel in dealing with their child's mental health, as, on some level, they may see their child's problems as a negative reflection of themselves and their parenting.

Creating Pathways to Care

The frontline professional in schools often becomes the person most responsible for coordinating a response to the self-injurer. The challenge in coordinating care for the self-injurer in the school setting requires that one also be able to work with the self-injurer's parents, with teachers, and other school personnel. Working with each of these groups can offer its own challenges. For example, parents may be uncooperative, school administrators may see the issue as a disciplinary one, other students or teachers may be inappropriately intrusive and interfere with the assessment of the adolescent. It is imperative, therefore, that schools develop response protocols with procedures for intervening with difficult student issues and in managing the various stakeholders in the process.

More specifically, schools can create mental health crisis teams where members have designated roles in the assessment and referral process. Different members of the team can be identified to assess the student, contact and work with the parents, and make decisions as to the appropriateness of the student remaining in school given his or her level of distress. The crisis team can be composed of counselors, nurses, and administrators with each member being designated to perform a specific function on the team. Together they should be responsible for developing procedures to be followed when a self-injuring or other troubled student is identified. Most importantly, the team should take the lead in creating a school culture of openness and responsiveness to student problems by educating both students and staff about the warning signs for identifying people in distress. Everyone in the school community should know the steps to follow in bringing troubled individuals to the attention of the appropriate professionals so that they can receive the help they need (D'Onofrio, 2007).

Conclusion

Working with self-injurers in a school setting can be difficult. The volatility and emotional instability of these individuals can evoke a sense of helplessness and despair in those who try to help them. And, when this happens, the needs of these troubled young people can go unmet. In order for the frontline professional to be effective and avoid burnout, schools must provide both professional and personal support for their counselors and healthcare staff. Certainly, having written policies and procedures in place is a start. Above all, however, school administrators must take their students' mental health issues seriously and understand that the mental healthcare needs of some students are quite complex and may require an increased investment of resources and an openness to considering other, non-traditional approaches to their students' care.

Finally, working with self-injurers requires that frontline responders work to maintain hope in spite of the hopelessness self-injurers may feel; that they understand that working with them will at times be tumultuous and chaotic; and that they work to affirm the adolescent in pain in spite of his or her resistance to help. In the end, the most valuable gift helpers can give their self-injuring clients is to listen to their muted voices, seek to understand the pain of their broken spirits, and to walk faithfully beside with them as they struggle along on their personal journeys.

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Chapter 52
Spirituality, Meaning and Counselling Young People

Ciarán G. Dalton

Abstract This chapter attempts to highlight spirituality as an integral part of the human condition and consequently the counselling experience. I focus on spirituality as an aspect to the person which is present regardless of where the person lives or what the person believes. In this sense, it is an attempt to uncover some universal principles regarding spirituality which transcend race, background and creed because they are applicable to each individual no matter who they are or where they live. This chapter will also argue that spirituality and meaning-seeking go hand in hand. Finally, the chapter examines some of the implications of recognising spirituality as a dimension of the counselling process with young people.

Introduction

The past number of years has seen the awaking of an interest in the area of human spirituality. This chapter will attempt to highlight spirituality as an integral part of the human condition. It will try to focus on spirituality as an aspect to the person which is present regardless of where the person lives or what the person believes. In this sense it is an attempt to uncover some universal principles regarding spirituality which transcend race, background and creed because they are applicable to each individual no matter who they are or where they live. The author would like to say from the beginning that this chapter is an attempt to go back to the basics of an understanding of spirituality as it exists within the person before it finds expression in whatever way the individual chooses to or is formed to, give its expression. It has been recognised that it is difficult to write or speak about spirituality because it is an area that dwells in the mystery of the person as a part of an overall mystery of creation and as such it is resistant to language (Thorne, 1990).

I will examine spirituality as a transcendental quality that humans have always expressed and I will point to spirituality as a necessary part of a holistic understanding of young people. Rooted in the core of what it means to be human is the spiritual

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and out of this comes a young person's need to make sense of life and experience. This chapter will also argue that spirituality and meaning seeking go hand in hand. Finally, the chapter will examine some of the implications of recognising spirituality as a dimension of the counselling process with young people.

What is Spirituality?

It is hard to find a satisfactory definition of spirituality because every understanding of it is as varied as the number of people that exist. The spiritual side to a person is deeply personal and despite the fact that it can find expression within the context of a group or community, it is also quite individual. Some see spirituality as a religious thing lived out in terms of relationship with God whilst others see it in terms of ethical, political or personal values that are not motivated in any way by religion (Dorr, 2004, p. 13).

Elsewhere, de Souza (2004) points out that a great misfortune of modern times is that the person has lost touch with the spiritual aspect of being. She points out that when spirituality is neglected it does not evaporate and go away and the tension produced in trying to keep the spiritual at bay can result in symptoms like obsessive behaviour, addictions, acts of violence and a loss of meaning (p. 122). Drawing on the work of several theorists, de Souza (2004) cites Maria Harris who defines spirituality as "a way of being in the world in the light of the mystery at the core of the universe", it is experienced as both personal and communal and it leads to strong interest in issues that relate to matters of "justice and the non-human universe" (p. 124). How one interprets and makes sense of this experience of mystery is determined and shaped by a personal belief system but what is important to note here is that spirituality is being defined in terms of both an internal and an external frame of reference. Drawing on the findings of previous research into the relevance of the spiritual to an integrated understanding of the self de Souza argues that the spiritual dimension complements the intellectual and the emotional dimensions of human intelligence (2004, p. 128). She defines this aspect of the person, the spiritual quotient, in terms of a separate but integral form of intelligence. She goes on to argue that, in fact, this quotient is essential to a healthy functioning of both the intellectual and emotional quotients. de Souza offers an understanding of human spirituality which goes a long way to seeing it in terms of something universal, that is, cross-cultural and common to every person of all formal faiths and none. She explains that spirituality makes up for a short fall in areas where intelligence and emotion, either combined or separately, are not enough. It is spirituality that allows the person to be creative and to express imagination. Citing Zohar and Marshall, she goes on to say that:

> It allows us to play with the boundaries, playing an "infinite game". SQ (spiritual quotient) gives us our ability to discriminate. It gives us our moral sense, an ability to temper rigid rules with understanding and compassion and an equal ability to see when compassion and understanding have their limits. We use SQ to wrestle with questions of good and evil and

to envision unrealised possibilities- to dream, to aspire, to raise ourselves out of the mud (de Souza, 2004, p. 128).

A sense of the divine has always been important to how a vast number of people interpret and live out their spirituality. In fact, I would contend that despite the religious expression of spirituality since earliest times, it is not necessary that each person in the world holds the same (or even any) religious belief or is part of the same church or faith group. While membership of a church or faith group is a common expression of spirituality, these are not necessary. In fact the spiritual side of the human person will exist regardless of the individual's religious faith or commitment. This is to say that spirituality is part of the person, it is a part of what it means to be human and it can find expression and fulfilment in many different ways. And so there must be things that can be said about spirituality that hold true regardless of how a person chooses to, or is brought up to, express his or herself as a spiritual being. Victor Frankl defined spirituality as a quality that is "a specifically human phenomenon, in contrast to the phenomena that we share with other animals. In other words, the 'spiritual' is what is human in man" (2000, p. 28).

Transcendence

From earliest times, humanity has looked at life and felt that there was purpose and meaning to all things. Human history is punctuated with attempts to come to terms with this sense of "something beyond". Whilst the person experienced him or herself as part of the physical world, there was also an experience that was inexplicable and non-physical. This sense of the beyond was also an experience of "something within" and humanity has always had a desire to seek for an ultimate meaning or purpose. The Acropolis in Athens, the Pyramids at Giza, The burial chamber in Newgrange, temples to the Sun high in the Andes, Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome can all be seen as monuments to this fundamental human need. While these monuments can be seen as part of religious expression they do attest to the fact that humanity has wrestled with the need to get in touch with something that is both buried within and at the same time "sensed" beyond. There is within the person a pull towards transcendence, which is part and parcel of being (Frankl, 2000, p. 68). This transcendent quality is part of being human and is caught up in the spiritual quest to find meaning and purpose to life. The notion that there is a non-physical (spiritual) aspect to the nature of the person that is both inward looking and outward seeking was noted by Thomas Groome who argued that the person has an urge to live as a spiritual being. He contends that trying to live this way is a journey where the individual goes into his or her depths and this finds expression through relationship with others and with The Other (1998, p. 325).

A key characteristic to each human person is the ability and the need to ask foundational questions relating to life and existence, such as, why is there something rather than nothing? Why are we born or why do we die, and why is it that people suffer? (Cassidy, 2001, p. 21). Young people are natural "questioners". It

would seem that finding ones place in the world, developing new and integrating inherited values begins with the process of asking questions. Discovering the need to articulate these questions is a milestone on the human journey through life, a journey that is in many ways a spiritual quest. The motivation behind the asking of such fundamental questions is a feeling of restlessness deep within the spiritual core. Within each person there is a restlessness or a "disease" which is never quite satiated. Saint Augustine put his finger on this when he wrote that "You have made us for yourself, and the heart of man is restless until it finds rest in you" (Collins, 1999, p. 15). Augustine felt that humanity was created with this restlessness and that what the person experiences is part of a transcendent aspect to the person that has something beyond as its ultimate destiny. Augustine used a theistic lens to interpret this restlessness. People from other backgrounds may use a different lens. However, what is important to note is the attempt to put shape on a human experience, and this is an experience which transcends belief systems and religious practice. It is an experience of the spiritual dimension of the person.

Spirituality and Wholeness

In an ever-changing fast paced world there is an increasing need to try and ensure that the person does not loose hold of what it means to be whole. There are many layers to the person and each one needs to be nourished. It can be difficult to maintain the tension between all constituent parts that contribute to human wholeness. What is it that defines a person in terms of "wholeness"? If a person is involved in an accident, which necessitates the amputation of a limb, is he or she rendered less whole? The answer to this is obviously no but this has a bearing on how we understand spirituality. The wholeness of a person is not a physical thing, and this implies that there is a part to the person that is not physical. There is a non-physical or metaphysical aspect to the person that needs to be addressed if the person is to be understood as a whole. To ignore or deny this metaphysical side leads to the development of an uneven picture in the understanding of what it means to be a person. There is a non-physical essence of what it means to be human and therefore wholeness is rooted in the part of the person that is spiritual. Victor Frankl stated that, in fact, the core of the person is spiritual and that the person's "physicality" is built around it (2000, p. 34).

Spirituality and Meaning Seeking

Spirituality can be expressed through the way a person lives his or her life and the values and moral code that he or she tries to apply to actions and choices. Working with young people is both a privilege and a responsibility. It is a privilege and a responsibility to be engaged with people who are beginning to develop a set of values which will sustain them as they live their lives. Donal Dorr suggests that there

are "ingredients" that need to be addressed in order for the person to find spiritual nourishment and fulfilment (2004, p. 35). I would stress that these apply no matter how a person finds expression for his or her spiritual self, as an individual, as part of a church or faith group or as part of some secular organisation. For Dorr these ingredients of personal spirituality include a respect for nature and the planet and a sense that the person is in some way part of the fabric of life on earth. Spirituality is also expressed through care for others especially those who suffer from want, illness and oppression. Another sign of spirituality is a thirst for justice and a striving towards peace and a need to be peaceful in how one may deal with everyday situations. Dorr also points towards a respect for the individual and his or her cultural difference, an openness to change and growth through challenge and a desire to develop personal qualities, virtues and attitudes as aspects of how human spirituality finds expression (2004, p. 36).

It is important to note that spirituality in itself is not necessarily about theology or ecclesiology. Nor is it necessarily about religion or faith or any codified ideology. It can involve these things but it is not defined by them. They are not essential to an understanding of spirituality, which sees itself as a part of the human condition. And so before theology or faith come into play, spirituality, as part of the human system, is present and active. Spirituality deals with the part of human nature that has a source in creativity and which finds itself in relation to all things, even the "moving force of the universe" (Thorne, 1990, p. 78). Is it possible to come to an understanding of what it is that defines the human person? Is it consciousness or the ability to reason and evaluate? Whatever defines humanity, what is inescapable is that the person possesses the ability to seek meaning in every situation and event in life. The person also has the ability to seek a meaning to existence. I suggest that this "meaning seeking" is an essential aspect to human spirituality. It is part of the non-physical process of "being" and is as important as any other faculty that the person may possess.

Frankl (2000) argued that the feeling that there is no meaning or purpose to life is a spiritual distress and results in existential despair (p.134). Despair itself is a bleak place to be and it can be characterised as a sense that there is no anchor to life, no goal to aim towards and no ultimate reason or purpose to life and being. Karl Marx saw the seeking of an ultimate meaning in the form of a "higher power" (in the form of religion) as "the opium of the masses". He felt that the pain of the realisation that there is no ultimate or existential meaning to life is so devastating to the psyche that down through the ages, humanity has used a belief in there being something more to life as an anaesthetic and antidote. Sigmund Freud also held the belief that religion was a form of neurosis and that if a person wanted to be healthy it would be necessary to abandon any theistic interpretation to life (Collins, 1999, p. 152).

However, to acknowledge that the person is meaning seeking, whether the search is in terms of religion or not, is to suggest that he or she is concerned with something outside of him or herself. This "outward looking" is the first step in moving away from despair and spiritual distress. By focusing on something outside of him or herself, the person is beginning to get in touch with a fundamental

characteristic of the human condition. For Frankl (2000) to take on the spiritual quest of meaning seeking is to engage in the process of becoming self-actualised (p. 138). Carl Jung, in contrast to Freud, took the view that the person had the need for *religious* experience and that in fact without it he or she could develop a neurosis (Collins, 1999, p. 152). I argue that Jung's viewpoint is one that supports the notion that some expression of the transcendent drive within the person is healthy and is intrinsically natural in the human condition. Jung was not alone in this. Victor Frankl, when reflecting on his experience in Auschwitz during the Second World War, began to realise that some prisoners were better able to survive than others. He discovered that those who had some sense of a higher meaning than just human experience could survive greater hardship whereas those that saw no ultimate meaning to life and experience lost the will to live and died (Collins, 1999, p. 153).

Illness and the Meaning Seeking

As has been mentioned earlier, it can be argued that there is a core to the person that is spiritual. It is possible to say that this is the part of the person that traditionally is referred to as the soul. It is in this inner part of being that the person tries to address the questions that are fundamental to human existence, questions relating to meaning and purpose. There are some human experiences that bring the person into acute contact with the meaning-seeking faculty within. One such experience is that of suffering. The experience of suffering is one which goes to the heart of an attempt to question the existence of meaning in life. A person can suffer an illness, a trauma or a life-changing bereavement and physically recover but the experience can leave a profound mark on the person's spirit. Spiritual healing calls for more than medical or physical attention. It calls for a search for meaning within the painful experience itself so that something can be drawn from it which makes it possible to continue in the face of suffering.

Illness and in particular, terminal illness are life events which bring the person face to face with fundamental questions relating to mortality and the purpose to life. They are events that push the individual to seek for meaning. Illness can affect a young person on many levels. They might be ill themselves. They may be aware of a friend, peer, classmate or family member who is ill. The onset of serious illness can impact deeply on a school community where students are only beginning to order and make sense of life and its events. Often it can be the lessons of life experience which help a person deal with the issues raised by illness, suffering and death and this may put the young at a disadvantage.

Michael Kearney, who worked very closely with patients who were terminally ill, stated that the time may come when the person cannot discern meaning and purpose from the outside world. He or she needs to look within, to the spiritual core of being, for answers and for healing. He discovered that in the case of those suffering from

terminal illness there is, deep within each person, a bottomless pit that contains a "healing balm" just waiting to be applied to our "mortal wound" and "if the dying person even begins to attend to soul it responds a thousand fold" (1996, p. 17). Many people, regardless of their age, when faced with death move very naturally into that stage of life where they experience a new peace and depth to their living and to their dying. However, for some the reality of being near to death becomes very threatening and fills their time with distress and anguish. Kearney explains that people can be "trapped at the surface level of their mind, cut off from the healing power of their inner depths" (1996, p. 60). He calls the distress that this generates "soul pain". In psychological terms this pain is a result of the ego's refusal to look into the depths of the unknown where death is seen as an end and a disaster. It tries to flee from the inner parts of the self that in reality have the ability to bring meaning and hope. This separation is what causes the pain.

The people that Kearney worked with were patients who suffered from terminal illness. They had all undergone treatment for their illnesses and had arrived at a point where it was obvious that they were not going to get better. Faced with the reality of death, it is only understandable that there would be fear and distress about what was going to happen in the near future. At a time when life seems to be at its most vulnerable, the person tries to come to terms with whatever it is he or she experiences. It is a time when the spiritual aspect to the person tries to search within, and beyond, for meaning that can make sense of whatever is happening. If a person is terminally ill, he or she might be aware that the possibility of recovery has passed but still there is a point to this search for meaning. Despite the fact that life will come to an end due to the illness, there is still a search for hope. It is not a search for a miracle or a magic cure. It is a search for meaning, for even partial understanding of how and why suffering occurs at all. This is a human search which is not limited to age or life experience.

Kearney shows a great understanding of the human person and the potential that is within each person. He reminds us that there is in all of us a primal fear of the darkness, which is the reality of death, and we can spend our lives trying to flee it (1996, p. 13). He argues that we do this as individuals in particular and collectively as a culture in general (p. 14). However, there is also within the person, the ability to seek and to find meaning. The answer is there to be found and I maintain that it is part of the spiritual dynamic of the individual that assists this searching process. Kearney discovered that for the terminally ill, this process began with a letting go and a giving in to "the pull of inner gravity" so that the sufferer can descend within and emerge with a new grasp on meaning and a fresh outlook in hope (1996, p. 47). He argues that there is something that points us inwards to see what is present in our depths (p. 63). This inner gravity is part of the human condition but is not of our own making and the healing that it can generate is not of human origin. There is within each person a pull towards the transcendent. What is discovered from this journey inwards is that there must be more to our existence than can be fully experienced in life. There is something stirring at the edge of our being that reminds us that all we can ever grasp is an incomplete picture (Lane, 1996, p. 63).

Implications for Counselling Young People and Their Families

Since the time of Sigmund Freud, the use and understanding of psychology as a means of reaching the depths of the person have developed and become popularised. There has been much achieved in terms of an understanding of human instinctual drives and the power of the unconscious as a factor in all that the individual is and does. This instinctual drive and unconscious dimension lie at the depth of the person and are at the heart of any attempt to help an individual examine his or her life in any meaningful way. However, also present in the depths of the person is what can be seen as his or her core as a spiritual person. Therapists are now realising that young people, when faced with a world which is moving deeper and deeper into commercialism and individualism, are searching for spiritual enlightenment as a way to provide a sense of meaning and worth to life. In order to help a young person make sense of this search, the therapist needs to be aware of more than traditional psychological and therapeutic values (Thorne, 1990).

It has been argued that many of these apparent psychological problems presented by young people and their families to counsellors are in fact spiritual in nature and that he or she may be in need of some form of spiritual awakening if recovery is to be fully achieved (Collins, 1999, p. 156). It is also generally accepted that developing the therapeutic relationship is an essential component for the counselling process. It can happen that when a young person faces moments where a search for meaning becomes necessary, he or she may need to temporarily lean on or depend on a person they trust whilst this search takes place. Sometimes it is the belief and confidence of this person that sustains the young person and in turn gives them hope. This has implications for the counsellor when, for example, he or she is faced with a young client who is experiencing the type of "soul pain" mentioned above. It would be impossible for a young client to engage on this level with a counsellor who remains detached and who does not place much value on spirituality or who does not recognise the intrinsic presence of a spiritual core (soul) to the young person sitting before him or her. At times the young client may need to know that the counsellor has reflected on this journey of the soul that they have become what Kearney refers to as, "an apprentice to soul" (1996, p. 138).

The aim of therapy can be seen as an attempt to put a client back into right relations with the self and those around him or her. Whilst it is a process that looks inward, eventually it needs to look beyond and acknowledging the spiritual dimension where each person is somehow connected in a non-physical way to those that he or she comes into contact with. Carl Rogers discovered late into his career that to give credence to the spiritual dimension during a therapeutic encounter could add a powerful dimension to what was happening. He reached this conclusion when he began to realise that he was reaching out to his clients and engaging with them on a level that was separate from and which seemed to transcend, the physical, emotional and psychological (Thone, 1990, p. 86).

In 1998 Brian Thorne remarked that over a period of 10 years he had noticed an attitudinal change among therapists regarding the notions of spirituality and the spiritual dimension of the person (2002, p. 44). The result of this change was that

many therapists had become open to both the presence and the importance of the spiritual dimension in an understanding of the constituent elements of the fabric of being human. Perhaps this change was partly as a result of a realisation that traditional approaches to therapy do not have all the answers or did not completely cover all the ground in developing an understanding of the person. Having seen the spiritual dimension as either outside of their realm or as an expression of a particular neurosis it seems that counsellors began to see that they were leaving out something very important and which is foundational in an understanding of the person. It was discovered that focusing on the spiritual core of the person was an appropriate way to "respond to those who are often desperate to find meaning and a sense of inter-connectedness in a world which is experienced as empty, fragmented, rudderless and programmed for destruction" (Thorne, 2002, p. 27). Thorne urged therapists to accept the spiritual dimension to their clients and to see spiritual experience as a valid and real occurrence. He advised them to accept spiritual experience as one of the "givens" of the human person and that they should "go with it" (Thorne, 1990, p. 45).

I have already argued that as time goes on it is becoming more and more difficult for the person to attend to all aspects of the self. The counselling process needs to take into account the notion that the young person is more than body and psyche. To speak about the young person in any holistic way, one must recognise that the person is body, mind and spirit (Frankl, 2000, p. 34). This has tremendous implications for the task of counselling young people. To ignore the spiritual during the course of the therapeutic encounter is to limit the help and insight made available to the client. This in turn is to do the young person a disservice. Many schools and colleges take pride in the provision of what they ideally term holistic education; however, their ability to promote a "holistic" education is all too often limited to a curriculum that focuses on the cognitive aspects of teaching and learning where the students' spiritual care is often seen as periphery or a personal matter. This needs to change if authentic holistic education is to be provided to young people in educational settings.

Counsellors today are very aware of the fact that the needs of the client should be always at the centre of the therapeutic relationship. In order for these needs to be met holistically, it may sometimes be necessary for the counsellor to make appropriate referrals to competent experts who may have more experience in particular areas. In fact I would argue that a competent counsellor is one who is aware of their own limitations in the therapeutic process and who is willingly to seek additional assistance for a client if necessary. It could be argued that this system of referral could also be employed in relation to matters concerning the client's spiritual welfare. However, there is a danger with this because it might imply that the spiritual aspect to a person is something to be dealt with in isolation from their other needs. Divorcing the spiritual from the psychological, physiological, cognitive and emotional needs of the client may result in a fragmentation when integration is the ultimate goal of the counselling process.

Developing the therapeutic relationship with young clients is just as necessary as doing so with adult clients. Encouraging clients in the process of "looking beyond"

and "looking within" involves making use of the skills which are integral to the professional counselling relationship. The primary purpose of the counselling process is to assist the client to be able to intelligently manage his or her life and to engage in and develop meaningful relationships. It is about encouraging a client to uncover his or her potential so that life can be lived to the full. The range of counselling skills which enable the counsellor to empathically attend, listen, challenge, show immediacy and help in the reframing process all encourage the client to look deep within themselves in order to access the root of motivation and behaviour. This can be a difficult process but the rationale behind each counselling skill and the method in which it is employed is the same regardless of the age of the client. Models of therapy such as art or play therapy prove to be effective in helping young people deal with personal issues. I would contend that they are also effective ways in helping a young client deal with areas of spiritual concern because they tap into the individual's ability to creatively express experience. This also helps the client to reach into the part of themselves which tries to put shape and meaning on their experience of life, of themselves and of others. Young people may not have the vocabulary to fully express their concerns. They may not be able to find the appropriate words in their attempt to seek some meaning or value following the impact of a difficult life event such as trauma, illness or bereavement. These forms of therapy tailored to suit the needs of the young allow them to put words aside and to express themselves through image, colour, play and creativity.

Guidelines for Dealing with Spirituality in the Counselling Process

When dealing holistically with a client, a counsellor should be attuned to the elements of the shared story which indicate different levels of concern. For example, a counsellor should be aware if a client is safe from harm. By attending well and being aware of body language, a counsellor has an awareness of how the client is in the present moment. By using appropriate reflection skills the helper will let his or her client know that they are present and listening with an involved level of understanding. It is generally accepted that a counsellor can only bring a client as far as they have gone themselves. This does not mean, for example, that a counsellor needs to have had a life-threatening illness as a teenager in order to help a young person as they face this experience. Rather, it means that they should have a solid understanding of what it must be like to be a teenager and to be so seriously ill. The same is true regarding spirituality and the counselling process. The counsellor needs to have a competent understanding of the elements of the person that are spiritual in nature in order to be of help in dealing with issues that are of ultimate concern to the person in the counselling process.

However, recognising issues of spiritual concern may not be the easiest thing to do within the counselling relationship. There are no telltale signs hidden, for example, in a client's demeanour which indicate concern at this level. There probably

is not a moment when a counsellor can say, it is now time to deal with spiritual concerns. In fact it is worth bearing in mind that the counselling process is not spiritual direction and that if this is the kind of help a client needs, then an appropriate referral should be made.

So, there is not an exclusive set of counselling skills which can be employed to help deal with a client and his or her sense of spirituality. I believe that this is so because every issue, each concern that a client brings to the counselling process, is spiritual in nature since it is affecting his or her ability to relate, to love, to create or to be at their fullest potential. Young people often present with personal issues relating to areas like self-esteem and self-worth, difficulties in belonging and feelings of isolation. They may be struggling to find some meaning in painful life events.

Counsellors should develop an awareness of the nature and presence of spirituality in the human condition. If this is not something that the counsellor personally ascribes to, he or she should at least be open to the possibility that their client may share a different view which is nonetheless valid and real for them. The counsellor should be aware of the difference between being religious and being spiritual. As has been said already, religious activity is generally an expression of a person's spirituality. The second should be an active listening for the clues that might indicate that a client is grappling with issues relating to mortality, to a sense of purpose and meaning, to responsibility and to belonging. These are areas of spiritual concern and as such are deeper than motivation and feeling and behaviour. Irvin Yalom refers to them as issues of ultimate concern (Yalom, 1980, p. 8).

The process of dealing with these concerns and consequently with the aspect of spirituality is the same as in any counselling relationship:

- Establish a solid working relationship so that the client will experience their counsellor as sincere, understanding and trustworthy. This can be difficult if time is short or if there is not the possibility of meeting again in the near future. However, it is still worth doing well.
- Find out from the client how they are in this present moment. How are they feeling right now? What thoughts do they have? What concerns, worries or joys are they aware of? What is happening for them in the here and now of the counselling session?
- Next, try and find out what has happened to them. What has led them to the making of an appointment? How were they in the past? Did they always feel the way that they do today, in this present moment? What has changed for them in terms of relationships? Try and encourage the client to make connections between how they are, how they were or (would like to be) and their experience of personal integration or disintegration.
- Validate and normalise this experience for them. Congratulate them for their insight and encourage them to keep making connections.
- Finally help the client to put the bits and pieces of their lives back together with the addition of any new insights. This is where healing, wholeness, new meaning and value are found. The person can then go on to live his or her life with a

greater understanding of the self, others and the world. That is, with a renewed sense of personal integration.

Conclusion

An exploration into the topic of human spirituality reveals that there is a lot more to the person than can be physically measured and quantified. There are hidden depths that house the wellspring of thought and emotion, from which comes the way the individual finds value and meaning to the self, others, and the world around him or her. From this place deep within, the spiritual core, the person finds that he or she is not alone but is connected to all things.

I maintain that the search for meaning is a spiritual quest and that young people have a great capacity to come through the most difficult of times with a new sense of purpose that will sustain them into the future. Most young people live their lives at the centre of mainstream culture but there are times when they can move away temporarily to the edge (Drumm & Gunning, 2001, p. 25). This can be a choice where, for example, an individual goes on a spiritual retreat or climbs a mountain or visits a place of great meaning to them. This move to the edge can also be forced on the person through illness, bereavement or some other unforeseen external event. The relevance that this has on human spirituality and meaning seeking is that generally the young person at the edge discovers something that is brought back to the centre which enriches life and gives meaning to their learning, their work and mostly their relationships. In other words, the experience of living day by day is changed by the experience of being on the edge.

Meaning seeking is an integral part of the spiritual dimension of every young person. As such it is operational during every activity that a young person engages in, whether conscious or unconscious. It is because of this I believe that an awareness of spirituality needs to be maintained at the heart of the therapeutic process. Carl Rogers stated that an aim in counselling is to teach the client to become aware of and to use core conditions when relating to the self and others (1979, p. 157). It is my contention that every young person who comes to counselling also needs to become aware of their spiritual dimension if the therapy is to touch him or her in a truly holistic fashion. In fact there might be an argument that the goal of therapy should be to fathom, in so far as is possible, the depths of the spiritual side of the person because "where the spiritual self steeps itself in its unconscious depths, there occur the phenomena of conscience, love, and art" (Frankl, 2000, p. 45). These in turn help the young person to develop in terms of how he or she relates to the self, others and to the world and all it contains. What more could be expected from the therapeutic process?

A difficulty with writing about spirituality is that it is all too often linked to religion and formal religious practice which quickly can move towards religious duty and obligation. To go down this road is to limit the freeing, creative and expressive beauty which is elemental to human spirituality. Whilst religious expression is a valid conduit for the spiritual, and has been since the first person sat and began to

reason and wonder, it is necessary today to peel back its layers to discover just what is within the young person that is being expressed. This raw product is the human spiritual dimension in its fullest. Thomas Merton describes this discovery very well. He compares it to a prism hidden in a box. Even if the box is never opened, it is a thing of beauty. But when the box is opened and the light passes through it, the prism is transformed into colour which in turn transforms all that it comes into contact with (Merton, 1949).

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Chapter 53
Facing Up to Workplace Bullying in the Context of Schools and Teaching

Jacinta M. Kitt

Abstract Workplace bullying is a serious problem for educational and other workplaces. It involves the systematic erosion of a person's capacity to contribute to the organisation in which they work. It is destructive and abusive behaviour that disempowers and discredits the target. It has devastating consequences for the individual target and for the organisation in which it occurs. Despite increasing recognition of the manifestations and effects of workplace bullying, many organisations for a variety of reasons respond inadequately and inappropriately to the problem. This chapter explores the many nuances of workplace bullying and attempts to dispel the prevalent myths and misconceptions associated with it. The chapter also examines the range of organisational responses that can effectively prevent or promote workplace bullying.

Introduction

Bullying is now widely acknowledged as a problem of significance in educational and other workplaces. A number of myths and misconceptions in relation to the manifestations and effects of workplace bullying still exist. However, there is an increased recognition of the abusive elements of bullying and of the devastation of its effects. For the purpose of this chapter workplace bullying will be examined in the context of workplaces generally; however, all references are relevant to schools and colleges, the workplaces of many of those in the educational professions.

The placing of the destructive behaviours that constitute bullying into the school/college context causes particular incredulity, sadness, anger and shock for all enlightened educators. It is, nonetheless, important to allude to the problem of workplace bullying in the education profession as it serves to focus minds on the potential for devastation in the schools and colleges hosting when bullying occurs. The source of particular shock will undoubtedly emerge from the considerable

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consensus across research and literature, that workplace bullying is consistently prevalent in the teaching profession (Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999; Blasé & Blasé, 2003; O'Connell, Calvert, & Watson, 2007). A school's attitude and response to bullying will determine whether the school will effectively prevent or promote bullying. In *bullying preventing* schools through creating, maintaining and promoting a psychologically and emotionally safe environment, bullying problems are minimised and there is effective intervention to resolve bullying when it does occur (Bluestein, 2001). These schools are characterised by reflective, enlightened and caring leadership. Priority is given to creating a sense of belonging, acceptance, inclusiveness and safety (Bluestein, 2001). Value and importance are placed on engaging staff that demonstrate and promote emotional intelligence. This type of intelligence manifests in fine-tuned and insightful self-awareness and self-management and in positive and productive relationships with others. It shapes both our understanding of ourselves and our interactions with others (Freedman, Jensen, Rideout, & Freedman, 1998, cited in Bluestein, 2001). Where emotional intelligence is developed it decreases the frequency and severity of toxic behaviours and increases the ability to cope with toxic behaviours when they do occur (Luibit, 2004). In this type of environment the interpersonal behaviours of staff are regarded as performance issues; standards and norms of appropriate behaviour are articulated and expected. Problems and conflicts are taken seriously and dealt with (Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999). Effective and comprehensive policies and procedures for dealing with bullying and other interpersonal problems are in place and all staff and students are made aware of their rights and responsibilities in this regard.

The bullying promoting school on the contrary are characterised by closed and dysfunctional communication, internal competitiveness, favouritism, dishonesty, power dynamics, denial and destructive and unresolved conflicts (Kitt, 1999; Bluestein, 2001). These schools do not acknowledge bullying as a serious problem. There tends to be a focus on the victim of bullying to apportion blame for the bullying. Lip service is paid to preventing and dealing with bullying and often there is scapegoating and further bullying of those who highlight or complain about bullying behaviours (Daniel, 1998). In these schools bullying among adults thrives and explicit or implicit messages of tolerance of bullying are communicated to students with devastating results (Kitt, 1999).

Describing Workplace Bullying

Definitions that do not capture the essence of workplace bullying increase the risk of behaviours that do not constitute bullying being labelled as bullying (McCarthy, 2003). They may also inhibit an understanding and acknowledgement that bullying is a proactive, albeit camouflaged, behaviour that targets and abuses. Inaccurate definitions may further prevent and obstruct the recognition and acceptance of victims' accounts of bullying as reflections of the reality of their experience, and not as episodes to be doubted, dissected and disputed. In my view Leymann's (1996)

description of bullying as a systematic attack goes a considerable way to explaining what bullying entails. Davenport, Schwartz, and Elliot (1999) while referring to bullying as mobbing, sheds further light on the destructive nature of the phenomenon by calling it an "emotional assault" (p. 33). As indeed does Einarsen (1999) when he alludes to bullying as "systematic persecution" and also as "psychological drowning" (Einarsen, 1999, p. 17). Whereas there are similarities between harassment and bullying, these analyses enable a focus on the critical difference between other inappropriate behaviours and bullying. Bullying has a very distinct and unique element involving the setting up to fail of another person. The goal of workplace bullying is to harm and incapacitate (Keashly & Jagatic, 2003; Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999). Bullying obstructs the targets in trying to do their jobs. It attempts to discredit their performance, competence and reputation. It aims to destroy their credibility and relationships with others in the workplace. Bullying creates a psychological brutality in the workplace that produces "exploitative, unhealthy and morally unconscionable work conditions" (Hornstein, 1996, p. 23).

Prevalent Bullying Tactics

Isolating and criticising are two of the most frequently cited bullying behaviours. Of course isolation may well be caused accidentally and inadvertently and criticism although rarely helpful, may be expressed constructively. Consequently without an adequate exploration of the particular manifestations and effects of isolation and criticism in the bullying context, their destructive and damaging impact and consequences can be diminished.

In order to understand isolation in the context of bullying it is necessary to focus on the underlying non-verbal psychological messages of disregard and dismissal that are disseminated through the surface tactics. The simple yet evocative act of turning and walking away from someone while they are in mid-sentence, the snubbing, ignoring or "sending to Coventry" of someone, are all isolating tactics frequently used by those who bully, not inadvertently, thoughtlessly or through rudeness but rather in an attempt to negate their target's "worth, dignity and equal human status" (Hornstein, 1996, p. 70). The isolation of another is often initially achieved by the suspension of verbal communication with them. One of the teachers in my previous study (Kitt, 1999) elaborated on her experience of the principal in her school absolutely refusing to communicate verbally with her.

> It's not just the fact that she never speaks to me that really bothers me. It's that she demonstrates exaggerated friendliness to every one else on the staff while totally blanking me. She looks at me with disdain indicating to me, that I have done something to deserve the silent treatment. When I ask her why she refuses to speak to me, she angrily and dismissively feigns ignorance of any such behaviour.

This statement indicates some of the myriad underlying dimensions of refusing and failing to communicate verbally with another as a workplace bullying tactic. Bullies do not isolate merely to exclude someone. The isolation is also a focused

means of preventing that person from contributing to the organisation. They are isolated to ensure that it is virtually impossible for them to do their job. Isolating someone is a gradual and escalating process. Victims can, eventually, find themselves totally excluded and marginalised. There are many accounts similar to the one alluded to by Einarsen et al. (2003) where victims find themselves, as a result of the gradual wearing down process of isolation (Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999), "working in a basement room without windows or a telephone" (Einarsen et al., 2003, p. 7). They frequently have their job responsibilities, their resources and their support system so eroded that they find themselves, effectively doing "a nothing job" (Ryan & Oestreich, 1991, p. 49). Emphasising the ostracising effect of this particular rejection Ryan and Oestreich (1991) referred to it as "the sending off to some organisational Siberia from which there is no return" (p. 49).

Being isolated by someone is a lonely and disempowering experience. However, it is difficult if not impossible for the desired outcome to be achieved by one person on their own. The notion that the bully, alone, can isolate a target is disputed (Zapt, Knorz, & Kulla, 1996). They contended that while the bully may try to orchestrate the isolation it is a strategy that will not succeed without the involvement of others. This involvement does not necessitate their acting as accomplices, although many of them do. Denial, control, apathy, fear, ignorance or disbelief that an injustice is being perpetrated, all contribute, to varying degrees to a failure to support those isolated. The unsupportive onlookers become either complicit in the bullying or act as inadvertent co-conspirators. This paucity of support triggers in victims "an inclination towards self-derogation" (Sheppard, Lewicki, & Minton, 1992, p. 98) thus complicating their situation and exacerbating their suffering.

Criticism is another frequently cited bullying behaviour. However criticism in the context of bullying involves two particular aspects requiring exploration. First, the criticisms are spurious. The innocuous and unsubstantiated incidents that are the basis of these criticisms are invariably "distorted, magnified and often fabricated" (Field, 1996, p. 31). Bullies frequently trawl through the records of their targets and also scrutinise their performance to find any small error or oversight in a frenetic attempt to discredit them. Any "grain of truth" (Middleton-Moz & Zawadski, 2002, p. 27) in this regard is exaggerated in order to misrepresent their intentions and actions and to portray them as uncooperative, incompetent and/or dishonest. Victims who are excluded from all teamwork and relegated to working on their own are then unjustly deemed to be uncooperative. Those blatantly overworked, under resourced and subjected to constant, arbitrary and unnecessary changes to their goals and schedules, to the extent that a deadline is missed by the smallest of margins are then wrongly deemed to be incompetent. And those who, perhaps once left the workplace early with verbal permission are subsequently wrongly accused, not merely of taking advantage but also of being dishonest. Any small oversight or error is filed in the bullies mind to be used against the victim at a time when it can cause the most damage to them. These actions, designed to set someone up to fail, are exceedingly difficult to credit if they have not either been experienced or witnessed. They are, however, the reality of everyday work life for those being bullied.

The other bullying aspect of criticism is that, when the criticisms are presented in the guise of highlighting inadequacies, or shortfalls in the victim's performance (Field, 1996), the bullying can easily be legitimised as a "fine tuning mechanism" (Boulnois, 1996, p. 125) for the good and improvement of the individual or the organisation. Unwarranted criticisms expressed "under the guise of monitoring job performance" (Costigan, 1998, p. 31) have among their destructive objectives the desire to force someone out of their job or to reduce them to such a state of ill health that they will have to leave (Costigan, 1998). Criticism as a bullying tactic is not about creating awareness of professional inadequacies, nor is it the correction of a flaw or failing. The goal is not to address, or prevent any individual or organisational shortcoming. It is totally inconsiderate and dishonest in style and content. It takes no account of the feelings or emotional reaction of the recipients (Baron, 1993, p. 158). It is unjustified and unfair and "it is abuse for the sake of abuse" (Hornstein, 1996, p. 49). Rejection and exclusion are implicit in the use of both criticism and isolation as prevalent bullying tactics. Both of these tactics present as social-evaluative threats and are especially powerful psychological stressors. They provide the potential for loss of self-esteem, social status or social acceptance (Dickerson, Gruenewald, & Kemeny, 2004).

Other Manifestations of Bullying

The concentration on a small number of common and recurring bullying behaviours is an important means of examining the nuances of bullying. It is, however, equally important, to allude also to the fact that bullying involves numerous negative acts such as withholding of vital information and support, spreading discrediting rumours, misrepresenting another's words and actions, the unjust and unfair application of rules, schedules and task allocation, preventing and restricting communication with colleagues and many other obstructive behaviours that prevent the target from contributing their best efforts to the organisation (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001; Namie & Namie, 2000). Swearer and Doll (2001) assert in this context that bullying "must be defined as a constellation of behavioural interactions" (p. 9).

Whereas there are obvious and visible manifestations of bullying at work including overt aggression such as physical violence and angry verbal outbursts, the less obvious and equally devastating insidious and subtle forms of bullying are more prevalent and pervasive. Indeed bullying behaviour can be so subtle that even the targets do not realise what is happening (Beale, 2001). Initial and seemingly minor incidents when taken out of the cumulative context may appear trivial. They prevent the targets from realising that something serious is taking place (Futterman, 2004). As bullying is generally psychological (Einarsen et al., 2003) it is probable that those who employ physical methods of bullying use the more psychological tactics also. Those perpetrating the latter and most manipulative of behaviours are "masters at disguising their actions, and the effect on victims is difficult to detect and to isolate" (Mann, 1996, p. 83). Turney (2003) suggested that subtle and insidious bullying "is almost impossible to detect outside the interpersonal relationships" (p. 5). A

central component of this behaviour is its ability to deeply hurt and demean, while remaining well obscured from onlookers (Adams, 1992). It is extremely difficult to identify primarily because of its secretive nature but also because of the Jekyll and Hyde personalities of the perpetrator. While covertly torturing their targets they overtly lavish charm and praise on others (Field, 1996). They also express righteous indignation and absolute denial of any wrongdoing if challenged or confronted. The psychological nature of the bullying renders it difficult to document and equally difficult to prove (Field, 1996; Adams, 1992).

Bullying is never warranted in any circumstance but it is widely acknowledged that victims of bullying have done nothing offensive, threatening or harmful to provoke these behaviours. The behaviours result mainly from skewed and mistaken interpretations, of the attitudes and behaviours of those the bullies perceive as a threat. There is evidence that the simple fact of having a superior qualification, of coming up with a good idea or of expressing a different view point (Hornstein, 1996; Namie & Namie, 1999) can be interpreted as a declaration of war and can result in a kind of "personal retaliation" (Zapt & Einarsen, 2003, p. 170) against those wrongly perceived as threats. Workplace bullying should be considered in terms of irrational behaviour and in terms of the insidiousness and subtlety of its manifestations. It also needs to be considered in terms of the ongoing, relentless and escalatory nature of the bullying behaviours. Only then can a real comprehension of the adverse and devastating effects of workplace bullying on individuals and organisations be achieved.

When workplace bullying occurs in schools it has a pervasive and corrosive impact on those targeted, on onlookers, on students and on the school generally. Schools have a responsibility to provide a consistently high quality of educational service and this can only be achieved in an environment where healthy interpersonal behaviours are the norm (Bluestein, 2001). It is difficult to imagine that those charged with the task of imparting knowledge and insights in an enlightened and collaborative manner would persistently deprive students of the talents and enthusiasm of colleagues. It is equally difficult to comprehend that those responsible for enabling the development of minds and intellects could act in such a mindless and self-obsessed manner. And it is virtually impossible to fathom that those expected to promote and model the values of honesty, fairness and openness would willfully engage in behaviours that hurt, abuse, control and destroy their colleagues. A further disturbing element in relation to workplace bullying in schools is that the majority of perpetrators of these behaviours remain unchallenged and unsanctioned while those they target are persistently subjected to humiliation, exclusion and blame (Blasé & Blasé, 2003).

Characteristics of Those Who Bully

Increased awareness in relation to the nature and effects of workplace bullying prompts an obvious and imponderable question. What sort of person could possibly treat another human being in that manner? Although the question cannot be

definitively answered, it is encouraging that it is increasingly being asked. The focus on the perpetrators and their behaviour rather than on the victims, in terms of finding the source, and cause of bullying is a slow and painstakingly evolving and justifiable process. Of course a full understanding of all aspects of bullying is not to be found in the analysis of the characteristics and motives of the perpetrators. However it is an inevitable and necessary element of the progression towards that understanding.

Although there is still a paucity of literature and research on the characteristics and motivation of those who bully in the workplace, some consensus is emerging. This arises from a combination of the exploration of the shared experiences of victims, the observations of objective onlookers and the consistency evident in the behaviours and effects of bullying. There is no standard profile of the person who bullies in the workplace (Randall, 1997; Pryor & Fitzgerald, 2003). However from the many and varied listings of bully characteristics offered, the following appear most prominently and frequently. In terms of the more obvious of these characteristics, it is suggested that bullies are aggressive, angry, malicious, vindictive, righteous, selfish and insensitive. The less obvious, yet equally significant, characteristics associated with bullies are insecurity, inadequacy, insatiability, cowardice, dishonesty, jealousy, lack of imagination and disloyalty. A legitimate conclusion to formulate in the context of bullies possessing all or indeed some of these characteristics is that there would be absolutely no difficulty in recognising and identifying them. Unfortunately this is far from the reality. Those who bully are masters at portraying themselves favourably to those they wish to impress. Futterman (2004) asserts that those who bully are not easy to spot. They are chameleons and are superficially and opportunistically charming. They manage to ingratiate themselves to potential allies and to those in positions of power and influence. Those who are included among the bully's favoured ones experience praise, generosity and preferential treatment. Consequently they see the one who bullies as kind and caring. They become blinkered to any flaw in the person who bullies. Perhaps, to see the bully as flawed is to see the favourable regard shown to them as shallow, worthless and flawed also. Those who are favoured are frequently the least competent, least ethical and most weak-willed. Others who have fallen out of favour or who were never favoured at all experience dismissal, degradation and discrimination and when not blinkered by self-doubt or self-blame, see the bully as irrational, hypocritical and sadistic (Crawford, 2001). Whether in favour or out of favour, all are consciously or unconsciously, and to a greater or lesser extent fearful around the volatility and fickleness of the bully.

Those who bully are almost invariably aggressive (Olweus, 2003), However the aggression is generally psychological and is more typically verbal rather than physical, passive rather than active and indirect rather than direct (Keashly & Jagatic, 2003). The more sinister forms of aggression can be found in the "gestures, tones, expressions and other non-verbal cues and messages" (Hornstein, 1996). A "passively aggressive bully uses secrecy, manipulation, obsessional and evasive behaviours as tactics, to get their way" (Tehrani, 2003, p. 282). Coercion and intimidation is achieved by instilling fear and terror (Adams, 1992). Those who bully

frequently aggress against anyone who is perceived as questioning, contradicting or impugning their favourable views of either themselves or their way of doing things (Zapt & Einarsen, 2003). Any differing attitude or perspective that may promote another way of seeing or doing things threatens their absolutism and undermines, jeopardises and contradicts their feelings of superiority (Zapt & Einarsen, 2003). The feeling of superiority is protected and preserved by resisting with dogmatic determination any real examination of any aspect of themselves or their behaviour.

In earlier literature those who bully were generally thought to have low self-esteem (Hornstein, 1996; Wright & Smye, 1996; Randall, 1997; Horn, 2002; Futterman, 2004). There is now a considerable consensus that their self-esteem may in fact be quite high particularly in the context of their favourable views of themselves and the aggressive response to any questioning of those views (Zapt & Einarsen, 2003). This view is reinforced by an examination of the narcissistic behaviours of a bully. Narcissism is thought to imply a combination of high self-esteem and a disregard for others (Zapt & Einarsen, 2003). Disregard for others is a hallmark of bullying behaviour. Those who bully have a compulsion to have their own needs met at all costs and make constant demands for respect and consideration, while persistently denying similar treatment to others (Adams, 1992; Field, 1996). Hornstein (1996) comments that by their self-centred, selfish behaviour they effectively treat selected others as "objects and instruments" (p. 59).

I remain firmly of the view, however, that the abusive behaviour of those who bully is a dysfunctional reflection of their low self-esteem. Their vociferous arrogance and righteousness serves to effectively disguise their low self-esteem and cause them to present as having the opposite. The fact that their self-appraisals are "heavily dependent on external validation" is an indicator of their own lack of confidence in them (Zapt & Einarsen, 2003, p. 168). The aggressive and territorial reaction to any negative evaluation is an indicator of the fragility and instability of their self-assessment. Middleton-Moz and Zawadski (2002), suggest, "because of their deep-seated feelings of worthlessness, they are terrified of being proven 'wrong' " (pp. 125–126). However, whereas bullying behaviours follow a systematic pattern and appear to have been meticulously planned, they may, in the context of the bully's inability to see themselves or their behaviours for what they are, be conducted unconsciously. In this context this author suggests that many of their behaviours are unconsciously strategic.

Those who bully are consistently described as being insensitive. The insensitivity of the bully's behaviour is particularly disturbing and extremely difficult to comprehend. Field (1996) describes their insensitivity as "perhaps the bullies' worst trait" (p. 66). Showing no consideration for the feelings of those they hurt and humiliate, they appear impervious to the effects of their behaviour (Field, 1996). Hornstein (1996) describes bullying bosses who display grossly insensitive behaviour as "dehumanizers" (p. 36). Finding it difficult to understand their callousness, Hornstein (1996) further suggests, "they self-administer a kind of emotional anaesthesia that diminishes their awareness of harm done" (p. 37). All of the teachers in Kitt (1999) agreed that those who abused them displayed gross

insensitivity to their feelings. To a greater or lesser extent they were all cruel and hurtful. Any personal illness or tragedy never elicited empathy or compassion from the perpetrators but rather seemed to be a signal to escalate and redouble the abusive behaviour.

An examination of the characteristics of those perpetrating the bullying behaviours is a vital component in exposing bullying in all its ugliness and in dispelling the myths and misconceptions propagated by those fearing and fighting against this exposition. However, a focus on the personality of the bully in terms of labelling them as psychopathic or evil is to exclude many others who also bully. Categorisation and labelling of those who bully may also lead to witch-hunting. In depicting those who were responsible for bullying them, the teachers who participated in Kitt's study (1999) concentrated more on the behaviours and on interpretations of the behaviours rather than on their personalities. They portrayed the bullies as being incapable of listening to, or accepting, any alternative point of view. They felt threatened by any question or suggestion that appeared to criticise or challenge their opinions or their methodology. They needed to be in control and keep their power safe from the imagined threats that they saw all around them. All those who bullied displayed gross inadequacies in their ability to communicate in a healthy and open manner. The bullying principals, to a greater or lesser extent, lacked vision and initiative. They reneged on their responsibilities, distrusted competence and put their own positions before the welfare of the school and the children. When organisations are subjected to power hunger and ego needs the organisation and its people are jeopardised (Davenport et al., 1999). The bullying principals took credit for others' achievements, stifled discussion and resisted change and innovation. They allowed staff relations to disintegrate and perhaps the saddest of all their behaviours was to proactively deprive the students of the talents and competence of those they targeted. All those who bullied displayed intransigence in their continuous abuse of others. They were uncompromising and unforgiving. They demonstrated no remorse for the obvious distress being causes by them. They were all in denial about their wrongdoing, and despite the toxic atmosphere in the schools, were totally dishonest in their attempts to give the impression that normality prevailed. It is little wonder that despair prevailed among those bullied teachers and that they felt powerless and helpless in terms of affecting any change in their situation.

Arguably, the principal difficulty in the search for insight into the reasons why bullies bully is that they are in denial in relation to their behaviour. This author suggests that the seriousness of bullying is directly commensurate with the levels of denial in the perpetrator. Serial and unrelenting bullies appear to have no capacity to reflect critically on their actions or indeed, more generally, have little or no inclination or ability to introspect analytically. Consequently, they either fail to acknowledge their behaviour or fail to interpret their behaviour as inappropriate. Where there is an acknowledgement of the different and less favourable treatment by them of another or others, it is perceived by the perpetrator as being necessary, even obligatory and certainly justified.

Being Bullied

There is one prevailing, albeit diminishing myth that those targeted for bullying share to some extent characteristics and attitudes that render them naturally vulnerable to being bullied. Leymann (1996) suggested that concentrating on personalities to explain bullying behaviour is a "fundamental attribution error" (p. 172). Some research and literature on bullying have focused on profiling those most likely to be targeted and have proffered suggestions for changes and improvements to be undertaken to avoid encountering the problem (Randall, 1997; Namie & Namie, 1999). Those having a submissive or a "placatory disposition" (Crawford, 1992, p. 98) are perceived to be more likely to be bullied. This author poses the possibility that a submissive personality may influence the response of the victim to the bullying but does not significantly impact of them being targeted in the first instance.

There is also a school of thought suggesting that certain characteristics contribute to individuals becoming "provocative victims" (Randall, 1997; Olweus, 2003; Hoel Coyne, Seigne, & Randall, 2000). Although not explicitly suggested, this view may imply that those "provocative victims" are in some way the authors of their own destiny. Bullies frequently cite a victim's less admirable and more annoying characteristics, in an attempt to deflect blame onto others and to exonerate themselves. The list of annoying characteristics is, however, extremely extensive (Wilkie, 1996). Bullies may consider it annoying, that someone is fat, thin, tall, small, talkative, quiet, pretty, not pretty enough, gay, intelligent, from another country, has an accent and is happy, sad, confident, dependent or independent (Pipher, 1994; Namie & Namie, 2000). It can annoy them if someone reads, listens to music, plays sport or enjoys life. This author while acknowledging that bullying may result from the attitude, action, omission, possessions, position, reaction, demeanour, philosophy or the personality of the target firmly believes that anyone can be bullied and that the problem is caused by those who, for a myriad of their own reasons, select and abuse others.

Victims are never to blame for the abuse committed by another who has chosen to act in an abusive manner. "They are the recipients of harm, not its agent" (Hornstein, 1996, p. 117). Predecessors have suffered at the hands of their tormentor, as will successors (Field, 1996). Targets, unfortunately just happen to be "in the wrong place at the wrong time" (McCarthy, 2003). It may be worth adding "with the wrong person" to the above in order to complete the bullying conditions. Interestingly, it is observed that there are similar risks of being bullied at all organisational status levels (Hoel, Cooper, & Faragher, 2001). Bullies will pick on someone just because they don't like the look of them, or the way they walk or the way they pray (Middleton-Moz & Zawadski, 2002).

The notion that the personality characteristics of the target contribute to the bullying is widely disputed. However, there is considerable consensus that personalities change as a result of bullying. Previously confident and assertive people once bullied often become insecure and submissive. Wright and Smye (1996) suggested that bullying "makes us doubt ourselves, sometimes even doubt our sanity" (p. 22). All of the bullied teachers in the author's study described how their personalities altered

considerably as a result of bullying. Changing from being communicative, open, confident and trusting with colleagues they became introverted, withdrawn, suspicious and fearful. As a result of the bullying they became intensely sad, and with the exception of one, were persistently and uncontrollably tearful. They became vigilant and defensive. As the preoccupation and obsession with the abuse increased they were all to varying degrees angry, moody, volatile, intolerant of noise and unable to engage with normal conversations or social activities (Kitt, 1999).

When bullying begins with a very initial impression by the target that something is wrong, the impression is often triggered by a distinct feeling of being intensely disliked. The way they avoid making eye contact, or the way they shake your hand can provide a gut feeling that something is amiss long before anything tangible surfaces (Middleton-Moz & Zawadski, 2001; Caviola & Lavender, 2000). The feeling of being intensely disliked, at a first encounter with someone, is disconcerting and confusing. The very tenuous and intangible source of this feeling provides little assistance in understanding or contextualising the subsequent abusive behaviours when they occur. As more tangible manifestations of the bully's distaste and disapproval are unveiled a sense of bewilderment and disbelief begins to creep up on the unsuspecting target. Further, encounters often find the target presenting as unusually tentative, nervous and even deferential. Particularly, if encounters are public and involve increasing and subtle hostility or reprimands, targets can become totally inhibited in expressing themselves and may stutter and stammer. This results in acute embarrassment and humiliation that is aggravated by the bully's failure to interject to redeem the situation or alleviate the embarrassment. Being made to feel foolish or being shamed is ranked in psychological and anxiety tests as having a most powerful, destructive and long-lasting impact (Wright & Smye, 1996).

If the bullying dynamic continues and progresses it takes a "spellbinding hold" of the victim (Caviola & Lavender, 2000). Middleton-Moz and Zawadski (2002) suggested that a dance begins between bully and victim that can last a very long time. "Bullies lead and victims wittingly or unwittingly follow" (p. 124). Competent, confident, people act in an uncharacteristically incompetent and uncertain manner. They can feel stupid and worthless (Wright & Smye, 1996,). With an escalation of the bullying comes an erosion of their personal position (Crawford, 1992) and they feel completely devalued and demoralised (Randall, 1997; Crawford, 1992). The five teacher victims of bullying in the author's study reported that as the abuse progressed they became less confident. All five regarded themselves as having previously been assertive. They were rendered powerless and impotent by the bullying behaviours.

Field (1996) suggested that victims who have previously exhibited a "robust and well balanced mental state" (p. 142) may, as a result of bullying display "bizarre, irrational and erratic behaviour" (p. 142). An angry outburst in this context generally fails to produce a sense of offloading or release as Adams (1992) suggested but rather, invariably produces feelings of shame and guilt in the victim. They lose sight of the provocation contributing to the outburst, blame themselves and attempt to apologise and make amends for their reaction. A rejection of their apology leads to further humiliation and confusion as the cycle of abuse continues.

Victims of bullying are frequently perceived as troublemakers but changes in their demeanour and emotional reactions can see them regarded as time bombs waiting to explode and can present an excuse for getting rid of the perceived offenders (Field, 1996).

A victim's ordeal is intensified by their own or others' inability to recognise the problem for what it is. Blasé and Blasé (2003) suggested that victims do not know how to react to the problem because they frequently do not know what the problem is. Adams (1992) claimed that the personal survival of victims depends on their recognising what is happening to them while still only slightly affected. With increasing discussion and highlighting of bullying in literature and in the media, victims have an improved chance of identifying and labelling the irrational behaviours perpetrated against them. However, without a more general understanding and intolerance of bullying, the climate of acceptability of bullying persists and the frustration and suffering of victims is exacerbated and prolonged.

Victims of bullying who accurately and honestly tell their stories are frequently disbelieved. Their viewpoint on the problem, should they have the ability to articulate it, may not be accepted by their colleagues or management. A sense that they are disbelieved, or regarded as being oversensitive, paranoid or in some way to blame, in addition to being bullied creates a feeling of helplessness in the victim and causes disappointment disorientation and disillusionment. Their feelings of being disbelieved are justified in the company of those who regard accounts of bullying as being solely "in the eye of the beholder" (Hornstein, 1996, p. 76). The beholder's eye theory was however questioned and disputed by Michela, Flint, and Lynch (1992) and is further disputed in the context of reports of bullying being frequently corroborated by others who were similarly treated, and by the accounts of multiple victims of bullying by the same perpetrator, exhibiting similar levels and types of effects (Hornstein, 1996).

While many victims for a variety of reasons never discuss their experiences, others have a compulsive urge and need to share them with others. The overwhelming, almost uncontrollable, desire to tell their story (Field, 1996) is reflective of their obsession with the bullying. They think about it to the extent that it is their last thought before sleep and their first thought on awakening. Victims obsess with trying to rationalise the behaviour, with the injustice and unfairness of the behaviour and with their own reactions and responses to it. They obsess particularly in the absence of established and effective mechanisms for dealing with bullying (Bassman, 1992). The denial, obstruction and further victimisation by the organisation of victims raising a concern or making a complaint is as shocking and devastating as the offending bullying behaviours. Victims are robbed of their credibility, their professional integrity and their reputation (Davenport et al., 1999). Their isolation and helplessness increases and suspicion and fear become their constant companions.

Fear of making the situation worse silences protest or challenge. Fear of being regarded as a whistle-blower or a troublemaker stifles the quest for justice. Fear of further intimidation pushes the victim into relinquishing autonomy, and "forfeiting self-direction for self-protection" (Hornstein, 1996, p. 79). An overwhelming and

inexplicable fear is communicated to the victim, by the bully's mere presence, often by their voice, their footsteps or the sight of their car in the car park. The fear can be so intense that it constitutes psychoterror that as McCarthy (2004) pointed out is the result of "repeated psychological abrasions experienced over months or years" (p. 81). Intense fear causes a paralysis of rational thought, action and reaction in the victim. The fear instilled in victims as a result of being "bludgeoned, belittled and betrayed" (Hornstein, 1996, p. 79) compels them to advance with extreme caution, making themselves either as inconspicuous or as compliant as possible in an attempt to avoid further unfavourable attention. In particular, the inability to resist and refrain from complying with unethical demands causes victims to feel guilty, corrupted and outraged (Blasé & Blasé, 2003). They often internalise the problem and may lose their sense of self (Davenport et al., 1999). Many victims are intimidated into employing "as little independent judgement and discretion as possible" (Hornstein, 1996, p. 80). They become disgusted with their own disempowerment and failure to affect a change in their situation. Bassman (1992) maintained that when victims become self-critical and acquire feelings of incompetence, they lose control not only in their workplace but also in their personal lives. Field (1996) suggested that those who are bullied carry the effects home with them, often causing unhappiness and stress to the family. Some of the victims of bullying in the author's study described their moods at home as being uncharacteristically, irritable, snappy and contrary. They experienced pangs of guilt when there were accusations from their spouses or children of them being constantly in bad humour (Kitt, 1999).

Bullying has a range of effects on victims that is extensive and enormous. The magnitude of the psychological and physiological symptoms found in victims of bullying is an indication of the impact of bullying on health and wellbeing (Tehrani, 2003). Effects of bullying are listed under the various headings of physical, psychological, behavioural, emotional, psychosomatic and social (Field, 1996; Adams, 1992; Leymann, 1996). Field (1996) grouped the more common of these effects under the umbrella term of negative stress. He described negative stress as an "almost cancerous condition which eats away at self-worth, self-image, self-esteem and self- confidence" (p. 123). Despite some variations in interpretation of the effects of workplace bullying the literature presented an overwhelming consensus that victims are deeply and profoundly affected on a daily basis. They feel sick, hurt and trapped. Many victims of bullying despair of any alleviation in their situation. Others despair because they blame themselves for causing or escalating the bullying behaviours. Through manipulation and control many victims accept as fact the lies and distortions told by those who bully them and often believe that they are deserving of the treatment meted out to them. In these and other extreme cases bullying may result in suicide (Hornstein, 1996; Randall, 1997; Leymann, 1996). Bullying makes working life a misery for all victims and the effects, irrespective of how they manifest are completely unacceptable. In the case of the five teacher victims in the author's study, the failure of colleagues to give any indication that they were aware of their suffering combined with the paucity of tangible support and validation of their abuse aggravated their sense of total isolation and loneliness (Kitt, 1999).

Organisational Culture and Effects of Bullying

Whether a hostile and toxic organisational culture leads to increased bullying or whether bullying behaviours are responsible for causing the culture to become hostile and toxic is a matter for continuing debate (Glomb, 2001). However, there are two undisputed organisational constants in relation to workplace bullying. Workplace bullying is extremely detrimental to organisational effectiveness and productivity, adversely affecting the job satisfaction, morale and stress levels of the staff (Mann, 1996; Randall, 1997; Rayner, Hoel, & Cooper, 2002). And workplace bullying thrives in organisations that are characterised by secrecy, denial, aggressive management, mistrust, disrespect and favouritism (Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999; Adams, 1992; Wright & Smye, 1996; Namie & Namie, 2000).

Ishmael and Alemoru (1999) described organisational effects of bullying in terms of both tangible and intangible costs. The tangible costs include absence and sickness, time loss, stress, recruiting and retraining, tribunal proceedings and lost of public image. The equally damaging intangible psychological and social costs include among others, the breakdown in relations, the withholding of discretional effort, the lapses in concentration, confidence, commitment and creativity and the presence of festering and lingering resentment (1999). The resulting effects include a gradual deterioration in the quality of service and/or product, an erosion of the organisations reputation, an enabling of corruption and an increasingly negative and stressful work environment (McCarthy, 2004).

The teacher victims of bullying in my own study (Kitt, 1999) described staff interactions in their schools as consisting of a concoction of superficial statements and flippant conversations that avoided any real or purposeful discussion. Obvious problems and discontent were unmentioned. There was no consultation on professional matters and definitely no sharing of ideas (Kitt, 1999). Those who dismiss human relations in the workplace as peripheral to effectiveness are oblivious to the view that far from being irrelevant to good business they are part of its foundation (Hornstein, 1996). How employees feel about each other, how they interact with each other and how they work together determines whether the workplace will be an abusive or a sustaining one (Wright & Smye, 1996). Wright and Smye (1996) put it succinctly when they stated "employees who have to protect themselves in abusive workplaces have little time, or mental energy for inspiration" (1996, p. 183). They absent themselves from decision making and risk taking (Mann, 1996; Ryan & Oestreich, 1991). They are definitely not working to their potential (Mann, 1996). Victims of bullying describe their work environments as stressful, obstructive and overwhelmingly tense at one level and as frightening and dangerous at another more serious level. Middleton-Moz and Zawadski (2002) equate these frightening and dangerous workplaces to domestically violent homes where employees behave like scarred children. They cower and hide in their offices instead of under the bed.

A workplace culture that tolerates, accepts, or encourages bullying creates a huge disincentive to victims to confront the problem and effectively allows the bullying to continue. Bullying is further facilitated in an environment where secrecy and denial prevail. Resch and Schubinski (1996) suggested that as with the problem of

alcoholism, many companies prefer to ignore bullying by denying the existence of the problem. The fact that bullying is endemic in some workplaces is revealed by the difficulties in convincing managers that it exists at all (Ironside & Seifert, 2003). A denial of the problem ensures that it becomes "an undiscussable" (Ryan & Oestreich, 1991, p. 36). In silent organisations where problems are "undiscussables" (p. 36) they tend to stay underground, festering and taking a huge toll on communication, morale and effectiveness (Ryan & Oestreich, 1991). Victims and onlookers are silenced in a climate where a "kill the messenger mentality is rampant" (Wright & Smye, 1996, p. 138) and perpetrators benefit when they are part of the organisation defence team fighting to prevent others from speaking out. Managers may be particularly adverse to anyone examining what is really going on, fearing an exposition of the ways they exercise power (McCarthy, 1996). All dissent and dissatisfaction are expressed privately allowing bullying problems to thrive. Justice is denied to the victims and they are left with only two feasible options. They can keep their heads down, endure the abuse and watch helplessly as their spirits become totally broken, or they can leave. Many who leave and move to a safe and functional working environment are relieved, comforted and positive about their decision. Others unfortunately bear a lifetime "legacy of defeat" (Adams, 1992, p. 113).

The Dynamic of Bullying

Bullying is essentially an interpersonal interactive process. It is a dynamic created by the behaviours involved in the interaction. Negative behaviours produce a response from the recipient and a process of escalation begins (Tehrani, 2001). Any change in the interaction changes that dynamic. In this context victims are often not merely advised to intervene and challenge their abuser but frequently instructed to do so. Those issuing such advice or instruction seem partially or totally ignorant of the fears and obstacles precluding the victims from taking that suggested action (Kitt, 1999). The control that is quickly gained by the bully combined with an increasing power imbalance stuns the victim into silence and inaction. Apart from believing that challenging will affect little or no improvement in their treatment and may actually make matters worse (Beale, 2001) they have a justifiable dread of challenging the bully as it may provoke and project them into escalatory righteousness, distortion and rage.

Victims are disinclined to challenge, in an organisation that ignores or dismisses bullying and are totally disempowered in an organisation that rewards and promotes those who perpetrate it. They may take on board the view that intervening is the key to stopping bullying behaviours and that fighting back is the only possibility of a solution to their problems (Adams, 1992; Middleton-Moz & Zawadski, 2002). They may master the appropriate skills for intervention. They may even find the inner resources and strengths necessary to intervene (Davenport et al., 1999). However, without an enlightened and supportive workplace context they rarely undertake the challenge. In an organisation that adopts a positive approach to dealing with bullying, victims can and do play an important role in addressing bullying. In

this context challenging or confronting sends a strong message to the perpetrator that their behaviour is identified and not acceptable. Learned, acknowledged, approved and practised strategies are thought to be the most effective in affecting change in the dynamic of bullying (Namie & Namie, 1999; Namie & Namie, 2000; Crawford, 2001).

Assertiveness is a key skill used to challenge bullying behaviours (Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999). Assertiveness enables an understanding on the victim's part of their legitimate right not to be subjected to bullying behaviours. It further facilitates the use of powerful and appropriate language that articulates the unacceptability of the behaviour. Assertive language describes the offending behaviour, states the effects of the behaviour and requests improved behaviour. The language used is clear, unambiguous, and contains no personal attack or attribution of blame. Those challenging are merely asking that their rights be respected. The request does not in any way infringe on the rights of the perpetrator (Namie & Namie, 1999). Challenging bullying behaviours can have an extremely empowering effect. And despite the fact that the bully may ridicule or ignore the challenge, it gives those who feel supported and able to challenge, a sense of breaking the control that bullying involves. Those, on the other hand, who for a variety of reasons cannot and do not challenge bullying behaviours often find it more difficult to recover from bullying. They are bothered by longer term intrusive negative thoughts in relation to having in some way allowed the bullying to continue (Namie & Namie, 2000). A sense of helplessness or lack of control over a situation has been shown to magnify the impact of social-evaluative stressors and to delay recovery significantly (Dickerson et al., 2004).

Whether victims of workplace bullying feel able or unable to challenge bullying behaviours, they should never be held responsible for stopping the bullying. This responsibility rests primarily and definitively with the organisation (Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999; Crawford, 2001).

Range of Organisational Responses to Bullying

Individual and organisational effects of workplace bullying are increasingly acknowledged as being pervasive, infectious and crippling (Randall, 1997). Yet, organisational responses to the problem are very far from being universally adequate or effective. Responses to bullying fall generally into four categories. They are the dismissive, minimum compliance, reactive and proactive responses (Corbett & Kitt, 2006). Each level of response is influenced and determined by a commensurate set of underpinning attitudes and beliefs.

The dismissive response emanates from some or all of the following attitudes and beliefs. It is thought that bullying is an inevitable part of working life and not a form of abuse. It is regarded as a current talking point that will pass if it is ignored. Those who complain of being bullied are considered to be weak, timid, oversensitive and/or paranoid. They are regarded as nuisances at best and troublemakers to be silenced at worst. There is a prevailing belief that "some people may bully but they get the job done and those who don't like it should put up, shut up or get out"

(Corbett & Kitt, 2006). Organisations adopting a dismissive response to bullying are exclusively task-orientated and demonstrate a total tolerance of bullying.

Organisations adopting a minimum compliance response to bullying know that they have to be seen to be addressing the problem but do the bare minimum to fulfil their basic legal responsibilities and are convinced that this is a sufficient response. They regard complaints of bullying and not the bullying behaviours as being the cause of problems. They may insist that bullying complaints be dealt with formally and are reluctant to see a role for the organisation in resolving issues informally. These organisations are also exclusively task-oriented in terms of management style, albeit having a sham acknowledgement of people management. They exhibit a high tolerance of bullying. It is the considered view of this author that, because of a lack of enlightened leadership in relation to responding to bullying, and of continuing ambiguity in relation to where responsibility for addressing bullying lies, and further because of the hands off approach of the Department of Education and Science, that a significant number of schools and colleges in Ireland fall into the minimum compliance category in terms of their response to workplace bullying.

A reactive response to bullying is underpinned by the belief that bullying is a serious problem and that it needs to be addressed. However, the focus is on having effective policies and procedures and indeed sanctions in place. Bullying problems are thought to be best dealt with on an individual, case-by-case basis and without reference to the organisation context. An organisational role in dealing with bullying problems is appreciated but a role in prevention of bullying is not. These organisations regard the achievement of task as the main priority and regard people management as important but peripheral. Tolerance of bullying in organisations whose response to bullying is reactive is low.

Organisations that respond proactively to bullying are in an exclusive and enviable position. They understand that bullying is a serious form of abuse with serious individual and organisational effects. They appreciate that the culture and climate of the organisation can prevent or promote bullying and that bullying does not thrive in an organisation with a positive/effective work environment. They realise that creating a bullying free environment will have beneficial effects on the quality of service and product in the organisation. Finally and vitally, they firmly believe that it is the organisation's responsibility to provide a psychologically safe working environment for all who work there. In management terms proactive organisations place an equal focus on task and on people, recognise that high standards can only be consistently and effectively achieved through the constant and focused valuing of all employees. They present a zero tolerance of bullying.

The examination of the various elements of workplace bullying in this chapter is intended to provide an understanding of the phenomenon as a link to possible avenues of prevention, intervention and minimisation of the problem. Every workplace has a responsibility to ensure that the health and safety of every employee is protected and maintained. They have a further responsibility to ensure that obstacles are not placed in the way of employees reaching their potential and contributing their best efforts in the organisation (Turney, 2003). A psychologically safe working environment is determined by the degree to which the dignity, integrity, self respect,

self-esteem and confidence of those who work there remains intact at the end of the working day. Workplaces that provide a psychologically safe environment consistently attract, motivate and retain staff. There is a greater commitment from staff, a higher quality of work, less absenteeism and less stress and there is a much lower turnover of staff (Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999). In this type of workplace managers consistently strive to create and maintain a high-quality work environment. However, irrespective of the attitudes and practices of individual organisations it is a basic human right for everyone to feel safe at work and to be spared the oppression, humiliation and destruction of bullying. We have come some way towards understanding and accepting this fact but there are still considerable obstacles to overcome to ensure that this human right is universally recognised and is afforded to all employees in the workplace.

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Chapter 54
Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning in Secondary Schools: The Use of Circle Time

Marilyn Tew

Abstract This chapter examines the case for better relationships in early adolescence. By drawing on data from several research studies, It illustrates how young people aged 8–16 experience an increasing sense of disconnection from adults and peers in UK schools. This disconnection lies alongside evidence to suggest that young people construe success at school almost entirely in personal and social terms. The use of circle time will be offered as an approach that can be used across the age range to foster personal, social and emotional growth and wellbeing.

Introduction

Ever since state education came into being in the United Kingdom, governments and educators have recognised that spiritual, social and moral development are important to learning. Way back in 1944, The Education Act in the United Kingdom stated that local education authorities should

> "*Contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community. . .*".
>
> (UK Parliament, 1944, 31.7)

The Education Reform Act (1988) re-affirmed the importance placed on the spiritual and moral dimension of education emphasizing the need to provide a

> "*balanced and broadly based curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society.*"
>
> (UK parliament, 1988, 1.2)

In 1992, The Education (Schools) Act stated that one of the central tasks of the new system of inspection under the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) would be to ensure a school's capacity to encourage spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. The importance of enabling young people to develop in a holistic way is central to the values and aims of the National Curriculum and legislation in England as well as Ireland, Greece, Australia and many other Western

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countries, where attention is not only given to cognitive and physical development, but also to the spiritual, moral and social dimensions of life and learning.

In 1999, the UK Department of Health (DoH) and the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) jointly launched the National Healthy Schools Programme. This initiative enshrined the concept that physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health are fundamental to learning. The 2010 target is to see all schools registered to become accredited with Healthy School Status by paying due attention to the four core themes of personal, social and health education (PSHE), healthy eating, physical activity and emotional health and wellbeing (EHWB).

Arguably, the first and the last of these themes contribute to a young person's sense of spirituality where it relates to a sane and psychologically healthy development of a sense of "self" and "self" in relationship with others. In this chapter, spirituality is taken to mean a person's sense of their unique identity and self-worth as a human being where an increasing sense of "self" is accompanied by a greater capacity to value others. Spirituality is not used here in the religious sense, with a response to God or an "ultimate" but in the development of human potential, which encompasses the ability to aspire to and believe in possibilities that transcend the current experience of the world. Intrinsic to this development of the "self" lie the development of an inner life, with insight, aspiration and vision alongside imagination and creativity. This understanding of spiritual development draws on human attributes such as connection, kindness, love and faithfulness and the quest for making sense of ourselves in relation to a greater context—in this case—the school.

As we have seen, the law pertaining to education, in England, enshrines aims and values which focus on the spiritual, moral and social development of young people. Yet data from two separate research projects indicate that, though the students agree that personal and social development lie at the very heart of being able to engage with school and learning, their felt experience is of increasing disconnection from both adults and peers as they progress through school from age 8 to 16 (Years 5–11).

What Kind of Learners Learn?

Between 1999 and 2002, I conducted an in-depth enquiry into what young people aged 11–14 think is important in order to be effective in school. Effectiveness was defined as being able to take part, to engage in school life and to do well in conventional academic terms (Tew, 2002). The study used Kelly's personal construct theory (Kelly, 1955) to inquire into the internal roadmap or constructs that students used to navigate effective engagement with and success in school. The 87 young people who took part in the study made sense of school effectiveness in almost entirely personal, social and emotional terms. They barely referred to the conventional notions of school, such as curriculum subjects, teachers or school systems. For these students it seemed that the most important navigational aids related to "Who am I?", "How
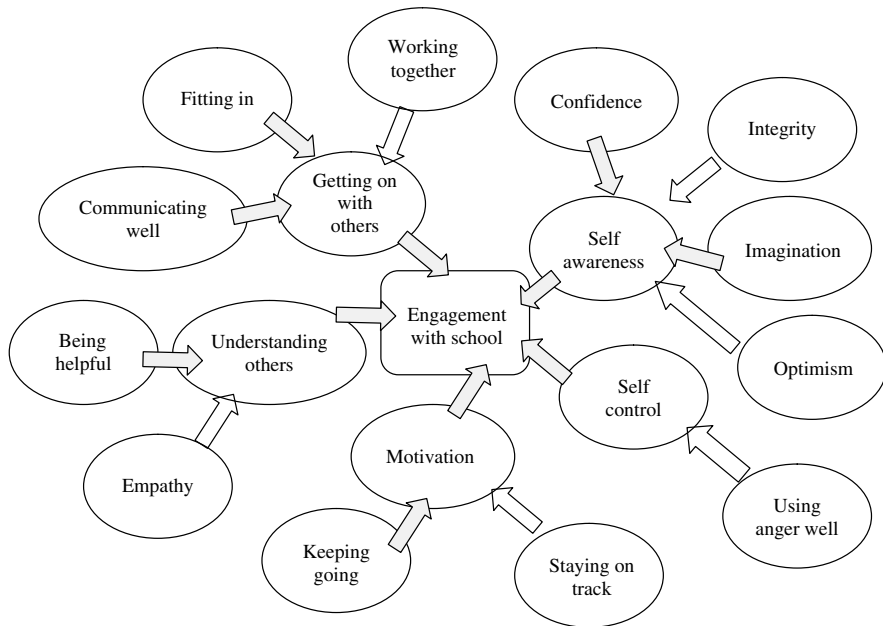
Fig. 54.1 Twelve constructs characterizing effective students situated within five domains of emotional intelligence

do I function?" and "How do I fit in or find a sense of connection in the school setting?" (Tew, 2007). The students identified a framework comprising 12 constructs, which characterised effective students. When the constructs were grouped together, they fitted into the five domains of emotional intelligence identified in the literature (Goleman, 1996; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The five domains and 12 constructs are shown in Fig. 54.1.

These students saw personal and social development as paramount to being able to access the more formal curriculum and for being able to engage with and get the most out of life at school. From the young people's point of view, gaining a positive and confident sense of themselves alongside ways of relating effectively with other people are the foundations on which academic achievements are built. They were looking for a developing sense of themselves as individuals who could "be themselves" with integrity and confidence. In their understanding, the students who did the best were those who could use their imagination to find a forward-looking and optimistic way of framing situations and events. They also noted that those who do well are those who have the skills to connect with other people in the school context. Effective students were empathic and responsive to other people, could communicate well and work in groups. They had found ways to fit in with other people and share something of themselves. Sharing was sometimes seen in physical form, such as resources, money and possessions. In other situations, it was seen in psychological form—emotions, ideas and enthusiasm.

How Connected Do Young People Feel to Others in School?

Between 2000 and 2006, Antidote, a charitable organisation that has worked for the past 13 years in the field of emotional literacy, conducted a research project in conjunction with the University of Bristol. The enquiry sought to identify and understand the factors that facilitate and inhibit motivation for and engagement with school life and learning in adults and young people. Four years of work on this "Emotional Literacy Initiative" (Antidote, 2005) produced five clear factors that, when present, facilitate learning and engagement in school. The five factors have come to be known by the acronym CLASI. The research project showed that when people's emotional experience of school makes them feel capable, listened to, accepted, safe and included (CLASI) they experience a greater sense of wellbeing and, as a result, learning happens (Haddon et al. 2005).

The CLASI factors apply equally to adults and young people in the school and a closer look at the acronym provides the following definitions. Capable means that people are working and learning in an environment that supports and empowers people, both as individuals and in their fulfilment of roles, to engage with the school and realise their potential. Listened to applies to a quality of dialogic interaction where people are heard and heeded in ways that appreciate the unique contribution individuals make and, as a result of the listening, may lead to things being done differently. Accepted means that they experience themselves as understood and accepted for who they really are. This kind of acceptance enables them to break out of stereotypes, labels and moulds. Safe applies to both physical and emotional safety. The emotional aspect of safety is founded on an atmosphere of trust that develops from acknowledging the role emotions play in how people think, speak and act. Clearly a lack of physical safety would impact on a person's sense of emotional safety. Lastly, included relates to people's sense that they have a distinctive role in the school. This in turn enables each person to feel connected to other people in the school because they feel valued and important for the unique contribution they make. When a school pays attention to enabling staff and students to feel CLASI, the result is higher attendance, greater motivation and higher academic achievement (Antidote, 2005).

Antidote's research resulted in the development of the School Emotional Environment for Learning Survey (SEELS) and the CLASI dimensions. SEELS is a questionnaire designed to discover how CLASI people feel in the relationships, communication and systems of a school. Analysis of data from 8000 students who completed the SEELS revealed distinctive trends (Fig. 54.2). Students' sense of feeling disconnected from all people in school other than their closest friends increased in each successive school year. At the age of 9 (Year 5) over 80% of the responses showed that children experienced a sense of connection to both the adults in their school and to their peers. The feeling of connection decreased until at age 15 (Year 10), only 47% of responses indicated a sense of connection to other people in the school.

Within the general downward trend, there are two distinctively sudden drops in students' sense of connection. From age 9 (Year 5) to 10 (Year 6) and from age 12

Percentage

Feeling connected in relationships
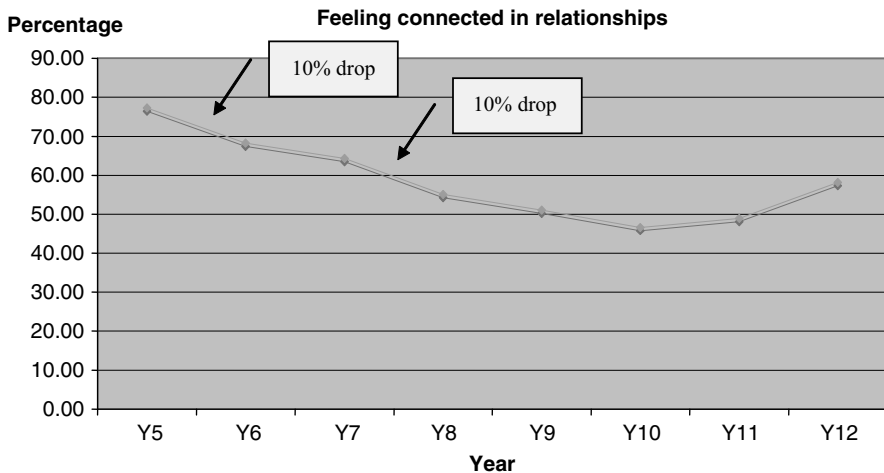
Fig. 54.2 Analysis of data from 8000 students who completed the SEELS

(Year 7) to 13 (Year 8), the responses showed the feeling of connection in relation-ships to drop by 10%. The downward trend continued, albeit at a slower rate until the age of 15 (Year 10) when it began to reverse. Even post-16, at an age when the UK students have made a positive choice to be in school rather than college or work, the sense of connection to adults and peers was not as strong as it was in the primary sector.

An interesting observation is that between age 11 and 12 (Years 6 and 7), when young people transfer from primary to secondary school in the United Kingdom, the downward trend is slowed. This is a somewhat counterintuitive discovery. When the students are dislocated from the familiar and comfortable relationships and friendships of primary school and placed in the uncertainty of secondary school, one would expect a sharp increase in disconnection. Perhaps it is the huge amount of effort, energy and resources that are invested in the primary to secondary tran-sition in schools in the United Kingdom that accounts for the results seen. On the other hand, young people may have a surge of optimism about the new context and the potential possibilities, which is slowly eroded over the first year of secondary education. The comments made by young people aged 11 and 12 are revealing:

> "Teachers pay more attention to those who misbehave and less attention to those who want to learn"
>
> "The teachers are more interested in the school's reputation than in our welfare and feelings."

Why Do Relationships Matter?

When the research findings cited above were shared in conferences and seminars, some people expressed the view that a decrease in relational connection is a natural by-product of the individuation task of adolescence and therefore of no real concern.

Alongside others who have worked on learning research (Claxton, 2000; Deakin Crick et al., 2004; Gardner, 1993; McCombs & Whisler, 1997), I call this view into question.

From a tiny baby, the human learning process is primarily a social enterprise (Gerhardt, 2004). The infant looks to its mother or another primary caregiver for the emotional support needed in order to take risks, sustain failure and persevere in the mastery of a new piece of learning. It is not surprising to discover, therefore, that the social and emotional component of learning remains important throughout life. Indeed, personal experience and observation confirms that the things we are most likely to remember and that have had far-reaching impact on attitudes, thinking and behaviour were very often learned with and from people who matter in some significant way. Developments in the last 20 years of psychology and neuroscience have highlighted the links between emotion, emotional connection and reason. In the West, our history has not helped us to embrace such a view. The roots of our education system date back to Greek philosophical thought, which considered thinking to be reliable but feelings to be subjective, idiosyncratic and unreliable. This dichotomy has dominated Western thought for centuries with an accompanying emphasis on and privileging of the empirical, rational and scholarly. In very recent time, a concept called emotional intelligence has emerged as a synthesis of the rational and the emotional. This concept proposes thought and emotion as adaptively and intelligently interconnected.

Many authors, both academic and popular have added to our understanding of the concept of emotional intelligence. It would be impossible to do justice to this entire field of inquiry, but a few of the contributors should be mentioned including John Mayer and Peter Salovey who provided a theoretical understanding and an instrument for measuring emotional intelligence in 1990; Joseph Forgas who made considerable contributions from the field of cognition and affect (Forgas, 2000); and Daniel Goleman who wrote the popularised books on emotional intelligence that brought the subject into wider public awareness (Goleman, 1996, 1998).

If there is any social or intellectual arena where the link between emotion, relationship and learning is paramount, it is the educational one. Yet in the United Kingdom, the concept that we should think about how we learn and the conditions that enable us to engage with learning are the subjects of considerable disagreement. Some critics think that any focus on emotional intelligence (or emotional literacy as it is called in the United Kingdom) or even on "learning to learn" is a waste of time. They would go so far as to say that such a focus distracts from the core business of teaching subject matter to young people thus enabling them to gain high attainment in standardised tests. Such a view was crystallised by the shadow schools minister Nick Gibb (2006). He argued in a House of Commons debate that all the problems with education in the United Kingdom can be ascribed to teachers' supposed preoccupation with "learning to learn". He went on to say *"The best way to learn how to learn is actually to learn and to acquire knowledge – lots of it – while young and able to absorb it"* (Gibb, 2006).

Despite the antagonists, the educational system of the United Kingdom *has* paid attention to the importance of emotional and social aspects of learning, including

the school relationships that support learners. The protagonists have heeded the evidence suggesting that attention to social and emotional aspects of school is foundational to the whole enterprise of learning (Sharp, 2001; Steiner, 1997; Weare, 1999). Much of the writing and research on the importance and impact of social and emotional aspects of learning have come from the United States, where academics such as Elias, Zins, and Weissberg (1997) and Howard Gardner (1993) have long argued for the importance of social and emotional learning for better academic results, reduced aggression and increased engagement with learning in school.

After nearly two decades of very tight control by central government, the current educational context in the United Kingdom is showing signs of responding to research imperatives relating to the "how" and "why" of learning alongside the "what". The new curriculum for students aged 11–16 has shifted the emphasis from a subject-based content-driven focus to a learner-based, process-driven one. The 2007 revision of the National Curriculum for secondary schools places learners at its centre (DCSF, 2008). It aims to ensure that all young people firstly become *successful learners*. These are students who are creative, resourceful and able to solve problems. They have enquiring minds, communicate well, understand how they learn, learn from their mistakes, learn independently and with others and enjoy learning. They are consequently motivated to achieve. The second aim is to enable young people to become *confident individuals*. These are students who have a sense of self-worth and personal identity, relate well to others and form good relationships, are self-aware and deal well with their emotions and have secure values and beliefs. These students take the initiative and organise themselves, recognise their talents. They have ambitions and are willing to try new things. The third aim is for *responsible citizens who* are enterprising, respect others and act with integrity, understand their own and other's cultures and can change things for the better (Aims, p. 1)

It is not that there is any less desire to see young people achieve the highest standards possible. Rather, the legislation and guidance coming from central government in the form of the curriculum review and the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) initiative in the National Strategy (DfES, 2005; DCSF, 2007a) agree with the view of the young people in the study cited (Tew, 2002) that the route to higher attainment is via attention to the impact of relationships in learning contexts.

School Responses

It is one thing for government to recognise research imperatives and produce guidance or even legislation in response to it. It is quite another for schools to change the approach they have been adopting for many years and re-think the way they engage young people in school life and learning. Sometimes it not easy for a school to see the difference between what they currently do and what is being asked for. Most secondary schools already have a PSHE curriculum and may feel that they are addressing the personal and social aspects of learning. Yet the aim of the 2007

curriculum review was to help secondary schools to think very differently about the way they design the curriculum. Subject divisions are no longer the main focus for curriculum delivery. Rather schools are being asked to put young people, their development and their school experiences central to curriculum design and to think again about how subject information is structured. There are many different models emerging and it would be foolish to think that in a chapter such as this one we could explore them.

The subject of this chapter is not curriculum design but the more transcendent issue of enabling young people to connect with others in the school context, no matter how the subject matter is ordered and presented. Young people see school effectiveness in terms of personal and social development. Their understanding is that students who develop a positive sense of "self" and "self in connection to others" are the ones who are able to access information and succeed. They are not so much concerned with *what* they learn. Rather they set far more store by the *way* they learn it, i.e. the way they are spoken to and treated and the sense of connection they experience in the relationships of school. The next section will therefore explore how secondary schools can work with young people to create that sense of connection.

Circle Time in a Secondary Context

For many years, the UK primary schools have used a whole class group approach called circle time to explore emotional issues and foster social cohesion while developing social skills. The practice of circle time has become so embedded in UK primary education that it tends to be boxed and labelled as a primary approach (Bliss & Tetley, 1993; Bliss, Robinson, & Maines, 1995; Mosley, 1993, 1996; White, 1991). While it is of interest to look at the use of circle time in primary schools, the remainder of this chapter will explore its use at secondary level as a forum for communication that enables students to feel capable, listened to, accepted, safe and included (CLASI), while also building relationships and providing opportunities for social, emotional and moral development. A 5-year case study in a secondary school in Bath, United Kingdom (Tew et al., 2007) showed that the experiences of the circle increased students' sense of connection to their peers and to the adults that taught them. They developed greater competence in social skills and gained confidence to hold and express their view, while being provided with a safe space in which to examine attitudes and values.

Circle time is a student-centred, group-work approach that involves the whole class sitting on chairs, in a circle so that every member of the group can see and be seen by every other group member. The advantage of this format is that no one can hide and no one holds more power than anyone else. Each takes his or her place as part of the group and is given responsibility for the contribution they do or do not make. The approach has its roots in humanistic education, including the work of Rogers (1983), Hall and Hall (1989) and Brandes and Ginnis (1986, 1991). These

authors, in turn called on the work of social interactionists such as Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934). Circle time creates a social and emotional environment based on trust, which provides a context for looking at oneself in the light of feedback from a social group. Several authors have addressed its application in secondary schools (Bliss & Tetley, 1995; Cowling & Vine, 2001; Mosley & Tew, 1999; Smith, 2003a,b,c, 2004; Tew, 1998a,b; Tew et al., 2007) each proposing a slightly different model. This section will not explore the relative merits and demerits of different approaches to running circle meetings, but will pull out some of the principles of running circle time and some positive outcomes for the personal, social and moral development of students in secondary schools.

A circle lesson is considerably more than sitting the class in a circle to talk. It is a session that takes account of the ways in which groups form, function, cope with conflict, perform tasks and close (Tuckman, 1965). Students have to learn the skills needed to take part in circle time in a more overt way than in other types of lesson. Time is, therefore, needed to teach and absorb these skills so that they build through time and can be transferred to other social contexts. In accordance with group theory, a circle time session has three parts:

- The beginning—when the group convenes for this session.
- The middle—when the group performs a task and/or considers an issue. In this phase, the class group functions using ground rules and agreed ways of working. Every circle meeting provides an opportunity to refine and develop the working contract, including strategies for dealing with any conflicts that arise.
- The closure—when the group finishes this session and looks forward to the next.

Also in accordance with group theory, the circle facilitates a class of students in becoming a cohesive group: learning how to work collaboratively together; developing strategies to deal with the inevitable conflict that arises when different personalities work together; and coping with the sense of loss when the group has to end. As has been noted, the literature reveals differences in technique and strategy that are needed for successful circle time with adolescents. There are, however, some principles that apply to all models.

Teacher as Facilitator

The normal role of a teacher in a classroom is as focal point and leader. They set the agenda, manage the resources, present the information and orchestrate the activities. In a circle session, the role is very different. The teacher has to learn a set of skills that may differ from the normal repertoire and this can feel uncomfortable until mastery is gained. In a circle, the teacher moves from the role of "sage on the stage" to "the guide on the side". The aim is to allow different (and maybe opposing) views, opinions, attitudes and values to emerge and be examined.

> *"If you can predict what they are going to say or even what they are going to tell you off for, then that isn't fun"* (Student aged 15).

If the teacher intervenes too early with the "party line" on an issue, conversation is closed down. The teacher is perceived to have the "right" view and students lose an opportunity to explore why they hold their views or if they might want to change them.

"If the teacher says this is my opinion, then you don't want to disagree with them" (Student aged 15).

The art is to introduce a subject, issue or theme, to provide stimulus material that allows for different perceptions and to let the students explore the relevance and meaning in their own world before bringing the group together to come up with any consensus of appropriate response.

"In a circle the teacher is more our friend than our teacher. She isn't like any other normal teacher. She is not entirely like our friend, though, she does tell us off" (Students aged 13).

Circle time requires a teacher to take on a different role from the didactic purveyor of information. He or she lays aside the more normal teaching role and acts as a facilitator and role model in the group.

"It's as if they are not teaching you, but sharing stuff with you" (Student aged 14).

The circle works best when the teacher is self-aware and able to use positive communication to create a classroom climate of trust. This in turn supports students to be open enough to examine their attitudes, values and behaviour (whether or not they share their thoughts and insights with the wider group). When a circle is functioning well, students are given and assume much more responsibility for their contribution and learning than in conventional classrooms. The circle invites and expects them to be active participants in the lesson and there is little opportunity to be an observer or passive recipient.

Speaking and Being Heard

Many, if not most lessons seek to provide an opportunity for students to answer questions and express a view. In most conventional classroom settings, however, students sit facing the front with their back to some of their peers. They are asked a question by the teacher and are required to address their answers or comments back to the teacher. It is unlikely, therefore, that they will express any view that is not conventional or "safe". If they were to say what they really think or feel, they would want to be able to gauge the response of their peers and this is impossible if some are behind them. Not only is there the problem of who can see whom, there is also a problem of time constraints. If the teacher has a lot of material to get through, time for discussion is limited and students are often only asked to speak in response to a direct question. Sometimes there is an opportunity for paired or small group work when everyone can have a say, but it then becomes difficult to ensure that the gist of the conversation is reported back to the whole class, or indeed to check that all the views are represented. Giving everyone an opportunity to speak presents a

challenge in the normal time constraints of a conventional 35-minute to one hour lesson. If each student spoke for just 1 minute, 30 minutes would have passed with no other activity and many members of the group will be bored before half the group have had a turn.

In a circle, the students have a different experience. First, they can see the faces of all their peers. Second, a "round" is used to collect up people's views after paired or small group discussion. The "round" gives each person an opportunity to express their view in turn. The usual way of keeping this paced and retaining interest is to provide the group with a sentence stem which they complete. For instance, if the discussion has been about situations when people might or might not be honest, the sentence might be "People are more likely to cover up the truth if . . .." Each person will have had an opportunity to discuss in detail situations and events when lies or truth were told, and then they summarise their thought by proving an ending to the sentence, which expresses their individual thought, opinion, perception or feeling. This strategy has the advantage of giving time to explore an issue or concept, in privacy, with peers while only asking an individual to provide a summary sentence in front of the whole group.

Some models of secondary circle time continue to use a "speaking object" as in the primary model. (An object such as a stone or soft toy, egg or mascot is passed around the group to signify a turn to speak.) Others prefer to move from using a speaking object to a more open system of turn taking similar to those found in adult encounter or self-help groups. The students come to really appreciate the opportunity to talk and to be heard. They like to discuss issues as they impinge on their lives and learning, from family structures to friendships; from handling conflict to preparing for job interviews; from environmental issues to assertively negotiating a sexual relationship. Yet circle time is not exclusively about personal, social and moral issues. Some teachers use it to talk about approaches to subject matter. Which teaching methods work, what has been successfully learned and by whom and how would the class like to learn the next topic?

Creating a Safe Space

Most lessons that explore personal and social issues have ground rules, that is, agreed ways of speaking and behaving in the group and in relation to the group's conversation. When speaking to students about ground rules, they say they are only effective if they are made by agreement in the group rather than imposed. They must apply to everyone, including the teacher. It helps to have them on display every time the group meets and actively enforced so that they become second nature through constant repetition, practice and reminder.

Students become disheartened by meaningless ground rules. On the other hand, they appreciate having a circle where

> *"We set up ground-rules at the beginning of the year about keeping issues within the circle and people keep to them. We made ground-rules by sitting in a circle and talking about them. They are written in the back of our PSHE (personal, social and health education) books and they are constantly referred to" (Student aged 12, brackets added).*

The Use of Humour, Games and Fun

All models of circle time include an element of fun, often in the form of games. It is alleged that Plato said *"You can learn more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation"*. Games are conventionally used at the beginning of a circle session to bring the group together and at the end of the session to bring a sense of closure. They create social connection, bring a sense of cohesion, lighten the mood, provide a barrier between this curriculum time and events that went before or follow as well as introducing the topic or skills of today's discussion. Secondary colleagues are often reluctant to use games. They perceive them to be a waste of precious curriculum time, or childish. Similarly students can be scathing about games and feel that they are being patronised or treated as primary children, particularly between the ages of 14 and 16. From 16 to 18 years, however, students often become more relaxed about themselves and more willing to join in games. The key to successful games seems to lie in the teacher's conviction that this is a meaningful and purposeful activity. If the member of staff introduces and plays the game with enthusiasm and conviction, the students take their cue from the adult and follow suit. *"The teacher can make it enjoyable" (Student aged 14).*

Finally, in case the more mature should think that this is an activity only for the young and newly qualified, the students said

> *"It's not to do with age. It's how you are, energetic and lively, fun, more like us than like a teacher. We need them to be able to teach us and handle us but like us so that we can feel comfortable with them" (Student aged 15).*

Developing Relationships

Perhaps the most powerful effect of circle work is the way in which it creates connection between members of the group. Students who took part in regular circles over an extended period of time said

> *"We made more friends and got to know people mor*e." *"We know people more intimately, so we get on better." "There were some people I thought I didn't want to be friends with, but when I got to know them, I found out I really liked them and I enjoy being friends with them." "I thought it was cool how people had different opinions about different things" (Students aged 12).*

If the disconnection observed in the 8000 students cited earlier in this chapter is representative of a commonly experienced trend, there is a call for more circle work. A formal classroom where students sit in rows and the teacher stands at or near the front is unlikely to address young people's need for a sense of personal value and social connection. The students said that they appreciated, enjoyed and valued the opportunity to be with teachers in a less formal way. *"The teachers are more down on your level and aren't afraid to have a bit of fun" (Student aged 14).* However, they did not always find it easy to take part in the circle, particularly at the ages of 14 and 15.

"Some people never contribute and some people say loads. If one person says "Pass" the whole circle says "Pass" so it's left to about four people and it puts more pressure on people to speak so they are not necessarily going to say what's true. They are going to say what everyone else is saying and what they think they should be saying" (Student aged 15).

"The discussion is sometimes hampered by people feeling embarrassed to say what they really think for fear of what other people in the circle might think or say or the reactions they might get" (Student aged 12).

Increasing Communication Skills

The circle provides the ideal format for seeing everyone and attending to the person who is speaking. Whereas it is easy to disengage in a room where some people have their backs to you and others are behind your back, it is very hard to be so discourteous when no one can hide.

"The circle is good for discussing because you can see everybody and you feel like you have to say something. You feel more obliged to say stuff because you're going round" (Student aged 13).

The students seem to really appreciate the difference. Perhaps for them, it is a relief to have a lesson when the put downs are noticed and dealt with.

"In a normal lesson, people behind you can fidget and not really listen. In a circle you can see everyone and say what you actually feel" (Student aged 11).

There is considerable evidence that the skills of circle time have to be taught and learned. They are not automatic and cannot be assumed. Many young people grow up in homes where there is constant noise, either as music or from a television or both. The rules of speaking and listening are not necessarily observed and the opportunities to practice the skills of conversation may either not exist, or be filled with tension and anxiety. Teachers may need to specifically teach students the skills of listening and the difference between passive hearing and active listening. In any case, it is likely to be several weeks or even longer before young people learn the skills of the circle.

"At the beginning we didn't say what actually thought but now we do" (Student aged 11).

Positive Impact on Spiritual, Moral and Social Development and Learning

The research evidence shows that when students take part in circle time, they learn to express themselves more accurately, using a wide vocabulary of feelings (Tew, 1998a). They become more aware of *what* is happening in the group and of *how* it is happening. The more accurate they become in their observations, the more able they are to articulate how they perform social skills, such as making friends, being assertive and negotiating a win–win solution. When some members of the group can provide relevant insights about the personal and social situations they encounter,

they can help their peers to cope better too. Many discussions involve skills such as time management, getting homework done, negotiating with parents, keeping and breaking rules, assertive techniques, the use of affirming "I" statements and getting the best out of other people whether peers or adults.

Though there is often resistance to working with a range of other students rather than staying with familiar and comfortable friendship groups, the students quickly understand the importance of developing such skills and so provide the conditions for connection to grow.

> *"They try to mix you up so that you are with other people but you really don't work as well with them. You don't know them and haven't even had a proper conversation so it's just really hard to get into it especially if you don't have much time to work" (Student aged 14).*
> *"You need the opportunity to get to know other people but not bunged with someone and told you have five minutes to do this piece of work. You need time to find out who they actually are before you can work with them" (Student aged 15).*

However, perseverance reaps rewards. The students appreciate the ways in which they change, grow and develop in confidence as they work in the circle. Similarly, the teachers understand that these skills do not happen quickly. They take time and patience.

> *"We are more confident, we have more friends and can work with people in other lessons" (Student aged 12).*
> *"They are able to work outside their immediate friendship group. It has taken about 9 months for that level of security and safety to be built" (Teacher of students aged 15).*

The students also understood that learning that has personal application and meaning remains with them.

> *"When you learn like this, it stays in your mind." "All the subjects we talked about are relevant to life" (Student aged 11).*

They enjoyed thinking about scenarios and situations which were familiar and relevant. Yet they wanted to be able to retain some degree of anonymity. The use of situation cards, agony aunts, case studies and stories as the basis of circle discussion meant that the learning remained just as potent but no one was shown up or showed themselves up.

> *"It matters that things are depersonalised so that we are not put on the spot" (Student aged 14).*

Conclusions

We have seen that the education system in the United Kingdom is charged with the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of young people alongside academic excellence. Yet, at all levels, it seems to be fixated on and riddled with anxiety about performance in public examinations and levels of attainment at different stages of school life. Parents have also become infected with the league table contagion. They look for percentage performance before selecting schools,

whether primary or secondary. Perhaps they have been brainwashed into believing the media messages that create a direct correlation between performance statistics and behaviour. Yet young people themselves provide the keys to their success. They too want to achieve well. The vast majority have every ambition to get good examination results as the access ticket to the adult world of work. But they have a much clearer understanding of what is important in order to get the outcomes to which everyone aspires.

The students do not put social and emotional aspects of learning as an appendage to the work of school in the way that curriculum designers have done. The first and second studies cited in this chapter demonstrated that students see the skills and dispositions, which are summarised under the heading "emotional literacy", to be central and core to school life. They are the essence of school and are ignored at the detriment to learning itself.

Despite recent moves and initiatives such as the 2007 curriculum review, the SEAL initiative and National Healthy Schools that place students' personal and social development in a more prominent and central position, there are few guarantees that these will impact on young people's experience of school. As we have already noted, SMSC education has always been among the aims of the curriculum yet the young people in the studies cited do not report a cumulative impact in each successive year of school life. The reverse is true. They report a diminishing sense of connection with the adults whose role is to support them and their peers.

Whether or not a classic version of circle time is adopted in classrooms, the essential elements of this approach have their place. Secondary schools need to look not only at *what* they teach young people but *how* they teach them. There is a call for approaches that facilitate open, honest relationships characterised by relevant discussions that lead to personal growth and development. Young people understand that this kind of discussion is not an easy option, or even a comfortable one for many. It is, however, important to develop the skills, qualities, values, attitudes and dispositions that enable young people to feel connected to adults and their peers in the learning environment so that they can access the formal curriculum and experience greater engagement with school.

Let us conclude with the voice of the young people themselves and be persuaded by their wisdom.

"Before we had the circle, everyone laughed at each other. Now we've started to respect each other because the teacher has taught us to let people have their opinion. People who are shy now speak out in other lessons, not just in circle time" (Student aged 12).

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Chapter 55
The Effect of Background Music on Learning

Dr. Anne Savan

Abstract The research of Dr. Anne Savan considers the effects of background music on the coordination of pupils with special educational needs and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Previous research has shown that background music has an effect on certain physiological and biochemical pathways in pupils with special educational needs and emotional and behavioural difficulties. When background music is played during practical lessons, pupils become better coordinated and their behaviour improves. A key issue is why this phenomenon does not occur in pupils in mainstream education. It is proposed that sound stimulation of the limbic system is "age specific". As the limbic system of the brain is not fully developed until around 2 years, stimulation up to this point will help the development of coordination. If a child has not received adequate stimulation of the limbic system during this crucial time, coordination remains underdeveloped. Case studies of pupils, who were subjects of this research, have shown that over 80% of them had not received high-frequency auditory stimulation during the first 2 years of life for a variety of reasons. Bombarding these pupils with high-frequency auditory stimulation at age 11 alters the body chemistry during stimulation, enabling the underdeveloped coordination system to function more effectively for short periods of time. While these effects have an immediate effect, it is not known at present whether the stimulation will have a cumulative effect or a permanent corrective effect.

Introduction

Music has provided a "background" for various activities for centuries. The development of electronic recording and reproduction systems has enabled background music to become extremely prevalent in society whether as part of a planned audio environment or by chance. The term often relates to some type of "mood music" or "easy listening", although almost any type of music may serve as a background for something else. Musselman (1974) notes that background music is intended to

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be heard but not actively or purposely listened to. Strictly speaking, music that captures a person's attention is failing to function as truly "background" music and, therefore, models and theories incorporating deliberate attention as essential to an aesthetic experience with music or to determining musical preference theoretically cannot apply to background music. There is certainly strong evidence from a variety of sources that people respond differently to stimulative and sedative music (e.g. Merriam, 1964; Gaston, 1968). However, the various factors that may mediate the effects of different kinds of music on behaviour and cognition have not been systematically documented or explored. Hector Berlioz's description of his reactions to a piece of music, as reported by Schoen (1940), included increased blood circulation, violent pulse rate, muscle contractions, trembling, numbness of the feet and hands and partial paralysis of the nerves controlling hearing and vision. Although in Berlioz's case he was probably actively listening to the music rather than passively absorbing the sound, the effects on his physiological mechanisms were very marked. While it is doubtful that many individuals' physiological mechanisms are affected to the extent that Berlioz claimed, there is objective evidence suggesting that changes in certain physiological rates do in fact accompany affective behaviours.

In the modern western world, where music is readily available to everyone through radio, recordings, television and videos, and where recorded background music is played routinely in many public places, the need to understand the effects of music on our behaviour and cognitive processing has become increasingly important.

Within the field of education there have been few studies which have investigated the use of background music on the behaviour of pupils. Hallam and Price (1998) carried out a study on mathematics performance in a school for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). A significant improvement occurred in the behaviour of the EBD children when background music was played and improved levels of co-operation and a reduction in aggression were also reported in the lessons immediately following the intervention. Other studies have reported a music-induced decrease in activity level in children with attention deficit disorder (ADD) (Cripe, 1986) and children with intellectual disability (Gregoire, 1984; Reardon & Bell, 1970). Giles (1991) also suggested that most pupils function better with appropriate music in the background rendering them less stressed, more relaxed, happier and more productive. She found that the most effective music for improving children's performance was that which they liked, providing that it did not overly excite them.

Studies at the Tomatis Institute in Lewis, Sussex, extensively used music, modified electronically and delivered by headsets to provide therapy for children with learning disabilities, dyslexia, attention disorders, vertigo and autism. The Tomatis techniques are based on the theory that high-frequency sounds stimulate the inner ear and improve the brain's listening function, thus helping it to process all information more accurately. This, it is claimed, has a powerful effect on other areas of the brain associated with co-ordination and motor function (Tomatis, 1989). While the environment provides continuous low-frequency sound the brain is stimulated by the occurrence of high frequencies in some music thus stimulating complex

listening process within the brain (Tomatis, 1989). Results of the Tomatis studies over a 3-month period, involving high-frequency middle ear stimulation of children with learning disabilities, indicated an improvement, though not quantitatively measured (Malies, 1997). Although quantitative data are not available to substantiate the claims of the Tomatis Institute, the observations, nevertheless, suggest that high-frequency sound may, in fact, be the trigger necessary to effect a beneficial response in children with special educational needs and associated emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Pupils who are already subject to stress find learning more difficult because of raised adrenaline and corticosteroid levels produced in response to stressful situations (Smith, 1996). It has been hypothesised that some "calming" types of music may do this by directly stimulating an area of the brain to produce a second chemical or set of chemicals which work in an antagonistic way to the first, thus suppressing stress levels (Savan, 1998). It, therefore, seems possible that aural stimulation could directly affect pupils' emotional states and even perhaps counter the effects of stress.

Physiological research to date provides limited insights into the affective response to background music and there appear to be several reasons for this. Suggestions include ambiguous instructions to subjects, intervening effects of volume levels, variations in subject attention, possible suppression of response due to the fear of disturbing measuring instruments. In addition, the sheer diversity of physiological variables themselves and their many aspects create an overwhelming array of measurement and interpretation problems. In order for the research to progress, several research designs and measurement problems need to be resolved. Also, the unique nature of individual autonomic nervous system response must be taken into consideration if the measurement of physiological parameters is to be appropriate.

A pilot study in which background music by several different composers was played during science lessons to SEN EBD pupils showed that a calming effect only occurred when orchestral compositions by Mozart were played (Savan, 1998). The aim of the follow-up study reported in this chapter was to establish whether there were specific factors in the compositions of Mozart which produce the aforementioned effects. It appears that the consideration of physiological and biochemical variables, together with the individual differences of the subjects, and the analysis of the musical qualities of the stimulus made this study unique.

Method

Participants

In developmental research it is normally expected that the subjects will be randomly selected. This was not possible in this study because the group of pupils was already pre-selected as the experiment was taking place in school rather than in laboratory conditions. The participants in this study were a class of 10 boys aged 11–12 years (Year 7) identified as having special educational needs and emotional and

Pupil no.	Reading age	Position in family	1 or 2 parents	Parents employed	Disabilities
1	7 years 5 months	BBG	1	No	a, b
2	9 years	B	2	Yes, yes	a, e
3	7 years 3 months	BGGBB	2	No, no	a, d
4	7 years 9 months	BBB	1	No	c, e
5	6 years 8 months	BBG	1	No	c
6	7 years	BGB	2	No, no	d, e
7	8 years 4 months	BGG	2	No, no	a, c
8	7 years 6 months	GB	1	No	e
9	8 years 3 months	GB	2	No	a, c
10	9 years 5 months	BGGBBBG	1	No	e

a = poor eyesight; b = poor hearing; c = asthma; d = epilepsy; e = other

Fig. 55.1 The range of difficulties experienced by the children. The reading age of each pupil is used as an indication of their academic progress. Their chronological age was that of first year secondary pupils, i.e. between 11 and 12 years of age

behavioural difficulties. Figure 55.1 shows the range of difficulties experienced by the pupils.

The pupils were taught science within the framework of the National Curriculum for five 40-min periods a week. National Curriculum science at Key Stage 3 is a practical-based subject, which requires skills related to hand/eye co-ordination, balance, tremor control, precision and concentration. These pupils all had underdeveloped motor co-ordination skills at age 12 and had previously failed to score in science taken at Key Stage 2.

Materials

In the pilot study mentioned previously (Savan, 1998), in which the physiological responses to the music of a variety of composers was assessed, only the orchestral compositions by Mozart produced statistically significant depressions of the systolic and diastolic blood pressure, pulse rate and body temperature. Extracts of Mozart's orchestral music that had appeared to cause the significant drops in the physiological parameters of the pilot study were selected and recorded onto an audiotape, which could be used to provide continuous uninterrupted sound stimulation for a 2-h period. This was labelled tape 1. Appendix lists the Mozart compositions from

which the taped extracts were taken. In subsequent phases of this study six further audiotapes were prepared to provide a sequence of experiments in which the results of each determined the hypothesis of the next experiment so as to investigate which aspects of Mozart's music might be responsible for these effects. Each tape utilised the same music compositions as tape 1 but was adulterated in the following ways:

Tape 2	Speeded up by one-third without alteration of pitch—to test whether tempo was a significant factor in producing the observed effects. An increase of one-third was chosen because it was considered that this was the highest speed at which the composition still sounded musical.
Tape 3	Slowed down by one-third without alteration of pitch—also to test whether tempo was a significant factor in producing the observed effects. A decrease of one-third was chosen because it was considered that this was the lowest speed at which the composition still sounded musical.
Tape 4	The recordings played in reverse—to completely alter every aspect of the music including the melody, rhythm, articulation, harmonic flow and structural integrity of the piece and thus eliminate the recognition factor.
Tape 5	Filtered to remove all frequencies above 700 Hz—to test whether high frequency was a factor responsible for the observed effects. The cut off point of 700 Hz was chosen because this is the highest frequency used in normal background sound which pupils would be exposed to in a natural environment (Tomatis, 1991).
Tape 6	Filtered to remove all frequencies below 700 Hz—to test whether high frequencies alone were responsible for the observed effects.
Tape 7	Transposed up two octaves—to further test whether higher frequencies were responsible for the observed effects. Every aspect of the original recording was kept intact except that the lowest frequency heard was 700 Hz.

Procedure

Tape 1 was played during 10 successive science lessons, each lasting 40 min, in which the pupils were taught practical science within the framework of the National Curriculum. The music was switched on before the pupils' arrival and although the volume was adjusted at various points during the lesson, so that the teacher could be heard above it, it was not switched off until the lesson had ended. The pupils were video recorded during the lesson so that their behaviour and response to tasks could be more effectively monitored. Observations of co-ordination, work output, task completion, neatness, noise level, concentration span and attention-seeking behaviour were recorded and compared with those observed in the lesson prior to the science lesson and in the lesson which followed it. Each behavioural parameter was scored out of 10 with 1 being the least favourable and 10 being the most favourable.

The observations were scored by three teachers viewing the video recording of the lesson and their mean scores were then calculated and compared with those of the lessons prior to and after the science lesson.

As part of a practical project, the pupils were taught to measure their own blood pressure, pulse rate and body temperature and then to measure these parameters on each other. A teaching stethoscope was used to check each measurement at first but as the work preceded it was only necessary to perform random checks on the pupils' measurements. The pupils became very adept at taking their measurements and they were extremely accurate. Measurements of systolic and diastolic blood pressure, body temperature and pulse rate were recorded at the start of the lesson; 20 min into the lesson; and 1 h after the end of the lesson.

The systolic and diastolic blood pressure measurements were taken using an oscillometric digital blood pressure monitor accurate to 1 mm Hg, which concurrently measured the pulse rate to an accuracy of 1 beat per minute. Body temperature was measured using an "in ear" electronic thermometer accurate to $0.1°C$.

Each of the other tapes was played as tape 1 for a similar succession of science lessons, with the same pupils. The same measurements were made and the results were recorded as previously. Finally, as a control, the measurement processes were repeated during lessons in which no background music was provided. Repeated measures of analysis of variance (Greene & D'Oliveira, 1982) were undertaken to examine whether the changes in the physiological and behavioural parameters were statistically significant.

Results

The findings showed that when the pupils, all of whom had special educational needs (SEN) and emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD), were played Mozart orchestral compositions during normal science lessons there was a significant drop in all physiological parameters and a resultant improvement in behaviour (see Table 55.1). Observed co-ordination was improved, all pupils completed the set tasks neatly and quietly, their concentration span lasted throughout the 40-min lessons and there was no attention-seeking behaviour.

These effects were also observed when the tape was speeded up without alteration of pitch (tape 2) or slowed down without alteration of pitch (tape 3) and with the recordings played in reverse (tape 4). In the recording, which had been filtered, to remove all frequencies above 700 Hz (tape 5), although there was a slight decrease in blood pressure, there was no decrease in pulse rate or body temperature and none of the results was statistically significant. There was also no observed improvement in behaviour. Similarly with the recordings, which had been filtered, to remove all frequencies below 700 Hz (tape 6) there was no statistically significant drop in any of the physiological parameters and neither was there an observed improvement in behaviour. The recordings, which were transposed up two octaves (tape 7) also showed no significant decrease in any of the physiological parameters or observed improvement in behaviour.

Table 55.1 The effect of sound stimulation on physiological responses shown by SEN EBD pupils ± standard errors of the means

Tape no.	Systolic blood pressure (mm Hg)				Diastolic blood pressure (mm Hg)			
	Before	During	After	ANOVA	Before	During	After	ANOVA
1	115.0 ± 3.1	98.6 ± 3.7	115.5 ± 3.4	$F_{(2, 18)} = 51.28\ p < 0.001$	73.0 ± 1.5	61.5 ± 2.5	73.5 ± 1.5	$F_{(2, 18)} = 33.86\ p < 0.001$
2	117.5 ± 1.9	101.9 ± 3.0	115.7 ± 2.3	$F_{(2, 18)} = 46.08\ p < 0.001$	73.5 ± 1.3	60.9 ± 2.3	74.6 ± 1.2	$F_{(2, 18)} = 38.19\ p < 0.001$
3	119.6 ± 1.8	103.6 ± 3.2	116.8 ± 2.3	$F_{(2, 18)} = 21.16\ p < 0.001$	73.1 ± 1.3	62.3 ± 1.7	74.9 ± 1.1	$F_{(2, 18)} = 38.82\ p < 0.001$
4	120.4 ± 1.6	103.9 ± 2.9	116.5 ± 2.2	$F_{(2, 18)} = 25.17\ p < 0.001$	74.1 ± 1.0	62.8 ± 1.5	75.6 ± 1.2	$F_{(2, 18)} = 44.50\ p < 0.001$
5	119.2 ± 1.4	117.3 ± 1.5	118.6 ± 1.4	$F_{(2, 18)} = 3.50$ NS	74.7 ± 1.5	72.9 ± 1.6	73.1 ± 1.7	$F_{(2, 18)} = 3.36$ NS
6	121.0 ± 1.3	120.5 ± 1.4	120.1 ± 1.2	$F_{(2, 18)} = 1.90$ NS	77.9 ± 2.2	77.5 ± 2.1	76.6 ± 2.2	$F_{(2, 18)} = 3.01$ NS
7	120.3 ± 1.3	117.1 ± 1.2	117.7 ± 1.4	$F_{(2, 18)} = 3.50$ NS	74.7 ± 1.5	73.2 ± 1.7	73.3 ± 1.7	$F_{(2, 18)} = 2.09$ NS
Control	120.8 ± 1.0	120.2 ± 0.8	120.1 ± 0.8	$F_{(2, 18)} = 0.46$ NS	77.6 ± 0.9	77.8 ± 0.8	77.2 ± 0.6	$F_{(2, 18)} = 0.38$ NS

Tape no.	Body temperature (°C)				Pulse rate (beats/min)			
	Before	During	After	ANOVA	Before	During	After	ANOVA
1	36.9 ± 0.1	36.7 ± 0.1	36.8 ± 0.1	$F_{(2, 18)} = 6.89\ p < 0.01$	83.8 ± 7.7	70.4 ± 4.1	81.8 ± 4.4	$F_{(2, 18)} = 7.04\ p < 0.01$
2	36.8 ± 0.1	36.6 ± 0.1	36.8 ± 0.1	$F_{(2, 18)} = 6.29\ p < 0.01$	84.8 ± 4.7	74.5 ± 4.8	85.4 ± 5.0	$F_{(2, 18)} = 21.04\ p < 0.001$
3	36.8 ± 0.1	36.6 ± 0.1	36.8 ± 0.1	$F_{(2, 18)} = 9.17\ p < 0.01$	85.8 ± 5.2	72.8 ± 3.1	81.5 ± 4.9	$F_{(2, 18)} = 7.86\ p < 0.01$
4	36.8 ± 0.1	36.6 ± 0.1	36.8 ± 0.1	$F_{(2, 18)} = 6.99\ p < 0.01$	83.2 ± 5.5	72.2 ± 6.0	81.8 ± 6.0	$F_{(2, 18)} = 9.73\ p < 0.01$
5	36.9 ± 0.1	36.8 ± 0.1	36.8 ± 0.1	$F_{(2, 18)} = 0.06$ NS	82.4 ± 6.2	81.7 ± 5.5	83.8 ± 5.4	$F_{(2, 18)} = 1.81$ NS
6	36.8 ± 0.1	36.8 ± 0.1	36.8 ± 0.1	$F_{(2, 18)} = 0.16$ NS	88.0 ± 6.4	87.6 ± 6.4	87.1 ± 6.6	$F_{(2, 18)} = 0.26$ NS
7	36.9 ± 0.1	36.8 ± 0.1	36.8 ± 0.1	$F_{(2, 18)} = 1.35$ NS	87.8 ± 6.8	87.7 ± 6.7	87.7 ± 6.5	$F_{(2, 18)} = 0.02$ NS
Control	36.9 ± 0.1	36.9 ± 0.1	36.9 ± 0.1	$F_{(2, 18)} = 0.25$ NS	83.3 ± 5.3	83.2 ± 5.2	83.4 ± 5.0	$F_{(2, 18)} = 0.06$ NS

From Table 55.2 it can be seen that there was an increase in favourable behaviour patterns when tapes 1, 2, 3 and 4 were used as compared to lessons without music. But, as with the physiological measurements, there was no significant increase in favourable behaviour when tapes 5, 6 and 7 were used.

Discussion

The results clearly suggest that there are qualities present in certain Mozart orchestral compositions, which evoke changes in the pupils that directly affect the parameters of blood pressure, body temperature and pulse rate. It is suggested that the resultant effects on body metabolism produce an improvement in co-ordination in these pupils. The underlying reason for this may be that the angry, disruptive, aggressive behaviour often exhibited by pupils with special educational needs results from frustration due to lack of co-ordination and the consequent inability to perform manual tasks effectively and efficiently. Any improvement in co-ordination may therefore remove levels of frustration and results in the improved behaviour patterns exhibited by such pupils. However, a distinction has to be made between "slow learners" and pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The latter are usually slow learners with extra problems arising from one or more of the following categories of problem in addition to slow academic progress, namely (a) environmental problems; (b) physical problems; and (c) emotional problems.

Recent research has indicated that if the co-ordination system of the brain of potential SEN pupils is not fully developed during the first 2 years of their development in an otherwise normally developed brain, the resulting co-ordination skills remain underdeveloped. However, it is suggested that the co-ordination centre may be stimulated at any age by subjecting the pupils to high-frequency sound (Tomatis, 1989). It was this hypothesis that provided the basis for this investigation. As previous research indicates, high-frequency sound may play an important part in producing these effects (Savan, 1998). The results of this study, however, suggest that high-frequency sound alone will not produce the observed effects seen with tape 1 since no improvement in behaviour or decrease in physiological parameters was observed when tape 6 or 7 was used.

The reason for the observed behavioural improvement and decrease in physiological function when SEN, EBD pupils are exposed to Mozart orchestral composition is multifactorial. Other, as yet unidentified factors, must also play an important part. Research to date provides only a small contribution to our understanding of the ways that music might affect cognition and behaviour. Much more systematic work is needed which takes account of the characteristics of the individual; the nature of the music being played; the listening environment; recent life events of the individual; metacognition; and task requirements. It is also likely that the mechanisms by which music exerts its effects on behaviour are multifaceted. The effects on cognition may be mediated by arousal and mood, while some processing may be affected by the priming of relevant neural circuits.

Table 55.2 The change in behaviour pattern for pupils for each tape ± standard errors of the means

Tape no.	Co-ordination				Work output				Task completion				Neatness			
	Before	During	After	ANOVA	Before	During	After	ANOVA	Before	During	After	ANOVA	Before	During	After	ANOVA
1	3.1±0.3	6.8±0.3	3.8±0.6	$F_{(2,18)}=31.51$ $p<0.001$	2.0±0.3	8.0±0.3	3.2±0.6	$F_{(2,18)}=88.94$ $p<0.001$	4.0±0.3	8.9±0.3	4.5±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=75.79$ $p<0.001$	4.0±0.3	7.9±0.2	3.3±0.5	$F_{(2,18)}=80.13$ $p<0.001$
2	2.8±0.3	7.2±0.4	3.8±0.2	$F_{(2,18)}=99.75$ $p<0.001$	2.5±0.2	8.1±0.3	2.7±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=96.64$ $p<0.001$	5.0±0.4	9.0±0.3	3.8±0.3	$F_{(2,18)}=92.67$ $p<0.001$	4.0±0.5	7.6±0.5	2.5±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=62.04$ $p<0.001$
3	3.0±0.3	6.5±0.3	2.7±0.3	$F_{(2,18)}=85.47$ $p<0.001$	2.7±0.2	7.8±0.4	3.3±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=95.79$ $p<0.001$	4.3±0.3	8.7±0.3	3.7±0.5	$F_{(2,18)}=79.23$ $p<0.001$	3.9±0.3	8.1±0.3	3.4±0.5	$F_{(2,18)}=59.77$ $p<0.001$
4	3.5±0.4	6.6±0.4	2.8±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=49.52$ $p<0.001$	2.3±0.2	8.3±0.4	3.0±0.5	$F_{(2,18)}=125.81$ $p<0.001$	4.9±0.5	8.7±0.3	2.8±0.6	$F_{(2,18)}=51.43$ $p<0.001$	3.7±0.5	7.8±0.1	4.5±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=57.19$ $p<0.001$
5	3.4±0.3	4.0±0.3	3.5±0.3	$F_{(2,18)}=2.01$ NS	2.6±0.2	3.3±0.4	2.8±0.2	$F_{(2,18)}=0.92$ NS	3.8±0.3	4.6±0.4	4.3±0.3	$F_{(2,18)}=2.09$ NS	4.0±0.3	4.9±0.3	4.6±0.3	$F_{(2,18)}=3.20$ NS
6	3.3±0.3	4.1±0.2	3.5±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=2.79$ NS	2.8±0.1	3.4±0.3	3.4±0.3	$F_{(2,18)}=2.25$ NS	3.8±0.4	4.8±0.3	4.3±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=3.14$ NS	4.0±0.3	4.8±0.3	4.6±0.3	$F_{(2,18)}=3.39$ NS
7	3.4±0.3	3.9±0.3	3.2±0.3	$F_{(2,18)}=2.32$ NS	2.9±0.2	3.5±0.4	2.9±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=1.45$ NS	4.1±0.3	4.5±0.3	4.3±0.3	$F_{(2,18)}=0.73$ NS	4.2±0.3	4.9±0.4	5.0±0.3	$F_{(2,18)}=2.80$ NS
Control	3.3±0.2	4.1±0.3	3.8±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=2.19$ NS	3.2±0.4	2.9±0.4	2.7±0.5	$F_{(2,18)}=0.68$ NS	4.1±0.3	4.2±0.4	3.5±0.3	$F_{(2,18)}=2.32$ NS	4.2±0.3	4.9±0.3	4.8±0.3	$F_{(2,18)}=2.63$ NS

Tape no.	Noise level				Concentration span				Attention seeking			
	Before	During	After	ANOVA	Before	During	After	ANOVA	Before	During	After	ANOVA
1	1.5±0.2	8.9±0.3	4.5±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=192.80$ $p<0.001$	2.5±0.2	9.0±0.3	3.5±0.6	$F_{(2,18)}=116.05$ $p<0.001$	1.6±0.3	9.0±0.1	2.6±0.6	$F_{(2,18)}=93.80$ $p<0.001$
2	2.0±0.5	9.0±0.3	3.4±0.3	$F_{(2,18)}=165.37$ $p<0.001$	2.6±0.3	8.9±0.4	4.4±0.6	$F_{(2,18)}=83.38$ $p<0.001$	2.3±0.4	9.0±0.4	2.8±0.2	$F_{(2,18)}=96.19$ $p<0.001$
3	2.2±0.5	8.8±0.4	2.8±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=86.87$ $p<0.001$	2.5±0.3	9.0±0.3	4.8±0.6	$F_{(2,18)}=83.56$ $p<0.001$	2.9±0.3	8.3±0.4	3.8±0.7	$F_{(2,18)}=52.68$ $p<0.001$
4	1.7±0.3	8.1±0.4	3.4±0.6	$F_{(2,18)}=89.11$ $p<0.001$	2.6±0.3	8.1±0.3	3.4±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=62.00$ $p<0.001$	2.7±0.4	8.6±0.4	4.1±0.5	$F_{(2,18)}=83.04$ $p<0.001$
5	2.3±0.3	3.5±0.3	3.4±0.5	$F_{(2,18)}=2.87$ NS	2.8±0.4	3.8±0.6	3.7±0.8	$F_{(2,18)}=1.22$ NS	2.9±0.4	3.9±0.3	3.3±0.6	$F_{(2,18)}=1.88$ NS
6	2.3±0.2	3.7±0.3	3.4±0.7	$F_{(2,18)}=3.24$ NS	2.4±0.2	3.9±0.5	3.5±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=3.14$ NS	2.9±0.2	3.7±0.3	3.4±0.7	$F_{(2,18)}=1.37$ NS
7	2.4±0.3	3.6±0.3	2.9±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=3.06$ NS	3.0±0.4	3.5±0.3	3.7±0.3	$F_{(2,18)}=1.84$ NS	2.9±0.5	3.9±0.4	3.0±0.3	$F_{(2,18)}=3.04$ NS
Control	3.4±0.2	3.9±0.3	3.5±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=1.36$ NS	3.8±0.3	3.6±0.2	3.2±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=2.47$ NS	3.8±0.4	3.4±0.4	3.1±0.4	$F_{(2,18)}=1.64$ NS

The 10 pupils in the study had all failed to score a level at Key Stage 2 SATS in any of the three examinable disciplines, and so entered mainstream secondary school with no recorded attainment level. However, 2 years later all 10 pupils gained a level at Key Stage 3 SATS in Science. Six of the pupils achieved level 3, three pupils achieved level 4 and one pupil achieved level 5. None of the pupils achieved a level in either of the other core subjects Maths or English at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, two pupils obtained passes at GCSE in Double Award Science, two pupils obtained passes at GCSE in Single Award Science and six pupils obtained passes at COEA Experimental Science at Work, two with distinction, three with merit and one with a pass. These were the only academic qualifications that the pupils obtained. Six pupils entered higher education. Two returned to Year 12 at Aberdare Boys' School to study at GNVQ level and four entered the local college of further education to study at NVQ level. One boy obtained a modern apprenticeship, another gained employment in a local factory and two remained unemployed. All are proud of their achievements and the school is indeed proud of them.

The SEN EBD pupils following the original cohort have all received sound stimulation during science lessons and to date they have all equally achieved. Music has now become an integral part of SEN Science and is being trialled by other departments within the school where appropriate. Obviously a great deal of further work is required to unravel the "Mozart puzzle" but as long as it continues to produce success, it will continue to be used at Aberdare Boys' School regardless of whether we ever find out why it has such a powerful effect on the co-ordination and resultant behaviour of pupils with special educational needs and emotional and behavioural difficulties. While these effects have an immediate effect it is not known at present whether the stimulation will have a cumulative effect or a permanent corrective effect.

Appendix: List of Mozart's Compositions Used in the Tapes

Title	Scoring	Key
Concerto for horn & orchestra no. 3 in E flat (K 447)	2cl; 2bn; str; solo hn.	E flat
Overture only from The Magic Flute (K 620)	2fl/pic; 2ob; 2cl/basset hn; 2bn; 2hn; 2tpt; 3trbn; timp; gloch; str.	G
Concerto for clarinet & orchestra in A (K 622)	2fl; 2bn; 2hn; str; solo cl.	A
Symphony no. 41 in C, "Jupiter" (K 551)	1fl; 2ob; 2bn; 2tpt; timp; str.	C
Symphony no. 40 in G minor (K 550)	1fl; 2ob; 2cl; 2bn; str.	G minor

s = strings (referring to full string complement of orchestra)		
vn = violin	vc = cello	va = viola
ob = oboe	cl = clarinet	bn = bassoon
fl = flute	pf = pianoforte	org = organ
timp = timpani	gloch = glochenspiel	hn = horn
tpt = trumpet	trbn = trombone	hv = human voice
db = double bass		

K refers to original Köchels index 1862
Scoring key is as follows:

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Chapter 56
The Aspiration to Care and Its Frustration: A Literary Exploration

Kevin Williams

Abstract Schools operate within a particular framework, and in order to function successfully, teachers must take account of this framework. Yet the institutional context in which schooling takes place can sometimes be inimical to the aspirations of teachers who are committed to caring for the pupils as learners and as persons. This can sometimes be the experience of student teachers and of teachers who are starting their careers. The proposed chapter explores the compelling accounts of this situation by D. H. Lawrence, himself a former teacher, in the novel *The Rainbow*.

Introduction

The impulse to wish to care for the general welfare of pupils is both common and commendable on the part of teachers. It is the impulse that animated the teaching vocation of Ursula Brangwen, heroine of *The Rainbow* by D. H. Lawrence (1977). This chapter explores the compelling account of her experience by Lawrence, himself a former teacher. Ursula discovers that her well meaning aspirations towards the pupils are completely frustrated by the toughness of the pupils and the rigidity and harshness of the school regime. The institutional context in which she finds herself is inimical to her aspirations to care for the pupils as learners and as persons. This can sometimes be the experience of student teachers and of teachers who are starting their careers.

Before giving an account of the conception of spirituality informing the chapter, it may prove helpful to offer an overview of the argument. As literature provides the principal source of data used in the chapter, the use of literary texts in educational discourse is explained and defended in the first section. The main part of the chapter consists in an analysis of the fictional experience of Lawrence's character, Ursula Brangwen. The final and third section of the chapter considers what is to be learned from the experiences of the fictional Ursula about the place of caring in teaching. This kind of experience is shown not to be unique to Ursula, but it is also

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shown to be neither inevitable nor universal. The chapter concludes by illustrating the possibilities of enlightened practice at the level of both classroom teaching and also school leadership.

The notion of the spiritual relevant to this chapter is as follows and is one of the strands of the concept that is explored in more detail in Williams (2006a). Spirituality can be given expression in particular personal qualities including self-knowledge, self-control, self-possession, self-transcendence, calmness, love, generosity, trust, hope, wisdom, serenity, openness, humility and many more. These are moral qualities related to making the individual a better person and the world a better place and have a role in both religious and secular versions of spirituality. Significantly too relationships of friendship, love and affection where those involved are concerned only with the enjoyment of one another and where considerations of usefulness do not apply can be said to have a spiritual quality. The spiritual disposition or psychological orientation can be found in individuals of religious or secular convictions and should not be identified solely with the former. The moral and spiritual dimension come together in the concern of schools with character education and with the cultivation of an integrated personality grounded in an appropriate self-esteem. In this respect, the school is perceived as an extension of the home in terms of providing personal support and overall care for young people. This is the sense of spirituality relevant to this chapter. The aspiration of Ursula to care for her pupils can be described as spiritual.

A Methodological Prologue

This leads to an account of the role of literature in educational discourse. Literary example can serve as a conduit of understanding much potent than the conceptual analysis. This should be no surprise. After all, as Reynolds Price writes so eloquently:

> A need to tell and hear stories is essential to the species *Homo sapiens*—second in necessity apparently after nourishment and before love and shelter. Millions survive without love or home, almost none in silence; the opposite of silence leads quickly to narrative, and the sound of story is the dominant sound of our lives, from the small accounts of our day's events to the vast incommunicable constructs of psychopaths (Price, 1978, p. 3).

In an interview, the novelist Barbara Kingsolver also makes the same points most eloquently:

> Telling a story is perhaps the most natural way for humans to exchange information. It's a way that you can engage a reader and bring them (sic) information that they might not otherwise think that they wanted to know (East, 2007).

Kingsolver goes on to explain that if her very successful novel *The Poisonwood Bible* set in the Congo had been written as a work of non-fiction few would have read it. On the other hand, "a novel allows you to reach more people, as long as you do it well" (ibid). Literature, as Linda Grant puts it, with "its subversive power of empathy", also demonstrates "how listening to the story of the other has its own

power" (2000, p. 210). Literature can provide access to views about teaching and learning that are often more illuminating than the *ex cathedra* pronouncements of those professionally concerned with the subject. Literary texts can offer then what might be described as casual clothes rather than a Sunday best-view of education.

Literary images can exercise a powerful influence on our minds and when most of what we have learned at school or university has dropped into the deep well of human forgetfulness, some of these images can often endure in our consciousness. The difference between abstract theory and literature as conduits of human understanding is captured in Goethe's distinction between theory and life itself. *Grau, theurer freund, ist alle theorie,/Und grün des Lebens goldener Baum* "Grey, dear friend, is theory all/And green the golden tree of life" (quoted in Grant, 1992[1] p. 118). Of necessity there is a greyness in philosophical work but literature does offer something of the "green" of life's "golden tree".

Recourse to literary texts does not involve renunciation of the pursuit of truth in terms of reasoning, argument and the assembling of data. The purpose of literature is not to pass on new information but rather to enlarge and enrich human understanding. Truth and art should not be conceived in opposition to one another. Art represents completed thought, and many great writers endorse this view of literature. In a famous passage, Jane Austen (1987), for example, speaks of the power of the novel to communicate "the most thorough knowledge of human nature" as well as the "happiest delineations of its varieties" (p. 22). In a similar vein, Monk Gibbon, in his novel/autobiography, *The Pupil*, writes that "(s)erious novelists . . . hope to make some contribution to the greater understanding of human nature" (Gibbon, 1981, p. 62). Such novelists seek to offer to their readers "truth" rather than mere "verisimilitude"; he describes them as the "giants of their profession" whose "insight is matched by their powers of invention" (ibid., p. 62). Marcel Proust also thought of himself as a searcher after truth. "I very much wish to finish the work I've begun and to put in it those truths that I know will be nourished by it and that otherwise will be destroyed with me" (quoted in White, 2000, p. 31). Alain de Botton's (1998) book on Proust owes some of its popularity to the psychological truthfulness de Botton discloses in his work. Proust, he writes, "offers us a picture of human behaviour that initially fails to match an orthodox account of how people operate, though it may in the end be judged to be a far *more* truthful picture than the one it has challenged" (ibid., p. 108) (italics in original). Seamus Heaney (1988) endorses this conception of the relationship between literature and truth; he has written persuasively of the poet's "truth-telling urge" (p. xvi) and of the "necessary function of writing as truth-telling" (p. 97).

Affirming a relationship between literature and life is not to be committed to a didactic view of literature. This is the view famously expressed by John Milton in the introductory lines of *Paradise Lost* where he describes his great poem an attempt to "justify the ways of God to man". Daniel Defoe (1980) expresses a similar view in the description of *Moll Flanders* as "a work from every part of which something may be learned, and some just and religious inference is drawn, by which the reader will have something of instruction, if he pleases to make use of it" (p. 30). The intention of its creator does not define the meaning of a work

of literature, and this meaning is never reducible to its author's proselytising intent. The purpose of literature is not to make a statement. Rather it is as novelist Linda Grant (2006) notes, to "create ambiguity, doubt, discomfort, confusion" (p. 191). She goes on to argue that following the reading of a poem or a novel, "you should feel that your mind is chaos—at least, this is what reading good literature does for me" (ibid.).

One of the important aims of this chapter is to subvert readers' assumptions about the activity of caring in education. Lawrence's treatment of the experience of Ursula Brangwen raises questions about the process. As Azar Nafisi (2004) explains in *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*, one of the aims of encounters fictional worlds is to learn call into question beliefs that are part of our comfort zone. "(M)ost great works of the imagination", writes Nafisi, are "meant to make you feel like a stranger in your own home" (p. 94, see also Williams, 2006b). They prompt us to question what we take for granted, especially "traditions and expectations" where they appear "immutable" (Nafisi, 2004, p. 94). She invites her students to consider the way in which great literature unsettles them, makes them "a little uneasy" and invites them "to look around and consider the world, like Alice in Wonderland, through different eyes" (ibid.). What a novel offers, she writes, is

> the sensual experience of another world. If you don't enter that world, hold your breath with the characters and become involved in their destiny, you won't be able to empathize, and empathy is at the heart of the novel. This is how you read a novel: you inhale the experience (ibid., p. 111).

Another important theoretical point needs to be made here. The interpretative task that literature demands of us is also required in more traditional research. The design, construction, implementation and presentation of any kind of research, quantitative or qualitative, require acts of interpretation. Such acts of interpretation are also required by those who will read the research. Imaginative understanding is therefore demanded in producing and in appraising all research. Indeed, the kind of arguments used to defend the use of literary sources has been used in recent times to defend qualitative research of a narrative or biographical character. Literary texts will tend to be more resonant and complex than the narratives of researchers, and most of them will also enjoy the status of being acknowledged works of art.

Ursula Brangwen and the Aspiration to Care

Ursula wishes to share with her students her own passionate love of knowledge. She intends to make her teaching vivid and *so personal* (Lawrence, 1977, p. 367). To this end, "she would give herself, she would give, give, give all her great stores of wealth to her children, she would make them so happy, and they would prefer her to any teacher on the face of the earth" (ibid.). In her classroom, "she would sit in state, the queen of scholars! Here she would realise her dream of being the beloved teacher bringing light and joy to her children" (p. 373). Her negative experience of

the school and of the principal and staff on the very first day leads her to question these aspirations. She begins to feel that "she has been a fool in her anticipations" by trying to bring "her feelings and her generosity" in an environment that welcomes "neither generosity nor emotion" (ibid.). She begins to feel too that she will be obliged to "alter . . . (her) personality" (ibid.).

On her very first day, she learns that the children can be hard and unforgiving. When she is rebuked by the principal for allowing the pupils go into the class too early, the girls for whom she was responsible look at her "smirking their accusation" (p. 375). And standing before the full class, she has a sense that they are "hostile, ready to jeer" (p. 376). In front of the pupils, she describes herself as "in torture", and as being "naked" and "exposed" before them and refers to the children as her "masters" (ibid.). Feeling as never before that she is a "stranger to life" and "in hell" and in "bondage" (376–377), Ursula has a disturbing sense that she is no longer "her own responsive, personal self" (p. 377).

The principal is "bullying and threatening" (p. 377) towards both her and the pupils and keeps "all power to himself" because in this school, it is "power and power alone" that counts (ibid.). He strives "to make absolute his authority", in order to hold "blind authority over the school" (ibid.). Her attempt to elicit from him some of "chivalrous courtesy" that a young woman might expect from a man is firmly rebuffed and her gender is either "ignored or used as a matter of contempt against her" (ibid.).

By the end of her first week in the school, she is left feeling "an entire foreigner in herself" (p. 378). Her colleague Mr. Brunt is very critical of her, and he resents what he perceives as Ursula's "superior tolerance, her kindness and her *laisser-aller*" approach to the children (p. 378). This approach prompts him to advise her "menacingly" to get a "tighter hand" over her class (p. 379). A female colleague further warns her in a "hard, superior" tone that "you have to keep order if you want to teach" (p. 380). This is indeed true, but the teachers offer the advice in an undermining, threatening manner.

One teacher alone, Maggie Schofield, stands apart from the system, her integrity remaining intact within "all this unclean system of authority" (p. 380). She keeps her classroom looking attractive with flowers on the teacher's desk. She and Ursula become friends and confidantes. Maggie is also very unhappy considering herself to be in "the ignominious position of an upper servant" (p. 380) belonging neither to the class who employed her and alienated from the servant class. The teachers in the school do not have real authority but enjoy only what Lawrence describes as "mongrel authority" (ibid., p. 381). In other words, they do not enjoy real discretion or wield any real power. Maggie describes her situation in the school as *hateful* (p. 382, italics in text), and Ursula realises that they both share the same "deadly bondage" (ibid.). Maggie refers to the children as "simply awful" and as "louts" (ibid.) who have to be compelled to do everything. As she puts it, the teacher has "to *make* them do everything" (ibid., italics in original) and that for the children to learn anything she "has to force it into them" (ibid.). Then follows an account of the kind of constraint that is envisaged as necessary to teach.

The Imposition of Compulsion

Ursula is shocked to discover the extent of compulsion that she will be expected to impose. "Why", she reflects bitterly, "must she force learning on fifty-five reluctant children", and a "great dread of her task" takes possession of her (p. 382). She perceives the other teachers as "drudging unwillingly at the graceless task of compelling many children into one disciplined, mechanical set, reducing the whole set to an automatic state of obedience and attention, and then of commanding their acceptance of various pieces of knowledge" (ibid.). Ursula's account of this endeavour is chilling and merits being quoted at some length.

> The first great task was to reduce sixty children to one state of mind or being. This state must be produced automatically, through the will of the teacher, and the will of the whole school authority, imposed upon the will of the children. The point was that the headmaster and the teachers should have one will in authority, which should bring the will of the children into accord (ibid.).

The sense of wills straining in different directions is very vividly communicated as is the perception that children will never want to learn. There exists, she muses,

> a set of separate wills, each straining itself to the utmost to exert its own authority. Children will never naturally acquiesce to sitting in a class and submitting to knowledge. They must be compelled by a stronger, wiser will. Against which will they must always strive to revolt. So that the first great effort of every teacher of a large class must be to bring the will of the children into accordance with his own will. And this he can only do by an abnegation of his personal self, and an application of a system of laws, for the purpose of achieving a certain calculable result, the imparting of certain knowledge (p. 383).

Her belief in the power of "own personality" and her wish "to become the first wise teacher" and to dispense with compulsion "by making the whole business personal" has met with defeat and leaves her "in a very deep mess" (ibid.). There are two reasons for this mess. In the first place, she offers the class a relationship which only one or two could appreciate but which the rest rejects. Secondly, she is setting herself against the authority of the bullying principal who believes in stern submission of pupil's to a "narrow and exclusive" (ibid.) set of demands.

The Inescapable Presence of the School Experience

One of the troubling results of Ursula's school experience is a sense of being closed off from the world of her usual joys and delights. She has a sense that the "sun was being blocked out" of her life and that the blue sky and clouds were just a "fantasy, like a piece of painted scenery" (pp. 383–384). Her heart is "black and tangled in the teaching" with the result that "her personal self" feels "shut in prison" and "abolished" (p. 384). The sunshine and the "luminous" (ibid.) outdoors disappear from her life, and only the harshness of the school is real to her. In her free time, she tries her best to put her situation out of her mind but even in the "spacious and wonderful" world of nature and of the woods she has a sense of being "pursued" by

the world of the school. The school is within her "like a dark weight" and constantly "haunting her, like a darkness hovering over her heart" (p. 384). Her whole identity becomes bound up in her role of the teacher of Standard Five in St. Philip's school, and she no longer has a sense of being her old self, "free and jolly" (p. 390)—this self does not exist any more. At the weekends, she goes "mad with the taste of liberty" but "the prison house" is "always awaiting her . . .. as her chained heart" too well knows (ibid.). When shopping with her sister in the local town, the children taunt and jeer her and even throw stones at her (p. 395). The tension that she experiences at the end of the weekend is great and she feels "strung up tight with dreadful anticipation" (p. 391). This may seem exaggerated, but many teachers experience negative feelings before Monday mornings.

Ursula's Encounter with Violence

The principal, Mr. Harby, is angry with her because of her inability to keep control of the class and "inflict knowledge" (p. 385) on the pupils, and he now begins "to persecute her" (ibid.) by coming into her classroom. He demonstrates his ability "to crystallise the children into hard, mute fragments, fixed under his will: his brute will, which fixed them by sheer force" (p. 388). He picks on a boy whom he hears answering Ursula with a tone of insolent mockery and takes him away to beat him. Finding it unbearable to hear "the whistle and thud of the cane", Ursula's heart stands "still within her" and she feels "sick" (ibid.). The "blubbering" of the beaten child "nearly . . . (breaks) her heart"—she also feels guilty that the episode is partly due to her failure to keep order in the classroom. Experiencing the "shame of incompetence", she feels as if Harby has left her "exposed before the class" (p. 387) Following this incident, the principal wages an even more intense and implacable war against Ursula, and has "worked himself into an obsession of fury against her" (p. 391), the weakest member of the teaching staff. His aim is to force her to resign from her job, and he criticises her in front of the pupils for their handwriting and the general state of their copy books and for failing to keep track of pens. In caning the boys, he is punishing her, and this triggers on the part of the pupils a response of "resentment . . . bitterness . . . anger and contempt of *her*" (p. 392, italics in original) rather than against the principal. Even more than her "horror" at the beatings, her sense of guilt at her incompetence causes her an even "deeper pain" (ibid.). It is important to keep in mind this incompetence—however deplorable the brutality of the school.

The Bitter Lessons of Experience

Ursula realises she must allow all personal aspiration to be set aside and that she must leave "nothing more of herself in school" (p. 393). She must become only her role and anything of her own personality must be excluded. Never again will "she give herself as an individual to her class" (p. 395) and she resolves to treat

the children simply as learners. In putting away "the personal self", she must make of herself a mere "instrument, an abstraction, working upon a certain material, the class, to achieve a set purpose of making them know so much each day" (p. 383). Much as she finds the task "hideous", she "must learn to subdue" the pupils "to her will" (p. 388). Becoming "distant and impersonal" and merely "official" (p. 393), she must focus on the task to be undertaken rather than on the children as human beings. She must learn to ignore the quirky individuality of each child and punish them with detached dispassion "where she could otherwise only have sympathised, understood, condoned" (ibid.). Appealing to the better nature of the pupils is fruitless, and she sets about bringing them "into subjection" (p. 395). She plans to "assert herself for mastery" and "to fight and subdue" (p. 396).

Her biggest battle of all to gain control involves beating and subduing her biggest tormentor, a boy called Williams.

Ursula Inflicts Violence

Williams is very adept at undermining the teacher's authority and displays a very "cunning intelligence" (p. 396) in doing so. In the incident that starts this confrontation, he answers Ursula's question regarding a blot on his copy "in the mocking voice" that he is "so clever in using" (p. 396) and causes the other pupils to snort "with laughter" (ibid.). An "actor", the boy is able "to tickle the feelings of his hearers subtly" prompting them into join with him in "ridiculing his teacher, or indeed, any authority of which he was not afraid" (ibid.). He is described as "a match even for Mr. Harby" (p. 397). Though she knows it is somewhat unfair, she asks him to stay back to write another page without a blot. That afternoon Ursula feels her heart beat "thick", for she knows that is the moment of the decisive "fight between them" (p. 397). Williams starts to disrupt the lesson by ducking his head under the desk and then claiming he is doing nothing. Eventually he pinches another boy on his leg, and Ursula tells him to come to the front of the class. He refuses to do so. Though "afraid", something goes "click in Ursula's soul" (p. 398), and she goes and drags him from his seat. For this is the moment that the decisive "battle between him and her" (ibid.) is joined. Williams kicks and struggles but in "horror lest he should overcome her, and yet at the heart quite calm" (ibid.), she flogs him into submission with the cane. Harby comes into the classroom to find out what is happening and Ursula, "her breast heaving" (p. 399) admits that she has thrashed Williams. With a sense "as if violated to death", she feels that nothing can "touch her now" and that she is "beyond Mr. Harby" (ibid.).

Williams's mother comes to complain and Ursula, with the principal present but totally unsupportive, admits only to being provoked and not to having done anything wrong. She receives the support of Mr. Brunt who advises her to deal similarly with the other trouble makers in her class. This she does although it makes her heart "sick" (p. 405). Realising that "nothing but a thrashing would settle some of the big louts" who want only "to play cat and mouse with her" (ibid.), she also beats them into submission. At length they become afraid of her and she has them "in order"

(p. 405). She is conscious of the "class instinct to catch her" if she shows any sign of weakness and so she remains "cold and . . . guarded" (p. 401).

The Consequences

The general psychological results of removing her personality from teaching are considerable. These results go to show that the suppression of the personal element in teaching and learning is at odds with the nature of the activity. Ursula is after all only seventeen, the age at which many girls are still babysitting today. It was "agony to the impulsive bright girl" to "become distant and official, having no personal relationship with the children" (p. 393). Lawrence describes this very vividly:

> So her face became more and more shut, and over her flayed, exposed soul of a young girl who had gone open and warm to give herself to the children, there set a hard insentient thing, that worked mechanically according to a system imposed (p. 395)

Though the impersonal style of teaching does not come at all naturally to her, she begins to enjoy "some success with her class" (p. 393).

The consequences of inflicting violence, in order to maintain control, were even more appalling. She resents the support from Mr. Brunt and has a sense of being drawn into a malign conspiracy of "strange fellowship" (p. 400). After administering the first thrashing, she knew that "Williams was beaten", but this success has come "at a cost" (p. 401). Ursula feels that she has been introduced to "the horror in humanity, that would destroy her, and with which she was at war" (ibid.). The use of the term "horror" echoes the dying words of Kurtz "(t)he horror, the horror" in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, words that communicate Kurtz's appalled insight into the dark side of the human nature (Conrad, 1971, p. 149). Though she establishes dominance over the class as a result of the subsequent beatings, she knows that success has come at "a great price" (p. 405). The imagery is striking—it "seemed as if a great flame had gone through her and burnt her sensitive tissue" (ibid.). It makes her feel "as if she would go mad" (ibid.). Bitterly does she repent of what she has done and wishes passionately that it had been otherwise. "Yet it had to be so. She did not want to do it. Yet she had to" (ibid.) Bitterly too does she regret having "leagued herself to this evil system where she must brutalise herself to live" (pp. 405–406).

Now isolated from the innocent "life of her childhood", she is a "foreigner in a new life, of work and mechanical consideration" (p. 406). She is without sympathy for the children because they had "forced her to the beatings" (ibid.). In her good will, she had approached them "full of kindness and love", and for this "they would have torn her to pieces" (ibid.). She has refused to be cowed and has displayed a capacity "to fight and hold her place . . . in the world of work and man's convention" (ibid.). In the "blind fight", she has "suffered bitterly" (ibid.) Again to communicate Ursula's pain, Lawrence draws on imagery.

> She was like a young filly that has been broken in to the shafts, and has lost its freedom. And now she was suffering bitterly from the agony of the shafts. The agony, the galling,

the ignominy of her breaking in. This wore into her soul. But she would never submit. To shafts like these she would never submit for long. But she would know them. She would serve them that she might destroy them (p. 407).

When she does endeavour to teach with imagination—instead of teaching the dates in history, she tells a lovely tale and instead of the usual grammar she introduces them to literary texts, she has to return to the traditional methods in order properly to prepare them for the examination (p. 409). Yet she has learned how to enter into mechanical nature of the task, she is able to take "a certain pleasure from the sheer oblivion of teaching" and to lose herself in the tasks to be accomplished. But this involves a great loss because "her individual soul" is excluded from her teaching and has to try to flourish and find "its growth elsewhere" (p. 407). School continues to remain "a prison to her" but at the same time a "prison where her wild, chaotic soul" has become "hard and independent" (p. 408). Still the effect of the large classes and the long hours drain her of energy. Teaching represents a very grim "world of work" totally at odds with her inner world "of young summer and flowers" (p. 407). The two worlds are harshly "out of tune" (p. 410) one with the other. Her work is essentially disconnected from her person. The kind of disconnection experienced by Ursula that Lawrence is trying to communicate here is captured in the reference in the Book of Job to "pressed service" and "hired drudgery" (Job 7: 1–4). She serves two years as an elementary school teacher and at the end of this time she leaves to pursue her studies. Though not having been a great success as a teacher at this level, she has not failed in the task. "She hated it, but she had managed it" (p. 411).

So then what is to be learned about the place of caring in teaching from the experiences of Lawrence's fictional Ursula? The third main section of the chapter addresses this issue.

Caring and Detachment in Teaching

The fictional experience of Ursula Brangwen is not unique. The toughness of the pupils and the rigidity and harshness of school regimes can frustrate well-meaning aspirations to help them. In his autobiography, *Another Country: Growing up in 1950s Ireland*, Gene Kerrigan (1998) writes of the torment that befell a young "nice priest" chaplain-teacher (p. 55). Kerrigan describes him as having a "fresh, open mind, a soul yearning to enhance our spirituality within a changing, questioning society" (p. 56). His aim was to get the boys "talking in the vernacular of the day about eternal truths" (ibid.). Willing to mingle with the pupils, he sat on an empty desk in the middle of the classroom rather than behind the teacher's desk.

> Smiling, open to dialogue. He wanted to be our friend.
> We ate him alive . . ..
> He wanted nothing but good for us, he wanted to approach us on our terms, he respected us.
> And we laughed in his face . . ..
> He offered friendship, we smelled weakness. . . .
> We mistook love for vulnerability and we seized him by the throat (pp. 56–57).

Like Ursula Brangwen, what this young priest did not appreciate was that schools operate within a particular framework and in order to function successfully, teachers must take account of this framework. An essential feature of the framework is an awareness of the adult–child and individual–group character of the teacher–pupil relationship. This requires the exercise of an institutionally appropriate form of authority and the imposition of a certain control. Within this framework, it is possible to offer the personal dimension of good teaching.

To draw attention to the limits of the personal in teaching is not to advocate an exaggerated kind of vocational detachment in the job. The model of excessive detachment is captured very well in the description of the role of a butler in Kazuo Ishiguro's (1989) novel, *The Remains of the Day*. According to this model, the individual "must be seen to *inhabit* his role, utterly and fully; he cannot be seen as casting it aside one moment simply to don it again the next as though it were nothing more than a pantomime costume" (Ishiguro, 1989, p. 169) (italics in original). For this kind of professional, there is only one situation where if he "cares about his dignity . . . (he) may feel free to unburden himself of his role; that is to say, when he is entirely alone" (ibid.). The "dignity" of this kind of professional has to do with the ability "not to abandon the professional being he inhabits" (ibid., p. 42), unlike lesser professionals who "will abandon their professional being for the private one at the least provocation" (ibid.). According to this view, being "professional" means being personally detached and immune from ordinary human feeling. It is hardly possible to attain such a degree of detachment and the aspiration to achieve it is inappropriate, unrealistic and misguided. To be sure discharging, a professional role requires a certain detachment—the detachment necessary, for example, on the part of those who provide hospice care if they are to serve patients and their relatives. It does not mean that carers do not have feelings about those they are helping but rather that these feelings are of a different character from those of the families involved.

This chapter should not be read as a denial of the need for nurture in teaching. But it is worth noting that concern for the welfare of learners seems to be most salient in the English-speaking world. In, for example, Japan, Germany, France and Italy, the pupil–teacher relationship can require significant detachment from the worlds of learners on the part of teachers.[2] British novelist Tim Parks (2000) makes very telling observations on his experience of this attitude in Italy. Observing the education of his two children, Parks writes with some bewilderment about what he perceives as the very different remit of the Italian school from that of its English counterpart. In the first place, the school:

> offers no games, no extracurricular activities. There are no music lessons, no singing lessons, no school choir. . . no hockey, no cricket, no netball, no basketball, no football, no swimming, no athletics, no sports day, no school teams (p. 287).

In the second place, what strikes him even more is the absence of any attempt to induce an atmosphere of caring similar to that to be found in rather idealised versions of family life.

> The school doesn't, as it does in England, pretend to offer a community that might in any way supplant the family, or rival Mamma. That's important. It doesn't, and later on the

university won't either, try to create in the child the impression of belonging to a large
social unit with its own identity. There is no assembly in the morning, no hymn singing, no
prayers, no speech day ... (ibid.)

For his two children of six and eight, school is "no more and no less than reading
and writing and mathematics" and other school subjects (ibid.).

To be sure, this is only Parks's perception of the Italian approach and may not
represent what happens in most schools. Nonetheless, there is something about this
approach that merits comment. Pedagogically it is highly questionable because it
fails to see learners as persons. This is not to claim that nurturing is an activity
in itself: rather it is an intrinsic part of educating. The teacher's principal task in
nurturing pupils is to ensure that they learn. The defining character of teacher's job
specification is to promote learning. A comparison can be made with the world of
medicine. Holistic concern for the patient should be part of any regime of treat-
ment but this concern should not at the expense of the competent administration of
medical care. Indeed, if I had to choose, I would prefer to be treated by someone
who was competent, although curt and brusque, rather than by a person who was
"nice" but unskilled in the practice of medicine. Likewise in education "niceness" is
no substitute for competence. Yet caring and supporting learners should actually be
written into the practice of the teaching itself. Part of a teacher's task is to nurture
by having regard for their welfare. Many teachers will have at some time in their
careers felt like Prudie, the fictional French teacher in The *Jane Austen Book Club*
by Karen Jay Fowler (2005). She claims that the pastoral concern should supplant
conventional teaching. "Why bother", she reflects,

> to send teenagers to school at all? Their minds were so clogged with hormones they couldn't
> possibly learn a complex system like calculus or chemistry, much less the wild tangle of a
> foreign language. Why put everyone to the aggravation of making them try? Prudie thought
> she could do the rest of it—watch them for signs of suicide or weapons or pregnancy or
> drug addiction or sexual abuse—but asking her to teach them French at the same time was
> really too much (p. 86).

This response is perfectly understandable, but it is possible to reconcile the
impulse to care and teaching. Good teaching means good caring, and such caring is a
normal part of the professional role of the teachers. Being professional in this sense
refers to reaching and maintaining the highest standards in a human art, activity or
practice and also to the quality of a person's skill and commitment. Doing any job
professionally means working with the required level of skill and also with a care
for the quality of service provided. Included in this notion of care is by extension
concern for the recipients of this service. In this way, we can speak of people being
very professional in spheres not commonly considered "professional"—bus drivers
and women and men working in service occupations in restaurants, shops and other
areas. In the context of teaching, being professional refers to the attainment of the
highest standards of competence in one's subject and in one's pedagogy and also
to the presence of an appropriate commitment towards the learners. These stan-
dards and attitudes have always been exemplified in the work of good teachers. The
following is an illustration of how this occurs.

It is an account by Gervase Phinn (2000) of a teacher giving a lesson based on a novel set during the Second World War to a group of non-academically inclined learners.

> She used well-chosen illustrations and probing questions to develop understanding of ideas and motives. . ..She encouraged the boys to explore character in greater depth, whilst sensitively supporting the less able, helping them to stay interested and involved by the use of questions matched to their abilities and interests. She required them to justify a point of view, refer to the text, relate to their own experiences and examine the use of language.
>
>   The atmosphere in the classroom was warm and supportive, and the boys responded well to the teacher, clearly enjoying her touches of humour. . .. (She) had a real empathy with, and respect for, the pupils and . . .had high expectations of their success. She encouraged, directed, suggested, questioned, challenged and developed the pupils' understanding in an atmosphere of good humour and enjoyment (p. 164).

The positive attitudes of the teacher are also reflected in the actual classroom environment. This "was wonderfully bright and attractive with appropriate displays of posters, photographs and artefacts which gave the pupils a feel for the period in which the novel was set" (ibid.). Striking in Phinn's characterisation of the classroom is the reference to warmth and good humour. The importance of humour also arises the comments of the principal that follow. Regrettably laughter and fun are not sufficiently foregrounded in educational discourse.

On leaving this class, Phinn heads for the final lesson of the day through the school hall. There he finds two aggressive groups of boys shaping up to one another for a fight. So intense does their aggression become, that Phinn intervenes much to the surprise of the boys and indeed of their teacher who stands up to inform him that he has been watching a rehearsal of *Romeo and Juliet*. He spends the next half an hour watching "the most gripping opening" of the play he had ever seen (p. 167). In both cases, the caring of both teachers was expressed in the quality of the teaching that they provided.

Caring should also be a feature of enlightened school leadership, and this process will be considered in the conclusion to the chapter.

The Role of Leadership

Significantly the chapter of the book in which Ursula undergoes her initiation into the world of teaching is entitled "The Man's World". Lawrence wishes readers to understand that teaching is a tough and hard business that requires stereotypically masculine qualities. These are embodied in and promoted by the principal. Ursula also feels that the man "did not believe in the least in the education he kept inflicting on the children" (Lawrence, 1977, p. 388). But the kind of system operated in St. Philip's was not the only one because Maggie Schofield leaves the school to find "a more congenial post" (p. 411), showing Lawrence is aware that St. Philip's is a particularly noxious place to work.

In a contemporary context, it is worth noting the effect of the different attitude of a principal on the atmosphere within a school. The volume by Gervase Phinn (2000) referred to above has an account of the educational vision and practice of

the principal whose ideas are very different from those of Mr. Harby in *The Rainbow*. Coincidentally the school is also in an area of disadvantage, and it caters for boys who have failed to get places in the traditional, academic secondary school. By virtue of attending this school, the boys are already "deemed to be failures" and arrive "under-confident, with low self-esteem" (p. 152). The task of the school, explains the principal, is

> first and foremost. . . to build up their confidence and self-esteem, continue to have high expectations for them and be sure they know, give them maximum support and encouragement, develop their social skills and qualities of character to enable them to enter the world feeling good about themselves . . .. so they develop into well-rounded young people with courage, tolerance, strong convictions, lively enquiring minds and a sense of humour (pp. 152–153). . .. I do really believe. . . that those of us in education can really make a difference, particularly in the lives of less fortunate children, those who are labelled failures (p. 171).

He tries, he says, to make the school "like the good home that I was brought up in, a place where there is work and laughter, honesty and fairness" (p. 171). Good humour also features in the class of the teacher referred to above. Laughter and humour were completely absent from St. Philip's. Laughter expresses a sense of shared and relaxed human fellowship, and I have always been conscious of notion of laughter and humour as a feature of educational activity within the caring school—a notion that is explored with insight and erudition by James C. Conroy (2004, pp. 77–110).

A similar view of the caring school under the leadership of a committed principal can be found in the description by Irish novelist, Monk Gibbon (1981) of the school in England that features in his novel, *The Pupil*. The narrator experiences the school as a "kind of miniature Plato's Republic" (p. 21), a "cultured oasis" (p. 75) animated by the conviction of the principal that a "school should be a large family—a small nation" (p. 14). His vision of the school is animated by the conviction "that character is everything, and that everything without character is nothing" (p. 76). The principal's vision resembles the traditional French conception of the school as a safe place or sanctuary where childish blunders do not have that the consequences they have in the adult world and where encounters with this world occur vicariously through the study of literature (see Williams, 2007b, pp. 48–50). Regrettably for Ursula Brangwen, her professional education took place in a very different environment. D.H. Lawrence succeeds in communicating how teachers' good intentions, including the aspiration to care, can be frustrated. Some of the other extracts illustrate that this is not all inevitable, but educators need to be alert to the dangers of unrealistic benign intentions in the real life of the classroom.

Notes

1. I have slightly changed Grant's translation.
2. For a consideration of the situation in Japan and Germany, see Norman (2004, pp. 18–19) and for an explanation of the reservations in France regarding the personal dimension in education see Williams (2007a).

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Chapter 57
Children in Kenya: The Role of Play Therapy in Recovery from Abuse

Kathryn Hunt

Abstract Play therapy with vulnerable children in Kenya is in its infancy. UK counselling/play therapy academics have designed and delivered a Certificate in Play Therapy for the Kenya Association for Professional Counsellors based in Kenya. Early research indicates that professionals there are finding the training helpful in working with vulnerable Kenyan children, including those both infected and affected by HIV/AIDs. (Hunt, 2007) Kenyan counsellors and play therapists are in the process of drawing up guidelines for working ethically within Kenyan tribal cultures. In time, the model may adapt according to Kenyan needs and wishes. The research is in progress.

Introduction

Many children in Kenya are far from experiencing wellbeing. On the African continent, children in millions are suffering due to the psycho-social impact of: separation; loss; bereavement; illness and caring for ill relatives caused by HIV/AIDS; abuse including, sexual, physical and mental trauma; domestic violence; civil unrest; crime; poverty and for refugee children, the experience of war. (Donald, Dawes, & Louw, 2000; Dyregrov, Gupta, Gjestad, & Mukanoheli, 2000; Efraim Junior, 2004; Staub, 1999; UNAIDS, 2004; UNICEF, 2005; World Bank, 2006).

For example, there are estimated to be more than 12 million AIDS orphans in Africa (Kaplan, 2005) with approximately 650,000 of these in Kenya. It is estimated that 11% of children below 15 years of age in Kenya are orphans. This definition of "orphan" includes all children who have lost one or both parents. It is estimated that 2% of children under 15 have lost both natural parents. There is however regional variation with the highest rate of orphans (lost both natural parents) at 6% in Nyanza province. It is further estimated that about 50% of orphans are attributable to parental death from AIDS (NACC, 2005). The Kenya National

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HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan (KNASP) 2005–2009/10 targets orphans and vulnerable children to ensure effective interventions to protect them from significantly higher risk of infection and greater vulnerability to the impact of HIV/AIDS (KNASP, 2005, p. 15, Section 3.3.3).

At the extreme end of the continuum, vulnerable children are living in the streets as a consequence of trauma and poverty. Street children are constantly exposed to the risk of violence, and insecurity is a constant state (Dyregrov et al., 2000). Counsellors work with street children in many settings in Kenya, including drop-in centres existing mainly for food and clothes and convents where children are offered food and an opportunity to talk through their difficulties (Hunt, 2007a,b). It was felt that many of these identified vulnerable children in the care of counselling and other professionals in Africa, including Kenya, have many varied needs that could be met with play therapy interventions. (Hunt, 2001, 2006).

Preliminary research findings from research data collected in three separate geographical locations in Kenya (Hunt, 2007a,b) indicate that sexual abuse of children is highly prevalent, and this group of vulnerable children are not specifically targeted by the government to prevent the spread of infection from HIV/AIDS. In fact sexual abuse in children is largely accepted without challenge and seen to be a domestic matter, although there are statutory structures to protect children in Kenya. Many caring professionals are unable to intervene when sexual abuse is discovered due to cultural and tribal customs. In addition, the law enforcement agencies are not robust enough to deal with child protection matters.

This chapter considers the socio-economic and political context in Kenya for children and considers the possible value of child-centred play therapy to support Kenyan children and argues a rationale for brief play therapy training for caring professionals in education, health, social services, voluntary, religious and other settings. Amongst those who care for and educate children in Kenya, trained play therapists would be able to bring benefit to vulnerable children by allowing them to express and heal their psychological pain through a child-centred therapeutic process.

Child Abuse in Kenya

Although the Kenya National AIDS Strategic Plan (KNASP) (2005, p. 15 Section 3.3.6.) acknowledges that survivors of rape and sexual violence expose both the perpetrators and their victims to an increased risk of infection from HIV/AIDS, this category does not specifically include children. Caring professionals (Hunt, 2007a,b) indicate that child abuse is a serious and prevalent matter which will need a significant change on behalf of the attitudes of those in government to support policy and procedures to enforce child protection legislation so that it is acted upon and adhered to by all groups. The continued abuse of children increases their risk of further infections of HIV/AIDS.

Newly trained play therapists have identified that societal structures are currently not providing the protection children require to be kept safe from abuse and neglect

in the home and in institutions such as schools and hospitals (Hunt, 2007a,b). Whilst play therapy can offer an effective therapeutic intervention process for children who are safe, it cannot offer anything to children living in unsafe environments and subject to continued abuse.

> Initially, it is important to recognise that Play Therapy with abused children can only be effective if the child is reasonably safe. Many stressed professional workers will refer children who are in state of crisis; perhaps still living in a dangerous situation and in no way free to reflect on their circumstances. These children need their defence mechanisms to survive.... (Cattanach, 1992, p. 50).

The continent of Africa has approximately 130 million children below the age of 6 years. This makes it a continent with the youngest population in the world (Mwiti, 2006). In Africa, in general terms many children's normal development is impacted upon negatively by poverty. Many children are sexually abused for economic gain as part of a system of commercial trafficking across the continent. In Kenya, for example, children from Kisumu in the Rift valley are frequently taken across the breadth of the country to the sea port of Mombassa to work in the sex industry (UNICEF, 1988; Hunt, 2007a,b, 2008).

The Rights of Children

In the past, tribal clan beliefs and customs ensured that children were cared for and protected. If individual parents faltered in the care of the young, then others in the community made sure that the children were protected. In this way, although there was a strong paternal power in the family, the father's behaviour was limited and constrained by tribal convention and customs. In some tribes, children were seen as belonging to clan and not an individual family or parents, and this gave the children protection as the upbringing of children was seen to be a collective responsibility. Currently, Kenya is a fast growing country with increasing urbanisation and mobility in the population. This rapid growth on the economic front has brought about great societal changes. Government agencies are now required to take the place of the tribe or family in ensuring that awareness is raised as to protect children both morally and through the legal system regarding children's rights. It is imperative that legislation can be enforced through its law enforcement agencies.

Children's specific legal rights are set down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) which was ratified by the Kenyan government on July 30th 1990. This includes the right to be protected from harm including sexual abuse and trafficking. There is a close relationship between abuse of children and value systems that govern the behaviour of adults who care for them. The inter-government expert group meeting that produced the Draft African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (OAU, 1990), aware of the declining old system of cultural values, discussed the need to preserve and strengthen African indigenous cultural values in order to secure child protection.

In 1990 Onyango made a keynote address at the 4th Scientific Seminar of the KMWA in Nairobi, Kenya stating that many African children lived within an antithesis of the UN convention and experienced abuse and neglect from fathers, brothers, cousins, neighbours, and in some cases children are sexually abused by their teachers who are the very people charged with the responsibility to teach children about the sanctity of human life and the value of morality.

Mwiti (2006) strongly agrees with the sentiment of the Draft African Charter and calls for her fellow Africans to urgently rediscover and own the indigenous value systems that in the past ensured the care and protection of their children. The Governments in African countries have been slow to develop legislation to protect children from abuse and to introduce measures to punish the abusers (Mwiti, 2006). Compared to other African countries, Kenya stands out as a country whose government is keen to ensure the protection of its children and young people. The Kenya Children's Act (2001) introduces free and compulsory basic education and calls upon the nation's parents, family and society to nurture, protect and educate children. There is also legislative protection within the Act to protect children from neglect and abuse. It is currently realised that it is the responsibility of the citizens of Kenya to operate within the structures of the law provided by the government to protect its children. This requires a willingness to become aware of the problems initially and then to tackle them. Sadly, there are frustrations for caring professionals, and children can still be blamed for their abuse.

> There is frustration that even though we know that sexual abuse takes place we cannot stop it. The police do not stop it and the children continue to suffer. A young woman of the cloth tells of a mercy dash to hide a young victim in another town. Close your legs! It was your fault little girl you should learn to close your legs (Hunt, 2008, p. 3).

The psychological future for abused children in Kenya looks grim if it is allowed to continue. Without protection from abuse, the Kenyan child is likely to grow up with anger, bitterness and possible eventual metal health problems. It is clear and generally agreed that past traumas in childhood may impact negatively on the lives of developing adolescents and eventually adult life. Therapeutic interventions, such as play therapy are thought to offer hope to such children in Africa.

> Who is willing to comprehend and carry the hurt and agony of these helpless, innocent and frightened ones? Who will restore their robbed childhood before it's too late? Someone must hear their desperate cry—a cry for unconditional love and acceptance, for counselling and therapeutic interventions that bring hope and restore developmental milestones (Mwiti, 2006, pp. viii–ix).

It is most important that Western societies are sensitive to cultural differences and do not impose their own values in trying to be of assistance (Geertz, 1973). It is argued that Western value systems are increasingly imposed on African societies through powerful media interventions. Related to this influence and the decline of traditional tribal values, Kenya is an ever more urbanised society with many now involved with drugs, prostitution, child labour, early pregnancies and unstable early marriages. Within this context of huge social change and family upheaval, children

are currently suffering and the demand for suitable help is immediate. Many caring professionals in the relatively new counselling professions in Kenya come from the education, social services, religious bodies and health professions and are seeking ways to help and support hurt children they come across in their daily working lives. Children can be offered child-friendly therapeutic interventions to help them deal with loss and trauma when in a safe enough environment. Such a suitable intervention for young children is play therapy. Training in play therapy was requested by a group of Kenyan caring professionals as a method of providing emotional and therapeutic support to children they had concerns about and adult-style counselling could not help (Hunt, 2006). It is most important that the Western models of therapy called for in Kenya are recognised as such and that Kenyan therapists consider the appropriateness of these approaches and adapt them in the light of their own cultural values (McGuiness et al., 2001).

Suitability of Play Therapy as an Intervention for Kenyan Children

What is Play Therapy and how could it best help Kenyan children? Play therapy offers a therapeutic intervention specifically designed to use play as the medium through which the therapeutic relationship can develop and therapeutic movement can occur. Child-centred non-directive play therapy (Axline, 1947) enables a child to create fictional worlds and in this way make sense of the real world. The child and therapist communicate through play. The child-centred model of play therapy includes as its deeply held core a belief that the hurt child has within, the power to self-heal in creative, constructive and progressive ways (Axline, 1947; Cattanach, 2003; Landreth, 2002; Hunt, 2000, 2001, 2006, 2007a,b). The aim of child-centred play therapy is to increase a child's level of wellbeing (Hunt & Robson, 1999). A child-centred model aims to address the needs of the whole child rather than focussing on presenting symptoms and problems as reported on referral. Changes in levels of wellbeing can only come with growth from within the child. In this model of play therapy, there is an implicit understanding that all human beings have a force within to drive them towards maturity, independence and self-direction (Axline, 1947). Wellbeing is experienced when a child receives "good growing ground" in the form of a relationship with a play therapist offering conditions of acceptance, genuineness and empathic understanding. Just as a plant needs food from the soil, sun and rain, a child needs optimum conditions to release a self-healing capacity that may be thwarted within by experiences and circumstances and then movement towards healthy growth can occur (Rogers, 1951). An approach to therapy that integrates awareness of the importance of attachment theory and loss (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980) is considered applicable due to the significant loss experiences of many Kenyan children and the light that attachment theory sheds both on normal development and on dealing with separation and loss.

Many Kenyan trainee play therapists can see that child-centred play therapy like person-centred counselling (McGuiness et al., 2001) is applicable to the Kenyan context (Hunt, 2004, 2006, 2007a,b, 2008). The approach is a simple one, embracing a growth model and not an expert-driven model. Thus, the approach seeks to work with the internal world of the child and to respect the child's view of life. Many Kenyan children are amongst the most vulnerable children in the world, and a therapeutic approach which uses play to create a safe metaphorical world (Groves, 1989) through play can help children in Kenya deal with the trauma and losses that so many are subjected to in current times.

There is a strong evidence base for the efficacy of play therapy in the Western world. Ray's (2006) research provides evidence of the practicality of offering play therapy interventions to children in spite of temporal and cultural changes in societies in the West over the last 60 years. Ray's review of evidence (2006) states that research has demonstrated play therapy to be efficacious in the following ways: improving the self-concepts of children and decreasing anxious behaviours, lessening externalising problem behaviours and increasing social adjustment. Both in mental health and in behaviour problems, research positively supports play therapeutic interventions. An overall summarisation of play therapy research over 60 years provides evidence that play therapy has a large beneficial treatment effect over comparison or non-treatment groups. Specific research studies are reviewed in this chapter to reveal the overall impact of play therapy interventions (Ray, 2006, p. 153). There is overwhelming evidence of the benefits of play therapy for children in the Western world. The question asked is "How useful could a Western model of therapeutic intervention through play be to an African country like Kenya?" (Hunt, 2007a,b).

In 2001, McGuiness et al. carried out an ethnographic research study using a mixed methodology within a naturalistic study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to ascertain the value of a Western model of counselling for adults in Kenya. It is heartening to observe that counselling for adults in Kenya has been warmly welcomed. The research team in 2001 was cognisant of the fact that counselling was a relatively new profession in Kenya and in their research concluded that newly trained counsellors were calling for recognition and awareness of the specific nature and orientation of this emerging profession. The concept of counselling as a service offering opportunity for the growth of people and their communities was little recognised at this time. Further evidence supported the growing awareness and need for adult counselling services.

Since the 2001 study, counselling agencies are common place in major cities in Kenya such as Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombassa and the surrounding rural areas. Furthermore, their purposes are widely understood by the general population. It is hoped that play therapy may also offer a welcome therapeutic intervention for Kenyan caring professionals with overwhelming responsibilities for children (Hunt, 2007a,b). Currently, trained play therapists in Kenya are beginning tentatively to practise embedded play therapy and more formalised play therapy within their own professional remit. Future research such as systematic case studies of this work would provide rich descriptive data as yet unavailable.

Guidance and Counselling in Educational Settings in Kenya—One Possible Home for Play Therapy

Guidance and counselling for children were introduced into Kenyan schools officially in 1971. This includes educational guidance, vocational guidance and psychological counselling. Historically, the Ministry for Education established guidance and counselling programmes. For the most part, these programmes have been designed and managed by teachers, many of which have little or no training in counselling and so for the first 20 years or so counselling was not delivered by fully trained staff. In addition many of these "counsellors" in schools continued to carry out a teaching role and therefore they often reported a conflict of role for them due to the dual focus of an individual having to act as both counsellor and teacher (Tumuti, 1985). Since that time there has been an explosion in counsellor training in Kenya and now Kenyan counsellors with training in therapeutic counselling are working in the education system and keen to bring about positive changes and gain recognition (McGuiness et al., 2001).

By Western standards, Kenyan children are exposed to extremely harsh discipline both in the home and in the school setting. "Spare the rod and spoil the child" is a commonly held belief in this predominantly Christian society. Currently caring professionals are considering the role this has to play in tackling child abuse and offering therapeutic interventions to those children who have suffered abuse. Trainee play therapists (Hunt, 2006, 2007a,b, 2008) reveal childhood punishments that would from a UK perspective constitute serious child abuse. Indeed some Kenyan adults are now beginning to reframe childhood experiences in the light of their emerging knowledge of child development and psychological growth. During their training courses, they were beginning to recognise that what they describe as "harsh" treatment in their own childhoods should not be offered to their own children and children to which they owe a duty of care.

> Beatings and beatings, harsh beatings pile up in all our groups. "I was beaten and I mean beaten" "I was so badly beaten and I was beaten for playing when I should have been working and I was beaten for playing football and I was beaten for disobedience" (Hunt, 2008, p. 4)

Ethirajan Anbarasan, UNESCO Courier (1999) journalist, has disclosed that there is widespread use of corporal punishment in Kenyan schools, and this has led to drop out rates in schools and in a few extreme cases, even death. He acknowledges that many countries in the world still practise corporal punishment but believes that Kenyan adults are among the worst offenders in delivering violence to children. This has grown out of a prevailing acceptance of corporal punishment in society. He maintains that violence has reached dangerously high levels in Kenyan schools. He quotes from the Human Rights Watch (HRW) report (1999) "Spare the Child: Corporal Punishment in Kenyan Schools" to reveal that caning is a regular feature in Kenyan schools, and some students have suffered from serious injuries including bruising, cuts, broken bones and some internal bleeding. Shockingly, between 1994 and 1999, six students died as a result of severe beatings in schools.

Brutality in the education system can provoke anger in its victims and their loved ones and can lead to future resentments and feelings of low self-esteem, argues Anbarasan (1999). This situation can then encourage more violence and feelings and acts of revenge. This cycle of violence can hopefully be broken by treating Kenyan children with respect and offering care and protection. As previously mentioned, Kenya ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990. Under Article 19, it states that the country must take measures to protect children from "all forms of mental and physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation". Even though International and Kenyan Law (Children Act, 2001) condemn violent treatment of children, offending teachers are not very often pursued by Kenyan law enforcement agencies. Many poorer families cannot afford to prosecute, and when cases have got to court, the teachers responsible for the violence or death of a student are not punished as it is necessary to prove a motive for killing under Kenyan law, and this is often difficult to prove in this context.

Children are very often punished severely for minor offences like being late for school or having a tear in their clothing. Additionally this brutal regime has caused many children to drop out of primary education, which is now free in Kenya. Among other reasons, non-completion at school is attributed to poverty and a hostile learning environment as well as various social barriers amongst young girls (Thomas, 2002). Some children told researchers that the reason they dropped out of school was due directly to severe beatings received there.

> My mummy died. My daddy died. I have been taken to live with relatives. I am 10 years old. I take care of the animals. I till the land I look after the chambra (vegetable garden). Sometimes I sell second hand clothes even though primary school is free I do not want to go because of the beatings. I prefer to work (Hunt, 2008, p. 5).

It is easy to point a finger of blame towards Kenyan adults, but the question of discipline in school is not an easy one, and many Western countries cannot claim to have addressed this question sufficiently either. Teachers in Kenya are worried that a ban on corporal punishment will lead the system into chaos and that a short, sharp shock in early childhood can prevent children from being violent towards others later on. The Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) look to the West and see that the excessive freedom given to children is not the answer and cite the violence in schools in the USA as an indication that is not the way forward. Some teachers in Kenya believe that alternative discipline methods are best introduced in Teacher Training Programmes. As is the case in the UK, very little time is spent on this in teacher training courses with the content of the curriculum taking precedence (Anbarasan, 1999).

Clearly the education system in Kenya needs to address the severity of corporal punishments and the affective domain of the learning experience in order for Kenyan children to prosper and stay in the school setting. In addition, schools with a nurturing ethos, concerned with the wellbeing of the whole child, could be the best place to offer therapeutic support for children both infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and the associated psychological impact, in addition to the usual psycho-social

transitions of a healthy developing child. Currently, in the UK, it is realised that locating the caring agencies dealing with children at or very near school is the best way to offer children the best physical and mental support without taking them away from the experience of mainstream education.

Bearing in mind that Kenya now has a rapidly developing counselling profession and a developing play therapy profession, perhaps, this influence on the education system, with many teachers now gaining qualifications in counselling and counselling skills and more recently training in play therapy, will have an impact on how to create a positive affective aspect to the learning environment, and children will become self-regulating in an environment which supports a mutual respect. Of course it must be remembered that many children are not in school and other agencies would need to make play therapy available for these children.

Studies on Psychotherapeutic Interventions and Related Training to Support Children in Africa

Before 2004, there had been little attention paid to the specific therapeutic needs of vulnerable children within the Kenyan counselling profession. Many teachers who are also trained as adult counsellors in Kenya are often called upon to offer therapeutic support to young children in their daily professional lives without adequate training. Counselling training centres in some locations offer post-qualifying training for counsellors in child counselling. Some Kenyan counsellors having attended training still feel inadequate to deal with a child unable or unwilling to verbally articulate their problems (Hunt, 2007a,b). In Africa as a whole continent, responses to the therapeutic needs of vulnerable children are limited. Kaplan (2005) states that searches using IT search engines such as PubMed and Cochraine indicate only a few reports concerning trauma treatment models for children in Africa. Since this review, in the same year, 2005, the *Journal of Psychology in Africa* devoted an entire issue to trauma in children and treatment models to address this identified need. Only two contributors addressed psychotherapy with children. Leibowitz-Levy (2005) explored the nature and extent of therapeutic interventions for traumatised children across South Africa, and McDermott (2005) described an evolving psychotherapy which includes traditional healing methods. No such studies exist in the literature for Kenya.

In view of the lack of studies in 2004, it was felt that an immediate response in the form of child-centred play therapy may be possible, when I co-designed the first course and co-delivered it in Nairobi in response to a request from The Kenya Association for Counselling (KAPC) (Hunt, 2006). A year later, there were a few published studies based in Africa and none of therapeutic interventions for children in Kenya, reflecting the paucity of therapeutic interventions to help vulnerable African children and in particular, Kenyan children (Kaplan, 2005; Leibowitz-Levy, 2005; McDermott, 2005).

The Play Therapy Course Offered in Kenya

In 2004, the course was delivered in Nairobi in May and July of that year. Subsequent courses have been delivered in 2006 and 2007. Course participants in all three cohorts (2004, 2006, and 2007) were invited to learn about play and how to provide therapy using play. Theoretically, play is believed to be the natural language of young children, older children with language deficits additionally, children with special educational needs or disabilities may also benefit from play therapy (Cattanach, 1992, 1995, 1997, 2003). The brief training course (120 h) was based on a child-centred model (Axline, 1947, 1969; West, 1990) derived from the adult model of person-centred therapy (PCT) designed and developed by Carl Rogers (1951, 1957, 1961, 1974, 1986).

The initial brief training in play therapy was first delivered to 30 Kenyan caring professionals, with counselling qualifications working with vulnerable children, and it yielded positive results (Hunt, 2006). This cohort of trainee play therapists were typical of subsequent trainees representing various professions including teachers and other caring professionals from the fields of medicine, education, government agencies, non-government agencies, religious organisations, social services, the armed forces, counselling and clinical psychology. The course participants were a very experienced group of professionals and ranged in age from 25 to 56 with a mean average of 10 years' experience in working with children. Their responsibilities typically included refugee and other displaced children, including those from Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi and the Congo; boy soldiers from neighbouring countries and war orphans; children and adolescents; children with special needs; children from single parent families and many were working with children both infected and or affected by HIV/AIDS. Later cohorts included people working with children living with mothers in prisons and street children (2006 and 2007).

It was found that there were high levels of pre-training feelings of inadequacy to meet the therapeutic needs of vulnerable children using adult style counselling. Post-training reports from participants indicated perceived raised awareness of the therapeutic power of play with positive impact on professional and personal lives. Additionally a perceived increase in therapeutic knowledge and skills of play therapy were reported and validated through the successful completion of assessments designed to confirm this understanding (Hunt, 2006) before a certificate in play therapy could be awarded by the Kenyan Association of Professional Counsellors (KAPC).

The training body, KAPC, a Kenyan NGO, offers training and qualifications in counselling at certificate, diploma, higher diploma, and master's and from early 2008 education at doctorate level. As a national body, it leads the field in counsellor training in Kenya. Over and above meeting the KAPC criteria for the qualification in play therapy course, participants also reported an increased ease in establishing therapeutic rapport with children and found the training largely beneficial in increasing their confidence, knowledge and skills in offering therapeutic support to Kenyan

children (Hunt, 2006). This first cohort of trainees became the first qualified play therapists in Kenya.

In 2006 a certificate in play therapy training was offered in KAPC's Kisumu centre, in the Rift Valley area of Kenya which resulted in a Kenyan working group of newly trained play therapists forming to design an ethical framework for Kenyan play therapists. Using guidance documents from The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and the British Association of Play Therapists (BAPT), the group currently aims to produce ethical principles and a code of practice applicable to the Kenyan context. The future wellbeing of children offered play therapy in Kenya will be dependent on an emerging profession that monitors its own practice using culturally appropriate codes of practice and other quality assurance mechanisms.

Initial findings of research in progress (Hunt, 2007a,b) including the course participants' perceived value of further training in play therapy offered at certificate level by KAPC in 2007 replicates the 2004, 2006 positive course participants responses. The 2007 training was delivered in three different regions in Kenya, Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombassa, indicating similar needs in the caring professionals concerned with the wellbeing of Kenyan children irrespective of tribal, religious and regional differences.

I kept a field diary during my 7 weeks in Kenya in 2007 and continue to work on an in-depth ethnographic understanding of my experiences of working within KAPC (Hunt, 2008). This kind of research in the therapy world is quite rare (McLeod, 1994, 2001) as most researchers would not have this intimate access to such a setting and such research can only be carried out by someone who is able to gain access through legitimate observant participation. The early findings of this study (Hunt, 2008) point to further additions to and the future development of the existing generic training for all groups to meet perceived training needs for the developing Kenyan profession of play therapy. There are currently 95 counsellors in Kenya working in three major cities with play therapy qualifications.

Political Developments in Kenya and Related Impact on Children

Sadly, civil unrest including riots and ethnic attacks followed election results in early 2008, when the Kenyan people suspected the election results to have been tampered with by the then President of Kenya, Kibabki and his government. Kibaki was sworn in on Sunday after official election results showed he narrowly beat opposition leader Raila Odinga. Both sides accused the other of massive vote-rigging during the Dec. 27 election (Reuters AlertNet, 2008). Following this internal unrest, it has been estimated that approximately 70,000 people were displaced and Reuters' reporters in Kenya estimated the death toll to be about 250.

Kenya Association for Professional Counsellors' (KAPC) Chief Executive, Cecilia Rachier, reported in email correspondence with me in March 2008 that the

civil unrest and violence had provided KAPC with increased demands for coun-selling and play therapy interventions. It is hard to imagine the impact on the bustling town of Kisumu in the Rift Valley with its rural lifestyle and in particular, on its youngest inhabitants, of the killings and widespread panic during this time. I had been training play therapists there in the summer of 2007. Reuters AlertNet (2008) reported that

> Fire engulfed a church near Eldoret town where hundreds of Kibaki's Kikuyu tribe had taken refuge. Witnesses said charred bodies, including women and children, were strewn about the smoldering ruins. "This is the first time in (Kenyan) history that any group has attacked a church. We never expected the savagery to go so far", police spokesman Eric Kiraithe said.

Play therapy is not a crisis intervention although it can be helpful to children who have experienced past trauma and are safe enough to be able to work on it in the present. Recently in July 2008, UNESCO has approached KAPC to offer training to counsellors who are to work in the transit camps with displaced Kenyan children. KAPC is keen to respond with training in play therapy.

Kenyan children live in a volatile country, housing large slums with tinder-box qualities and ready to ignite at the smallest provocation. Many of the youth in these slums are living without hope, and many are likely to react with violence when the stability of the country is under threat. It was young men who surrounded the church where the women and children were sheltering near Eldoret, and these young men set the torches to burn down the church and killed the women and children inside. If disaffected young men can be offered economic stability, education and care in childhood, then this cycle of violence may be broken to bring stability to the fam-ily and a nurturing environment for children to develop and prosper. Kenya's new coalition government brings hope of a unified society working together to address its needs and protect and nurture its children. Within this turbulent societal context, newly trained Kenyan play therapists look forward bravely and with hope to forming a developing profession able to respond therapeutically and appropriately to those young children who are in need.

Future Identified Needs and Directions of Play Therapists in Kenya

Newly trained play therapists in Kenya have identified their professional develop-ment needs and future directions (Hunt, 2007a,b). All the training course cohorts requested that further training be made available to them at diploma level and pos-sibly higher to degree level. There should in addition be training for play therapy supervisors. Holloway and Carroll (1999) assert that supervision takes place within a dyadic relationship characterised by committed fellowship and will bring about emotional challenge for both the counsellor and the supervisor. They maintain that strategic collaboration is required for the relationship to be helpful to the positive outcomes for the client and the professional development of both counsellor (play

therapist) and supervisor. Supervision is an ethical and professional necessity for all those practising counselling (Feltham & Dryden, 1994) or play therapy.

The question of supervision for newly qualified Kenyan play therapists is a difficult one, as usually counsellors or play therapists would have clinical supervision from a more experienced counsellor or play therapist. As the profession of play therapy is a new one in Kenya, it will take some time for experienced play therapists to emerge. In the interim, it has been suggested that local groups of play therapists meet to offer each other peer supervision. All Kenyan play therapists are also counsellors which means they are already familiar with a model of supervision and have therapeutic relationship understanding. In this sense, they are in a better position to peer supervise than a UK group of newly trained play therapists, who would be inexperienced in therapeutic work and would need an experienced supervisor to be practising ethically. Future training in the tasks of supervision; contracting between play therapist and supervisor; understanding the reflective processes in supervision; training in group and team supervision; supervision evaluation and how to train supervisees to make best use of supervision are urgently required. This training could be offered by counsellor trainers experienced in running training courses in supervision for newly qualified counsellors. This would make training by Kenyan counsellor trainers in supervision possible. Ideally, such training would be delivered by a play therapist with comparable experience. Currently this would require consultancy training from the Western world until play therapy establishes itself in Kenya. There is also an identified need for specialist courses for play therapists to offer services for children who are challenged such as visual or hearing impaired children, children with other disabilities and chronic illness or children with special educational needs including learning difficulties (Hunt, 2006, 2007a,b).

Newly trained play therapists identified the need for raising community awareness of play therapy and the role of the play therapist in Kenyan society (Hunt, 2007a,b). This was felt necessary for play therapists to gain professional status and for agencies to have the knowledge and understanding of play therapy, in order to make appropriate referrals to play therapy services and make best use of the resources now available.

A network of rescue centres for abused and neglected children and their carers to provide safe havens in which play therapists could begin to work with children who cannot be offered services whilst living in abusive situations was also identified as an acute need in Kenya by the newly trained play therapists. There was a general feeling of frustration and distress as trainee play therapists described heart-breaking stories of children living in ongoing abusive situations and the impotence of the caring professionals to bring about a change for such children when contacting the law enforcement agencies.

Training courses in Kenya gave course participants the freedom to explore their feelings about the current situation and consider case studies from various professional settings and perspectives. This was on occasions very distressing, and course participants expressed feelings of upset and anger about the impassable structures in Kenyan society which were preventing children from protection and care.

Kenyan case studies of play therapy in the near future could be shared to help play therapists learn from a network of fellow professionals and seek to understand the particular needs of Kenyan play therapists and Kenyan children. At present, there are no published Kenyan play therapy case studies. It would be unethical to describe play therapy case studies in this chapter as these experiences were shared in the group in the interests of learning, and ethical permission has not been obtained to share them outside of the group training experience.

Kenyan play therapists recognise that in order to improve the lives of Kenyan children, they will need to become politically active to raise parental awareness of their responsibilities towards their children beyond material and educational provision. There were discussions in Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombassa to develop regional play therapy groups to become part of a National Association for play therapy in Kenya organised by KAPC (Hunt, 2007a,b). This planned association could have an educational and political pressure group role, in order to influence government policy to help improve the lives of Kenyan children. This kind of organisation could enhance networking for the emerging profession and bring about collaboration amongst play therapists in the sharing of practice knowledge and skills as these develop over time. In addition such an organisation could provide play therapy with the necessary guidelines for national quality assurance mechanisms to monitor the service provision. Additionally, it was thought by Kenyan play therapists that such an association could act both as a conduit for information sharing, training opportunities, future registration and accreditation of its members and in addition offer services such as indemnity insurance and legal advice.

Conclusion

Kenyan children are growing up today and developing into the citizens of tomorrow in a rapidly changing society. Widespread economic growth is bringing increased prosperity to many, and many families have the opportunity to move out of poverty. Alongside this positive change, there are deep-seated problems such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, many families still in poverty, disciplinary measures for children that border on and overstep into violence both in the home and in the schools, a current revelation of the slowly unfolding true extent of widespread sexual abuse, neglect and other abuses of the rights of children subjecting them to physical and mental risks to health. Play therapists can offer suitable child-centred, therapeutic interventions to assist children who need support during bereavement, illness, suffering from post-traumatic stress (PTSD) and other psychological disturbances.

Whilst Kenyan counsellors and play therapists recognise that they cannot individually change the systems that do not protect and nurture children alone, they are willing to join together to offer alternative ways to manage children's behaviour and provide input on how to discipline children in schools using counselling/play therapy methods, for example.

The newly developing profession of play therapy in Kenya under the auspices of KAPC is growing and beginning to clarify its needs. A generic training, regardless

of tribal, religious or geographical differences is developing and requested by participants to degree level. Eventually post-graduate level training is envisaged. Kenyan play therapists, although small in number currently, are hopeful and inspirational and can begin to influence Kenyan society in a positive way to bring about increased wellbeing for Kenyan children.

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Chapter 58
Healthy Development for Healthy Spirituality: Social Transformations Among Chilean Youth in the New Millennium

Klaus Püschel and Gabriela Cassigoli

Abstract There is increasing evidence on the importance of considering multiple social, cultural, and community factors, in order to understand healthy development in adolescence (Youngblade et al., 2007). Previous research that has focused on single factors and contexts has been shown to have important limitations in explaining quality health outcomes among youth. In contrast, studies that have taken a more holistic and ecological approach incorporating community, educational, and family variables have helped to explain better health status and social competence in adolescents (Barber et al., 1997; Blum et al., 2002). There is also evidence that suggests that there are significant social and cultural differences among adolescents living in Latin American countries compared to those living in western European or North American countries. In this chapter, we describe the main social and political transformations experienced by the Chilean youth population during the last three decades. We present specific examples to illustrate the changes produced in each of these dimensions and analyze their impact on the family, health, and educational systems. We will discuss to what extent these changes have transformed the different dimensions of Chilean youth and what meaning they draw from this new scenario. Also, we will address the extent to which these changes have contributed to develop a healthy spirituality among young people in Chile.

Introduction

There is increasing evidence on the importance of considering multiple social, cultural and community factors in order to understand healthy development in adolescence (Youngblade et al., 2007). Previous research that has focused on single factors and contexts has been shown to have important limitations in explaining quality health outcomes among youth. In contrast, studies that have taken

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a more holistic and ecological approach incorporating community, educational, and family variables have helped to explain better health status and social competence in adolescents (Barber et al., 1997; Blum et al., 2002). There is also evidence that suggests that there are significant social and cultural differences among adolescents living in Latin American countries compared to those living in western European or North American countries. Even though community, educational, and family factors are essential to achieve a healthy development and spirituality, there seem to be particular interactions that need to be considered when analyzing these factors among adolescents in Latin America. Social participation, political commitment, "familiarismo" (i.e., family cohesiveness and support) and religious beliefs appear to have a particular effect on youth development in Latin American culture (Pommier, Deschamps, Romero, & Zubarew, 1997; Sapag & Kawachi, 2007; Kliewer & Murrelle, 2007). These factors have also experienced deep and rapid changes that have strongly affected the Latin American youth population during the last 30 years. The particular characteristics in Latin American youth culture and the rapid transformation in its social and political environment call for developing specific health promotion and educational strategies in order to achieve a healthy development and spirituality in this population.

Chile offers an interesting example that represents the rapid changes experienced by the Latin American society and its youth population during the last 30 years. The country appears to have experienced a deep transformation moving from a strong religious and socialist culture in the 1970s to a much more utilitarian and technocratic society in the new millennium. Beyond this simplistic view, it is important to consider in which way the specific characteristics of Chilean youth culture have influenced this new scenario. In order to achieve a healthy development and spirituality, adolescents in Chile and Latin America need to use effectively their own cultural resources and values and take advantage of the opportunities offered by their societies.

In this chapter, we describe the main social and political transformations experienced by the Chilean youth population during the last three decades. We present specific examples to illustrate the changes produced in each of these dimensions and analyze their impact on the family, health, and educational systems. We will discuss to what extent these changes have transformed the different dimensions of Chilean youth and what meaning they draw from this new scenario. Also, we will address the extent to which these changes have contributed to develop a healthy spirituality among young people in Chile. The chapter starts with a wide definition of spirituality and describes how its components are equivalent to the elements necessary to achieve social competence and a healthy development among youth. Then, the chapter presents a description and analysis of the social, educational, and health situation of the current Chilean generation of youth. Specific examples are provided. Finally, the chapter discusses the new challenges within this ongoing process toward a healthier spirituality and improved youth development in a more diverse and uncertain Chilean society.

Spirituality in a Broad Perspective

There have been numerous definitions of spirituality and there is a frequent confusion in the literature between spirituality and religious beliefs. In a recent systematic review conducted by Rew and Wong (2006) the authors found that 84% of the 43 studies analyzed, showed that measures of religiosity/spirituality had significant positive effects on health attitudes and behaviors among adolescents. However, they also found that although the majority of the studies were well designed there was no consistency in the theoretical bases and operational definitions of religiosity and spirituality. A similar conclusion was raised by Sloan, Bagiella, and Powell (1999) in their discussion about religion, spirituality, and medicine.

In this chapter, we take the definition of spirituality presented by Brazilian theologian, Leonardo Boff. He understands spirituality as a human dimension that produces an internal transformation (Boff, 2001). Spirituality is made up of qualities such as love, compassion, patience, tolerance, capacity of forgiveness, happiness, responsibility, and harmony. Spirituality has the characteristic that it can produce happiness to oneself as well as to those around. According to Boff, religion helps a person "walk" to God and spirituality allows a person to "see" God. Religions can show ways to approach the presence of God. In their many ways, they offer several paths to connect to God. The concept of religion has been linked to a particular tradition, practice or community that shapes a comprehensive worldview sufficient to interpret all of human experience within a specific cultural context (Hall, Catanzaro, Harrison, & Koenig, 2004).

We will take this broad definition of spirituality and, based on a systems theory approach, we will consider it as a dimension that connects the physical, psychological, and social components (subsystems) of human beings. The spiritual dimension allows a person to make significant meaning of his or her physical, psychological, and social world and gives a sense of transcendence and being unfinished. Therefore, an essential characteristic of spirituality is its sense of contact between the immanent and transcendent worlds and its connectedness to the Whole and to the Divine. This relational character has a transformative capacity for individuals and society. An individual or a society with a healthy spirituality can be understood as one that longs for a meaningful and transcendent connection among its different dimensions.

Socio Political Transformations and Youth Protagonism in Chile

Political Changes in the Last 30 Years: From Dictatorship to Democracy

The early 1970s encountered Latin America and especially Chile with a highly ideologized society. This ideologization affected predominantly the young population.

Society was characterized by a high level of intolerance and radicalism. This scenario led to a severe and painful dictatorship that lasted until the end of the 1980s. The dictatorial government strongly promoted a homogenous view of society. In political terms, the authoritarian system produced a split in the Chilean population that was almost evenly divided for and against the government. Chilean young people experienced a shift from a highly ideologized culture in the 1970s to a politically divided movement concentrated in two main opposite blocks in the 1980s.

During the dictatorship period, the Chilean Catholic Church had a very active role in the defense of human rights on behalf of Chilean citizens and was almost the only institution that had the authority to officially denounce deleterious government practices ("Detenidos desaparecidos: una tragedia nacional," 1978, p. 357; Fleet & Smith, 1997). It was also one of the few institutions that represented a bridge between two opposite political views of the world. Despite the official suppression of political parties, the universities, school movements, and youth organizations within local parishes and churches flourished throughout the country. Thus, these predominantly young groups were protagonists of the many changes that were about to take place in the country. In 1989, after an intense process of political re-organization, the country returned to its traditionally democratic path through a plebiscite and then political elections within a notably peaceful atmosphere. Chilean society, especially the young population felt proud to experience an exceptional climate of tolerance despite its different political visions. Also, they seemed to be aware of the value of peace and social participation. This atmosphere was translated into what was known as *Democracia de los Acuerdos* or the *Democracy of Agreements*. On the one hand, it reflected the value of dialogue, tolerance, and respect, but on the other, it represented fear of discrepancy and lack of assertiveness within Chilean society in the early 1990s.

From Intolerance to the Value of Diversity

Along with the political changes described, the country has experienced an unprecedented improvement in its economic profile with a decrease in the level of poverty from about 40% in the mid-1980s to 14% in 2006 (MIDEPLAN, 2006), and a stable economic growth of around 5% per year. However, this positive general economic scenario has uncovered other important realities such as the tremendous socioeconomic inequalities in the population as well as huge differences of opportunities for young people from different backgrounds (Baranda y Claude, 2007, p. 31).

During the last 10 years Chilean society has experienced a new agenda of public debate. New priorities have arisen in social discourse, particularly among the youth. Gender discrimination, ethnic rights, youth opportunities, and quality of education have been some of the main topics that have been introduced within social discourse. Chilean society has been facing a broader agenda and has progressively discovered the value of diversity.

According to Dr. Pedro Güell, a Chilean sociologist working at the Program for Human Development in the United Nations, Chile is experiencing a rapid and

profound cultural change. He perceives that Chilean society today is more willing than before to express differences without the fear that this will produce social destruction or authoritarism. Society is looking for new leadership styles, less authoritarian, and more participative models. The challenge is to find the balance between corporate interests and social participation in a more complex cultural scenario. This new perspective is not exempt from fear and uncertainty especially for the younger generations (2006, p. 28).

Political Changes Taken to the Classroom: The Educational Reform

All the challenges set up by the new political perspectives have fostered changes also at the education level in the country. The Chilean Education Reform Programme started in 1996 with considerable impact on schools. The fundamental transversal objectives within this programme demand the implementation of transversal topics such as human rights, environmental education, education for tolerance, and citizenship among others. The Education Reform Programme states that every sector and subsector of the learning process needs to include and relate its contents to the ethics and values of such transversal topics. Thus, in the area of human rights it promotes a personal sense of connectedness to its community and to others. Justice, solidarity, and the acceptance of the "Other" as a legitimate other are some of the values mentioned in the Reform. The promotion of hospitality and the ethics of attention toward others are mentioned as key elements that need to pervade the educational system (Cox, 2003).

The Educational Reform Programme does not explicitly mention the word spirituality or spiritual development, but it seems clear that it intends to create an environment where young people can master values and pursue meaning and identity all of which are key elements within our definition of spirituality. However, a spiritual education within the school system requires a lot more. It requires educators who are connected to their own selves and to the most sublime areas of human identity. They must also be willing to accompany their learners in the educational process. It also requires a less individualistic and less pragmatic society that can truly support the efforts in these areas of spiritual development. The process of implementation of the Chilean Educational Reform Programme gives an interesting example of the effect of social, cultural, and political transformation experienced by Chilean youth since 1996.

As it was stated by Brazilian teacher Paulo Freire in his *Pedagogy of Freedom* (1998), education is not merely a process of transferring knowledge, it is also a political process. Learners should be subjects (and not objects) of their own process of education. As subjects, all their dimensions, physical, psychological, and spiritual are involved. As a reminder of this principle, Chilean high school students protagonized in 2006 the most significant national strike since the arrival of democracy ("Cerca de 100 mil estudiantes se movilizan," 2006, p. A1). More than

100,000 students from 15 to 18 years of age called for a more profound change in the educational system. They rapidly gained sympathy from university students, workers, and many politicians. The "penguins" (as they were called due to the colors of their uniforms) demanded a new educational legislation that could decrease the economic resource inequalities between public and private schools. They also called for relevant contents within the educational curriculum. *No más de lo mismo* (No more of the same) was their motto. As a result of the student protests, the government's agenda had to be adjusted to meet their demands, the Minister of Education had to resign and a national commission with the participation of students had to be created in order to develop new legislation.

Was this movement different from the strikes and protests of the 1970s and 1980s? It certainly did not have the political-ideological content of the 1970s nor its focus on the abolishment of dictatorship of the 1980s. However, this so called "Penguins' Revolution" clearly represented a significant transformation in the form and spirit of participation among the young population in the new millennium.

Family and Religious Beliefs in the New Generations

The family as a unit in Chile has undergone important changes in the last decade. There has been a rapid change from the traditional homogenous nuclear family of the 1970s to a variety of new family structures. Currently, less than 50% of couples are married, a very different situation to 1990 when 70% of them were married. In 2002, for the first time in Chilean history, the children born outside a legal marriage outnumbered those born within a legal marriage. However, it is important to consider that about 61% of families in Chile are still made up of a couple and children – with or without other members – (MIDEPLAN, 2006).

Despite the significant changes in family structure, young people highly value family life and most of them picture themselves married and with children in their future lives (Instituto Nacional de la Juventud, 2007). Among two-thirds of young people who would like to marry, 72% would like to have a religious marriage. More than half of them like such marriage because of their religious convictions.

Even though Chilean society has shifted from almost exclusively Roman Catholic beliefs to more secular and wider religious choices, the young population still perceive themselves as highly religious. Over 80% of Chilean youth are said to adhere to a religion (catholic, protestant, and others). Parishes and churches continue to be places of encounter with other young people. They gather at churches not only because they share believes in relation to transcendence, but also because they offer a concrete way to put into practice their spiritual desires of sharing, giving, and exercising solidarity and compassion, specially toward the most vulnerable people of the country. In fact, from the active role in the defense of human rights in the 1970s and 1980s, churches have continued to gain respect within the Chilean youth population for offering opportunities to exercise qualities such as love and responsibility to others. It would be very rare to find a church or parish that does not invite

young people to join a team and carry out some kind of humanitarian activity. It would be also hard to find a more accessible or common place to share and discuss spiritual matters than through a church or any other religious institution in Chile.

It is quite clear that religious institutions bring together young people to share their most profound desires of spiritual wellbeing. Probably, the main tension between Chilean youth and the Catholic Church, which continues to represent most of the population, derives from sexual matters. It has been stated elsewhere that the Church's approach to social issues and to sexual issues have differed from each other. In terms of social issues, the Chilean Catholic Church has had a very clear and progressive position and often engaged in actions to put its sometimes radical policies into practice. By contrast, sexual issues have been treated with rigidity and have been seen as imposed by the Church (Barria, 2007). A call for a new moral discernment in the sexual ethic has been proposed by Chilean Jesuit theologian Tony Mifsud (2002).

Young People and Health Problems: Big Challenges, Good Opportunities

Chile is experiencing an epidemic of chronic diseases and a significant increase in mental health problems. About 60% of the main causes of deaths in Chile are associated with cardiovascular disease, cancer, and injuries. A high percentage of them are attributable to risk behaviors such as smoking, lack of physical activity, unhealthy diet, and excessive alcohol intake. In addition, mental health problems such as depressive and anxiety disorders as well as family violence are among the main problems identified within the primary care network (MINSAL, 2003; MINSAL, 2008).

There is consensus among experts that interventions should target the adolescent population where many risk behaviors are practiced. The National Health Survey conducted in 2003 showed that over 80% of people between 17 and 24 years old were sedentary, 26% were overweight or obese, and 54% smoked. In addition, national data show that alcohol consumption has increased during the last 10 years and 25% of young people between 19 and 25 years have alcohol abuse problems. Furthermore, about 10% of Chilean young people consume illicit drugs. This percentage has been stable during since the mid-1990s (CONACE, 2006). Teen pregnancy has also been a significant problem during the same period of time. According to the data available from the National Statistical Institute, 15% of births are to teenage mothers. At a national level, strategies to reduce this trend have not produced a significant impact.

Health problems are not among Chilean youth's priorities and they have little interaction with the health-care system. Their main interests and concerns are related to having access to good quality education and job opportunities. However, they see alcohol and drug consumption as important social issues. It is clear that in order to have an effect on health behaviors among the young, strategies need to operate

outside the health-care system, within the environment where young people spend most of their time i.e., the school.

A successful intervention directed at teenagers from low socioeconomic status was developed in 2003 in a school environment (Bonhauser et al., 2005). Together with teachers, parents, and students, a physical activity program was designed and developed during one academic year. Four eighth grade classes were randomly selected to form 2 groups of 100 students each. In the intervention group, students designed their own physical activity program from a number of choices and increased the amount of time they spent doing exercises at school. The control group received the standard physical activity program offered at school. At the end of the program, participants in the intervention group significantly increased their physical performance (saltability, speed, oxygen consumption capacity) and improved social competence levels and emotional parameters such as self esteem and fewer anxiety symptoms. The program was maintained and expanded after the end of the research intervention. Over 80% of participants complied with the program.

Another interesting example at a major scale was also school-based and targeted smoking and alcohol consumption among 2,600 11-year-old children. They participated in a prevention program strategy called *Mirame*! (Berríos, 2004). The study had a quasi-experimental design and was implemented during a period of 3 years. It also incorporated teachers, parents, and students in the design and development of the activities. The evaluation showed that students that were in the intervention group had between 6 and 9% reduction in the prevalence of smoking and alcohol consumption compared to those in the control group. The program has been significantly expanded and more than 40,000 children have participated since its origin in 1993.

Finally, in the sexual behavior area, an innovative pregnancy prevention called the *Teen Star* program directed to adolescents of middle and low socioeconomic status was implemented in Santiago for a period of 3 years (Cabezón, 2005). A total of 1,256 students aged 15–16 years belonging to three different cohorts (1996, 1997, and 1998) were randomly selected to participate in the *Teen Star* program or were assigned to the standard control educational program. The *Teen Star* program recommended sexual abstinence and taught fertility awareness methods. Each cohort of participants was followed for 4 years. Pregnancy rate was the main outcome studied. At the end of the program, the students participating in the *Teen Star* initiative had a 13% of cumulative pregnancy rate (including clinical pregnancies that ended in term, pre-term deliveries, and abortion) compared with 22% in the control group. The authors highlighted the capacity of the program to change sexual behavior and to delay sexual activity by promoting a person's own sense of worth together with free and informed decision making.

These examples show how different interventions can improve healthy behaviors among adolescents. Giving them the opportunities in the appropriate settings, young people actively participate in health promotion initiatives. A common strategy in the three interventions was the active involvement of family, teachers, and students. The incorporation of participatory health education strategies such as a *Dialogue Education* model developed by Jane Vella (1995) in the training of young health

professional appears to be a key strategy to shift from traditional and paternalistic approach to a more effective horizontal approach for health promotion among adolescents. Successful experiences using the Dialogue Education approach have been implemented and tested in the primary health-care setting in Chile (Püschel, 2004).

Chilean Youth and Spiritual Life Today

The social, political, and cultural transformations experienced by Chilean society previously described have significantly affected the educational model in Chile and produced an impact on the health profile and wellbeing of young people. Considering that the spiritual dimension connects the physical, psychological, and social dimensions of human beings and gives them a sense of transcendence and incompleteness, it is clear that all the changes described have had an impact on the spiritual life of Chilean youth. When compared to their predecessors Chilean new generations have experienced significant changes in their views of the world and the meaning they attribute to their different life dimensions. The fifth National Youth Survey conducted in Chile in 2007 to a representative sample of young people between 15 and 29 years old can help us understand the current view and meaning of this new generation (Instituto Nacional de la Juventud, 2007).

Optimism and Participation

According to the National Youth Survey, 89% of the interviewees perceived that their personal future was going to be better than their present. About two-thirds of them believed that the future of their country was going to be better than at present. The great majority (83%) of the participants reported that they were happy or very happy with their current situation. All these parameters experienced a significant rise compared to the information available 4 years earlier.

Increased participation in society was another significant finding in this survey. In spite of the common belief that new generations have lack of commitment where social issues are concerned, the survey showed that half of the young population is participating in a social organization and a third of them have participated in the past. The highest participation rate was in sports organizations followed by religious groups. On the other hand, the lowest level of participation was in political organizations. These findings were consistent with the lack of trust in political parties expressed by the great majority of the interviewees. The lack of interest in political issues represents a striking difference from the reality existent among young people in the early 1970s. During that period, participation in society was synonymous with political commitment, a concept that has significantly changed with the new generations.

As it was described earlier, young people had an unprecedented level of participation during the high school students' strike known as the "Penguins' Revolution"

in May, 2006. One of the main characteristics of this mobilization of young people was a lack of political party involvement. This is a clear example of the new spirit of youth participation, where participation in society is linked to a commitment to self rather than a commitment to institutions.

Family and Life Cycle

Young people's lives are full of challenges: they need to become independent and learn to make decisions; they need to restructure their values and ideals and gather relevant information to build their future. However, they also need time to reflect and listen to their inner selves and their most profound aspirations and spiritual desires in order to connect themselves with others and attain meaning. They need to slow down in a very hectic environment that demands rapid action rather than contemplation.

The National Youth Survey showed the high importance that young Chilean people give to their families as a support network and a vehicle to achieve their aspirations. The great majority of Chilean youth interviewed in the survey reported that one of the things they value the most in their leisure time was to spend time with their families. They have high expectations in the quantity and quality of the time spent with their relatives. Many of the interviewees said that time spent with their parents, especially with their fathers was insufficient. On the other hand, family relational difficulties were one of the four main problems that concerned them.

This information shows how eager young people are to create a future family environment with more time dedicated to better quality interactions. However, the traditional value attributed to *familiarismo* or the family is challenged by higher expectations in the realm of education which is also linked to success at work. This challenge produces a level of tension among Chilean youth.

Healthier Spirituality and Youth Development in a More Diverse and Uncertain Chilean Society

Chilean young people face a more complex society than two or three decades ago. From an almost political monopoly, Chilean society has moved to a more diverse scenario with new topics and challenges such as gender discrimination, ethnic injustices, and educational inequalities. From a nuclear family system, society has migrated to a variety of family structures; from an almost homogenous Catholic religious faith, Chilean society has shifted to more diverse religious beliefs and faith expressions. This changing and more diverse scenario introduces a higher level of uncertainty in a per se changing population such as the youth. Despite all challenges, young people face this new scenario with optimism and commitment with social justice. They bestow a high value to family and consider it the main support unit for growth and development. These are certainly symptoms of a healthy spirituality.

A less rigid society with a wider spectrum of interests and opportunities might also present uncertainty because of the lower level of norms and control. Meaningful affective relationships and sexual responsibility are important values that could be threatened in a more liberal and wealthier society. On the other hand, a less rigid society can pose excellent opportunities to develop less hierarchical and deeper family connections as well as stronger solidarity toward those in need. Deep family connections and solidarity seem to be essential components of a healthy spirit. However, it remains to be seen which pathway Chilean society and its youth will take given this new uncertain environment.

Religion continues to be an essential part of life among a great majority of young Chileans. The less hierarchical and more participative culture has also challenged the rules and norms of religious practice within traditional Christian churches. As we have described in the examples presented in relation to education and health care, Chilean youth are willing to commit to transcendent values as long as they seem meaningful to them. They tend to reject impositions but happily join invitations for discussion, debate, and participation. Therefore, the discernment approach suggested by some theologians to address topics such as moral sexuality seems to be much more appropriate than traditional didactic approaches.

The new social and cultural scenario that embraces the Chilean youth population and most young populations in Latin America calls for new strategies to achieve a healthy development, social competencies, and spirituality. Health and educational promotion strategies need to consider the importance that youth populations give to non-ideologized social and religious participation, family values, and technological interaction. Experiences that combine and connect these dimensions have been shown to produce positive effects on healthy development and spirituality among Chilean youth. This young generation will make significant meaning of their physical, psychological, and social worlds if all factors involving their healthy development are put together within policies that concern them.

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Chapter 59
The Development of a School-Based Curriculum to Enhance Wellbeing Among Somali Immigrant Children in the United States

Sorie Koroma and John C. Carey

Abstract This chapter explains the use of Somali cultural knowledge to develop a school-based curriculum to strengthen the wellbeing of Somali immigrant children living in an urban setting in the northeast region of the United States. Children such as the Somali children who have experienced war trauma sought refuge in neighboring countries, and with the help of international agencies like the United Nation High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), these children were transferred to developed countries such as the United States (US). The Somali children brought with them some baggage of emotional turmoil due to war trauma experiences that have derailed their normative development. In school systems, especially in the US, teachers and other school personnel not only lack necessary Somali cultural knowledge but also lack an understanding of what these children had gone through in their home country, in refugee camps, as well as their difficulties in adapting to a society that is different from theirs. This chapter explores the immigration experiences of these refugee children and impact of mass trauma which these children had gone through; it also explains the development of a culturally appropriate curriculum, based on Somali cultural knowledge, and how the curriculum could be used in working with these children in schools.

Introduction

This chapter explains the use of Somali cultural knowledge to develop a school-based curriculum to strengthen the wellbeing of Somali immigrant children living in an urban setting in the northeast region of the United States. Children such as the Somali children who have experienced war trauma sought refuge in neighboring countries, and with the help of international agencies like the United Nation High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), these children were transferred to developed

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countries such as the United States (US). The Somali children brought with them some baggage of emotional turmoil due to war trauma experiences that have derailed their normative development. In school systems, especially in the US, teachers and other school personnel not only lack necessary Somali cultural knowledge but also lack an understanding of what these children had gone through in their home country, in refugee camps as well as their difficulties in adapting to a society that is different from theirs. The task of understanding their experiences and their cultural background is obviously challenging.

This chapter explores the immigration experiences of these refugee children, and the impact of mass trauma which these children had gone through, explains the development of a culturally appropriate curriculum based on Somali cultural knowledge, and explains how the curriculum could be used in working with these children in schools. Methods used to develop the curriculum reported in this chapter could be used in other countries to develop specific interventions for children from immigrant or migrant groups.

The Somali Immigrant Experience

The occurrence of natural and man-made disasters presents challenges to human adaptation and development. These catastrophic events take different forms including wars, ethnic conflicts, environmental disasters, poverty, famine, and terror. These mass trauma events inflict suffering on whole populations or segments thereof. Any of these occurrences may also result in mass movements of people to different parts of the globe (Whittaker, 2006). One notable casualty of such catastrophic events is the Somali people of North Africa. Their society has been torn apart by an ongoing war which has precipitated mass trauma and migration. Perhaps those most affected by these catastrophic events are the young, some of who are now living in developed countries as immigrant refugees.

The number of resettled refugees is increasing—especially in developed countries. The Global Trends (2006) report on refugees indicated that some 29,560 persons were resettled in 2006 with the assistance of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). The Somali people clearly benefited from this assistance. Somalia has been in the throes of clan and civil war at least since 1992 arising from insurrections against the repressive President Siad Barre. Since then the country has been in constant turmoil despite attempted interventions from the UN, the United States, and some other African states. The effects on the people of Somalia have been traumatic and resulted in many fleeing Somalia in the hope of a better and more secure life. In recent years, their numbers increased to over 460,000 reflecting an 18% overall increase among those being resettled (Global Trends, 2006). Resettlement in a third country is being used as a durable solution for helping this population. The conventional wisdom is that the Somali refugee children will become integrated members of their host countries through "naturalization," acquiring the full range of protection and legal rights of the host country (Global Trends, 2006, p. 8).

The United States is one of the major host countries for Somali refugees. For the past 20 years, the United States has accommodated refugees from war-torn countries such as Somalia (US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2004). McBrien (2005) noted that "the majority of applicants for refugee status came from Somalia," and according to the UNHCR (1994) most of the refugees are children. The Somali children arrived in the United States with some "baggage" of psychosocial and psychological problems. They have a history of trauma and their mental screening before arrival to the United States was brief (Adams, Gardiner, & Assefi, 2003). United States educators and other professionals who work with these children may not fully meet their complex psychological needs. To work with these children without understanding these important components in their life course and culture will not yield optimal results.

The Somali Children's Experience

The horrendous and traumatic experiences of the war have affected the development of the Somali children drastically altering the course of normal human development. Such children often "lose social stability and access to education" (Boyden, de Berry, Feeny, & Hart, 2002). These children experienced different traumatic situations as a result of the war. Dyregrov, Gjestad, and Raundalen (2002) highlighted the spectrum of war experiences. Many Somali children have experienced or witnessed murders, the violent death of parents, rape, abduction, and neglect in refugee camps. Many were forced to participate in war-related activity and torture or injury to their own family members. Many children experienced trauma-inducing events such as parents' fear and panic, physical torture, scarcity and famine, separation and forced migration. These children need to be able to access and profit from quality education. Education is a vital fundamental human right that could contribute immensely to their rehabilitation and wellbeing (UNHCR, 2000). Education can promote both social and emotional healing (Sinclair, 2002). For this to happen, however, school personnel need to have the cultural knowledge and effective ways to educate and help Somali children.

The traumatic experiences of the Somali children and their subsequent adjustment to the United States (US) school system and culture is challenging. If not adequately addressed, Somali children's socio-emotional issues affect their total development at school, family, and community life. Somali children are at high risk of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other symptoms or behavior related to war trauma. In fact Kahin (1997) asserts that the Somali children manifested symptoms of trauma in school that are misinterpreted by school personnel as being a sign of disruptiveness and acting out. For instance, these children often have difficulty in settling down, concentrating in class, inhibiting aggression, and maintaining social contact with peers and teachers.

In addition, the process of adjusting to their new US environment also presents challenges. Many of them are experiencing what Kelison (1992) refers to as "sequential traumatization." The traumatic experiences these children had in their home

country continue to be reenacted in their life experiences in refugee camps as well as in their host country. Davis and Webb (2000) reported that children such as these are extremely vulnerable to both social and psychological disadvantages. In addition to coping with their prior traumatic experiences, they have to contend with racial violence, homelessness, language difficulty, and adjusting to new school systems. Somali children come from different education systems and have had their education interrupted by the war. Most children who lived in refugee camps did not get the quality education they would have received under normal conditions. As Hunt has pointed out elsewhere in this book in relation to children in Kenya, it is unlikely that there are sufficiently qualified counselors and psychologists working with them to help to set them back on the track of normal child development.

Many studies report that children who have experienced trauma such as the Somali children are at high risk of depression, PTSD, substance abuse, and suicide which are directly related to their traumatic experiences (Bhu et al., 2003; Gorst, 1992; WHO, 1999). However, Western professionals may not adequately understand their problems. Davis and Webb (2000) succinctly argued that:

> the extent to which the Somali refugee child's development had been affected by the war seemed to be largely ignored by the majority of professionals. There was instead an assumption that these children's development was intact and not intrinsically different to that of western children (p. 547).

Children's traumatic war experiences can have a long-term effect on their development. In examining cases of children traumatized by war, Ispanovic-Radojkovic, Tadic, and Bojanin (1994) report that 64.4% of children aged up to 18 years of age experienced serious psychological suffering 1 year after the experience of war, while up to 35% of these refugee children met the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual's* criteria of having mental/behavioral disorders. Further evidence suggests that some refugee children who had early childhood experiences of trauma have PTSD symptoms that persist into adulthood. There are also war-related depressive disorders and personality disorders which can persist into adulthood (Dell & Eisenhower, 1990; Kinzie, Sack, Angell, Manson, & Rath, 1986).

Many Somali children demonstrate symptoms of PTSD and behavior patterns related to their prior traumatic experiences. Memories of their past interfere with their everyday activities at home as well as at school. These traumatic aftereffects are manifested in different ways. For instance, Kahin (1997) reports that Somali children have demonstrated withdrawal and depression; phobia and anxiety preoccupation with death and destruction; somatic problems such as headache, stomach pain; reactions of intense anxiety, aggression, or irritability; and difficulty to react in a balanced way. Mano (2000) reports that these children's traumatic experiences may manifest "...in unruly and disruptive behavior in school," and they could be suffering from consequences of war injuries that are not easily apparent and also culturally difficult to diagnose. Kahin (1997) argues that school personnel's perception of these children's "unruly behavior" "might be seen as disruptive and naughty or racially stereotyped when in reality they are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder."

In the context of Somali children's prior traumatic experiences, adjusting to a new culture can be overpowering. Davis and Webb (2000) emphasized that the children are overwhelmed with "feelings of confusion and alienation that could not be generally understood" (p. 547). The perception of the Euro-American professionals can be at odds with Somali way of doing things, belief systems, and ways of understanding "psychological difficulty" (Macksound, Dyregrove, & Raundalen, 1993). Macksound et al. (1993) noted that it is essential to provide culturally sensitive interventions to helping these children to overcome their traumatic experiences and adapt to a host culture. Elsewhere, Boyle argues that from a practical point of view "the school is an ideal place to pioneer new methods and programmes to address interculturalism" among asylum-seeking and refugee children (2004, p. 119). Summerfield (1996) was critical of professionals who use a strictly medical approach with a central focus on diagnosis and treatment. Ingleby (1995) further contends that such models and approaches could be invalid especially for many refugees. He stressed that the focus should be on culture instead of pathology to avoid stereotyping based on Euro-American models and a related misunderstanding and misapplication of interventions. It is important to understand these children's background and their culture in order to design culturally appropriate psychological services and school-based interventions.

Culturally Appropriate Interventions

There is, at present, no commonly accepted definition of "culturally appropriate interventions" nor is there a standard method for developing a culturally appropriate intervention. We approached the task of developing a culturally appropriate curriculum for Somali immigrant children with the belief that a culturally appropriate curriculum would need to include indigenous knowledge of Somali culture and be designed to fit the learning styles and preferences of Somali children. We were guided in this process by Teufel (1997) who delineated major considerations in the design of culturally appropriate health assessment practices and by LaFromboise and Howard-Pitney (1994) who develop a process to co-construct the Zuni Life Skills curriculum with indigenous cultural experts.

As mentioned earlier, the reaction to trauma varies in some way in different societies. Each culture seeks help and defines normality and pathology in its own terms. Furthermore, these diverse efforts in seeking help and finding meaning may be different from those offered by mental health professionals from a different cultural background. Furthermore, the normative processes of teaching and learning vary across cultures and need to be considered in curriculum design. We sought to avoid the imposition of a "universalist" approach to interpretation and treatment of traumatized individuals which Kleinman (1987) has succinctly termed as "category fallacy." The assumption that all psychiatric categories, symptoms, and diagnoses have the same meaning when carried over to a new cultural context is unwarranted (Kirmayer, 2006). The insistence on the exclusive use of "Euro-American" approaches in "non-Western" settings or with "non-Western" groups is

likely to result in missing the mark in many instances and to result in poor outcomes (Summerfield, 1998).

Treatment intervention and programs that are developed in the "assumptive world" of one culture may be ineffective and even counterproductive when applied outside the context in which they were developed. For instance, Neugeber (1999) stressed that inappropriate psychosocial assessment and interventions may cause more harm than good. Harmful effects include stigmatization, breaking down of the adaptive defense mechanisms against psychological distress, and a possible re-traumatization (Human Rights Watch/Africa, 1996; Newman, Kaloupek, Kean, & Folstein, 1997). Snider et al. (2004) further stated that:

> some of the dangers of indiscriminate application of Western schema, such as 'PTSD'... to indigenous societies include: (1) pathologizing normal responses to stress, (2) lack of attention to cultural bereavement and socioeconomic context, (3) bias towards individual-istic treatment approaches stigmatizing to local persons, (4) 'category fallacy', or the false idea that symptoms described in different context share the same meaning, (5) reductionism of the meaning of traumatic experience into clinical descriptors (p. 390).

There is consistent advocacy for the acceptance and comprehension of diverse cultural practices to be the norm in working with traumatized communities. Anthro-pologists and cultural psychologists have stressed the importance of understanding the local conceptualization of distress and suffering, as well as the meaning attached to such experiences which could yield substantive results in the helping professions (Loughry & Eyber, 2003; Boyle, 2004). This advocacy is propelling a paradigm shift in the helping profession and in school settings.

Curriculum Development

The process of designing the curriculum was guided by the assumptions that using the cultural knowledge and targeting the domain of internalized behavioral and emo-tional problems after mass trauma would be necessary and productive. Rothbaum, Meadows, Resick and Foy (2000) argued that "thoughts, feelings, and physiological responses are classified as private events that can serve as antecedents stimuli or con-sequences." Rothbaum et al. (2000) further asserted that in the treatment of PTSD, the focus is not on the trauma but on the "maladaptive behavior that developed in the aftermath of the trauma." We developed the curriculum to be delivered by teachers, school counselors, or school psychologists (with the support of a culturally competent resource person) for students in elementary through to middle school.

The objectives of the curriculum were:

(1) to engage children in examining their cultural ways of coping with stress;
(2) to enable them to adapt well in their new social settings;
(3) to explore cultural manifestations of psychological symptoms associated with trauma and how it impacts them in school and their community;
(4) to enable them to identify and communicate feelings of traumatic stress; and
(5) to increase their coping mechanisms.

The overall aim was to use their own cultural beliefs and concepts to enhance adaptive skills, coping mechanisms, and promote the resiliency of the children to adapt to their new US culture, and be productive in their host society. Our approach is congruent with the pathways to wellness advocated by Cowen (1994) who maintained that children should have the empowering sense of being in control of their fate and should be engaged in coping effectively with stress. In developing the curriculum, we gave consideration to four cultural components highlighted by Teufel (1997), that is, cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural appropriateness, and cultural competency. Grounding the curriculum in the cultural knowledge that could only be obtained from adult Somalis was central in this curriculum development work.

Therefore, adult Somalis were extensively interviewed based on five leading topics: that is, growing up as child; views on trauma/cultural context of trauma; seeking help; ways of curing traumatic experience; and cultural blend and ways of learning. The first step in the curriculum development was the analysis of the themes that emerged from these interviews. Major themes included denial; confused mind; trust; belief; community assistance; and cultural receptivity. The curriculum is designed around these six themes. The second step in the curriculum development was reviewing and analyzing excerpts of the data based on the themes. Excerpts from each theme are further analyzed for cultural knowledge that could guide the design of the specific curriculum content. To this end, three aspects of the Somali culture were identified: "I am in a caring community"; "Talking about Naxidin/Uurkutaalo-what happens when someone experienced a traumatic episode"; and "The brighter side of life." These cultural understandings are key elements of the Somali cultural beliefs about dealing with the aftermath of traumatic experiences. These cultural aspects were used to address the "what, who, how and where" questions in a therapeutic setting. Therefore, the three cultural aspects mentioned above were also included as essential concepts upon which the curriculum was designed.

Having established the basis of the curriculum content, the third step in the process was examining the data to determine the sequence of the content to be addressed in the curriculum. Learning objectives and activities were developed for each of three sections ("I am in a Caring Community"; "Talking about Naxidin or Uurkutaallo—what happens to a person after life-threatening experiences"; and "The Brighter Side of Life,"), and a draft of the curriculum was developed based upon our data on Somali cultural beliefs and learning styles and preferences. The draft curriculum was then submitted to the adult Somali experts for their evaluation, suggestions, and recommendations for improvement. The rationale for giving the drafted curriculum to these cultural experts is to ensure a true representation of the Somali culture was reflected in the curriculum.

The first meeting with each of the cultural experts was a general discussion of the draft curriculum. These cultural experts emphasized that "Somali children will find it difficult to discuss traumatic experience with people they do not identify with." So they stressed that "teachers or counselors should invite Somali community leaders or parents to be included in discussions of the trauma issues." It is these cultural experts' opinions that Somali resource persons are necessary to support the

work of the educators entrusted with actually delivering the curriculum. The experts further believed that Somali resource persons were needed to help educators make judgments about specific issues that should be taught or discussed with the Somali children and how these discussions should be approached. The experts, however, stressed that children should be given discussion homework that would enable them to ask their parents or other Somali adults.

A second meeting with the Somali cultural experts was necessary to get more detailed feedback on each section of the curriculum. Their general consensus was that "the curriculum content is a true representation of their culture." However, in section C, that is, "The brighter side of life," a primary focus should be on "self role." The experts stressed that children should be aware of "playing their role" in working successfully to overcome trauma and taking responsibility for their own improvement. The Somali adults asserted that their religion emphasized the "self role" in the Koran which says, "God will not help you until you help yourself." And that this religious belief goes with the Somali saying that "you don't leave your responsibility to God when you don't play your part, you should take the initiative, then God will help you." The experts further advised that in delivering the curriculum particular attention should be given to the age level of the children. They suggested the use of some traditional dances, games, songs, and poems that are appropriate at different ages and that could be used to help children overcome trauma. Modifications of the curriculum were made based on these consultations with the cultural experts. The modified curriculum was edited to be a final product to be implemented.

Description of the Curriculum

The overriding belief underpinning the curriculum is that immigrant/refugee children who survived mass trauma have the potential to overcome their traumatic experiences, do well in school, and become happy and productive members of their host society. The curriculum is based on the belief that dedicated and committed school personnel can effectively address these psychological and psychosocial problems appropriately with the right tools and cross-cultural understanding. As indicated earlier, the curriculum is divided into three sections, and each has its objectives, a cultural guide for educators who are implementing the curriculum, and specific units with learning activities for children that are designed to create a relaxed and reflective process to help them develop the knowledge and skills that are necessary to successfully overcome the aftermath of trauma and adjust to life in a new culture.

Section A of the curriculum is titled "I am in a caring community." Considering the Somali social dynamics and their present situation in the United States, the main objectives of this section are: to build trust; to help students learn skills in communicating with school personnel and peers; and to help students gain knowledge about the benefits of working with other people. The cultural guide that accompanies this section emphasizes that building trust is an essential first step in facilitating an

effective educational program with the Somali people in the United States. This could be most easily achieved by the presence of a Somali adult(s) in the first session with whom the children could identify and connect. In the absence of a Somali adult, a suitable alternative could be an African with knowledge about how Somali children are raised and regarded in their community. This resource person will serve as "cultural bridge" to promote reliance and trust.

Unit 1 in section A is "Our Speaker." The educator delivering the curriculum should contact a willing culturally competent adult who will talk to the children about adversity experiences; coping skills; and successful approaches in seeking help. Individuals facilitating this unit session start with a story or an icebreaker to help the children feel relaxed and to be ready for the lesson. The second unit in section A is titled "Doing the Right Thing." In this unit, sharing ideas about community caring in crisis situations is paramount. Children are given the opportunity to talk about their cultural practices in helping each other when life-troubling experiences occur in their community. The final unit in section A is "Seeking Help." As indicated earlier, the educator needs to involve parent(s) as resources to gain specific knowledge about help that is available within the Somali community. The discussion with the children involves how Somali people tap the resources of the community as a coping mechanism in the event of trauma or life-troubling experiences. The discussion emphasizes that in a caring community, there are individuals who are willing to help children with their problems. Students are encouraged to identify trusted people in the Somali community. Finally, the discussion focuses on the fact that teachers, counselors, and psychologists can also be trusted and relied on due to their professional training and membership in the school community.

Section B of the curriculum is titled "Talking about Naxidin" (pronounced as Nax-Z-Deen) or "Uurkutaallo" (pronounced as Wurr-Kut-Tal-Lu) which means "what happens to a person after life-threatening experiences". The main objectives of this section are to enable students understand the psychological reaction after traumatic experience; learn that it is normal to have psychological stress; discuss signs of psychological stress; recognize/acknowledge emotional and social feelings; and introduce the concept of trauma.

The cultural guide to this section emphasizes that professionals should acknowledge that trauma is conceptualized culturally and efforts should be made to discuss it in like manner. Educators are encouraged to facilitate a discussion of common reactions after a traumatic experience and emphasized how traumatic experience may change the way people look at life and how they feel, including lower self-esteem, confusion, worry, anger, and feelings of isolation. A role play of a traumatic experience and how different students react is used. Having a cultural resource person available to discuss the concept of Naxidin or Uurkutaalo is recommended. Consultation with elders is part of the Somali culture so students are given assignments in which they consult with either their parents or a Somali elder(s) about how the aftermath of trauma is understood in the culture.

To facilitate comprehensive discussions in Section B, its content is broken into two units. The first unit in this section is "What is Naxidin or Uurkutaallo?" Having already built a foundation of confidence and trust, the educator facilitates the

discussion of what happens when someone experiences a traumatic episode, helps students enumerate and list signs of psychological stress, and leads students in a short role play. "Confused Mind" is the next unit in Section B. This should be discussed in the Somali cultural context, ideally with the help of a cultural resource person. Leading questions in this discussion include: What is a confused mind? What causes it? What are the emotional signs of a confused mind? The educator emphasizes that it is normal to feel differently after a traumatic event. The educator needs to be prepared to talk about the concept of trauma in US culture and how this concept is similar to and different from Somali culture. It is important to emphasize in this unit that the Somali culture is valuable and respected and that combining knowledge through "blending cultures" will produce "beautiful outcomes." A firm foundation is established here to enhance the children's skills and confidence in reporting and discussing life-threatening experiences such as trauma in a culture that is different from theirs, using both Somali community and US school resources.

Section C of the curriculum is titled "The Brighter Side of Life." This section entails a blend of Somali cultural beliefs based on religion and a practical outlook on traumatic experiences and how to cope with them. The main objectives of this section are to enhance self-esteem and cultural identity; reinforce skills in managing psychological stress; learn skills in reporting; and feel more comfortable talking about psychological stress. The cultural guide for educators for this section focuses on recognizing and accepting the religious beliefs of the Somali. In the event of a traumatic episode, the Somali people find solace in religion. They believe that whatever happens to them has been preordained by a Supreme Being. They typically communicate with Allah through prayer and commit their suffering to this Supreme Being. This belief system gives them strength, hope, and helps them focus on managing their current life experiences to achieve a better future. The guide suggests using a culturally competent resource individual to discuss aspects of Somali religious belief systems with students to reinforce that they can overcome their traumatic experiences.

Section C uses Somali cultural games that motivate love for schooling. Drumming has been identified as part of their approach in curing traumatic stress. Drumming is interspersed with dancing and poetry to further connect learning with culture and cultural identity. The Somali society is largely an oral society. To this end, students are encouraged to express themselves orally, in poetry, and in song. Assignments require that students make use of their culture in songs and even writing related to section themes. Two units compose Section C. First, "Belief in Self," introduces Somali drumming, singing, dancing, poetry, and games that build self confidence. These activities are connected to spiritual beliefs and involve students emotionally, socially, intellectually, and physically. Discussion questions help students identify how they can clear their minds of traumatic episode and overcome "a confused mind." It is important to attend to the religious dimension, hopefully with the help of a Somali resource person. The idea that Allah states that "God helps those who help themselves" is used to encourage students to take their share of responsibility in overcoming traumatic experiences (i.e., take the initiative to move on with the aim to achieving their dreams for a successful future).

The second unit in the section is "Managing Psychological Stress." Here, the educator discusses ways to communicate feelings of psychological distress and facilitates students' engagement in cultural activities such as drumming, poetry, singing to express feeling, and manage distress. Students are encouraged to talk about traumatic episodes and to communicate about these episodes in poetry, singing, and dance. This expressive communication is presented as an essential part of the process of overcoming adversities and achieving success.

Expected Benefits in Children's Wellbeing

Cultural misinterpretation is rife in education and the helping professions generally, especially in dealing with clients from non-Western countries. The use of culturally appropriate approaches in working with children from other cultures is not common. Most school-based professionals do not know enough about Somali culture and the experiences of the Somali people to be significantly helpful to Somali children who are struggling to make meaning of their traumatic experiences and to adjust to life in the United States. Furthermore, US educators lack culturally appropriate tools that will enable them to work effectively with Somali children. The curriculum described in this chapter is a much needed tool for working in culturally competent ways with Somali refugee children. The educators guide and the recommended use of Somali adults as curriculum resources will help educators develop the cultural knowledge, insight, and appreciation that are necessary for effective work with Somali children. Through the implementation of this curriculum, Somali children will be provided with an opportunity to voice their hurt and find its meaning. In mass trauma, recovery is based on "... reconstructing the trauma story, and restoring the connection between survivors and the community" (Herman, 1992, p. 3).

It is important to help children express their feelings and seek help in culturally appropriate ways. The physiological reaction of trauma could be the same in all cultures, but the interpretations, coping mechanisms and healing preferences are not the same. On the other hand, not all cultural practices are beneficial to individuals. Children in collectivist societies like Somalia, are commonly told to forget about their traumatic experiences or discouraged from expressing their views, feelings, and opinions (Dyregrov, Gjestad, and Raundalen, 2002). Cultural restriction can preclude children from full recovery from trauma and from the full benefits of an education system that will promote their wellbeing. Involving children in the process of helping them overcome troubling experiences is a vital ingredient in their healing as well as their total development, and is consonant with Somali religious belief and cultural practices. By involving Somali parents in curriculum activities we expect to be able to encourage and support them as they seek a cultural balance in how to raise a child in the context of the US society.

We are currently transitioning from the process of curriculum development to the process of evaluation. The curriculum is developed and documented so that

educators can implement it with the help of a good resource person. We are seeking to confirm that anticipated improvements in students' academic functioning, school behavior, affective functioning, optimism, and family life result from the systematic application of this curriculum. We are confident that the process used to develop the curriculum resulted in an educational program that reflects an effective blending of a deep understanding of Somali culture with an understanding of the essential elements of trauma recovery work. The co-construction of the curriculum with indigenous cultural experts has resulted in a truly culturally appropriate intervention. We strongly recommend this dialogic process to professionals who wish to develop other culturally competent tools in education and psychology.

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Chapter 60
Violence and Conflict in Schools: Negotiating Pathways to Wellbeing

James O'Higgins-Norman and Edward J. Hall

Abstract Progressive educationalists have identified the skills that are needed to intelligently manage life and to participate in society, namely, critical thinking, problem solving, communicating and collaboration. We argue that to some degree schools have become environments that are so extremely organised and controlled that young people experience themselves as strangers in an environment that does not appreciate the core characteristics of their generation such as a sense of confidence and an expectation that one will make a positive contribution to society. A further concern is the fear that the violence which has become widespread in society will find its way into schools thus changing them from the safe havens they are meant to provide for students. In this chapter, we will argue that creating a participatory climate in moments of violence and conflict in schools is essential to the maintenance of a safe and caring environment where the wellbeing of students and staff is protected. Understanding the principles of negotiation and mediation is important in making programs in mediation effective.

Introduction

For at least a century, educators have argued that a gap exists between what is taught in schools and the person-centred skills needed to function and be successful in a democratic society (Dewey, 1916; Lindeman, 1926; Coyle, 1947; Pring, 2007). Too often, schools have focused on scholastic development alone and to such a degree that the interpersonal skills required for a congruent society are often neglected. This is not new thinking as almost 100 years ago John Dewey (1916) was arguing that there is an intimate connection between education and social action. He argued that democracy could only continue to exist if schools promoted exploration and growth rather then repressing expression and creativity. Progressive educationalists have identified the skills that are needed to intelligently manage life

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and to participate in society, namely critical thinking, problem solving, communicating and collaboration (Dewey, 1916; Lindeman, 1926; Coyle, 1947; Williams, 2007). The challenges faced by educational institutions that aspire to promote critical thinking and creativity in young people are addressed in several places by Kevin Williams in his book on Michael Oakeshott's philosophy of education in which he argues that the development of both qualities involves the careful negotiation of the interface between tradition and individual talent (2007, pp. 99–104, 160–162, 169–187).

Maria Harris in her book, *Fashion Me a People*, states

> Permanent social change—the redistribution of the gifts of God's good earth—does not occur by wishing it. It occurs when the imaginations of people touched in such a way that they work to refashion existing institutions wherever those institutions prevent people from living complete human lives

Academic settings are not always the most suitable environments for this type of transformational process to be taught and modelled. Apart from a strong focus on scholastic achievement, modern schools often reflect what Bauman (1991) refers to as society's "solid" form and attempt to remove all unknowns and uncertainties in the educational process. Such schools are highly organised and hierarchical in nature with learning managed in a structured manner by professionals who impart knowledge on the non-professionals (i.e. students). A school's instrumental goals, those that are concerned with the transmission of academic learning, are closely related to its organisational goals. These have to do with the administration and structures which have been put in place to facilitate the teaching and learning envisioned by the instrumental goals. A modern concern with instrumental and organisational goals has resulted in other aspects of education receiving less attention in many schools. These somewhat intangible aspects of a school's outcomes include cultural activities, the formation of character, the cultivation of attitudes, the transmission of values and freedom of thought. While these expressive goals are important as a source of cohesion and unity within a school as well as providing the foundations of democracy and collaboration in wider society, they are too often displaced by instrumental and organisational goals (Bernstein, 1975). This can contribute to a society where citizens are competitive, individualistic and ill-suited to participating in a democratic way of life (Norman, 2003, p. 2). In response to this problem of goal displacement, some new syllabi are now integrating real-world problems so that students will begin to understand and learn how to solve issues with a global perspective from a less individualistic perspective.

Related to the displacement of the expressive order of school life is the concern that the apparent rise in societal violence and conflict has been in some way fed by anti-social expressive behaviour which began with the alienation of those for whom their school's instrumental and organisational methods did not work. Bauman (1991) argues that despite the tendency to manage and arrange society into categories, there are always individuals and groups who cannot be administered and controlled. If we fail to recognise and facilitate the nature of such *undecidables*,

under repression they can become further alienated form mainstream society and are left to find expression of their alienation in violence and other forms of anti-social behaviour. Recent research confirms that although acts of high-level violence are rare, low-level violence and conflict in schools among students is increasingly a cause of stress to both teachers and students alike (Welsh, Jenkins, & Greene, 1996; Welsh, 2000; Leach & Mitchell, 2006; Martin, 2006; Adams-Meyer & Conner, 2008). We argue that to some degree, schools have become environments that are so extremely organised and controlled that young people experience themselves as strangers in an environment that does not appreciate the core characteristics of their generation such as a sense of confidence and an expectation that one will make a positive contribution to society (Howe & Strauss, 2000).

A further concern is the fear that the violence which has become widespread in society will find its way into schools thus changing them from the safe havens they are meant to provide for students (Martin, 2006). In this chapter, we will argue that creating a participatory climate in moments of violence and conflict in schools is essential to the maintenance of a safe and caring environment where the wellbeing of students and staff is protected. Understanding the principles of negotiation and mediation are important in making programs in mediation effective. Untrained persons in mediation and negotiation create negative outcomes by not separating the person from the problem. Conflict resolution and peer mediation programs seem to work when *interests* are focused on instead of *positions*. Constructive outcomes occur when objective criteria is used. Generating a variety of options before settling on an agreement is also essential.

Challenges of Spirituality

In this chapter, we understand spirituality as a fundamental concept that defines humanity as distinct from all other living things. It has to do with our relationship with self, with other people, with the environment and with the Divine. When a person has achieved integration between all of these relationships in their life, then they can be said to be spiritual. Human spirituality is transformational in that it takes the individual out of themselves to connect with and be concerned for everything else outside of self. We can recognise a person's spirituality in their capacity for love, compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, happiness, generosity, responsibility and harmony. Spirituality is nourished by connecting with the Divine but not in any abstract or theoretical way. For some this connection will be maintained through prayer while for others it is achieved through quality relationships that raise us up and out of ourselves. In this sense, to recognise the spiritual in oneself is to challenge oneself and the quality of the relationships that contribute to who we are and how we live.

For too many young people, violence and conflict is not just something experienced at school or on the street. Unfortunately, for some young people, violence and conflict is a feature of home life, and this can directly undermine the possibility of a

young person developing the balance or integration that is the hallmark of spirituality, and this must be of concern to schools. Martin (2006) explains how the fear of violence can undermine a young person's wellbeing:

> Children living in an atmosphere of fear and tension are unlikely to be psychologically available to engage in life in school, albeit that school may represent the good and safe wedge of their lives (2006, p. 3.8).

While much has been written about societal disintegration, the disintegration of the individual person should be of equal concern as it is this more fundamental problem which nurtures imbalances in society. Recent research in Ireland found that 84% of admissions to psychiatric hospitals were children aged 15–17 years (Hanfin et al., 2008), while a previous study revealed that 15.6% of pupils aged 12–15 years had a current psychiatric disorder (Lynch, Mills, Daly, & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Research in other countries such as Norway, France and Finland found that about 12–15% of children and young persons aged from 10 to 19 years self-reported mental health problems (Van Roy et al., 2006; Fombonne, 1998; Puura et al., 1998) with a higher prevalence of 19% of young people in this age group in Germany suffering from anxiety disorders and 18% from depression (Essau, Karpinski, Petermann, & Conradt, 1998). The importance of social cohesion and networks, as well as the ability to be involved in decision-making and a sense of belonging and safety in different situations, has been highlighted as crucial in promoting mental wellbeing among young people (Morrow, 2000; WHO/HBSC, 2007) and cannot be ignored by schools.

Schools will have to employ empathetic strategies that might be useful to help children and young persons to achieve an integration of self. Furthermore, schools need to find ways that help young people, despite their personal struggles, to transcend their own woundedness and to connect with the needs of their brothers and sisters in the global family. Schools are now increasingly looking for a praxis that will be most useful for engaging young people who desire healing and wholeness and who courageously face the hole in their souls. Educators are seeking to respond to the deeper issues of the human heart and to be able to help young people to question issues related to belonging and loneliness, good and evil, peace and division, healing and suffering, meaning and meaningfulness, hope and despair, love and apathy, justice and injustice, freedom and ultimately life and death questions. Ultimately, it is through the development of an integrated life, achieved through positive relationships, that a young person will achieve wellbeing, including spiritual wholeness. This should challenge young people to grow in nonviolence, work for human rights, be merciful and seek liberation of all and most of all deepen their relationship with God, others, the environment and self. These questions are rooted an essential pastoral perspective when teachers, chaplains, guidance counsellors and school leaders pass over from clinical definitions of emotional disturbance and engage young people to envision alternatives to the conflictual narratives which are often carried forward in popular culture in the form of cinema, television and computer games.

Mediating with Students in Violence and Conflict

The best way to promote positive behaviour in schools is to pay attention to the antecedent context and thus prevent violence and conflict from starting (Allday & Pakurar, 2007). There is less of a chance for violence and conflict to occur if students have a good relationship with each other, with teachers and with parents. These positive relationships are promoted when young people are given the opportunity of working together in school or community as partners rather than adversaries. Consequently, it is essential that those who work with young people in schools recognise that they are working with individuals who can think for themselves, have a personal history and live in a social context and who consequently deserve to be respected. When a learning environment is characterised by empathy and respect, the process of teaching and learning is more likely to be successful than when the environment is characterised by punitive control and purely instructional methods of teaching. Both inside and outside the classroom, it is equally important to engender an ethos of respect and care for young people. Such relationships cannot be modelled by school personnel who rely on didactic methods of teaching alone and who fail to establish a positive relationship with their students. Often conflict in schools is accelerated by an inability on the part of adults to know how to negotiate with young people who they often wrongly understand to have less power than they have as teachers. Fisher (1988) argues that to a large extent, the amount of power an individual has is related to the amount of power she/he assumes to have. In a conflict situation between a teacher and a student, due to school hierarchy and discipline procedures, the teacher may believe that she has all the power and therefore there is no need to negotiate with the student. However, power comes in different forms, and the student due to his popularity with peers and his ability to disrupt the teacher's plans may in fact assume as much if not more power than the teacher. In such a situation, negotiation may not be possible as both teacher and student assume they are most powerful. Consequently, a mediator may be required in the form of a year head, school chaplain, counsellor or colleague. It is essential that when such a mediator is called on that both student and teacher have confidence in them. This can be a difficult role for the person asked to mediate as they will often have a desire to help both parties while at the same time a professional loyalty to the teacher as their colleague.

Fisher, Ury and Patton (1992) offer seven key concepts that one should be aware of in mediating any conflict situation:

(1) *Relationship*: Focus on building strong, positive interpersonal connections between the parties who are in conflict with each other.
(2) *Communication*: Having developed positive relationships, it is important to speak with clarity and to listen with empathy, in order to maintain positive interpersonal connections.
(3) *Interests*: It is essential that all parties can come to understand each others' interests rather than just stating arguments to score points.

(4) *Options*: identifying possible courses of action that might prove acceptable to all sides. This stage might take sometime to conclude and may involve a considerable amount of shuttle diplomacy between parties.

(5) *Criteria of fairness*: proposing precedents, standards, rules, principles, etc. that everyone can go along with and that the parties generate and agree to abide by throughout the process.

(6) *Best alternative to a negotiated agreement*: Here it is very important to establish the extent to which each party desires to participate in negotiation.

(7) *Commitments*: Finally, finding out what actions each side will commit to in order to bring about a resolution.

Underpinning all of the above, the mediator must constantly be attentive to the role that emotions play in conflict situations. Fisher and Shapiro (2005) have identified five core positive emotional concerns that must be kept in mind in conflict situations: appreciation, affiliation, autonomy, status and role. If one fails to recognise and account for these core emotional concerns, other negative emotions such as anger, guilt, and fear can arise and hinder the mediation process. On the other hand, when one deals in positive emotions, success can be achieved in "win-win" outcomes for all the parties involved.

Many teachers, school chaplains and other professionals have struggled with the question of how to respond appropriately to young people who are socially or emotionally disturbed and engaged in conflictual behaviour. A significant part of any response to a socially or emotionally disturbed young person will include pedagogical and therapeutic interventions. However, the basic needs of these young people are no different from those of others of the same age. They also need to be appreciated, to be loved, to belong, to be respected and to be supported personally. Such a response from teachers and other school personnel is ordered towards the wellbeing of students who habitually find themselves in conflictual situations. Furthermore, the role of the school chaplain in helping the young person to achieve integration is crucial as the chaplain will bring an added spiritual dimension to help the young person find meaning in his/her difficulties.

There are two crucial qualities that agents of pastoral care offer young people. The first is the ability to be present and to accompany someone. The second is the ability to affirm young people. Being present means making oneself available to others, perceptiveness, listening and relating in the here and now, all of which can be inhibited by the business and daily pressures of school life. Affirmation includes unconditional valuing of others, love, articulation, forgiveness and hope. As "being present" and "affirmation" are the keystones of any pastoral response to young people experiencing conflict, we will now spend some time exploring these two aspects of pastoral care.

Being Present

Being available: To be present to young people begins with making oneself available, for example, to make time to be with them and open to their changing needs and situations as they arise. Availability assumes that one is predisposed to enter

into whatever situations may emerge at any given time. For teachers, chaplains and counsellors in schools, this will include even the uncomfortable situations of conflict. Verbal battles between young people can be frequent and require the teacher's intervention to prevent an escalation into a physical confrontation. The willingness to make oneself available to young persons in even the most confusing or anxiety-producing circumstances reveals to the young person that the teacher, chaplains or counsellor cares enough for them to be there at the most critical of times. Research has shown that when teachers do not respond to conflictual or discriminatory behaviour, pupils will read their silence as a validation of this type of behaviour (O'Higgins-Norman, 2008, pp. 117–121).

Keenness of perception: The willingness to be available to young people is complemented by a consistent sensitivity to their needs in any given situation. Perceptivity is the ability to piece together often from a few fragments of information, what is happening with a young person at a particular moment; it includes seeing as well as intuiting the needs of the other and then responding to those needs. For example, a pupil may tell a teacher that they are feeling unwell and cannot go to a gym class. The perceptive teacher will look for a pattern here and will be sensitive to any other reasons why the pupil may be unwilling to go to the class such as the possibility of bullying or not being able to afford the required gym shoes.

Listening: Reflective, non-judgmental, supportive and attentive listening enables young people to be who they are, feel deeply understood and become connected with another in a trusting relationship. In offering pastoral care, the skilled listener will be able to set aside his or her own agenda and really tune-in to what the young person is saying. It is important that the teacher, chaplain or counsellor listens actively and demonstrate to the student that they hear what is being said. It is important to pay close attention to what the young person is saying to ensure that you understand their point of view. Show the students that they have been listened to and taken their point of view seriously by inquiring, pressing them to clarify and repeating what you have heard so that you have understood them correctly. Validating the student's point of view does not mean that the teacher, chaplain or counsellor is agreeing with the student's point of view. This can be difficult for teachers who have so many curricular responsibilities and who are tied to a busy timetable. In fact, we would say that listening and perceptiveness depend on availability, and this is often something that the school chaplain and other pastoral agents will have in greater abundance than those who are more tied into the school's instrumental and organisational orders. In addition it is also of key importance that a school's pastoral agents respect confidentiality. A crucial role for the school chaplain or counsellor is to prudently judge the level of appropriate disclosure to other staff so as to enhance their understanding of the young person's behaviour.

Relating: It is important to maintain communication regardless of the disagreement at hand. The former ways of being present to young persons combine into a style of relating to them in which they may develop a healing relationship with another. Consistent, predictable and stable relationships can be absent from some young peoples' family lives, and therefore they particularly need the positive relationships to be established in other settings including school. One should try to put oneself in the other side's shoes to develop an empathetic understanding of

their viewpoint. Setting clear personal boundaries is also important for a number of reasons not least it enables the young person to predict and understand the nature of the relationship with the teacher, school chaplain or counsellor who is acting as mediator between them and whoever they are in conflict with. On the other hand, the mediator must be someone the student can relate to, thus, the risk of revealing important aspects of oneself cannot be avoided. A mediator's commitments, abilities, values, vulnerabilities will be evident in the relationship they form with the student in conflict. The chaplain, counsellor or teacher must carefully negotiate the tension between being real and yet not crossing any professional boundaries.

Affirmation

Affirmation of the other implies a "no strings attached" relationship of *unconditional valuing* in which the other is valued as intrinsically good. The young person does not have to earn love in this dimension of affirmation. If that were the case, love would be reduced to simple cause–effect events, and affirmation would mean a reward for doing the expected thing or proving oneself worthy. Unconditional valuing, however, means that the young person in conflict is recognised as already having received his/her worthiness by virtue of their humanity. People do not earn this or need to prove it. Of course, this is not to say that the actions of the young person are of no concern. Certainly, there are more helpful ways of relating than others, and those constructive ways need to be encouraged and destructive ways discouraged. But affirmation insists, before one does anything, that as human beings we are valuable and lovable. Among other things, love is the uniting and harmonising force of affirmation. It enables one to reach out in caring service to another. Where fragmentation, confusion and sadness seemed to have taken over, love enters to bring all things together.

Articulation: Once we recognise that the human worth of the young person we work with, we need to articulate that recognition in ways that enable them to see their human beauty as well. Articulation involves translating into word and action the dynamic and redeeming power of the unconditional value of the human person in relation to their place in the world. It means uncovering the beauty which one cannot see because it is hidden by conflict. For example, a school chaplain might articulate the Gospel to a young person by simply acknowledging his/her own commitment to Jesus Christ and God's compassion in and through him, by encouraging and praising them not only when they deserve it but also when they need it, and by expressing appreciation for their presence and relationship. Of course, articulation is not a quick technique to exercise power over a young person, something they would easily suspect anyway, nor is it an easy gimmick in "Ten Ways to Win Friends", rather, it is the honest and humble communication of presenting what is already given as a gift and simply begs open recognition.

Sometimes the school chaplain fulfils this through leading prayer and articulating the needs of the school community. Teachers taking students to witness and tour

what has been achieved in the community is also a way to articulate negotiation and mediation. One good example is along the busy Lisburn Road in conflict-ravaged Belfast, Northern Ireland, stands a small house dedicated to peace. A bright yellow banner hangs outside the second-floor window: "Campaign for a Gun-Free Northern Ireland". Inside, ordinary women and men, young and old, believers from all faiths and none, carry on steady, persistent witness for peace and justice. Pictures of peacemakers and heroes, such as Martin Luther King Jr., Gandhi and Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace winner from Burma, line the walls of the house. There is a large picture over the mantelpiece showing the 1976 Belfast demonstration featuring thousands of women with banners calling for an end to violence and a new day of peace for Northern Ireland. From 1969 to 1998, over 3,400 people were killed in a brutal war stemming from British colonial interests, revolutionary republicanism and age old, oppressive religious bigotry and fanaticism. Eventually, after a year of mediation and negotiation, a breakthrough settlement was reached on Good Friday 1998. What was once deemed unimaginable and unthinkable was now possible. Central to the achievement of this peace was the ability of the mediators to articulate the human worth of all those who were effected by the conflict in Northern Ireland.

Forgiveness: So often in our competitive society, we expect to receive from others only what we produce ourselves or somehow merit as our just reward. This utilitarian attitude also spills over into our relationships with others and therefore when we violate or hurt another person the most we expect from them is that which we are able to give ourselves. The last 20 years has seen a considerable amount of scholarly and applied work on forgiveness as a skill that is now recognised as necessary for the development of peaceful people and communities (Gassin, Enright, & Knutson, 2005). Research has shown that forgiveness can be an antidote to the personal and communal disintegration that can occur as a result of poverty, violence and marginalisation because of race or other factors (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Baskin & Enright, 2004; Gassin et al. 2005). Critics of Nelson Madella have argued that his emphasis on reconciliation and forgiveness between former enemies in South Africa resulted in some people being let off the hook and not being held to account for the wrongs they did during the apartheid regime (*Economist*, 21 Feb. 2004). However, such arguments are rooted in modernity's desire for accountability and fail to grasp the contribution of forgiveness to a deeper and lasting peace among those who were previously in conflict with each other in the promotion of a peaceful society. Forgiveness is not a new concept and can be traced back at least to biblical times (Job 14:17; Matthew 6:14; Ephesians 1:17). More recently it has been defined as follows:

> People, on rationally determining that they have been unfairly treated, forgive when they wilfully abandon resentment and related responses (to which they have a right) and endeavor to respond to the wrongdoer based on the moral principle of beneficence, which may include compassion, unconditional worth, generosity, and moral love (to which the wrongdoer, by nature of the hurtful act or acts, has no right).
>
> (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000, p. 29)

Evidence supports the argument that young people need to experience in their own relationships at home and in school the reality of forgiveness. Gambaro (2002) found that forgiveness intervention with especially angry adolescents was more effective than a Rogerian-based support group in reducing various forms of anger and improving attitudes toward school and quality of interpersonal relationships. Park (2003) implemented a forgiveness curriculum in Korea with female adolescents who were aggressive victims of peer abuse and found that intervention participants demonstrated less anger, delinquency, aggression and hostile attributions than did participants in two control groups. Further research on forgiveness education in both Milwaukee, USA and Belfast, Northern Ireland found similar positive responses (Gassin et al., 2005). Sometimes the approach to discipline traditionally taken in schools provides a model of reward and punishment rather than one of understanding and forgiveness and as such fails to embed a more positive and long-term outcome in terms of behaviour. Forgiveness allows for the possibility of restoring a hurt relationship without further pain or punishment. It is the glad acceptances of another's regret and welcoming acceptance of another's limitations, all the time knowing that the hurt she/he inflicted could easily have been done by oneself. Forgiveness is not cheap grace. It does not mean the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. It does not exclude preliminary judgments about morality, yet leaves final judgement in the hands of the Divine. Forgiveness enables one to be fully responsible for hurtful actions by the common recognition of such actions and open the way for healing by providing another the free space to show guilt and regret, yet without fear of further hurt. Young people often expect more from themselves than others do of them and harshly treat themselves when they fail to fulfil often rigid expectations. Forgiveness is the way out of compulsive and self-defeating expectations. It recognises the sinful and limited condition that we all share and encourages us to move beyond it. Forgiveness must be the ultimate aim of any school's attempts to deal with conflict if young people are to learn that not everything has to have its match in "an eye for an eye" sense.

Mairead Corrigan-Maguire, a Nobel Peace winner from Northern Ireland, refers in her book *The Vision of Peace* (2007) to how hard it is for any of us to change, she quotes John Henry Newman, "In a higher world, it is otherwise, but here below, to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often." As she speaks about the courage that was necessary to move from "exclusive" to "inclusive" in reaching the Good Friday agreement in Northern Ireland, she reminds us, "Yes, change is painful, but when accepted graciously, it allows us to grow spiritually". The need for change becomes complicated when "we fail to recognise that we ourselves are part of the problem. Change will come about only when each one of us takes up the daily struggle to be more forgiving, more compassionate, more loving". Mrs. Maguire is quick to recognise that "the rebirth of humanity will not come without pain". She also argues convincingly that preoccupation with "other" rather than with "justice" is self-defeating and futile. Central to any attempt to mediate in conflictual situations that arise among young people in schools is the ability to move all parties beyond their own experience of self to a deeper appreciation of the human need to forgive and be forgiven.

Challenges in Mediating with Emotional Disturbed Young People

While many of the conflictual situations that arise in schools are among young people who are going through the normal stress and turmoil of adolescence, there are increasingly more young people in mainstream education who experience emotional disturbance arising out of clinical conditions and/or years of life in insecure family and community settings. There are particular challenges which one encounters in a school setting with emotionally disturbed young persons, tensions which often get in the way of manifesting a pastoral approach. While those who work with young people who are emotionally disturbed or who have special needs will normally have a huge commitment to this type of work and the energy to match their commitment, there are costs involved in working with young people in conflict. One of the costs of caring for disturbed young persons is what Lewis and Brown (1979) call the "regressive pull". This is where seriously disturbed young persons can tend to make others who work closely with them feel a movement towards chaotic and archaic levels of functioning characterised by anxiety in relation to a child who has lost control, rescue fantasies or unrealistic expectations for success and healing alternating with despair and hostility in the form of punishment. It is not clear whether such young people intentionally cause the regressive pull as an attempt to make others close to them feel impotent and themselves omnipotent or whether it results from simply being in their presence. What is clear is that those who work closely with young persons with emotional problems need to be supported by their colleagues and employers. One form of support is to have a weekly or monthly de-briefing session in which all those who work with those who are emotionally disturbed such as school chaplains, teachers and other carers can discuss their experiences and focus on a common approach.

The fact that these young people dramatise their conflicts in relation to the adults who work with them often makes relating to them extremely frustrating and emotionally draining, even with the type of staff support outlined above. The emotional intensity of continual conflict for teachers in a school with a high number of emotionally disturbed young persons and the great neediness of these young people can set one up for emotional burn out if efforts for personal solitude, staff communication and even prayer are not maintained. Those who work in this type of environment learn quickly that compassion and pastoral care cannot become a competition between their needs and those of the young person. All those who work with young people with this type of special need require an approach that recognises the importance of everyone's needs and seeks to meet them. A failure to respond to personal needs can result in them getting in the way of offering genuine and effective pastoral care to those in our care.

Conclusion

For many reasons, not least of all the changes in social and family life, more young people are presenting in our schools with emotional needs and quite often

these needs first emerge in conflictual situations. Some of these emotional needs will be short lived and can be addressed by a caring teacher who takes time out to listen. Others will need more ongoing support from the chaplain, counsellor or psychologist.

Fundamental to any approach that seeks to promote the wellbeing of young people is a concern for the person in which the totality of the young person is recognised. Those who engage in the care of young people with emotional needs will need to find a healthy mechanism to meet their own needs either through peer support from other colleagues or through a form of professional supervision. Finally, low-level violence and conflict in the form of bullying and miss-behaviour is inevitable in schools. Punitive approaches have been found to control but not to motivate students into a more cohesive existence in school or later in society. Sometimes, it is necessary to engage mediation skills such as those set out in this chapter and at the heart of successful mediation is a desire for the wellbeing of all concerned and the presence of positive relationships which support the integration or spiritual wellness of the person.

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Chapter 61
Teaching a Theology of Suffering Through Story

Caroline Renehan

Abstract This chapter has grown out of a concern to interpret the Christian story of an infinitely good God within the framework of young people in educational environments who experience various forms of human suffering. Teachers often teach about unjust structures in society citing examples to students from a plethora of curricula and resources on the market. However, they seldom encounter in the various curricula a theology of suffering which enables them to help or to understand the plight of many of the students who actually sit before them. Instead, human suffering is sometimes viewed as something that happens to people in the developing countries or the victims of crime or of car accidents. It is often the stock-in-trade of textbooks and television, objective rather than subjective, making it difficult for those involved in the business of teaching to divorce the academic from the empathetic. It would be interesting to know to what extent educators stand in class at any given time and question in their own minds which of their students might be contemporaneously in the throws of suffering. It is possible that for the most part the question is no more than a passing thought while they try to focus on how they will teach the next section of "Issues of Justice and Peace" on the respective syllabi. How often in their busy professional lives do they look directly into the eyes of the young people they teach and see the haunted look of a suffering child masked by an expressionless face? In their concern for the spirituality, care and wellbeing of their pupils, this chapter explores ways in which educators might approach a theology of suffering that takes serious account of such pupils. The enterprise is an exploration into God, the meaning of human suffering and how teachers can renew their commitment to the physical and spiritual care of the child with the "expressionless face" and the "haunted eyes".

Introduction

This chapter has grown out of a concern to interpret the Christian story of an infinitely good God within the context of young people in educational environments

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who experience various forms of human suffering. Suffering experienced by young people may range from mild to extreme forms and may be emotional, mental or physical. The "ethic of care" we expect among teachers has been argued and outlined in this book and elsewhere (Noddings, 1992; Totterdell, 2000; Williams, 2004; Norman, 2004). The perennial problem for teachers is how to recognise suffering and its effect on the spirit of the young person and then how to deal with it successfully. All too often, teachers do not recognise suffering and its effects in their pupils. This non-recognition can arise out of a lack of training or because for some reason, or other certain pupils may hide their suffering. Ironically teachers may teach at length about unjust structures in society citing examples to pupils from a plethora of curricula and resources on the market. However, they may seldom encounter in the various curricula a "theology of suffering" which enables them to help or to understand, through that theology, the plight of many of the pupils who actually sit before them. Instead, human suffering may tend to be viewed as something that happens to people in the developing countries, or the victims of crime or of car accidents or anybody except their pupils. Stories and images of suffering are often the stock-in-trade of text books and television tending towards objectivity rather than subjectivity making it difficult for those involved in the business of teaching to divorce the academic from the empathetic. It is possible that for the most part that the question is no more than a passing thought while teachers try to focus on how they will teach the next section of their respective syllabi.

As to what extent educators stand in class and question in their own minds which of their pupils might be contemporaneously experiencing some form of suffering or other is not widely known. It is unrealistic to expect teachers in their busy professional lives to look directly into the eyes of the young people they teach and be aware of the haunted look of a suffering child masked by an expressionless face. Out of concern for the spirituality, care and wellbeing of pupils, this chapter suggests one practical way in which educators might approach a "theology of suffering" that takes serious account of such young people. The enterprise is an exploration into God, the meaning of human suffering and how teachers might renew their commitment to the mental, physical and spiritual care of their pupils through such understanding. Attention will be given to the problem of human suffering and the presence of God with particular emphasis on the *Book of Job* indicating how that classic biblical text might be of use to teachers as they go about their daily work of teaching and caring for the young people in their classrooms.

The Problem with Human Suffering

Without doubt, suffering is the greatest human mystery of all time. It is a phenomenon of monumental proportions and not understood by any human being who has ever lived on this Earth. As Hall (1988, p. 90) claims, "the problem with human suffering is that on the whole, answers are both inadequate and inappropriate". Hall's remark is reminiscent of the hapless comforter who tries to console the

aggrieved or grief stricken mourner with a response such as, "it is God's Will" or "time will heal". Time and again scorn has been poured on such futile comments for if a given tragedy is the will of God, then shame on God. As for the aspiration that time heals, there are those who would say that the pain of the loss of a loved one is as acute today as it was at the time of the loss no matter how many decades ago that may have been. Nonetheless, what is "inadequate" and "inappropriate" is all that human beings have so teachers simply have to make use of all that is available through the Christian message.

In such situations, people of good will attempt to alleviate the distress of the sufferer either from some spiritual vantage point, through the use of theological language or well meaning comments such as those above. While all such efforts on the part of the sympathiser are to be expected and very often understandable, what is required in addition is a body, a community or a forum where pupils in particular feel they are allowed at least to explore and express their anxieties, bitterness, remorse, anger or fear. In some cases, pupils in the ordinary course of their lives believe they must hide their suffering from others. Where this is the case, then the teacher is in a key position to provide a forum for these eventualities of life.

In order for this forum to be effective, the teacher must be sufficiently in touch with his/her own experiences and understanding of suffering before the recognition of the deeper needs of others can take place. In addition, the teacher must rely to some considerable extent not only on his/her own ability to be compassionate and empathetic but recognise that suffering for many does not take place in the world without God's involvement in it in some way. This is a God who is involved with all created realities not least of whom are the people that God has created. However, the complexities of dealing in a school situation with "God", "Suffering" and "Pupil" go far beyond the remit of the ordinary teacher. It is important to keep in mind that the teacher is not a chaplain, a counsellor or a social worker. Nonetheless, the teacher has a significant role to play. Any teacher who has broached the topic for private study will be able to relate to the premise that there are two broad categories worthy of reflection (1) the experience of personal faith and (2) theodicy (reasoned study that attempts to recognise the existence of evil or suffering in the world with the assumption of a benevolent God). Yet, personal testimony and philosophical theodicy often falls short of the sufferer's struggle to understand or come to terms with the immediate impact or the long-term effects of the accompanying grief. For the person of faith, perhaps it is only by focusing on God and God's own stories can the sufferer make some modicum of sense of the world that has fallen around his/her feet.

Suffering is described by Fatula (1987) as the "disruption of inner human harmony caused by physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional forces experienced as isolating and threatening our very existence [and] the deprivation of human good inseparable from the mystery of evil". If this definition is worthy of consideration, then it may be difficult to see how the telling of stories, God's or otherwise, would have any impact on the child who is abused at home, the victims of the alcoholic who has destroyed her family, or the unloved son of a wealthy household who is crying out for affection and understanding. While on the one hand it is incredibly trite to

claim that stories about God are the answer to the problem of human suffering, on the other hand it is impossible for a human being to live any modicum of that life without reference to history. Of the teeming millions of people in this world, each and every one has a story to tell beginning at birth and ending at death. Everything in life is story. Absolutely nothing happens without story which is the fabric of human life. All media items such as television, radio and newspapers are about story, some are as banal as the results of a football match and others as incredulous as the devastating news of the Tsunami's on that dreadful St. Stephen's Day of recent memory. Regardless of whether the stories consist of the telling of a moral evil such as the Twin Towers on 9/11, or a physical evil such as a Tsunami, they require a lens through which humankind tries to relate. In order to come to terms with human suffering, people of faith attempt to refocus on God's story. In this way, the sufferer may see how his/her story intersects with and is impacted by God's story. Dare it be said that story is the very "sacrament" of human life.

In the eventful life of the teacher who has to deal with curricula, syllabi, timetables, exam pressure, disruptive pupils and endless administration, it is difficult to find the time to find practical ways in which to console or even consider the pupil who is suffering in the classroom. This difficulty is often compounded by the fact that many pupils who suffer do not do so openly because they are either introvert in personality or not permitted by home or society to speak of the suffering that they are currently experiencing. In these instances, neglect of the pupil is something that has to be guarded against in the busy traffic of teachers' minds. It, therefore, may never be possible for the pupil to confide in the teacher, but this does not mean that the teacher cannot reach the pupil, even if the attempt to do so is unknown to the pupil. It is here that the relationship between God's stories and human stories become intertwined, and it is within these stories that the teacher can provide the body, community or forum essential for pupils to accommodate their own stories, secret or known, to counter the reality of the regretful situation of their lives.

Where Is God?

Perhaps the most poignant stories of all are the ones where unquestionable faith in God was put to the test in God's apparent abandonment of those who were the most loyal of believers. In order for the teacher to sympathise or even empathise with the "hiddenness" of God in times of great suffering, an interpretation of a tragic story from a survivor Auschwitz, Elie Wiesel is worth quoting at length. The story is one of many written by Wiesel (1982) in his search for the good and merciful God. The interpretation below is that of Surin's (1986, p. 116):

> One day when we came back from work, we saw three gallows rearing up in the assembly place, three black crows. Roll call. SS all round us, machine guns trained: the traditional ceremony. Three victims in chains—one of them, the little servant, the sad-eyed angel. . .All eyes were on the child. He was lividly pale, almost calm, biting his lips. The gallows threw

its shadow over him. . .The three victims mounted together on to the chairs. The three necks were placed at the same moment within the nooses. Long live liberty'! cried the two adults.

But the child was silent. "Where is God? Where is He?" someone behind me asked. At a sign from the head of the camp, the three chairs tipped over. Total silence throughout the camp. On the horizon the sun was setting. "Bare your heads" yelled the head of the camp. His voice was raucous. We were weeping. "Cover your head!" Then the march past began. The two adults were no longer alive. Their tongues hung swollen, blue-tinged. But the third rope was still moving; being so light, the child was still alive. . .For more than half an hour he stayed there, struggling between life and death, dying in slow agony under our eyes. And we had to look him full in the face. He was still alive when I passed in front of him. His tongue was still red, his eyes were not yet glazed. Behind me, I heard the same man asking: "Where is God now"?

And I heard a voice within me answer him: "Where is he"? "Here he is hanging on the gallows".

The reciting of a horrendous story here is not intended to appeal to raw emotion nor is intended that the teacher should necessarily use it in class. Clearly, the telling of stories such as these to young students must be treated with caution and discretion. However, stories of suffering no matter what end of the spectrum, whether they tell of mild forms of it or those such as the above, are real. Teachers who wish to provide a caring and receptive environment in a school context must face the challenge of reconciling the existence of pain and evil between a pupil who has lost hope, spirituality and belief in a benevolent God.

Where is God in all this suffering and what are the stories to be told about God? If God is good, why do people have to suffer? Questions about suffering and belief in a powerful, omnipotent creator God who is full of justice and mercy has flummoxed the most brilliant of minds through the ages. According to Mackey (2007, p. 132), God is responsible:

God the creator, and as the creator, takes full and immediate responsibility for virtually everything in our world that we would consider an evil. Full and immediate responsibility, that is to say, for natural disasters as well as for all the evils that human beings do to each other. . .

If the responsibility is God's, then where is God? The age-old answer comes readily to most Christians, "God is everywhere" or as Lane (1977, p. 136) puts it theologically, "the incarnation of God in Jesus is the unambiguous and definitive revelation of a divine presence which is all around us". Yet, how does the teacher in caring for the suffering pupil put this message across in the classroom? It has been suggested above that the message manifests itself through story, the story of God and human suffering. Stories of God are hugely significant for the teacher, and while there are a plethora of stories to be told there are none as expressive in their anguish and human meaning as that contained in the Book of Job [indications of the date of writing are tenuous but it appears it was written circa 600–300 CE—Mackenzie, 1969, 512]. The next section shows that, of all the stories to be told about the relationship between the presence of God and the wretchedness of humanity, the story of Job is the most pertinent and perhaps the most useful for the discerning teacher.

The Story of Job

As a synopsised form of part of the story of Job is outlined below, it will be shown that the author of the Book of Job is concerned to show how one man in biblical times continued to assert his faith in the midst of unjust suffering. To make matters worse, Job has friends who are called "comforters". These can be explained as people who try to make Job feel happier, but they make him feel worse instead. The teacher may help the pupils to see that Job only very slowly begins to resolve his problems by working through a series of images of God which manifest themselves throughout the book. A reading of Job will show the teacher that these images are imaginative and colourful and each image in its turn tells its own story of suffering. Firstly, the images show how Job struggles with the traditional portrayal of God, a distant omnipotent deity secure in "his heaven". Secondly, they show how Job has to struggle with his own understanding of God in the face of apparent abandonment by his Creator. Thirdly, the images show that after a long and arduous battle in his mind, Job comes to see the inadequacy of his own images of God. In the same way, all images of God including the pupils fall far short of the reality of God. Images exist to help humankind to try to reflect on the presence of God in apparent absence.

It can then be explained to pupils that the process by which Job finds God is not a solitary one. God also plays a part. That part is one of God's self-revelation. When Job finally opens his eyes, he finds that God was there all time. This is not unlike the example of the child in the Auschwitz concentration camp during the Second World War within whom God was to be found as co-sufferer. It is an account of a Jewish image of God, but it is also reminiscent of the Christian understanding of God suffering on the cross in the form of the Christ. Many teachers, however, may not be conversant with the story of Job, the richness it contains or its usefulness for the classroom. Teachers however, who embark on examining the story with their pupils, will recognise fairly quickly that it is one which will appeal to pupils. In particular, those who are suffering in some way will be able to identify to some extent with the frustration and the terrible sorrow of the main character despite his righteousness and goodness. Job did no wrong, and the child who is suffering has done no wrong, yet for some reason God is not alleviating the distress of these innocent parties.

According to Mackenzie (1969, p. 511), the story of Job is a:

> poetic dialogue in a prose-narrative setting, dealing with the profound theological problem of the meaning and function of suffering in the life of a just man and with the consequences of it for a man's attitude to God.

The story of Job begins with what is known as the Prologue (Job 1.1–2.13). The Prologue establishes that above all else Job is a very good person, a paragon of virtue. He is a "sound and honest man who feared God and shunned evil" (1:2). When the teacher peruses this story she/he will see that Job has a family, a home, servants and all that money can buy. Yahweh is seen as the great rewarder, who, according to ancient wisdom teaching, rewards virtue with perfect happiness

(Bergant, 1982, p. 25). This is a God in whom Job trusts. The question of suffering has not yet arisen hence Job's faith is unassailably secure. The relationship between God and Job is peaceful and unquestioning. Before long, however, the problem of suffering comes to the fore. It causes Job to question God's ways leaving Job bewildered and insecure. Eventually, though, through taxing questions and unexpected answers from God, Job gained new insights on suffering, patience and endurance. And, more importantly, he learned how deeply he was loved by God (Swindoll, 2004).

It will be interesting for pupils to learn that unknown to Job his problems begin with the dialogue which takes place in heaven between Yahweh and the Satan (the Satan is not yet the "devil" of later Judaist and Christian theology. Here he is an unpleasant figure who is cynical of the goodness to be found in human beings). Yahweh is anthropomorphically represented as an oriental monarch in his heaven, a traditional image of God which still exists in the minds of many believers today. According to Mackenzie (1969), Yahweh is seated on his throne in the heavenly court while his messengers appear before him. This is a simplistic anachronistic image of God but one with strong psychological power. That power creates an infinite distance between Yahweh and his people who is an awesome benevolent, powerful and dominating ruler. The picture portrays a sense of "godness" which produces an abject fear and sense of humiliation in his subjects. This powerful monarch has the capacity to do with his subjects as he wills.

The author of Job sets the tone for what is about to come next. Yahweh boasts of his faithful servant Job to the Satan by saying, "Did you notice my servant Job…There is no one on earth as good and faithful as he. He worships me and is careful not to do anything evil" (Job 1: 1–8) to which the Satan retorts, "Would Job worship you if he got nothing out of it?" "You have always protected him and his family and everything he owns… he is not God-fearing for nothing is he?" (Job 1:9–10).He further provokes Yahweh by adding, "stretch out your hand and lay a finger on his possessions: I warrant you he will curse you to your face" (Job 1:10–12). So Yahweh accepts the challenge permitting the Satan to kill Job's children and destroy his wealth (Job 1:13–22). There is a proviso however, and that is, the Satan is not to harm Job himself. In several rapid stages then, Job's possessions are all destroyed, but Job proves the Satan wrong; he blesses Yahweh instead of cursing him. The Satan returned to Yahweh when this did not work, and he put a second challenge to Yahweh to harm Job's person. Nonetheless, Job still remains faithful to Yahweh. The story goes as follows:

> Satan replied, "A man will give up everything in order to stay alive. But now suppose you hurt his body – he will curse you to your face!" So the Lord said to Satan, "All right, he is in your power, but you are not to kill him". Then Satan left the Lord's presence and made sores break out all over Job's body. Job went and sat by the rubbish heap and took a piece of broken pottery to scrape his sores. His wife said to him, "You are as faithful as ever, aren't you? Why don't you curse God and die?" Job answered, "you are talking nonsense! When God sends us something good, we welcome it. How can we complain when he sends us trouble?" In spite of everything he suffered, Job said nothing (Job 2:4–10).

The imaginative teacher will be able to set up a small dramatic play from verses such as these in class or some prose pieces for the pupils to read to enable them to have empathy with Job and assimilate what he may be feeling.

Job and His Comforters

School children have friends who are generally supportive and helpful, however while the child who is suffering does so with such support, the time soon comes when that help and comfort may wane. Job's friends are no different, indeed, they soon contribute to Job's grief as they claim that he must be at fault or God would not punish him so. According to Hester (2005, p. 36), Job's core complaint with his "friends" is that "they expected certain standard behavior from him, and when he failed to conform to their expectations, their 'comforting' became finding ways to 'correct' and thereby make themselves more comfortable". The teacher with this in mind may look at the dialogue between Job and his comforters. Tantalising examples of this lengthy dialogue are to be found in the words of the comforters, Eliphaz (Job 4), Bildad (Job 8) and Zophar (Job 11). The dialogue (Job 3:1–31.40) follows the Prologue continuing to show how an innocent person may suffer through no fault of his/her own. Given its considerable length, only some examples of the more pertinent parts of the dialogue between these men and the innocent Job will be outlined here.

In the following extract, the accepting composure of the resigned Job eventually breaks down as his troubles increase. It can be explained to the pupils that he curses the day he was born and prays for death to end his affliction. Alternatively, the pupils can be shown this extract and asked what they think about it.

May the day perish when I was born,
And the night that told of a boy conceived.
May that day be darkness,
may God on high have not thought for it,
eclipse swoop down on it (Job3:2–5).

Yet, despite the fact that Job is struck with terror and bewilderment, his comforters are unanimous that God is a just judge. They take God's side. Job's punishment is deserved they say and can only be explained in terms of his sinfulness (Job 4:1–14). In other words, Job must have done something terribly wrong to upset God or these awful punishments would not be foisted upon him. This is the main emphasis of the speeches. Job's friends nonetheless try to console him but he continues to protest his innocence. In time, Job begins to change his image of God so that God now becomes the one who brings terror:

The arrows of Shaddai (God) stick fast in me,
my spirit absorbs their poison,
God's terrors stand against me in array (Job 6:3–4).

The study of a quotation like this can help pupils to see that this good man cannot understand why he is being punished by God. So often in life people ask why God is punishing them or what have they done to deserve the tragedies and injustices they experience (Sobrino, 2008). Like Job, suffering people very often believe that God is punishing them for something they did not do and in this respect they cannot see God other than someone who punishes. Some believe that they are the object of God's relentless attacks and either turn against God or they decide not to concern themselves with a belief in the existence of God (Bergant, 1998). Alternatively they may deem that they have, indeed, done something to deserve God's punishment and torment themselves with endless questions about past behaviour. Many pupils may have been taught that God the Almighty is in the role of protector and provider but when answers as to why they suffer are not forthcoming their traditional under-standing or image of a good, merciful and powerful God will eventually become their enemy.

So it is with Job. He has faced such opposition and all he wants at this stage is to die:

May it please God to crush me,
to give his hand free play
and do away with me (Job 6:8–10).

Here Job has bemoaned his pitiful position, and God is clearly responsible for it. One interesting implication of all this however is that Job still trusts God. This is seen by the fact that Job does not contemplate taking his own life but looks to God for final release.

The Justice of God

When death does not come to Job by way of release, he resolutely continues to defend his innocence. He accepts that he is a sinner since according to Job all men and women are sinners (Job 14:3–4). The real question of course is not whether or not that Job is a sinner but whether he deserves such severe torments. The Latin American theologian Gutierrez (1985, p. 24) gets it right when he says that Job is, "confronted now with suffering that is unjust". In the same vein, Job's comforters' arguments begin to sound hollow when he demands answers from them:

Put me right, and I will say no more:

show me where I can have been at fault.
Fair comment can be born without
but what is the basis for your strictures? (Job 6:24–26).

The comforters nonetheless remain unanimous that God is a just judge. God is imaged as the judge who metes out to every man and woman their just desserts.

At this stage, however, Job is worn down. After several repeated attempts to make contact with God, he has reached the conclusion that God is inaccessible, that God is not to be found and that God is hidden. This means that God will not even listen to argument (Job 19:7–8). One of Job's friends believes that he has the answer when he says that God does not reply to Job because of humankind's pride (Job 35:12). Job does not accept such a teaching since his sufferings have not grown out of his sinfulness. Job then becomes stronger in his attack of God. He sees that God is not only responsible for Job's troubles but also the initiator. God is waging a relentless onslaught against a helpless creature (Job19:8–12). It appears that "God has either succumbed to the power of an evil force or has himself inflicted unwarranted adversity on a previously favoured devotee" (Bergant, 1982, p. 108).

In spite of Job's belief that God is responsible for his predicament, he still sees God as the only one with the power to help him. He adheres firmly to the idea that God is a redeemer (Job 19:25). Job's faith in the midst of suffering is so strong that he believes somehow he will eventually be delivered (Bergant, 1982, p. 109). The one who will deliver him is alive and is only waiting for the right time to act. Job tenaciously holds on to the belief that if his arguments were heard, he would be acquitted (Ch. 23). The real problem for Job, as it is for the suffering person, is that God is far away (Job 23:13); God hides his face (Job 13:24) and remains deaf to appeal (Job 24:12).

Pupils who are suffering might well be able to identify with the great distance between Job and God as the gap seems greater than ever. Job's last words end with one final expression of regret that God never responded to Job (Job 31:1–40). Job had repeatedly demanded an answer from God. He searched for some explanation for the suffering in his life. Time and again his friends rebuked him for his arrogance and defended God against Job's attacks. They defended God on the basis of God's wisdom and omnipotence and refused to be silenced. Such was the traditional worldview of that time. Their image of God was a static one.

Out of the Whirlwind

Then suddenly, contrary to all expectation, God confronts Job from out of a whirlwind. The manner and nature of this encounter is not at all what Job expected. Job's image of God was to be radically modified (Bergant, 1982). Through the medium of the whirlwind (Chs. 38–42) God rebuked Job at length for his lack of trust and for questioning God's wisdom, "Who are you to question my wisdom with your ignorant empty words? Stand up now like a man and answer the questions I ask you. Were you there when I made the world?" (Job 38: 2–4). God continues, "Are you trying to prove that I am unjust—to put me in the wrong and yourself in the right?" (Job 40:8). While this part of the text, indeed all of it has to be taken in the context of its day and rampant with anthropomorphism, the teacher will be able to explain to pupils that God is there all the time. God is the creator of the world and all that is in it.

It can also be explained to pupils that Job held in tension a plethora of lively and imaginative images of God (only a few of these have been outlined above). In the overall text, Job in his desperation is seen to accept, question, argue with and despair of God using his own personal images as a medium. What concerned Job above all was the credibility of God in the midst of unjust suffering. Job's suffering forced him to question his faith time and again. Job does this by changing his images of God. A reading of the text in its entirety will show the changing images of God which include God as the oriental monarch, the God of retribution, the God of justice, the God of wisdom and the God of omnipotence among others. At times, Job is so wrapped up in his own suffering that he "imprisons" God in these world views of his day. Most of the time, however, Job searches among his images until finally he finds God. In the last analysis, Job discovers that God was with him all of the time even during the darkest nights of his despair (Talbert, 2007).

Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been suggested that teachers will encounter many pupils whose spirituality, care and wellbeing will require both immediate and ongoing attention particularly those who experience some form of suffering whether that is mild or acute or secret or known to the community in which the young person lives. However, as argued by Williams elsewhere (2004) and in this publication, caution has to be advised as the teacher is not the pupils' chaplain, medic or parent, and what the teacher is capable of doing in class in these areas tends to be rather limited. The teacher is also aware that a set of theoretical proposals on how to deal with anguished pupils or in-service days on the study of spirituality, care and wellbeing of pupils cannot remove the pain that touches their young charges deeply. Nonetheless, these responsibilities cannot be reneged upon simply because of the teacher's specific role or because of the time constraints on the school timetable. Teachers, given their primary roles as educators, must find another way to access the minds and hearts of their pupils within the context and limitation of the classroom environment. What better way to do what the teacher does best but to teach.

One of the great advantages of being a teacher is the opportunity to put across a message. Messages can be transferred from the teacher's mind in dialogue with others in the classroom in a plethora of ways. Sometimes messages need to be discreet, surreptitious, vague, bold, vocal and sensitive and so forth. This chapter has outlined just one medium for such messages, that of story. The teacher's sympathetic and or empathetic manner of portraying story through various lessons is capable of reaching all pupils when the appropriate topic and method of delivery has been considered. While in most cases the teacher will never know to what extent his/her message has been assimilated by the pupils, she/he has the wherewithal to alleviate physical and mental discomfort and promote much needed spiritual growth. The insightful teacher will discuss with pupils the problem of human suffering and the apparent absence of God particularly to the person of faith. When stories such as

that of the child hanging on the gallows at Auschwitz or the story of Job is reflected upon, pupils will come to see that God is always present even in the very worst of times. Once God is seen as present in all created realities and to every human being, it becomes evident that God also suffers with humankind. For Christians, Jesus as the fullest sacrament of God is the earth-link with suffering humankind. Given the reality and essence of suffering, the teacher will help pupils to see that suffering is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be lived. Faith in the midst of unjust suffering requires a constant, endless, personal search for God on the part of the pupil. Dare it be said that the teacher is the very sacrament of that search.

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Chapter 62
Encountering Different Spiritual Traditions in the Classroom: The Contribution of ICT

Fiona Williams

Abstract The purpose of this proposed chapter is to demonstrate how ICT can be used to bring the voices of different spiritual traditions into the classroom and enable young people to engage with and learn from representatives of different faith traditions. In this way, it is hoped to show how, by giving students access to authentic voices from different spiritual traditions, Religious Education can be made more inclusive. The project examined involved the design and appraisal of a WebQuest, entitled *Faith in Ireland*, followed by a Moodle discussion forum involving external collaborators representing three different faith communities in Ireland.

Introduction

Contemporary educational discourse quite properly affirms the importance of affirming diversity within the school system. Much rhetorical support is also given to the potential of web-based learning in education. The purpose of this chapter is to give practical expression to these aspirations by demonstrating how Information and Communications Technology (ICT) can be used to bring the voices of different spiritual traditions into the classroom and enable young people to engage with and learn from representatives of different faith traditions. In this way, it is hoped to show how, by giving students access to authentic voices from different spiritual traditions, Religious Education can be made more inclusive. The project examined in this paper involved the design of a WebQuest entitled *Faith in Ireland* (Williams, 2004) followed by a Moodle discussion forum.[1] The impact of the project is appraised via an action research methodology.

The chapter is organised along the following lines. Firstly the specific school context is explained as are my own educational aims and also the appropriateness of action research in evaluating the project. The first cycle of the research is then briefly outlined. This is followed by a presentation and analysis of findings from the main research project, the *Faith in Ireland* WebQuest and the discussion board with

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external collaborators representing three different faith communities in Ireland. The chapter concludes with recommendations as to how this research could be modified for a further cycle, and how it could be applied to other areas of the curriculum.

In identifying a conception of spirituality to inform this chapter, I draw on the analysis of the concept by Kevin Williams (2006). There are religious and secular versions of spirituality, although these domains do not have clear boundaries and even the very notion of religion is not clear-cut. Five of the six strands of spirituality outlined by Williams (2006) are relevant to its use in this chapter. Underlying all of these strands is the non-instrumental and non-utilitarian character of spirituality. By this is meant that being spiritual is not connected to earning a living or survival. The spiritual and the ascetic are related because, as with asceticism, spirituality is understood to involve a detachment from bodily needs and desires.

The first aspect of spirituality concerns the search or quest for meaning. In religious terms, the quest for meaning takes places within a tradition of belief and discourse about what is ultimate and what gives purpose to human life. This normally means God and the afterlife. In the secular version, this quest for meaning is reflected in a sense that there is more to life than appears on the surface, and it is captured in the title of the U2 song, "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking for". The second and third strands link spirituality to a moral life. Strand two refers to its manifestation in personal qualities and strand three concerns its collective or communal dimension. The personal qualities of the spiritual disposition include self-knowledge, self-control, self-possession, self-transcendence, calmness, love, generosity, trust, hope, wisdom, serenity, openness, humility and many more. These qualities have a moral character related to making the individual a better person and the world a better place. Relationships of friendship, love and affection, where the individuals involved are concerned only with the enjoyment of one another and where thoughts of usefulness do not apply, can also be said to have a spiritual quality. The spiritual disposition or psychological orientation can be found in individuals of both religious and secular convictions and should not be identified solely with the former. The collective or communal dimension of spirituality concerns the celebration of a sense of belonging, shared memory and commitment to a common purpose. This has very clear religious and secular expressions. Denominational services represent the most obvious religious version of this dimension of spirituality and some sporting occasions represent one secular version. In both contexts, the expression of spirituality takes the form of communal bonding. The fourth strand of the spiritual refers to feelings of awe, reverence and wonder in response to the human and natural world. Clearly these feelings can take religious and secular forms. From both a secular and religious perspective, creation is quite properly a source of awe, respect and reverence. In this form of response to the world, the religious and secular versions of spirituality are very close to one another. This takes us to the fifth strand of spirituality, namely, the cultivation of inner space. In religious spirituality, this includes prayer, meditation and ritual often accompanied by meditative music. There has been a great revival of interest in this kind of music in particular, Gregorian chant. The exploration of inner space in secular contexts has

prompted the development of meditative music with therapeutic purposes designed to provide moments of respite from the stress and pressure of life, for example, *The Chillout Album*, *Pan Pipe Moods*. In the educational context, the cultivation of the inner space can take both religious and secular forms and classes devoted to meditation can take place as part of Religious Education, through Chaplaincy or in pastoral education.

Contextual Matters

As a teacher and parent, I have been struck by the potential of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to engage young people, not merely in recreational activity, but in learning. As a teacher of Religious Education (RE), I have noted the pervasiveness of spiritual and religious websites on the Internet. There is little that is suitable for educational use and in the Irish context there is a dearth of material appropriate for use in the classroom. These perceptions formed much of the impulse behind this research. I wished to design a WebQuest in the area of RE and thereby to explore the potential of ICT in the classroom. I was concerned to establish whether the inclusion of the virtual learning environment, Moodle, could make the teaching of religion more inclusive and also make the learning of religion more exciting and real by giving students access to authentic voices from different religious traditions. In this chapter, I will first examine the subject and research context and follow that with some reference to the relevant literature. This will be followed by a brief overview of the two cycles of action research and finally refer to some of the findings from this research. The article will conclude with some analysis of the findings from this research.

The context of this research project is the teaching of RE at second level in Ireland which has undergone major change in aim and content over the last 20 years. This change will now be explored. In 2000 a new Junior Cycle Religious Education Syllabus was introduced by the State (An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta 2001) in Ireland to supplement the existing catechetical programme which had previously been produced by the Irish Episcopal Commission for Catechetics (1982). This new syllabus differs significantly from its predecessor in its inclusive tone. The overall aim of the RE in the Junior Cycle now is to promote tolerance and mutual understanding among students. The study of the phenomenon of religious belief and experience, as well as of non-religious worldviews, is central to the new syllabus. Teachers are expected to adopt an objective approach to world religions. This major change in the status of RE coincided with a government drive to improve technological investment in schools. *Schools IT 2000—A Policy Framework for the New Millennium* (An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta 2000) that ran from 2000 to 2003 sought to provide both equipment and infrastructure and training to develop teachers' skills. The implementation of these two initiatives gave rise to the opportunity to pursue the research reported in this chapter. The research took place within my school's networked computer laboratory with 20 computers with Internet access and a data projector. The machines were old and poorly maintained. Access

to the computer laboratory was possible only on two out of three weekly timetabled classes. Only four students had Internet access at home, therefore this project had to run entirely during the limited class time available. Action research was used for this research project; therefore, two cycles of research will be discussed throughout this chapter. At this point, it is appropriate to examine some relevant research literature.

The Research Context

Research clearly demonstrates the potential of ICT to increase motivation and autonomy in learning and in improving retention. Chen and McGrath (2003) draw attention to a link between motivation and co-operation in learning through ICT. Valle-Riestra, Spero and Sixto-Yero (2004) further found that in a "paperless" classroom students sought opportunities for peer collaboration and group work. Gill (2003) outlines how it may be used significantly to improve student motivation in second-language learning. Al-Bataineh et al. (2000) and Valle-Riestra et al. (2004) also found that the use of WebQuests in an American high school led to an increase in pupil motivation, collaboration and self-reliance. Passey et al. (2004) found that the use of ICT in schools increased student motivation, particularly when it was used to support the research, writing and presentation of work. These findings are confirmed in two separate studies of an educational initiative in the state of Maine where high school pupils were each issued with a laptop for use in all lessons (Lillington, 2004).

March (2004) suggests that learner motivation will be increased through the use of WebQuests, especially if the task of the WebQuest is relevant to real-life activities. WebQuests were first developed by Dodge (1997) as a way of enhancing higher order learning for students and maximised use of the Internet in a scaffolded or supported manner (McKenzie, 1999; Benz, 2001; Gill, 2003). Dodge (1997) defines a WebQuest as "an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the Internet". As a virtual learning environment, Moodle provides increased and varied opportunities for different forms of interaction and shared narrative, and thus for learning. de Zwart (2003) outlines possible uses of Moodle within the secondary school context. Of particular relevance to this research is his description of how the asynchronous discussion forum may be used to surmount organisational difficulties with timetabling. Indeed the potential of WebQuests and Moodle to increase motivation and to promote autonomy is particularly pertinent to teaching Religious Education in the context of this research where the extrinsic incentive of a State examination was absent.

Action Research First Cycle

The first cycle consisted of reflections on and meta-analysis of a WebQuest called *Born and Raised in Belfast* (Udsen, L., 2004), used in combination with Moodle to teach the topic of sectarianism. This project showed that it was possible to use Moodle and WebQuests to teach Religious Education. The results above show that

students engaged very positively with the WebQuest and with Moodle. The aims of this project were to enhance pupil interest and motivation, as well as pupil collaboration and to include a discussion board where students could interact with an external collaborator. Reflection on the use of this WebQuest and of Moodle in the light of my own educational aims, combined with insights from the research, led me to identify the following changes for the second cycle.

1. The WebQuest needed to be designed with the needs of my students in mind with attractive design, simple language, suitable for small screens and with web links which relate directly to the task.
2. Moodle should only be used for the follow-up discussion board after the WebQuest has been completed. There should be more than one external participant, thereby enabling diversity to be voiced.

Second Cycle

The second cycle of this research was composed of the following elements:

1. Design of WebQuest *Faith in Ireland*, based on the design principles noted above, derived from my reflections on and analysis of the first cycle.
2. A usability test.
3. Completion of the WebQuest and the accompanying PowerPoint presentation.
4. Students engaged in correspondence through Moodle with external participants representing the faith communities which they had studied.

At this point, it is appropriate to give some detail on the implementation of this second cycle of the action research. The second cycle of the research process took place over seven lesson periods which were preceded by two lessons where students were taught PowerPoint. All of the areas for improvement noted above were incorporated into the design of this cycle. Data was collected from a number of sources:

- My own research field notes
- Written observations from a professional colleague
- Student questionnaires
- Student interviews
- Student research journals
- Recorded audio evidence
- Student PowerPoint slideshows
- Student postings made to the discussion board

Pupils collaborated very successfully from the beginning of this WebQuest. Pupil collaboration was one of the areas I focused on when collecting data because I wished to see if the students' experience of group work matched my teaching observations. Initially some found it strange that the teacher was not to be their first choice of assistance when a problem arose, but this response soon changed. Collaboration

was evident at both the level of willingness to assist one another technically, and in the cognitive domain when decisions were made as to the content and design of the slideshow. Students were assigned to work two to a computer as this arrangement suited maximum pupil learning and co-operation. As the project progressed, some students moved onto the spare computers to do their own slideshow while still working collaboratively. All of the students surveyed found working in groups helpful. The reasons they offered were that they could help and support each other and make decisions together about the content and design of the slideshow. One student noted that she was now more confident in her social and leadership skills. Thus it may be seen that overall the students experienced collaborative group work positively. Even when some students had the opportunity to work alone because of their partner's absence, they sought to form a new partnership with someone else. This matches with my initial perception of how WebQuests promote pupil collaboration, noted during the first cycle of this research project. The nature of engagement in this WebQuest and the creation of the PowerPoint slideshow explicitly promoted pupil collaboration and self-confidence.

The use of an asynchronous discussion forum was popular with the students because it provided them with an opportunity to further their learning through direct engagement with people whose beliefs and way of life they had studied. To support the *Faith in Ireland* WebQuest, Moodle was used only for the asynchronous discussion board, and not as a virtual learning environment for the whole course. In total 83% of pupils were involved in posting questions on the *Faith in Ireland* discussion board. Some students posted more than once, and others collaborated in groups and put questions on behalf on their colleagues. Questions posted were of highly informed by students' previous learning, and the answers were a high standard and showed interest and commitment on the part of the external collaborators to this research. The following are some of the questions put to the external collaborators by the students.

To a Religious Sister of the Holy Faith Order:

How long have you been a Holy Faith Sister?
Have you ever been on a mission?
Do you know anyone who helps out on these missions?
Forty years is a long time as a nun—what have you achieved in this time?

To an Orthodox Priest:

Does the Orthodox Church have the same Saints and Holidays as the Catholic church?
If so, are the feasts celebrated on the same days/dates?
What made you become an Orthodox Priest? Are you in a monastery or parish?

To an AnglicanPriest:

Our priests can't get married—are you married?
Do you think being married makes a difference in the Church?

Do you think that Anglicans have avoided bad publicity regarding child abuse because your priests can marry?

Each of these experts answered their questions promptly, so there were always answers for the students the following day. The students were unanimously positive about the role of the discussion board in their learning. These discussion forums were available to all class members. Although not all students asked questions, they all followed the discussion boards avidly and learned from the points raised by their peers. Overall it can be said that students derived significant benefit from the use of a Moodle asynchronous discussion board. A large number of the students participated directly in the experience. Those who didn't follow the questions engaged with the answers informally with their peers in class.

One of the benefits of this, acknowledged by the students, was that it gave a living witness to the religious and spiritual beliefs and practices which they had studied on the WebQuest. In particular, the students were impressed with the responses. They also found it difficult to comprehend how one could commit 40 years to religious life, indeed the idea of committing 40 years of one's life to anything was strange to them. This correspondence led the students to a greater appreciation of the richness and diversity to be found in a religious view of the world.

Comparison of WebQuests and Moodle with Traditional Learning

Throughout the two cycles of this research, one of the outstanding features I noted was the students' enthusiasm for web-based learning as described in this chapter. This was the only experience of web-based learning which this class group ever had. As stated previously, the students had a low level of computer literacy. Therefore, they found using a WebQuest and Moodle challenging. Yet their high level of interest was maintained for the duration of both cycles, and it far exceeded their interest and motivation for projects using traditional classroom media. They also benefited from the structured support provided by the scaffolding and learned a lot from the use of a WebQuest and the discussion board. As part of the data collection for the second cycle I decided to focus on how their perception of WebQuests compared to traditional classroom learning.

One of the findings I had not expected was that students with low literacy levels engaged better with screen text than with paper media. One possible reason for this is the interactive nature of the Internet. Rather than reading passively, the use of the mouse enables pupils to edit and control what they are reading. This is reinforced by good design principles governing page layout, the use of colour and graphics and ease of navigation. Pupil success in learning from this WebQuest reflects back to the initial research carried out on student engagement with WebQuests in the first cycle, and the usability study carried out on this WebQuest during the pilot phase. Thus one reason that this WebQuest on *Faith in Ireland* was a successful pedagogic tool was because previous student feedback was incorporated into its design.

Self-Directed Learning

During each lesson, there was a constant low hum of activity as students worked at their own pace in collaboration with their peers. This was also evident from the audio recording made of two students working together on their PowerPoint slideshow and was noted by the teaching colleague who observed a lesson. Initially students directed a lot of questions to me, but as the task became clearer and they became more confident they relied on their own ideas about progressing their task. My colleague who observed one of the lessons was struck by how self-directed the activity was. She also noted that I spent the lesson "directing and giving individual assistance". I was "very busy, involved with each group". The nature of the WebQuest model enables self-directed learning to take place. All of the research links relevant to the task are located on the one website. Students are thus directed to relevant material without having to resort to search engines with the consequent multiplicity of results. This also eliminates the problem of having to sift through irrelevant material building the confidence of the learner, particularly those with low levels of literacy and computer skills.

Constructivist Learning Through the Use of PowerPoint

Another finding from this research was a perception of the fit between constructivist theory and the use of PowerPoint. The two criteria of constructivist theory are, firstly, that information about the world is arranged by our psychic constitutions into a form that is intelligible to us (Winch & Gingell 1999). PowerPoint is a particularly potent pedagogic tool in enabling learners to do this by putting the stamp of personal ownership on their learning. The second criterion is that "learning is always active" and this active quality is most appropriately given expression where learning involves "overt physical activity" (Winch & Gingell 1999). Learning that involves physical interaction with the world is likely to provide greater satisfaction and also to be retained for longer. In a sense constructivist theory offers reflects the Chinese proverb: "What I hear I forget, what I see I remember but what I do I understand".

   The constructivist approach does not dispense with the role of the teacher. Throughout this research project student work was carefully scaffolded. Students were taught PowerPoint over two class periods. None of them had ever seen a PowerPoint slideshow before, but they quickly learned the basics, namely, how to select and construct a series of slides, insert graphics, text and a template background and to apply random transition. Before working on their slideshows pupils made notes in their copies from the WebQuest of material they wished to include in their slideshow. This step was taken as a form of scaffolding, an intermediary step for the students to help them plan their work. This worked very well as it enabled them to interact with the cognitive elements of the WebQuest before beginning work with software which was still quite new to them. The themes of the personalised shaping of learning and its interactive dimension emerged in the interviews. Students were asked if they liked creating a slideshow and to give reasons why. They all agreed

that it was positive experience and all cited the freedom of expression and creativity which it permitted. In all 12 slideshows were created by the students. They were of varying standard and length. There are similarities in content but each one is unique. As an educator reflecting on my practice, I can say that this slideshow met the two criteria of constructivism identified by Winch and Gingell above. Pupils arranged what they learned in a form that was most intelligible to them. This learning was active in the sense that it assumed a form that required overt interaction with the world.

Conclusion

This research project demonstrated that it is possible to integrate the use of web-based learning into the Religious Education classes in secondary schools in Ireland, even where the levels of computer literacy are very low and resources are limited. Once students had mastered the basic computer skills of using the mouse, opening documents, clicking on links etc., they experienced no significant difficulties with either the use of WebQuests or with Moodle. This is confirmed by the usability test conducted on the *Faith in Ireland* WebQuest, as well as the research on student engagement with WebQuests in general. This research has also shown how student creativity may be introduced into computer-assisted learning through the use of PowerPoint. As a cognitive task, it engaged the learners and provided scaffolding for students who are creative but lack good artistic skills. This constructivist creativity could also be integrated with a different task such as the design of a brochure or newsletter in Microsoft Publisher.

The virtual learning environment, Moodle, was new to me as well as to my students at the start of this research project. The research has shown that students engaged well with Moodle and had no serious specific usability issues, apart from having to remember their usernames and computer-generated password. Data collected at the end of the first cycle, showed that one of the features the students liked about their use of the Internet, was the use of Moodle to keep student journals, the WebQuest, quiz, discussion forums and other material on the one site. The fact that students engaged so positively with Moodle suggests that it could be used more widely throughout the second-level system. But Garvey's (2002) research suggests that we should not be too sanguine about this. His research considered the possibility of teaching a second-level subject entirely through the use of a course management tool such as Blackboard. He found that students were reluctant to regularly log on from home, upload assignments and use chat rooms for revision purposes. Garvey's findings, combined with the findings in this dissertation, suggest that virtual learning environments are best used within the classroom rather than as a method of course delivery alone. Regarding the use of secure online chat rooms on Blackboard or Moodle, specifically for a secondary class group, the combined research of both Garvey and myself suggests that students understand the use of chat rooms to be exclusively a recreational activity, rather than as a forum for discussing topics which arise in a learning context.

If a course management tool such as Moodle is to become commonplace within the educational context, issues of resource need to be addressed. As noted previously during this chapter, one of the difficulties I faced during this research was the age of the computers in school, the lack of maintenance and the slow download speed of web pages in school. In order that the students would be able to work on the WebQuest during the lessons, I gave up 15 min of lunchtime every day so that the machines would be booted up in readiness for class. This is obviously not sustainable on an ongoing basis. As stated already, few of my students had Internet access at home. Therefore, the fact that this work was online was of little benefit to the students, as they could not access either the WebQuest or Moodle outside of class time.

The lack of technical personnel in schools inhibits the use of a course management tool such as Moodle. Although Moodle is open-source software, and therefore freely available to download, few teachers would be able to download and install it as it requires knowledge of computer languages such as sql and php. It also requires the use of an Internet server which many schools may not have. This again is a resource issue.

One of my educational values, which was not being realised in my traditional practice, was the importance of student collaborative learning. One of the aims of this research was to see if this could be promoted through the use of WebQuests and Moodle. As already seen, this element of the project was an outstanding success. Pupils worked very well in their groups, and between groups at all stages of the project. Some of the students remarked that their social and leadership skills had improved as a result of the collaborative nature of this project. This is a positive outcome, and congruent with the overall aims of education of developing the student in all aspects of life. It is also one of the goals of the Transition Year Programme. Inclusion of computer-assisted learning through the use of WebQuests in Transition Year at an early stage of the school year would help the development of teamwork skills.

As the subject matter of RE is by definition, lived religious experience, it has always been a value of mine to integrate the insights of external collaborators where possible. The successful use of the Moodle discussion board following the *Faith in Ireland* WebQuest has shown how this may be done simply and within timetabling constraints. The postings from each of the external collaborators with regard to the lived experience of their community was influential in pupil learning and motivation. These contributions challenged pupils to reflect on their own life and religious experience and to move beyond their historical context and lack of knowledge towards embracing new ideas and a new tolerance and understanding of the different ways of life in the pluralist Ireland which is emerging. This is in line with the curricular aims of Religious Education, as stated previously.

This use of discussion boards with external collaborators would have many uses beyond RE. It could be used in other curricular areas such as History, Civics, Irish, Foreign Languages and Science to name but a few. This is also in line with Garvey's (2002) findings on the successful use of the course management tool Blackboard in enabling a link up with a third level institution.

Undertaking this research was a voyage into the unknown for me. As noted above, I had never used either WebQuests or a discussion board before as pedagogical tools. The success of this project is due to a number of factors:

- The technical support from the Moodle administrator in a local university.
- The generous and punctual responses of the external collaborators to the Moodle discussion board.
- The enthusiasm and interest of my students, whose responses were carefully integrated into each stage of the research process.
- The time-consuming, meticulous and detailed preparation which I put into the planning and implementation of the teaching and learning reported in this research.
- The availability of the computer room in school at times that coincided with some of my RE classes.

As a teacher–researcher, I have learned a lot from this research process, especially that action research has the potential to generate living educational theory based on classroom practice. I have always sought to promote active learning and student collaboration within my classes. However, group work using linear, text-based media often lacks dynamism and creativity. It is difficult to maintain interest and momentum in teaching and learning when teachers fail to vary their resources and teaching methods. I wondered if the use of a creative task using computers would enhance this motivation. I have learned how to realise in practice the values that are important to me in my teaching as follows:

1. My students corresponded with people of diverse religious backgrounds and have learned from this to be open to the richness of other religious traditions. In this way, I succeeded in voicing diversity as required by the syllabus.
2. These external collaborators shared the stories of their lived religious commitments and thus challenged my students to reflect upon their own spiritual journeys and to be tolerant of others.
3. I incorporated active learning and constructivist theory into my teaching. The autonomy and creativity of these methodologies, together with the action research, enabled my students to be co-researchers in generating a living educational theory.
4. The innovative use of ICT in RE improved student motivation in learning and enhanced student collaborative skills. This led to an increase in student self-confidence.
5. A persuasive explanation of the fruitfulness of the research can be offered by virtue of the fact that ICT offers learners a much more active engagement in their learning.

The theory is living in terms of its contribution to my understanding and practice as a teacher. By demonstrating how it is possible to give voice to diversity in the classroom and to engage students in dialogue across religious traditions, my research has shown that my educational values and aspirations can be realised in practice. I am now aware of the possibilities in using ICT in Religious Education

and of the challenges entailed in implementing my ideas in practice. I have eluci-
dated criteria for the successful design and implementation of a WebQuest within
my work context.

My educational values have been confirmed and shown to be sustainable in the
classroom even in circumstances that are less than propitious. I have lived these
values in conducting the research and continue to do so. Through the medium of
ICT, I invited international collaboration into the classroom and enabled my students
to dialogue in this context. This made very real to students the requirement of the
syllabus to explore and affirm diversity.

This research was driven by a wish to design a WebQuest in the area of RE
and thereby to explore the potential of ICT in the classroom. In particular, I was
concerned to establish whether, by giving students access to authentic voices from
different traditions the use of the virtual learning environment, Moodle, could make
the teaching of religion more inclusive and also make the learning of religion more
exciting and real to students. I also wished to find out whether the aspirations of
policy-makers about the use of technology in Irish education were at all realistic in
the practical context of a secondary school with limited resources. My answer to my
question concerning the potential of Moodle to transform the learning environment
is resoundingly positive. I have also learned that the resource considerations that
restrict the use of ICT in one school can be circumvented but that doing so demands
enormous energy, work and commitment on the part of the teacher. It is therefore
important not be defeatist about what can be done. At the same time it is necessary
to be realistic about what needs to be done in terms of resource provision if ICT
is going to play a significant role in the educational experience of young people in
schools.

Note

1. Moodle is a free, open source course management system.

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Chapter 63
Building Trust with Gay and Lesbian Students in Universities

Perspectives of a Catholic Lay Chaplain

Michael J. Maher

Abstract The chapter places the topic in the context of research in the areas of pastoral support for Gay and Lesbian Catholics, needs of gay and lesbian university students, and appropriate magisterial documents. The bulk of the chapter focuses on insights from the author's own pastoral experiences working as a lay chaplain with five different gay and lesbian support groups for university students. Major themes that will be explored include overcoming Church phobia, answering the hard questions about Church teaching, responding to the larger community's concerns, creating an environment of trust, being trustworthy, and religious presence enhancing student wellbeing.

Introduction

One Sunday evening in the early spring of 1990, I and Rabbi Sharyn Henry set up for a meeting at the Good Samaritan Project, Kansas City's AIDS organization. Sharyn was Kansas City's only female rabbi at the time. We had known each other for a few months through meetings leading up to that night. It all came about because I had heard a radio report on NPR about a study that showed that gay and lesbian youth had a much higher rate of suicide than the rest of the youth population (Gibson, 1989). I was the director of religious education at Saint Patrick Catholic Church, writing my masters thesis, 22 years old, and still coming out. I decided to call a friend of mine to discuss this, Merrill Proudfoot, an ordained Presbyterian minister, college professor, and longtime gay activist. His suggestions led to a small group of concerned persons coming together to create *Greater Kansas City Gay and Lesbian Youth Services* (a.k.a. "Passages" once we recognized we needed a catchier name).

After our months of brainstorming, debating, and considering legal what-if's, we finally were having a meeting for a youth group for gay and lesbian kids. We hadn't actually consulted any gay and lesbian kids, and we didn't know what to expect. Four quiet young men arrived. Almost 18 years later, I can still remember

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their faces and even some of what they were wearing. Sharyn and I planned an icebreaker activity designed around guessing famous gay and lesbian people from history and then discussing why no one knew who these people were. The icebreaker went fine, and then we really started to talk. As it turned out, they were all out of high school, college age. In fact, they were not really younger than me. We had envisioned ourselves helping high school students, but it was initially these young adults/late adolescents who expressed the need for some help. Their quietness evaporated as they began to talk about what was going on in their lives. For 1990 in Kansas City, we were all breaking new ground that night.

One of the young men was tall, laughed a lot with a huge smile, had somewhat long and dark hair, and was very sharp-witted. He was wearing a therapeutic sort of glove that went partially down his forearm. He eventually revealed what had happened. He had come out to his family, who responded with anger and threats of expulsion from the home. This seemingly light-hearted youth, feeling that he had run out of options, went into the garage and cut off his own hand with a circular saw. Doctors had been able to save his hand and save him from dying. Who was going to save his life, though? We all did.

The young man continued in the group for a few years, made lots of friends, and was on the first *Passages* float in a Gay Pride parade in Kansas City. The scars on his wrist were always visible. I eventually quit the board of Passages when I went to Saint Louis University for my doctorate in 1994. Shayrn is now a rabbi in Pittsburgh, married with two sons. Merrill passed away from cancer in 1998. *Passages* is still going strong (www.kcpassages.org).

A few months after the night described above, I was let go from Saint Patrick's in a budget cut. I became the director of a one-man-show Newman Catholic Student Center at Northwest Missouri State University, where I served for 4 years. After a year there, I obtained permission from my supervisor in the diocese to start a gay and lesbian student group as a ministry of the Newman Center. I had consulted the active students on this through a survey, and received support. It turned out there had been a group that had met at the center before I came, very quietly and very much in secret. I advertized the group and received support from some of the other campus ministers at the university, especially the Episcopalians and the Methodists.

On the appointed night, no one showed up, so I spent the evening watching television. I was living in the center. About 3 h later, I got a phone call from a young man wanting to know about the group. I encouraged him to come by. When he did, we talked about his family, his friends, and his life on campus. Over the next several months, I received other similar phone calls. The young men (it was always young men) would call in the evening, saying they heard that the Newman Center had a gay and lesbian group. Some had been referred by professors. I would invite them to come over to talk. Two men who were a couple came together one evening, and I am still in contact with them. Both had grown up in small towns where they played high school football. One was from a farming family in Iowa. His parents were devout Lutherans, but he had decided that he was an atheist, influenced by his out gay philosophy professor (who had referred him to the Newman Center). They enjoyed the chatting, but really wanted a group.

I began to call back the various young men who I had met over almost a year, and we managed to pull together a group of about a half-dozen. The group would meet, talk, watch gay-themed films, discuss ideas, and encourage each other when one was about to come out to family. A few of them were Catholic, and they began coming to the Newman Center Masses on campus.

A critical change came when one of the young men from an Irish–American Catholic family in Omaha came out to his two sisters, also students at the university. The sisters decided that they needed to join the group. Not only that, they drug along their two boyfriends and some of their sorority sisters. This was their brother, and he was not going to do this alone, and nor were they. They all started coming to Mass, too. When their parents would come to visit, they would bring them by to see the Newman Center, something they never would have done before.

The group decided that it needed to become its own student organization, officially recognized by the university. Gays and Lesbians Together at Northwest (GALTAN) was formed. They debated the name quite a bit, given that a slight majority of the members were not gay or lesbian. The straight students strongly urged that these words needed to be in the name of the organization, and they didn't feel slighted. This was before terms like "gay straight alliance" or "advocates" were in vogue. The notice that they were going to petition the student government for recognition caused quite a stir. On the night of the vote, the nearest television station from Saint Joseph Missouri (of Pony Express and Jesse James fame) sent a camera crew and reporter. Well over 100 people attended in addition to the student government representatives. The young man from Iowa presented the petition for recognition. In a truly inspiring moment, he came out, there, with a news camera in a room with his fraternity brothers present. Open discussion was then allowed.

The little sister of the young man from Omaha asked that all GALTAN members present stand. The campus newspaper snapped a picture of me standing with the students, which was on the cover of the next issue. She then asked that all GALTAN supporters stand. About 30 people stood, including some members of the student government. Some in the audience expressed their disapproval, notably a few campus ministers from other denominations and some students who identified themselves as part of the Kappa Kappa Kappa fraternity (a code for Klu Klux Klan). One of the officers of the student government, a straight-talking farm boy in a fraternity said, "Everyday, I probably sit in the same desk that a gay person sat in, go to the same classes where gay people go to class, put my pants on one leg at a time just the same as a gay person. What's the big deal here?" The vote carried, and the organization was recognized. A celebratory potluck dinner was held later that week at the Episcopal Church. The following semester, GALTAN won the contest for best float in the homecoming parade with one member dressed in drag like the sea witch from *Little Mermaid*.

In the months that followed, the group's activity level went up and down as student organizations usually do. The controversy of the Catholic campus minister identifying as a member did not go away. Some students stopped going to Mass at the center, and one even yelled "faggot!" at me one day as I walked across campus. Other students continued to come, however, and GALTAN students and supporters

began to take on special roles and become more involved in the center. Still, a little letter-writing campaign to the diocese began to try to oust me. This inspired a counter-campaign of letters to support me. The letter I remember most was from the Lutheran mother of the young atheist from Iowa. Her own denomination was going through turmoil over homosexuality. She shared how important it was for her to know that her son was going to a campus ministry center, of whatever denomination and for whatever reason. He had a place in the Church.

In the end, I was not dismissed, and I served out a couple more years before leaving to pursue my doctorate. Under a different name, the university still has a student group. Since then, I was a member myself of the gay and lesbian student group as a graduate student at Saint Louis University (a Jesuit institution), and in my 12 years at Loyola University Chicago, I have served as chaplain from time to time to three different LGBT student organizations here. Some things I have learned:

Religious Presence Enhancing Student Wellbeing

In my experience, religion is a source of great joy and meaning and direction and is also a source of great pain and confusion and isolation for many people. Religion has this in common with family, love relationships, friendships, and sexuality. They all have something to do with how people relate to things of importance outside themselves and how people define their identities.

In one of the stories above, the Lutheran mother of the young man from Iowa was grateful for the support he received through the Catholic campus center. Even though his family was not Catholic and he himself identified as atheist, there was still something important about belonging. Neither he nor his mother was naïve about the official teachings of the Vatican on homosexuality, but still, at some level, he has a place in the Church because of the pastoral ministry provided for him. The fact that this was an institution of the Catholic Church was important to that family.

His story is not unique. In 2007, I presented at a conference at DePaul University here in Chicago. The conference theme was on LGBT issues in Catholic universities. In discussion in my presentation, two of the students shared that they did not "identify as Catholic." Why were they there? Why had they traveled from other states to take part in this conference? The Church was important to them. This has been true of other students in all of the groups I have worked with. Raised Catholic but indifferent, raised Catholic and angry, raised in another tradition and practicing or not, the presence of the Church through ministry has been meaningful to them. I do not want to create the impression that they were looking for some sort of approval or acceptance through this. While that may be true in some cases, I think most did not have that need. Religion plays such a major role in society, however, that it is important even to those for whom they would never have called it "home." People have preconceived notions about how a religious denomination should react to LGBT persons. On one hand, religious people are supposed to be compassionate, and people expect that of ministers. On the other hand, we are expected to be sexually repressive and squeamish. When that doesn't happen, it

opens up the possibilities that "Maybe Mom and Dad can talk about this more than I think," "Maybe my friends really can handle this," and "Maybe my life isn't as closed to some possibilities as I thought."

Much has been made of a distinction between spirituality and religion in recent years. I acknowledge that denotatively they are distinct but related. In common usage, "spirituality" is often used for individual beliefs and practices while "religion" is used to talk about public institutions. Connotatively, people seem to use "spirituality" when describing the great joy and meaning and direction mentioned above, and they seem to use "religion" when talking about the great pain and confusion and isolation. I think that it is important to note that some authors have recently begun to question if the distinction between "religious" and "spiritual" is helpful when talking about young people. In a study of high school age young people in the United States, Smith (2005) found that there was no real distinction between the two; indicators of being more spiritual and indicators of being more religious showed extremely high correlation. That is, spiritual young people are also religious young people. Bender (2007) points out that many survey studies of undergraduates are conducted with a "religious" versus "spiritual" paradigm that often does not meaningfully describe the experience of most undergraduate students. Bender argues that undergraduates do not see these labels as mutually exclusive, and survey designers often use nebulous terms in order to reach the "spiritual" students; however, in the process, they produce findings that are practically useless.

Drawing from my Roman Catholic background, "wellbeing" is a state of integration. This integration is experienced both at an individual level where the young person's identity and relationship with God show integrity ("spiritual" in this context) and at a public level where the young person is part of community that includes the institutional church and acts in relationship to others showing an integrity with supernatural truth ("religious" in this context). The Second Vatican Council stated that Church leaders have a responsibility not only to provide for the spiritual wellbeing of Catholic students at Catholic universities and non-Catholic universities through pastoral centers (1965, p. 10). Similarly, the U.S. Catholic Conference (USCC) has stated that Catholic colleges and universities must allocate money and personnel to campus ministry in order to integrate the Faith with life (2000, p. 70). Pope John Paul II stated that Catholic universities must provide a professional staff for pastoral care of students, faculty, and staff (in cooperation with the local bishop) who can assists in spiritual development and the integration of faith with life (1990, Part I, pp. 38–42; Article 6 of Part II). He further made clear that pastoral ministry is not simply an add-on at Catholic universities, but is essential to the nature of a Catholic university in providing "integral formation" for students and the university community as a whole. Pastoral ministry "permeates everything one does, integrating it into the educational program" (2000, p. 3).

The importance of encouraging a *living* faith in young people is emphasized in many official Catholic documents (USCC, 1972, 1979, 2005). The Congregation for Catholic Education stated, "Knowledge, values, attitudes, and behavior fully integrated with faith will result in the student's personal synthesis of life and faith" (1982, p. 31). The International Council for Catechesis stated that adult catechism

must provide a formation that enables adults to live their public lives in a secularized world (1990).

One's relationship to God is tied to one's relationship to others (USCC, 1990). "The fundamental concept in Catholic social teaching is the dignity of the human person. Human dignity and sacredness, present from the moment of conception, are rooted in the fact that every human being is created directly by God in His image and likeness and is destined to be with Him forever" (USCC, 1979, p. 156). The Congregation for Catholic Education called on Catholic teachers to cultivate a deep commitment in their students for human rights and the dignity of the human person in order that they transform society toward peace and justice (1982). The International Council for Catechesis stated that adult catechesis must focus on ethical principles of daily life, especially those dealing with social justice, peace, the dignity of the human person, and the right to life (1990).

The USCC's 2005 *Directory* distinguished between an inductive approach to catechesis, which begins with human experience that leads to truth, and a deductive approach that begins with eternal truths that are then applied to daily life. Catechesis of adults and adolescents must place great emphasis on daily life experience. This distinction between inductive and deductive approaches in ministry with young people has been used for some time by the Catholic hierarchy, frequently with the advice that young adult ministry should begin deductively, with lived experiences (USCC, 1979; Congregation for the Clergy, 1971, 1997).

According to the Catholic hierarchy, this integrated approach is applied as well to sexuality. The USCC issued *Human Sexuality* in 1991. There they defined sexuality as "a fundamental component of personality in and through which we, as male or female, express our relatedness to self, others, the world, and even God" (p. 9). "Sexuality, as noted earlier, is a fundamental dimension of every human being. It is reflected physiologically, psychologically, and relationally in a person's gender identity as well as in one's primary sexual orientation and behavior" (p. 54). Similarly, in the Congregation for Catholic Education's 1983 *Educational Guidance in Human Love*, it is stated that the body is God's first message to the individual; it is almost a sacrament. The body reveals God and His creative love (pp. 22–30). Sexuality is a fundamental component of personality. It is an integral part of the development of personality and the educational process. It is what determines gender and, therefore, how one relates to society (p. 4). Sexuality characterizes a person physically, psychologically, and spiritually (pp. 4–5). Affective sex education considers the person in totality: biologically, psychologically, affectively, socially, and spiritually. It educates the whole person: the intellect, the will, feelings, and emotions (p. 35).

While there have been only a few studies into the experiences of gay and lesbian Catholics, they tend to show a group of people who overcome social and ecclesial obstacles in order to come to happiness in their adult lives, sometimes within the Church. Negative statements from the Vatican do seem to hinder this process for them.

In a study of gay and lesbian Catholics, Harris (2001) found that internalized homophobia and sexual identity development were not related to scriptural

literalism or to religious commitment. Lower internalized homophobia and higher levels of sexual identity development were related, however, to the gay or lesbian Catholic being able to derive personal religious beliefs and make personal religious decisions independently from other authorities such as family, clergy, and religious institutions.

Toman (1997) found that gay Catholic men who were more religious during their adolescence had greater difficulty with their coming out process, but that this did not prevent these same males from eventually achieving an affirmative gay lifestyle later in adulthood. O'Brien (1991) conducted a survey of gay and lesbian adult Catholics, mostly through the organization Dignity. O'Brien found that gay and lesbian Catholics were comfortable in their sexual orientation for the most part, sought long-term relationships, and found the organization Dignity to be a source of spiritual growth. O'Brien compared this to responses in a "control group" of heterosexual Catholics and concluded that gay and lesbian Catholics' comfort with their spirituality, and their sexuality was not significantly different than that of their heterosexual counterparts. O'Brien contrasted this to the presentation of homosexuality in the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's 1986 *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*. O'Brien characterized the Vatican's view of gay and lesbian Catholics as unhappy, spiritually disconnected, and uninterested in committed relationships and characterized the Vatican's view of Dignity as non-spiritual and sexually promiscuous.

Gay and lesbian Catholics have formed a number of different organizations and ministries in recent decades. The Catholic hierarchy has been openly hostile toward groups that are ambiguous or disagreeable to the Church's condemnation of homosexual genital behavior. The most known such organization is Dignity. Primiano (1993) studied the Philadelphia Dignity Chapter from 1986 to 1987 and discovered that *Letter to the Bishops of the World on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* threatened the local Dignity chapter's existence. Tew (1996) argued that Dignity provided a culture that bridged gay experiences and Catholic experiences for its members and thereby assisted its members in identity integration. It also provided an environment that celebrates difference. According to Tew, Dignity also provided a form of resistance to the Catholic Church without compromising its commitment to inclusion and diversity.

Sister Geannine Gramick and Father Robert Nugent founded *New Ways Ministry* in 1977 to promote reconciliation between gay and lesbian Catholics and the Church (Nugent & Gramick, 1992). In 1999, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ordered the two to separate themselves from *New Ways Ministry* and any pastoral work with gay and lesbian people, and the Congregation also restricted them from leadership roles in their orders (CDF, 1999).

"Courage" was co-founded in 1980 by then Archbishop of New York, Cardinal Cooke and by Father John Harvey. It is an organization for gay and lesbian Catholics who wish to live a life of chastity and offers support groups based on a 12-step model. It boasts 50 chapters in North America, Australia, and Europe. It also boasts Vatican endorsement (Harvey, 2001).

Overcoming Church-Phobia

The young man from Omaha I described above decided after a few months in the group to come out to his parents. His sisters were firmly on his side, encouraged him to do so, and swore that if their parents gave him a hard time, they would refuse to speak to their parents until they came around. When he did come out to his parents, they were not surprised, were happy they could finally talk about it, and encouraged him to grow as an honest person. Drat!

A month later, the young man was dating another young man. He was bringing the boyfriend home to Omaha for a weekend and told me he was insisting that they shared the same bedroom at his parents' home. I asked if his sisters shared bedrooms with their boyfriends in their parents' home when they came for weekend visits. "Well, no." I asked him what this was all about. "Well, they *say* they are accepting, but I want to really see if that's true." We talked about this quite a bit, and he decided not to put them to the test. The boyfriend came for the weekend, slept in a guest bedroom, and the parents showed equal interest in him as they had in their daughters' boyfriends. The parents joined Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) and became very active. The young man joked later, "My mom is gayer than me!"

With parents like this, why had the young man been so fearful and then so aimed at raising a conflict? I saw this same pattern in others. The young man from Iowa saved up money before coming out to his family so that he could survive for a few months without their financial help. When his parents were accepting, I met his mother on a visit. To my embarrassment, he told some of the most graphic dirty jokes in front of her while we were visiting. I found out later that she let him know that she didn't appreciate hearing jokes like that from any of her children.

Society is heterosexist. For LGBT young people, this is the source of conflict that builds. When they finally have the development to confront it, they are ready for a fight. Heterosexism, however, is sometimes allusive. It lingers like a hue in a photo. I like to use the phrase, "boxing with a ghost" when describing the story of the young man from Omaha trying to pick a fight with his parents. In truth, his parents had *politely* never spoken to him about homosexuality, even though they knew it was a topic that needed to be discussed. In trying to respect their son's needs, they waited for him to come out. His own anxiety about this allowed him to put so much of his hostility about heterosexism onto the image of his parents. He had built himself up to fight heterosexism, and he was going to fight it if he had to create the bully himself.

This also happens when LGBT people and their supporters interact with the Church and other large societal institutions. They expect rejection. When they experience acceptance, they find it confusing, and they don't trust it. They have a need to test the institution. I think it's best to diffuse these potential conflicts by talking and not getting pulled into power struggles that are really not about what's actually going on. Also, one must be honest about what limits there really are and how potential conflicts can affect others. I once interviewed a nun who was a principal of a Catholic high school. Two lesbian students wanted to attend the prom together.

"I said, 'OK, if you want to go to the prom together. Just don't make it obvious. If you make it obvious, then it doesn't make it easier to me to be able to say yes for somebody else.' And they were great" (Maher & Sever, 2007, p. 91).

Answering the Hard Questions About Church Teaching

Eventually and inevitably, the question will arise, "Well, what does the Catholic Church say about homosexuality?" This can be a moment of dread for ministers who not only know they have an obligation to provide official teaching but also know they don't personally agree with all of it. What has worked for me is three steps: allow the young people to bring up the question; answer it honestly, and know the teaching in all its complexity with its positive points and negative points; decide in advance what of your personal opinions you are willing to share in what forums. I have found that people will respect this. Below is a quick synopsis of the major points of Catholic teaching on homosexuality.

The Catholic hierarchy has made a distinction between homosexual orientation (disordered, but not sinful), homosexual activity (sinful, but judged "with prudence"), rights of gay and lesbian people, and the Church's pastoral responsibilities to gay and lesbian people. Both the American bishops and Vatican Congregations have issued a number of statements on the topic of homosexuality in recent decades. While all documents touch on a number of issues, those from the American bishops tend to place greater emphasis on the pastoral care of gay and lesbian people while those from the Vatican tend to place greater emphasis on the immorality of homosexual sexual activity (Maher, 2003).

Responding to liberal trends within the Church, the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (SCDF) released the *Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics* (*Persona Humana*) in 1975. The document emphasized that trends away from condemning homosexual behavior were wrong; the document stated that homosexual acts are morally wrong and that homosexuality is a disorder. It also made a distinction between those who may be acting out of homosexuality that is transitory or reversible and those for whom it is a permanent condition. Those with the permanent condition should be treated with understanding. The statement, "Their culpability will be judged with prudence," caused later debate.

Coming shortly thereafter, the U.S. Catholic Conference (USCC) released *To Live in Christ Jesus: A Pastoral Reflection on the Moral Life* in 1976. This document made a clearer distinction between homosexual orientation and homosexual sexual activity. While teaching that homosexual sexual activity is morally wrong, it emphasized that persons who have a homosexual orientation are not at fault. It also placed further emphasis on the rights of gay and lesbian people to not be treated with discrimination and the responsibility of the Church to welcome them, care for them, and seek justice for them.

Responding to the growth of Catholic ministries to gays and lesbians, including the organization "Dignity," the Vatican's SCDF released the *Letter to the*

Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons in 1986. This document gave strong emphasis to the teaching that homosexual sexual acts are morally wrong and argued that the issue was beyond debate in the Church. It also emphasized that while homosexual orientation is not a sin, it is a disorder. It also placed special interest in separating gay and lesbian Catholic groups (such as Dignity) from the local Catholic communities if they did not strongly and publicly uphold the Church's teaching against homosexual sexual activity. It did, however, acknowledge that the Church must provide pastoral care to gay and lesbian people and their families, but under close scrutiny of local bishops. It also condemned discrimination and violence directed against gay and lesbian people.

In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (SCDF, 1994), emphasis is on homosexual sexual acts being immoral and homosexual orientation being a disorder, but it also acknowledges that the number of gay and lesbian people is "not negligible," and that they must be treated with respect (articles 2357–2359).

The Vatican's Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education issued *Educational Guidance in Human Love* in 1983. The document placed emphasis on not avoiding the topic of homosexuality with students, but finding its causes when displayed in a student and seeking cures. The Church's condemnations of homosexual sexual activity must be presented to the student, but the student must also be received with understanding. The Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Family issued *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education within the Family* in 1996. The document not only placed emphasis on curing or controlling homosexuality in children but also emphasized that gay and lesbian people should not be discriminated against.

For some time, the American bishops, or U.S. Catholic Conference, has indicated that homosexuality should be included in Catholic education (USCC, 1979, 1981). The strongest statement, however, came with the 1991*Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning*. The document emphasized sexuality as an integral part of identity. It remarked on the distinction between homosexual attraction as a temporary phase for some but as a lifelong condition for others. Emphasis was clearly on modeling and teaching respect for gay and lesbian people, but the Church's condemnation of homosexual sexual acts must also be taught. Emphasis on the pastoral responsibility of the Church was very clear. Another interesting feature was that the document calls upon people to overcome their homophobia. It also stated that parents and teachers must realize that an adolescent or adult may be struggling to accept his or her own homosexuality. It also acknowledged that the distinction between *being* homosexual and *doing* homosexual acts is, "not always clear and convincing" (p. 56).

In 1997, the USCC/NCCB Committee on Marriage and Family issued *Always Our Children: Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children and Suggestions for Pastoral Ministers*. Clear emphasis of this document was on acceptance of gay and lesbian sons and daughters and acceptance of self as parents of gay and lesbian children, but still acknowledging that homosexual sexual activity is unacceptable according to the Church. The Committee recommended that Church

ministers accept gay and lesbian children and adults, welcome them in the faith community, provide pastoral services for them, and educate themselves on gay and lesbian issues.

In 2006, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued *Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care*. The document affirmed again the dignity of gay and lesbian persons as created in the image of God. The same distinction between homosexual persons and homosexual sexual activity was made. While the document affirmed the teaching that homosexual "inclination" is not a sin but is disordered, it emphasized that all persons have disordered inclinations of some sort and that while homosexual inclination is disordered, the homosexual *person* is not disordered. It emphasized that the Church must provide pastoral support for gay and lesbian persons and their families, who are in need of community. It condemned discrimination against gay and lesbian people and called on ministers of the Church to overcome prejudice they feel toward gay and lesbian people. It also several times emphasized that the Church is opposed to same-sex marriage and adoption of children by same-sex couples, but did state (with cautions) that such children could be baptized. It emphasized that all ministers of the Church and all ministries to gay and lesbian persons must clearly uphold the Church's full teaching on homosexuality, including condemnation of homosexual sexual activity. It cautioned gay and lesbian persons not to become a part of the "gay subculture."

Responding to the Larger Community's Concerns

In my story from my experience at Northwest Missouri State University above, I mentioned having a student who had been an active Mass attendant yelling "faggot!" at me one day when I was on campus. While others were not so bold as do be this direct, he was not alone in his sentiment. His fiancé, also an active Mass attendant who had stopped coming to the Newman Center Masses, happened to be in a workshop on diversity with the Department of Student Life some time after this. In this workshop, I was helping some of the GALTAN students give a presentation on LGBT concerns. She took the initiative to talk to me after the workshop. We had a very good discussion, and she left feeling much better about all that had happened. I was able to explain to her aspects of the official Catholic teaching she was unaware of, such as the call to offer support for LGBT persons. I was able to say to her in good conscience that while I disagreed with some official teachings and sometimes shared my disagreement in smaller forums, in public forums I had never said anything contrary to Church teaching in my assessment.

I realized I had made a big mistake. I had not involved the community in the discussion. I made the mistake I most resent in other ministers of the Church; I assumed that because I believed I was right I could plow ahead with my ministry without explaining myself to the community and engaging the community in dialogue. I had given no intelligent outlet for discussion for those who had questions

or who disagreed, leaving many of them with only the options of silence in her case or screaming in the case of her fiancé.

Smith (1994) has argued that during the 1970s and 1980s, American culture was becoming more tolerant of gay and lesbian people, including many religious bodies and some Catholic institutions. American Catholics became more tolerant of gay civil rights during this period, but not more tolerant of same-sex sexual activity. The Vatican reacted by emphasizing a split between homosexual orientation and homosexual sexual activity. The Vatican also emphasized non-discrimination based on sexual orientation.

In the 1980s, priest and sociologist Andrew Greeley found that U.S. Catholics were more tolerant of homosexuality than Protestants (McNamara, 1992). Greeley (1991) reported that the attitudes of American Catholics had not changed greatly during the 1980s on the morality of homosexuality, but that Catholics had become more supportive of the civil liberties of gays and lesbians.

McNamara (1992) surveyed almost all graduating seniors of a single U.S. Southwestern Catholic high school from 1977 to 1989 for a total of over 2,000 subjects. Over the years, support of a city ordinance to protect homosexuals against discrimination increased. Females showed more support of the ordinance, but males made much higher gains in percentages over the years.

A 1998 study conducted by The National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago found that American Catholics are more accepting of homosexuality than American Protestants. Of Catholics, 33% agreed that homosexuality is "not wrong at all," compared to 19% agreement for Protestants. At the same time, 51% of Catholics indicated that homosexuality is "always wrong" (Smith, 1999).

In 1995, I conducted a survey of incoming freshmen at a U.S. Midwestern Catholic university regarding their attitudes toward homosexuality. Students who had graduated from Catholic high schools tended to have more favorable attitudes in general than students who graduated from non-Catholic high schools. It seemed that education on social justice issues may have influenced the students in their attitudes toward homosexuality (Maher, 2001, 2004).

Creating an Environment of Trust

The Congregation for Catholic Education has stated, "They (students) are more willing to cooperate when they feel respected, trusted, and loved" (1988, p. 106). The congregation went on with, "An excellent way to establish rapport with students is simply to talk to them—and let them talk" (p. 72). Similarly, the USCC stated, "Those who teach in the name of the Church do not simply instruct adults, but also learn from them; they will only be heard by adults if they listen to them" (1972, p. 44).

The road to acceptance for LGBT student organizations at U.S. Catholic colleges and universities has not been easy. The "Gay Rights Coalition of Georgetown

University" battled in court for recognition by the university for nearly a decade (Rullman, 1991; Nordin, 1989).

Love (1997, 1998) conducted an in-depth study of one U.S. Catholic college as it dealt with the issue of homosexuality. Invisibility had marked the experiences of gay and lesbian students at the college. Homosexuality was "suddenly" a topic in the college in 1991. Gays and Lesbians along with heterosexual allies formed student and staff organizations, and several departments within the university held special workshops and events around the topic of homosexuality. Love (1998) identified several barriers at the college, such as perceptions of Catholicism, fear of external and typically peripheral constituencies (Church officials, donors, alumni, parents, etc.), and lack of appropriate ways to discuss sexual orientation. Love found not only that Catholicism did not cause homophobic barriers in the culture but also that Catholicism was used to justify these barriers. Love (1997) also found several contradictions. The college upheld the values of service, care for the person, and educating the whole person, but gay and lesbian students experienced hatred and rejection. Many students did not uphold in their actions Catholic teaching on other sexuality issues, such as premarital sex and birth control, but they use Catholic teaching to condemn homosexuality. Love pointed out some interesting paradoxes as well. Support came often from the department of campus ministry and the department of religious studies. Many of the gay and lesbian students and their allies were very religious Catholics who saw their work on gay and lesbian inclusion as a "calling from God." While the college administration was known to be supportive of gay and lesbian causes, fear crippled the administration's ability to be leaders on the topic.

Being Trustworthy

The Congregation for the Clergy has warned that as adolescents search for values, they reject values that are taught but not lived by adults (1971). The USCC has also warned that Catholic universities must act justly if they are going to be witnesses of justice for their students (1980).

As I stated above, there was some pressure and a letter-writing campaign when I worked in Missouri concerning my public support of LGBT students. My superiors put some pressure on me to leave GALTAN after it had formed as a separate organization. I refused. There were also some hints that maybe it would be a good idea for me to resign. I refused on that one too. It was the most depressing and isolating experience I've ever had as a minister. In retrospect, I probably could have done things better to make conflicts with the diocese a little less intense, such as not jumping to the conclusion that my superiors were "sell-outs" or "homophobes" when we were all dealing with tough issues. I knew, however, that to pull back would have made me untrustworthy with those who I was ministering (regardless of their personal opinions on the issue), and with myself. In the end, I did not sell out, and nor did my superiors.

It is important to realize that the issue of homosexuality is divisive in the Church. Those students who have the courage to trust a minister to journey with them in what is most likely the greatest challenge they have faced thus far in their lives need to be sure that the minister is in "for the long haul."

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Chapter 64
Educating for Spirituality and Wellbeing Through Learning Sacred Texts in the Jewish Primary School

Deena Sigel

Abstract The Bible is an essential religious text for human spirituality and for the faith development of children. This chapter will explore theories that relate to the possibilities and advantages (and disadvantages) of teaching the Bible text to children. Christian as well as Jewish pedagogical views will be explored. Additionally, educational theories that relate to children's textual understandings will be used in order to get a sense of the educational implications of exposing children to sacred texts. Illustrations will be presented from my work with primary school children as it relates to their responses to the Bible and ancient interpretive texts. These responses will reflect the views of a sample of children in Israeli, British and American schools. The theory and the classroom research will be used together to explore the implications for religious educators of teaching sacred texts in the primary school.

Introduction

Jewish studies classes can be found in the curricula of Jewish primary schools in many variations. But common to the ethos and curricula of most Jewish primary schools is the development of students' personal identity and the study of Jewish sacred texts. Thus in most Jewish primary schools, students' Jewish identity, values and sense of purpose are fostered through teaching Jewish scripture and sacred texts as a basis for participation in the Jewish tradition and community. This chapter will provide an illustration of Jewish children's responses to sacred texts. These responses were formulated by pupil participants in a mini-course on Biblical (Old Testament) interpretation that was taught in a British primary school; in two Israeli primary schools and in an American primary school (Sigel, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2009). The chapter will first discuss notions of wellbeing, including the wellbeing that can be achieved through spiritual development. It will discuss notions of children's spirituality; notions of how the study of sacred texts can foster spiritual

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development and notions of Jewish identity formation through Jewish literacy and the study of sacred texts. It will be argued that through fostering the child's sense of identity and purpose as well as the child's sense of belonging, the study of sacred texts can contribute to the education for wellbeing of Jewish primary school students. Indeed despite the privileging, here, of Jewish sources the general train of thought is towards all faith-based educational environments. Therefore, it will be suggested that it is not unreasonable to think that these insights, gleaned from Jewish students, would shed light on the fostering of the wellbeing of children of other faiths who are educated in the sacred texts and values of their religious traditions.

A Brief Look at Children's Wellbeing

Weare and Gray (2003) link the concept of wellbeing to emotional and social competence as well as to a particular state of mind. Accordingly, they provide definitions of emotional and social competence, such as that of Elias et al.

> Social and emotional competence is the ability to understand, manage and express the social and emotional aspects of one's life in ways that enable the successful management of life tasks . . . (p. 17)

This definition includes aspects of self-perception and reflection—"to understand, manage and express"—that can be applied to notions of self-concept as well as to social interaction. They also draw on the suggestion that wellbeing refers to a balanced state of mind in terms of feelings such as confidence, happiness, calm and caring (Stewart-Brown, 2000, in Weare & Gray, p. 19). Confidence, it would seem, develops through a positive self-concept. Moreover they note that the promotion of inclusion, or the need to reduce situations of exclusion, is an area for concern in fostering the wellbeing of children. Thus according to Weare and Gray (2003) the child's wellbeing is built on emotional and social foundations that incorporate a positive self-concept; a sense of happiness; and a feeling of connectedness to, and caring for, others.

The wellbeing of children is likewise at the heart of the British governmental green paper, *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003). The government sponsored Web site that describes this green paper refers to its overall aim as one that encompasses a new approach to the wellbeing of children. It emphasises that children need the support of adults to achieve wellbeing. Like Weare and Gray (2003), it discusses the need to identify children (and young people) who are at risk for social exclusion (DfES). Similarly, UNICEF has been focusing on the wellbeing of children. UNICEF's (2007) *Overview of Child Wellbeing* report elicits children's reflections on their social inclusion. In this vein the following questionnaire statements, for evaluation by children, were offered for agreement or disagreement by study participants:

- I feel like an outsider or left out of things
- I feel awkward and out of place
- I feel lonely (p. 37)

The authors explain that perceptions of social exclusion can "significantly affect the quality of young people's lives" (p. 37). Accordingly, wellbeing is understood here as including the social quality of children's lives, as perceived by the children themselves.

Clearly an in-depth discussion of the concept of wellbeing is beyond the scope of this chapter. What is useful for the following discussion on the interrelationship of educating for children's spirituality and fostering the wellbeing of the child is a working definition of the term *wellbeing*. For the present discussion the working definition will be gleaned from the literature just reviewed. Together these sources provide a view of wellbeing as something beyond physical and mental health. Wellbeing is seen as relating to the emotional and social aspects of the child's life, as viewed by the child. Accordingly nurturing wellbeing relates to helping the child to develop emotional competence as well as to develop feelings within him or herself of confidence, happiness and a sense of caring for others as well as feelings of being a valued participant in his or her social group.

Children's Spirituality and Spiritual Development

The notion of children's spirituality is complex and has been the subject of academic discourse in among more than one discipline including theology, education and child development. But since the interest here is the interrelationship of children's spirituality and the fostering of their wellbeing, this discussion will suffice itself with a brief look at the notion of children's spirituality. This concept has been discussed in recent decades in the context of religious education for children, particularly as part of an effort to describe how children achieve religious understandings. In this regard Minney (1985) has suggested that there is an emotional or affective component to religious understanding. To this he has added the component of values understanding that he believes is attainable by children. Ashton (1993) has affirmed that imagination is one of the key factors for children in arriving at religious understanding.

In later discourse Hay, Nye, and Murphy (1996) insisted that the discussion should focus on spirituality rather than on religious understanding. In their view spirituality is experiential. Accordingly, they ascribed particular dimensions to children's spirituality. These are awareness, mystery, value-sensing and meaning-making (p. 63). Indeed, more recently, Nye's (2006) study of children's spirituality led her to suggest that children are able to describe their spirituality. In this view, children's perceptiveness and reflection on themselves; on their relationship to the world; and on their relationship to God leads them to spiritual and moral insight (p. 109). Similarly, in his recent collaboration with Nye, Hay (2006) refers to the "natural spiritual awareness of children" (p. 57).

Reflection as a foundation for spirituality is considered by Bosacki and Ota (2000) in their work with pre-adolescents. They suggest that spirituality can be viewed as the development of a sense of self through a search for meaningfulness

and purpose (p. 206). Their suggestion regarding spirituality is evocative of Bruner's analysis of meaning-making in general. Bruner (1986, 1996) discusses meaning-making in the sense of interpretation and understanding. He (1986) proposes that our narratives enable us to make sense of our experience. He (1996) suggests further that people tell stories in order to understand what something is "about". Hence these stories lend a sense of security or confidence (p. 90). I believe that the theologian James Fowler's (2004) conception of faith, as responding to a human need to make meaning, reflects an influence in thinking from Bruner's work in the area of meaning-making. Similarly, Paley (as cited in Bosacki & Ota, 2000) views spirituality as a combination of the story and the response of the listener (p. 206). Thus the meaning-making aspect of spirituality is underpinned by the storying nature of the child who seeks to understand what he or she "is about"; and where he or she stands in relation to others, and in relation to the world. Bosacki and Ota (2000) take this notion a step further when they suggest that children's wellbeing is tied into their feeling that they can *engage* those around themselves because they are understood by them. This point echoes the suggestion, above (Weare & Gray, 2003; UNICEF, 2007), that social inclusion (and interaction) plays a role in wellbeing.

A child's sense of inclusion, likewise, plays a role in Fisher's (2004) spiritual health measure. In addition to asking children about their feelings towards God and nature, his questionnaire includes items that relate to loving and spending time with family and to knowing people like themselves. These social measures relating to family and peers are considered to be spiritual aspects of quality of life (Fisher).

A discussion on children's spirituality should consider children's spiritual development. This is important since educating for spirituality should logically be aimed at fostering spiritual development. In Great Britain, much of the discourse on children's spiritual development has centred on the 1988 *Education Reform Act* which stipulates that curricula should promote the spiritual and moral development of pupils (1(2)(a)). Wenman (2001) outlines some parameters for this endeavour thus: "…giving them [pupils] opportunities to be increasingly imaginative, expressive, creative, analytical, to develop a scale of values …" (p. 315). His inclusion of the imaginative and valuative components of spiritual development parallel the aspects of spirituality raised by Minney (1985) and Ashton (1993) above.

Gay (2000) centres her discussion of children's spirituality on *Spiritual and Moral Development* (1995), the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority discussion paper. She also describes in further depth what was stipulated in the *Education Reform Act* (1988) with regard to promoting the spiritual and moral development of pupils. In addition to the imaginative and affective components of spirituality she points out the spiritual aspects of personal identity and community. She summarises spiritual development thus:

> The development of personal beliefs, including religious beliefs and a developing understanding of how beliefs contribute to personal identity; a sense of awe, wonder and mystery; experiencing feelings of transcendence; the search for meaning and purpose; self knowledge; the ability to build up relationships with others and develop a sense of community; creativity- which involves exercising the imagination, inspiration, intuition and insight and feelings and emotions (p. 62).

She suggests that children's spirituality can be fostered through the religious dimensions of a school, such as through religious education classes. Consequently, it is the task of the teachers to find ways to develop children's spirituality. Sokanovic and Muller (1999) examined teachers' perspectives on educating for spirituality to explore the practitioner's point of view. They found that, for teachers, education for spirituality was less encompassing than Gay's (2000) definition above. Rather their sense is that spirituality is that which fosters a positive sense of self, happiness, contentedness and moral behaviour. Sokanovic and Muller (1999) also found that it is the view of teachers that when they foster these aspects of the child they are also furnishing the child with tools to cope with his/her encounter with the world (p. 12). The latter suggestion seems to echo notions of wellbeing and spirituality discussed above (see Weare & Gray, 2003; Nye, 2006).

Pike (2004) ties together the discussions on spirituality, belief and wellbeing. He suggests that sacred texts can be instrumental in children's spiritual development. Therefore, he suggests that children can form a spiritual relationship with a sacred text when appropriate pedagogy is adopted; a pedagogy that encourages readers to respond personally to the text (p. 158). His stance is similar to that of Paley (in Bosacki & Ota, 2000) which is that spirituality evolves from the story and from the response of the listener. He explains that texts can help the reader move towards an understanding of being, and that sacred texts can, therefore, facilitate spiritual education and may thus foster children's wellbeing (p. 161).

In summary, perhaps one can build a working definition of children's spirituality based on the foregoing sources thus: Children's spirituality encompasses a construction of meaningfulness and purpose; of a sense of self as related to family and peers; and an understanding of the values (and behavioural norms) of the community to which the child belongs.

Sacred Texts as a Gateway to a Community of Faith

Bruner's (1986, 1996) view that one makes sense of the world through storying is paralleled by Fowler (1981), in his seminal work on faith development, and by Egan (1999). From his perspective as a theologian Fowler regards the personal master story as a construct that is composed of "contents of faith"; that help to interpret and to respond to the events that take place in personal lives (p. 277). Egan (1999) discusses more generally the function of a shared master story in the culture of a community. He suggests that master stories contain central cultural messages and that through these stories young people are initiated into the shared values and commitments of their community (p. 11).

In his foundational theoretical exploration of Jewish education Rosenak (1987) discussed religious stories. He explained that the religious literature of a community provides an existential link to that which is sacred and to the assumptions and valuative norms of religious tradition. He asserted that the acquisition of this sacred knowledge is a requirement for participation in a religious community. Rosenak's

thoughts were echoed by Etzion (1990) in his assertion that the importance of education for Bible literacy in the Jewish primary school relates to the development of sacred understandings. It also relates, in this view, to developing understandings of the normative message of Scripture that relates to the quality of the conduct of its adherents. More recently Rosenak (1995) described the importance of sacred texts and specifically their understanding as the basis of the language of Judaism. He suggested that it is through this language that learners are initiated as participating members in the Jewish community's values and traditions (pp. 189–190).

The centrality of Bible education in Jewish primary schools is a reflection of the role of the Bible as the Jewish community's religious and cultural legacy; and of its role as *the* primary text for Jewish literacy (Chazan, 2005; Stern 2003). Bible education is, therefore, important for the formation of the child's Jewish identity. Indeed, Plaut (in Lipetz, 2004) suggests the following about the Jewish Bible: "Jews cannot know their past or themselves without this book, for in it they will discover the framework of their own existence" (p. 187).

Jewish Identity and Spiritual Development Through the Study of Sacred Texts

In Jewish education Bible study has been part of the traditional primary school curriculum for centuries. Moreover, ancient interpretive texts have been included in Bible classes as well. This has traditionally taken place through the study of the Bible commentary of the 11th-century scholar, Rashi (Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac). For in addition to his own insights Rashi includes ancient rabbinic interpretation, *midrash*,[1] in his commentary. Indeed even before the printing press was invented Rashi's commentary was used in Jewish primary schools across Northern France and Germany (Bortniker, 1971). This centuries old tradition of teaching Pentateuch with Rashi's commentary is still widespread in Jewish communities today throughout Israel (Israel Ministry of Education, 1993) and the Jewish Diaspora. Strack (1969) explains that in the view of the ancient rabbis,

> Scripture [was] the sum and substance of all that is good . . . and worth knowing. Hence it ought to be possible to apply it to all conditions of life, it should comfort, it should exhort and edify. . .It was through midrash that Holy Writ was made to do this service. . . The midrash, in part, followed closely the Biblical text; frequently, however, the latter served as a peg upon which to hang expositions (p. 202).

In the terminology of the current discourse perhaps one could say that Hebrew Scripture is the Jewish master story and that midrash is the medium by which the rabbis transmitted their understanding of its content: its sense of identity and community; its spiritual history and culture; and its values and commitments. But, notes Heinemann (1954), the rabbinic role extended beyond the teaching of Bible. As the religious leaders of the Jewish community, the rabbis' primary role was to maintain the spirituality and religious commitment of their followers. To this end, they used the Torah (Jewish Scripture) as their guide and Scriptural exposition

(midrash) as their means (Heinemann). Accordingly, the encounter in the Jewish primary school with sacred texts combines readings of Scripture with readings of the rabbis' traditional biblical commentary, midrash.

The ancient character of sacred texts poses a challenge to the young reader, just as it does to the mature reader. Alter (1981) suggests that the reader should be able to approach Scriptural meaning by understanding the way that the text is written. He points out, however, that the modern reader has acquired different expectations of texts through the intervening centuries since the Torah was taught in Biblical times. Thus the clues for meaning that are offered by the text need to be studied and learned by the modern reader (p. 188). This is true for midrash texts as well. Thus although midrash seeks to clarify Scripture and to edify the reader, the fact that midrash was written so long ago makes the learning of these texts a challenge to today's student. Furthermore, the less-than-straightforward interpretive style of midrash presents its own challenge as well. Ahrend (2001) describes, in Hebrew, the creative nature of the midrashic process. But Bruns (1987) had already brought this important issue into sharp focus:

> The hermeneutical task of mediating between [the Scriptural] text and situation helps to explain the excessiveness- the legendary extravagance- of midrashic interpretation. For midrash always seems to be going beyond the [biblical] text in the manner of transgression-going too far, saying not only what the text does not say but also what the text, by itself, does not appear to warrant. But in midrash the text is never to be taken all by itself as a purely analytical object; the text is always situated. Thus the task of midrash is never merely reproductive; it is always productive of new understanding (p. 629).

Here Bruns explains that the rabbis composed midrash in order to produce spiritual understandings for their faith community. These comments are essential to understanding the rabbinic exposition of the Bible story that will be used here as an illustration of how children engage with sacred texts and of how these texts impact their spirituality. The text that will be presented here is one of the midrash texts that was taught in a midrash mini-course that I conducted in several schools. All participating schools were Jewish faith-based schools. Out of a total of four schools (two in Jerusalem, one in London and one in New York) three were of Orthodox denomination (catering to religiously observant families) and one was what is known in Israel as pluralistic: having religious and non-religious students together. They are separated for prayer and for Bible classes, accordingly, in that particular school. Usually there is less Bible for the non-observant kids, but in my case I had a mixture of religious and non-religious pupils in my midrash classes. All the children were between 10 and 11 years old (British year 6 equivalent). All classes were co-educational (boys and girls mixed). Socio-economic backgrounds were mixed. The total population of the study was just under 70 pupils.

The research paradigm used was the design experiment. In the case of the midrash design experiment, a mini-course based on midrash texts that comment on some of the stories in Genesis was the centerpiece of the research. The idea was to teach children aspects of midrash so that they could gain an understanding of this interpretive genre of rabbinic literature; and to gain a basic idea of the way

that the ancient rabbis viewed Scripture—not just literally but theologically and morally. So, There were pre-test and post-test questionnaires to determine knowledge of midrash. These were administered before and after the 10 lesson midrash mini-course. Then there were daily quizzes and homework assignments as well as an in-class midrash worksheet that provided more qualitative data—responses in the children's own words—as to what they thought was "going on" in the midrash texts being studied. The lessons were taped or video taped so that I could build a set of transcripts of what the children said in class. Then I built a data log for each child based on comments from all of these sources in order to see the picture of understanding—or not–that was developing from the data of each participant. To this data I added information from pre-test and post-test interviews with the students.

There were also pre-test interviews with the head teachers/head of Jewish studies and with the class Bible teachers to see whether they were teaching midrash in their Bible classes and what their attitude to midrash as a discrete subject for instruction was. I also reviewed some of their teaching materials and their curriculum suggestions in the area of Bible. For illustrative purposes the children's comments will be presented as an amalgam of responses from three classes: a British class, an Israeli class and an American class.

Reading Scripture and Midrash with Year Six Students

The following midrash centres on the moral or valuative messages that underlie the Bible story. The Biblical context is the story of Abraham and Sarah's (or Avram & Saray's) journey to Egypt to escape famine. In this story, Abraham asks Sarah to tell the Egyptian officials that she is Abraham's sister rather than his wife. As a preamble to his request he remarks upon Sarah's beauty in a way that provokes the rabbis to wonder whether Abraham has suddenly become aware of his wife's beauty. This becomes the rabbis' exegetical opportunity to extol the "unbelievable" modesty of the pair.

> .. he said to Saray his wife Behold now I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: therefore it shall come to pass, when Mizrim shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me (The Jerusalem Bible, Genesis 12: 11–12).

> **The Midrashic explanation is**:[2] Until this time, he had not been aware of her [beauty] because of the modesty of the two of them. And now, due to this event, he became aware [of it] . . .
>
> **And the plain meaning of Scripture**: Behold, now, the time has come wherein we need to be concerned about your beauty. I have known for many days [or years] that you are beautiful, but now we are approaching people who . . . are not accustomed to [seeing] a beautiful woman. (Rashi, Rosenbaum & Silbermann ed., ad loc)

The classes always read and discuss Rashi's second interpretation (*And the plain meaning of Scripture*. . .) before discussing his first because the latter one follows the straightforward (plain) meaning of Scripture. But the more interesting interpretation, in terms of its spiritual or valuative element, is the first interpretation, the midrashic one. Arguably the most striking element of this midrash is its suggestion

that Abraham and Sarah were so modest that they didn't look at each other. This exemplifies what seems to be the lack of rationality of midrashic commentary (Heinemann, 1954, p. 137) which can be off putting to the modern reader who expects midrash to be a serious, rational endeavour. Indeed the young students zeroed in on the improbable suggestion of the midrash.

> Doesn't Avram know already that his own wife is pretty? (A. K., American girl)
> Avram says, ['] behold you are pretty, ['] not, ['] you are pretty.[']
> Did he just notice she was pretty? She is his wife! (T.B., American girl)
> It's illogical. (Y. K., British boy)

As the discussions progressed in the various classes, respectively, the students began to realise that the rabbis must have had a point to make; one that was elusive, at first glance, to the reader. In the Israeli class the discussion took a unique turn. In an effort to draw out the meaning of the midrash one of the students suggested that the rabbis were not referring to external beauty. It was reasoned that since Abraham must have been aware of her external beauty the rabbis must have been suggesting that it was Sarah's inner beauty that was newly discovered by Abraham. The rest of the class warmed to this suggestion and a lively discussion ensued about the importance of a person's inner beauty. Thus the children built for themselves a lesson on valuing and respecting the inner beauty of the "other". While that discussion certainly contributed to a kind of spiritual exploration of human beauty, and an appreciation for one's fellow it didn't actually fit into the Biblical story. Abraham's fear of the Egyptians could not have been motivated by an appreciation of Sarah's inner beauty.

Accordingly, the children in each class, respectively, were encouraged to explore the possibility that the rabbis were purposely exaggerating. The first stage was to identify this non-literal strategy. Below are two articulations of this from the American class.

> [The exaggeration is when] Avram said to Saray, ['] I have discovered your beauty.[']
> (G. R., American boy).

> They didn't look at each other because of modesty. That's not literal. (A. P., American girl)

Similarly one of the British girls reflected afterward, "…so it's kind of you had to think a bit non-literal".

The students were then ready to think about why the rabbis had chosen to use exaggeration in their commentary. Accordingly an American boy suggested, *[It] makes us interested* (G.M.). A British counterpart of his made a similar suggestion but elaborated thus:

> But we should remember that this is purposely exaggerated. It is a midrash which confuses us and makes us laugh and then we think and we discover something which is not obvious. (A.W.)

In her comments this girl points out the ways in which the midrash calls the reader to engage with it and to look for the meaning—and the spiritual message— that lies beneath the surface: "something which is not obvious". In this case a prima facie reading of the midrash leaves the reader with the implausible suggestion that

Abraham never looked at his wife. This, as G.M suggested above, catches the attention of the reader. The reader is then motivated to set out on a quest for the message of the rabbis. The clue lies in the key words of the midrash. In this case, the focus is on modesty which is highly valued by the rabbis. The reader is drawn in by the exaggerated suggestion that not only did Abraham not stare wantonly at women in general, but he did not even look at his wife.

It may be helpful to note here that Jewish children who study the Bible learn in the early years of primary school that sacred texts carry religious or spiritual messages. Thus these students who were in year 6 were aware o this traditional view of Bible study. Accordingly, when these students engaged with the Bible story and wth this midrash they cast about for the underlying religious message. They reflected on the exaggerated stance taken in the midrash. Some of their responses are discussed below.

> When we see this exaggeration, we're like, "This is so weird. Is this what we should look [up] to?" (E.L., American boy).

This boy is acknowledging that there is a valuative message in this midrash. He realises that the rabbis are suggesting that the reader should emulate the behaviour of the patriarchs. The exaggeration, in his view, gives the midrash a sense of wonder: "This is so weird". "Is this what we should look to?" is essentially questioning, "Is this who we are?" Alternately he may be asking, "What are the values of our community?" His classmate offered the following:

> If it starts at such a high level, then people have something to look up to. At such a high level people would say, "Wow they were so modest." (G.W., American boy)

When he talks about starting at a high level he is referring to the standard being set by the patriarchs for their descendants to emulate. This is based on the traditional religious view that the patriarchs were on a particularly high level of spirituality adhering to strict standards of behaviour. One of the American girls articulated this:

> Because Abraham and Sarah, they were like role models and we want to be like them and we'd try to be at least a little modest like them. (T.B.)

Indeed most of the students felt that the high level of modesty depicted by the midrash was meant to suggest that modesty is important; and that if the patriarchs were very modest their descendents should be at least somewhat modest. Or, alternatively, "If they could be modest, so could we". Here's one example of this sentiment,

> To show that they were both very modest, and that we should be modest (L.S., British girl).

Namely, we could take their values to be our own as members of their faith community. One British boy made the point of the elevated level of spirituality of the patriarchs in the following way:

> So that we could see the Avot (patriarchs) do it, and so could we. Like if I have a cup of water and I give it to you, then some is going to spill. So it's better if I have a bigger cup, less to spill as it goes down (A.G.).

His assumption is that the behaviour of the patriarchs is too difficult to emulate, but that their model serves as one to which their descendants can aspire. Yet there was one Israeli boy who understood the spiritual message of the rabbis differently. He felt that the rabbis wanted their followers—and today's members of the faith—to follow very high standards of modest behaviour, *beyond* that which tradition requires

> The exaggeration gives us a message of modesty: that we should go above and beyond [in our observance of modesty] (A.M.)

Accordingly in their different ways the children in the different classes found meaning in the midrash through uncovering its authors', the rabbis', spiritual or valuative message. Thus the notion of appropriate behaviour being modelled by the patriarchs was understood by the children. This ties in to children's ability to empathise with others and to seek an understanding of the personalities of the role models of their community (Deitcher, 1990).

But there was still a piece missing from the interpretive puzzle: How had the rabbis imagined that this message could "masquerade" as commentary on the Abraham and Sarah story? Could this really be viewed as exegesis/interpretation? In this case it would seem that Bruns' (1987) observation, above, regarding interpretive transgression—going too far from the plain meaning of Scripture—is apt. What was it about this story that made it an appropriate location for a commentary about modest behaviour? Below is one student's formulation of the textual connection between midrash and Scripture.

> "Cos Avram and Saray were role models and they [the Bible] were talking about .. how they're pretty (A.K., American girl).

This short comment ties together the main elements of the lesson. Looking at her points in reverse order one can see the makings of a textual connection as well as a valuative or spiritual connection. The textual connection is the theme of beauty that is the focus of the story, in this case that of Sarah. The spiritual connection that the rabbis add is one of modesty that they visualise as being modelled by Abraham and Sarah. The "situatedness" of this commentary in the spiritual milieu of the rabbis reflects their view that a story that pivots on beauty should be accompanied by a lesson in modesty and respect. Thus through reading the *midrash* the Bible story—of Abraham's plight of having to leave the promised land because of famine—was broadened. The rabbis understood that a spiritual message of appropriate behaviour, as well as respect for the other, would be relevant to the faith of Abraham's followers.

A brief summary of how the children engaged with these ancient sacred texts will follow. The first challenge for the students was the search for a basic understanding of the Bible story. Indeed, children are particularly receptive to learning through the medium of narrative (Egan, 1990, 1991, 1999). Therefore, in the area of religious education the Bible story opens up the world of the sacred text to the child. Onto this backdrop the spiritual message of the rabbis is placed. The exaggeration in

the midrash is, simultaneously, the key to its message as well as the spark for the reader's curiosity.

In his early work Bruner (1966) suggested that curiosity is a motivation for learning. Building on Dewey's view of the importance of reflection in learning, he suggested that children are attracted to that which is unclear or uncertain; and that their attention is sustained until the matter becomes clear or certain (p. 114). (Bruner, 1996, later described children as epistemologists who intuitively seek knowledge and understanding.) In the midrash class pupils were fortified by their curiosity to look for the underlying spiritual message in the midrash text. They found that the midrash produces new understandings (Bruns, 1987) of the codes of behaviour of the Biblical patriarchs. Hence it is through reading this kind of midrash that modern children can gain an understanding of how the ancient rabbinic text conveyed a message of appropriate behaviour—and respect for the other—for a participant in the Jewish tradition; promoting a sense of shared values for their community. Similarly Wachs (2002) has shown that rabbinic literature can contribute to the Jewish child's values education. Accordingly the lesson of modesty and respect, gleaned from the rabbinic gloss on the Bible story, expands the child's view of Jewish values and norms; and by extension, that of his/her Jewish identity.

The potential carried by stories for helping the reader to find meaning and to explore values is not limited to religious stories. Carr (2007) argues that secular literature can also be a source for finding spiritual and moral meaning. Similarly Peyton and Jalongo (2008) encourage the use of stories in primary school education. Their particular interest lies in the potential for promoting acceptance of the different faiths and spiritual backgrounds of pupils in the multicultural classroom. Towards this end, Peyton (2008) recommends children's stories that contain narratives of commonalities. (One example she brings is *Snow in Jerusalem*. It tells the story of two boys, one Muslim and one Jewish, who live in different religious quarters of Jerusalem.)

This brings the discussion back to Bible stories. The children's brief comments, highlighted in this chapter, point to the possibilities that the study of sacred texts holds for fostering spirituality and wellbeing within the child. These can include the positive development of self-understanding and of self-confidence (Weare & Gray, 2003; Bruner, 1996). These would follow from the child's burgeoning feeling that he/she is included as a valued member of the faith-based community. Thus the journey taken in the Bible class through engaging with—and responding to—the Scriptural text can enhance the child's spiritual development (Paley in Bosacki & Ota, 2000; Pike, 2004; See also Worsley, 2004). It is possible that when the development of religious literacy includes discourse with an adult/teacher who is trusted by the students (Harris & Koenig, 2006) that a sense of shared values, connectedness and purpose can be fostered, in the pupils, and therefore a sense of wellbeing. Indeed it would not be overreaching to suggest that these illustrations may provide insights for the spiritual development of children of other faiths too. As with Jewish sacred texts, so too the sacred texts of other communities, it is thought, can be a source of spiritual inspiration and personal growth; and of connectedness to and of caring for others, for children of different faith-based communities.

Notes

1. The existing written collections of early midrash date back to 5th–7th century Israel. For a detailed table of midrashic classifications see Herr (1971).
2. This text as quoted by Rashi ad loc. (s.v. *Behold now I know*) can also be found in the Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Babba Batra* folio 16a.

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Chapter 65
Liberation Through Story: Children's Literature and the Spirit of the Child

Robert Hurley

Abstract In this chapter, I argue that the experience of literature is often liberating; at its best, it is transcendent. It would be a mistake to think such that experiences are only open to adults and not to children. Stories allow us to live vicariously, to assume new identities, to form new relationships with heretofore unknown persons and to reassess the world from novel vantage points. The literary imagination is infectious in its ability to suggest novel and hopeful ways of responding to the challenges life throws at us. Through narrative, we become conscious of our own ability to tell a new story about our everyday world. Things which we formerly accepted as incontrovertible facts, historically and scientifically established, prove to be malleable and open to amendment once we weave a new tale around them.

Introduction

What adolescent has not lingered over a novel, drinking in every word, smelling every syllable, not wishing to finish too quickly, fearing that once the last page was turned the tones of those book-bound friends would fade forever into oblivion? Most adults, when we cast our minds back to our life as a child, can remember a favourite story—a picture book, a short story, a novel or even a narrative poem. Inevitably, a character comes to mind with whom we particularly identified or to whom we were drawn in a special way. These are the stories we found ourselves returning to again and again.

If Bruno Bettelheim is right, and I am persuaded that he is, the characters and plots which mark our childhood and adolescence—different for each of us—work their magic in some part of our selves that is not open to rational scrutiny. But our inability to account for the fascination that a particular story produces in us does not mean that our personal and communal experiences are not illuminated by its characters and events at some preconscious or unconscious level (Bettelheim, 1991). The smell of paper mingles at times with the fragrance of the sacred as a

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reflection of the reader's inscrutable self becomes discernible in the shadows of the narrative. Bettelheim, using psychiatric metaphors, captures the sacred potential of the narrative in a caution he offers to parents. Even if a parent should guess why a particular story exerts such an overwhelming attraction upon the mind of her child, she had best keep that knowledge to herself:

> Explaining to a child why a fairy tale is so captivating to him destroys…the story's enchantment, which depends to a considerable degree on the child's not quite knowing why he is delighted by it. And with the forfeiture of this power to enchant goes also a loss of the story's potential for helping the child struggle on his own, and master all by himself the problem which made the story meaningful to him in the first place (Bettelheim, 1991, p. 18).

A story will mean something different for different readers depending on the way in which their experience prompts them to pay attention to certain of its features while seemingly neglecting others. Indeed, in different circumstances, the same reader may construe the same story in very different ways. An episode reported by Robert Coles, another child psychiatrist, illustrates the point. In *The Call of Stories: Teaching and the Moral Imagination*, Coles describes Phil, a 15-year-old boy trying to come to terms with the crippling effects of poliomyelitis. Angry and depressed, unable to find a moment's distraction, the youngster lashes out at those around him. Even though he feels nauseous every time, he reaches for a magazine, when he begins to read *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* his stomach settles and he continues late into the night until he has finished the novel. The book was the gift of an unusually sensitive and insightful teacher in whose class Phil had already read the novel earlier that year. Although at first puzzled by his teacher's choice, Phil reports his experiences to Coles:

> I read and when I was done with the story, I felt different. It's hard to say what I mean [. . .] I can't explain what happened [. . .] I forgot about myself—no, I didn't, actually. I joined up with Huck and Jim. We became a trio. They were very nice to me. I explored the Mississippi with them on the boats and on the land. I had some good talks with them. I dreamed about them. I'd wake up, and I'd know I'd just been out west, on the Mississippi. I talked with those guys they straightened me out (Coles, 1989, p. 36).

It seems clear that both Coles and Bettelheim believe that literature, certain forms of it at any rate, may be useful when it comes to the difficult task of helping a child find meaning in life. And it is worth noting that while both of these men had been trained in the detection and remediation of psychiatric pathologies, neither regards literature as a substitute for psychoanalysis. Coles writes that "Novels are not, of course, meant to be a replacement for psychotherapy for young people or indeed for anyone" (Coles, 1989, p. 63). Bettelheim explains his position more fully:

> Fairy-tale motifs are not neurotic symptoms, something one is better off understanding rationally so that one can rid oneself of them. Such motifs are experienced as wondrous because the child feels understood deep down in his feelings, hopes and anxieties, without these all having to be dragged up and investigated in the harsh light of rationality that is still beyond him. Fairy tales enrich the child's life and give it an enchanted quality just because

he does not know quite how the stories have worked their wonder on him. (Bettelheim, 1991, p. 19).

Bettelheim and Coles also agree that the serious impasses most people encounter as they mature are not pathological in nature and that certain stories may be useful in helping us identify and resolve problems on our own.

While both these psychiatrists write eloquently about the role played by literature in the inner lives of children, neither of them uses the terms "spirituality" or "spiritual" to describe what they are trying to get at. Coles concerns himself with the question of the moral imagination—an expression by which he presumably means something different from the spiritual life, since he found it necessary to publish *The Spiritual Life of Children* just a year later. Bettelheim restricts himself to explaining "why fairy tales are so meaningful to children in helping them cope with the psychological problems of growing up and integrating their personalities" (Bettelheim, 1991, p. 14). He is quick to recognize that this fairy literature might also be examined for its value in the moral, cultural and religious education of children (Bettelheim, 1991, pp. 12–13). As an exegete, I am particularly struck by Bettelheim's observation that many biblical stories are of the same nature as fairy tales. I understand his statement to mean that certain biblical stories produce the same kinds of effects in readers as do fairy tales, a notion that I find particularly congenial (Bettelheim, 1991, p. 13).

I too believe that a distinction needs to be made between the use of literature for moral, cultural and psychological ends on the one hand, and its use as a vehicle for spiritual awakening and growth on the other. However, given that there is a clear overlap between these spheres of concern, any hard and fast distinction of the boundaries separating them should be eschewed. With this caveat in mind, some attempt at describing the specificity of the spiritual seems necessary if we are to make any headway in our discussion. That is why I would like to begin with a brief explanation of the unique qualities that might be used to distinguish the spiritual potential of literature from its moral, cultural and psychological usefulness. These remarks emerge from my work with biblical texts and with children's literature. Within that framework, I make no necessary distinction between the nature of spiritual and religious experience, although I appreciate well that many today would wish to draw rather clear lines between the two. From this general discussion of the nature of spirituality, I will move on to a consideration of the role which narrative plays in the construction and understanding of the self, of the world around us and of those with whom we share that world. The inviolability of the child's inner life constitutes the central theme of this paper. The sacred character of the spiritual life begs the question of interpretive and spiritual freedom in childhood experiences with literature. To use children's literature in a spiritually enriching way will be to allow young readers to evaluate the texts they read for themselves, to respond to them in whatever way they see fit. The work of Stanley Fish and David Bleich, two American literary critics, will inform our discussion at key points, while at other points Frank Kermode, Robert Coles and Bruno Bettelheim will be called upon.

Spirituality

Bettelheim begins *The Uses of Enchantment* with this thought: "If we hope to live, not just from moment to moment, but in true consciousness of our existence, then our greatest and most difficult achievement is to find meaning in our lives" (Bettelheim, 1991, p. 3). David Hay echoes this call to a true consciousness when he describes the holistic notion of spirituality to which his research points: "Each of us," says Hay, "has the potential to be much more deeply aware of both ourselves and of our intimate relationship with everything that is not ourselves" (Hay & Nye, 1998, p. 9). In *The Spirit of the Child*, a book which has become essential reading for any contemporary discussion of childhood spirituality, Hay and his research partner, Rebecca Nye, present a grounded theory of relational consciousness, an expression they use to describe the core category which emerged from their study of the spiritual life of British children in the 1990s. The study combed the verbatim of individual conversations between Nye and 38 children in an effort to develop a theory about the spiritual lives of those children (Hay & Nye, 1998). While recognizing the uniqueness of each child's life, Nye identifies four types of relational consciousness which emerged from a cross-sectional analysis of the data she gathered: child-God consciousness, child-people consciousness, child-world consciousness and child-self consciousness (Hay & Nye, 1998). This original and contemporary research resonates with the biblical theme of holiness which underlies, among other important texts, the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:2–17 and Deut. 5: 6–21), Leviticus 19 and a good part of the NT. A consciousness of one's relationship to God, to one's family and to one's neighbour underpins the texts from Exodus and Deuteronomy; and to these, Leviticus adds a consciousness of one's relationship to the land and to the goods of the land (Luciani, 2005, p. 392).

In an increasingly secularized West, the need or even the usefulness of making connections to the Judeo-Christian heritage is regularly contested. In Quebec, for instance, a new non-confessional service was developed for the promotion of the spiritual life of all school-aged students regardless of their religious affiliations (MELS, 2005). Among those attracted to work in the schools as Animators of Spiritual Care and Guidance, one finds atheists and secular humanists working alongside colleagues who, until recently, had worked as Christian chaplains. In Quebec, the teaching of religion is also approached from a cultural perspective; the major world religions and native spirituality are examined in an effort to promote social understanding and peace. The intent of this instruction is related only tangentially to the enrichment of the spiritual lives of learners.

Barbara Kimes Myers, in choosing to address her book on the spirituality of children to people who wish to dialogue about childhood spirituality with others outside their religious tradition, also recognizes the need for a non-religious treatment of the topic (Myers, 1997, p. ix–x). Without wishing in any way to impugn the desirability or even necessity of initiatives such as these, I proceed under the assumption that most Westerners, knowingly or unknowingly, frame their spiritual and religious experiences in ways which are indebted to the Judeo-Christian roots of spirituality in the West. In fact, the French philosopher, Marcel Gauchet, maintains

that Christianity held the seeds of a secular society within its own logic. In his best known work, *Le désenchantement du monde, Une histoire politique de la religion* (1985), he defends the theory that the religious has collapsed into the political. Arguing that the West was profoundly marked by the revolutionary potential of Christianity, Gauchet illustrates his theory with reference to the French state. He believes that the secularism of France was heavily influenced by traditional religious values, which remain at the heart of the Republic. After religion, Christianity remains. So it is perhaps unsurprising that so many similarities might be found between the expression of spirituality in secularized British society and the standard expressions of spirituality identified with the Judeo-Christian tradition.

To the theory of relational consciousness proposed by Hay and Nye, I would add another element to the description of the spiritual life of children today. I believe that the inner lives of children are animated by a capacity to transcend the material world through the use of imagination and creativity. Transcendence through imagination and creativity affects the way children inhabit time and space, freeing them, from time to time at least, from the bonds that normally weigh us all down (Hurley, 2005). Frank Kermode, when he explains the New Testament distinction between *chronos* and *kairos*, provides vocabulary that will help me explain the distinction I wish to make here. Borrowing from Oscar Cullmann and John Marsh, Kermode presents the Biblical notion of chronos as "waiting time" or "passing time," time experienced, in his words, as "one damn thing after another" (Kermode, 1967, pp. 47–48). Kairos, on the other hand, is a season filled with meaning. We recognize kairos in those moments of intemporal (I would say eternal) significance which are experienced in the midst of life as harmonizing the origin and the end of it (Kermode, 1967, p. 46). Experiences of such historical moment are marked by a kind of suspension of time and space, by a transformation of our perceptions of the everyday. "This is the time of the novelist," writes Kermode, "a transformation of mere successiveness which has been likened, by writers as different as Forster and Musil, to the experience of love, the erotic consciousness which makes divinely satisfactory sense out of the commonplace person" (Kermode, 1967, p. 46). This elevation of the commonplace through the cosmogenic capacity of the imagination is the spiritual heritage of all humanity and one which is particularly well developed in those who weave stories.

Pan's Labyrinth, the haunting film by Spanish director Guillermo del Toro offers a brilliant mise en scène of the peculiar power of one child's imagination to transcend the strictures of her cruel world. The story world, which the child creates and occupies, proves more real than the material world in which her sadistic stepfather reigns supreme over her. In the end, death becomes her ultimate kairos. This creative way of living in the world is much more than childish make-believe. It is an interpretive or constructive strategy that allows children to live with hope, and which inspires them to have faith in others and ultimately in themselves. Adults often try to recover or emulate this naïve yet profound way of experiencing the world. Most of us do not succeed very well.

Ultimately, transcendent spirituality is more than a passive awareness of oneself and the relationships of the self to all that is not self. It is an act of construction in which both the self and the world are being created. And while progress in the

moral life and psychological maturation may be intimately related to this creative movement of the spirit, spiritual transcendence does not emerge as a condition of having attained moral perfection, psychological equilibrium or cultural fluency. It is, as Hay, Nye and several others suggest, a universal feature of human life even though its organon may have atrophied in some.

Hay recognizes this transcendent, and dare I say, mystical quality of the spirituality of children when he encourages researchers to look for the "signals of transcendence" which may be found in the responses children give to ordinary activities (Hay & Nye, 1998). Later in the book, Nye is on to something when she speaks of the significance of the languages of fiction and of play which children use to frame their spirituality (Hay & Nye, 1998). Should we not see in the response to "ordinary activities" and to story much more than the mere reception of someone else's meaning and someone else's description of the world?

Narrative and the Spiritual Life of the Child

Is it possible for teachers to tell stories in such a way that their students will not only become more spiritually aware but also feel that life is for them and not against them? Can literature help to empower children to live their lives imaginatively, hopefully and with a sense of freedom and trust? While no known method reliably and consistently achieves such effects, the choice of literature one chooses to tell is of critical importance. Some 30 years ago, Bettelheim deplored the use of primers that were meant to merely entertain or inform:

> The acquisition of skills, including the ability to read, becomes devalued when what one has learned to read adds nothing of importance to one's life. [. . .] The idea that learning to read may enable one later to enrich one's life is experienced as an empty promise when the stories the child listens to, or is reading at the moment, are vacuous (Bettelheim, 1991, p. 4).

There are, however, ways of using even good literature which contribute little or nothing to spiritual nurture. Literary scholars have often been concerned to treat literature with an intellectual rigor similar to that applied in the natural sciences. Consider for example the objectivist positions defended by W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley in *The Intentional Fallacy* (1946) and E.D. Hirsch in *Validity in Interpretation* (1967). These men were interested in a rigorous logical approach to literary interpretation, objectifying the text and treating it from a predominantly rationalistic perspective. Reception-oriented critics, on the other hand, argue in favour of a more intuitive and imaginative approach to the text; an approach which values the subjective response of the reader. Methods such as reader-response criticism, deconstruction, feminist criticism, post-colonialist critique and psychoanalytical interpretation all move in this direction. Norman Holland's description of his literary colleagues a quarter century ago still rings true for many working in literary and biblical circles today: ". . .most professional critics assure us that there are right and wrong, better and worse readings, and they insist, often quite fiercely, that the themes and other literary entities they discover have 'objective' validity" (Holland,

1980, pp. 119–120). Objectivist critics understand their work as an attempt either to recover a meaning deposited in the text by its author or a meaning determined by the forms and structures of the text. Holland pokes fun at this quest for embedded textual meaning:

> . . .the writer's emblem is the badger, Old High German dahs, an animal who builds; thus the critics symbol would be that animal especially bred for ferreting out badgers, the dachshund like so many of my colleagues, long of nose and low of belly (Holland, 1980, p. 118).

Literature has thus often been used in such a way as to set readers, young and old, on the path of discovery of someone else's meaning and someone else's thoughts. On this view, the real purpose of reading literature is to reproduce the thoughts of an absent author rather than to explore and synthesize one's own thoughts. Formulating ideas of one's own, if it happens, is of secondary importance. David Bleich, another reader-response critic, believes that most of the "negative receptions to response studies can be traced to an abiding sense that any means of making subjective experiences public, necessarily leads to psychological danger, intellectual disarray, and pedagogical anarchy"(Bleich, 1980, p. 158). Bleich rejects these arguments and objects to the unambiguous presentation of accepted formalisms which this approach to literature encourages. He calls his alternative to this model "the subjective classroom":

> When knowledge is no longer conceived as objective, the purpose of pedagogical institutions from the nursery through the university is to synthesize knowledge rather than to pass it along: schools become the regular agency of subjective initiative. Because language use and the interpretive practises that follow from it underlie the processes of understanding, the pedagogical situations in which consciousness of language and literature is exercised establish the pattern of motives a student will bring to bear in his own pursuit of knowledge. For the development of subjective knowledge, motivation has to become a consciously articulable experience. . . (Bleich, 1980, p. 159).

Bleich is making a case here for interpretive freedom in the literary classroom, one that encourages teachers to value the subjective responses of students and to see in these responses the very raison d'être of literature itself. In other words, rather than being forced to pay attention to those features of the text which historically have been valued by the guild of critics, or by specialists and authorities, students should be encouraged to pay attention to their own observations, to how the text makes them feel; they should be encouraged to consciously take note of those textual features which attract their attention and appear to them novel. The spiritual value of the subjective response to literature was already clearly recognized in the monastic approach to Scripture in the Middle Ages. The goal of the monastic approach to Bible, known as the lectio divina, was communion with God through a prayerful contemplation and personal appropriation of the text. This is not to say that the monks and nuns of that period had the only game in town. Near the end of the 11th century, schools were forming around the great cathedrals of Europe which began to apply Aristotelian logic to the rational study of the Bible. The approach of the School Men took the form of the *disputatio* or *questio*, i.e., scholarly debates and discussions over the meaning of a passage of Scripture. These debates set the pattern

for the academic approach to Scripture not only in these cathedral schools but also for the universities which developed from them.

For the monks, the lectio divina referred to the physical act of reading Holy Scripture aloud (Leclercq, 1982). This acoustical reading allowed monks to pronounce what they saw and listen to the words they pronounced. Jean Leclercq describes the result as a *muscular memory* of the words pronounced and an aural memory of the words heard (Leclercq, 1982). Meditation in the monastic setting implied an affinity with the practical or even moral order and was linked to the contemplation of a text; it was almost the equivalent of the *lectio divina*:

> It [the mediatio] implies thinking of a thing with the intent to do it [. . .] For the ancients, to meditate is to read a text and to learn it "by heart" in the fullest sense of the expression, that is, with one's whole being: with the body, since the mouth pronounced it, with the memory which fixes it, with the intelligence which understands its meaning, and with the will which desires to put it into practise" (Leclercq, 1982, pp. 16–17).

The monastic tradition places great value on the benefits of repetition, on what Leclercq calls the repeated mastication of the divine words; a metaphor in which spiritual nutrition is compared to the digestive processes of herbivores. "It occupies and engages the whole person in whom the Scripture takes root, later on to bear fruit" (Leclercq, 1982, p. 73). This notion of "bearing fruit later on" is readily recognizable in the experiences children have with literature. Young children often treasure the stories they hear, seemingly not sure what to make of them at the moment they hear them. Later, in response to a specific incident, they may use the story stored in their memory as a source of insight. Be it fairy tales, picture books, novels, or even stories from the Bible, children often want to repeat the same story many times. In his discussion of fairy tales, Bettelheim sees in this desire to return to a particular story, a sign that the tale evokes something particular in the child's conscious or unconscious mind (Bettelheim, 1991). Eventually the child will abandon a story because he has gained all he can from it or because the problems which prompted his interest have been replaced by others (Bettelheim, 1991).

The monastic *lectio divina* suggests a holistic approach to literature which emphasizes creativity and intuition, two characteristics I believe to be hall marks of spirituality. The monastic and scholastic approaches to Scripture present right-brain and left-brain characteristics respectively: the "right brain" being associated with intuition, subjectivity, emotion, and an interest in the 'big picture'; the 'left brain' focusing on logic, analytical skills, objectivity, rationality, and an interest in facts and details (Springer & Deutsch, 1989). These right brain activities are thought to be related to accessing deeper senses of self (Pearmain, 2007) and are therefore better suited to the spiritual nurture of children than the left-brain logical analyses that we associated with the Scholastic approach. Maria Montessori was one of the first pedagogical theorists to realize the advantages of incorporating dynamic physical activities into the learning process for children. "The hand is in direct connection with man's soul. . .," she writes in *The Absorbent Mind*. "The skill of man's hand is bound up with the development of his mind. . ." (Montessori, 1995, p. 150). A little later in that book, Montessori contrasts the highly specialized use of the hands

and their necessary and very precise control by the active mind with the use of the less specialized muscles of the feet and legs which operate to a large degree independently of thinking as they respond to the biological requirements of bipedal locomotion. In that context, she makes this remark: "The development of movement is therefore duplex; partly it is tied to biological law; partly it is connected with the inner life; though both kinds are dependent on the use of muscles" (Montessori, 1995, p. 150). Inspired by her observation of children, Maria Montessori seems to be rather close to that notion of a muscular memory which Leclercq emphasizes in the monastic practise of the *lectio divina*.

Jerome Berryman in his approach to teaching children stories from the Bible follows the lead of Montessori as he incorporates techniques which encourage children to become physically active and prayerfully contemplative. His method, which he calls *Godly Play*, makes room for the creative responses of children to the stories they are told. As the children listen to a story being performed, they form an aural memory of it, in a way not unlike monks might have experienced the *lectio divina* (Berryman, 1991). With an emphasis on stimulating the imagination of the listeners, the stories are told with the help of minimalist figurines and settings more sparse than a Shakespearean stage. Children who return often to the story circle will eventually hear the same story several times, a feature which also resembles the monastic notion of the *ruminatio*. During the play time that follows storytelling, children are invited to return to the story through activities in which they may become physically as well as intellectually active. They may in their turn choose to perform the story themselves using the same materials used by the storyteller.

The objective of the Scholastic approach to Scripture was science and knowledge, while the monastic approach aimed at producing wisdom and appreciation in the heart of the reader (Leclercq, 1982). Respect for the text, while important, remains subordinate to respect for the child whose inner freedom remains central when considering the ways in which a story might be used to his or her spiritual benefit.

Interpretive Freedom and the Child's Inviolate Spirit

As we saw, psychiatrists like Bettelheim and Coles are acutely aware of the harm that insensitive adults can do when they intrude carelessly into the inner life of the child. The nurture of the spiritual life through narrative, no less a delicate matter, is tied up with the questions of subjectivity and objectivity in interpretation that we have been discussing. Stanley Fish has defended the validity of subjective interpretation for more than 40 years. In fact, his anti-foundationalist and anti-essentialist position denies the possibility of any truly objective interpretation. Fish of course is joined in this rejection of objectivity in interpretation or scientific description by a host of other scholars including such notable figures as Thomas Kuhn, Northrop Frye and Jacques Derrida. His trademark approach consists in giving detailed attention to the reader's experience during the interpretive process. Meaning for Fish is not to be sought in the mind of the author nor in the formal semantic or stylistic units

of the text; it is rather a sequential process that happens to the reader (Fish, 1972). Everything that happens in the reading process—the doubts, the expectations created, the questioning, the images projected as well as all the other mental activities of the reader—are as much a part of the meaning of a text as are the conclusions reached once reading has finished. Reading is an event, or series of events, in which the reader's activity is central. The experience of the text changes the reader, to greater or lesser extents, depending on the way in which the reader engages the text. Like the monks who practise *lectio divina*, Fish is more concerned with the effects a text produces in the reader than with any objective meaning that might be lifted from the text. Meaning is always personal, always subjective and can never be predetermined by any authority whatsoever, not even by the author of the text. There is simply no substitute for the reader's personal experience with the text (Fish, 1972, p. 393).

To accept this anti-foundationalist position is to recognize that no objective basis exists for determining whether or not a particular reading is better or worse than any other particular reading. How then, can one avoid the "intellectual disarray and pedagogical anarchy" which the detractors of reader-response critics believe must ensue where such practises are encouraged? Fish argues convincingly that such dangers are more perceived than real. Just as there is no pure objectivity, there is no pure subjectivity. Readers, critics and all interpreters are members of interpretive communities and in this sense, no matter how original they believe themselves to be, their originality only makes sense when considered against the beliefs and practises of the interpretive community from which they emerge and to whom their comments are addressed.

Fish belongs to the school of American pragmatism, a philosophical perspective which replaces objectivity with a less absolute claim. In an article he published in 1887 entitled "Knowledge as Idealization", John Dewey, one of the founders of American pragmatism introduced the notion of "warranted assertability" (Dewey, 1975, pp. 176–193). John Patrick Diggins explains how Dewey showed the impossibility of knowing the immediate existence of objects and repudiated the "whole notion of truth as an enduring idea capable of being directly present to the mind" (Diggins, 1994, p. 229).

> The epistemologist wants to know such objects "out there" in the real world. But Dewey explained why all objects as existing entities are empty and devoid of meaning until perceived.[. . .] "An idiot," wrote Dewey, "has as many ideas, qua existences, as Shakespeare; the delirious patient has, in all probability, more in a given time than his physician." Such ideas exist as physical facts without psychical meaning, as sensations without significance. It is only intelligence in the form of attention, reflection, and inquiry that gives experience meaning and significance (Diggins, 1994, p. 229).

Warranted assertability holds that propositions are warranted only to the extent that their predictions deriving from hypotheses are observed and verified (Diggins, 1994). Any discourse then would be evaluated for the effects it produces. The plans of architects have warranted assertability to the degree that their buildings remained standing, are adapted to the actual use of their inhabitants, are aesthetically pleasing, and so forth.

Following this logic, the choice of literature to be given to children with a view to nurturing their inner, spiritual lives could not be made on the basis of critical acclaim or magisterial proclamation. Ultimately, the choice of stories to be told should be determined by the effects they produce in readers and listeners. The assertability of any statement would be evaluated not with reference to the past, but rather by verification in the future. Accordingly, Fish, the pragmatist, rather than try to reconstruct the author's original intent or to extract meaning from the forms and structures of the text, seeks to describe the effect that a particular word, sentence, paragraph or literary work produces in the reader, i.e. to describe what that literary unit does to the reader. This approach to literature values individual and subjective response to a text. At the same time, it recognizes that communities which value spirituality construe literary texts in such a way that elements which produce spiritual effects in readers are readily identified (Hurley, 2005; Lacoste, 1989).

The importance of the interpretive community became quite apparent to me when I submitted a piece to Canadian Children's Literature for publication. In the rich exchanges I had with the editor on the topic of spiritual transcendence, I had to defend an interpretation which was at odds with virtually all of the critical opinion available on Robert Munsch's *Love You Forever*. The editor, perhaps taking the lead from the theoretical grounding I had presented in my own article, suggested that this divergence was likely the result of the particular sensibilities of my home discipline, that of biblical studies. Most other critics, he hastened to add, had not seen what I claimed to see in this narrative. In fact, most critics attacked Munsch's book on grounds of Freudian weirdness, of outmoded images of motherhood or of plain sappiness. From my perspective, these learned attacks did nothing to explain why this particular book has sold about a million copies every year since it was first published. I sought to identify textual features which to a great many readers—young and not so young—produced effects of the transcendent spirituality I described earlier. The difference of opinion between my way of reading Munsch's book and those of the other critics who had written about it may have much to do with the assumptions of our respective interpretive communities. No longer accepting that objective truth is rationally accessible, I opt for an indirect expression of truth of the kind that is made possible through narrative, an effect first described by Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855). This is the idea that stories may permit a form of indirect communication, conveying "truths" which become unintelligible, inaccessible or inaudible when one attempts to communicate them directly (see Lacoste).

Kierkegaard's position stood opposed to an approach to literature which had been gaining ascendancy for quite some time. Stanley Fish (1972), in literary criticism, and Hans Frei, (1974) in biblical criticism, have both pointed out that by the end of the 17th century, hermeneutics had abandoned the notion that a narrative should be read as if the experiences it offered could lead the reader to conversion and move him to action. From the 18th century onward, criticism begins, on the one hand, to reduce biblical narratives to a source of abstract moral or theological truths, or on the other hand, to use them as a way of getting at the historical context in which the Bible was written. Both of these uses short-change the reader by supplanting the experience of personal interpretation with the conclusions and goals of other, "expert" readers.

The individual reader has lost the opportunity to taste and see for herself, to decide whether or not to accept the "truth" which the narrative is indirectly pushing her to accept (Placher, 1989). Fish contends that the reason why certain literary forms disappeared after the end of the 17th century was because readers came to believe that truth was not something one arrived at by a dialectical process of discovery but a certainty one could positively determined with the tools of objective science (Fish, 1972).

Since to educate for the spiritual is to point towards experiences of the transcendent, through consciousness raising and perspectival transformation, it would appear that pre-critical approaches to narrative offer the greatest promise of achieving this deictic function. A spiritual vision of the world, of the type I have been describing, necessarily transcends a rationally attainable version of the real. Communities interested in these sorts of intellectual, social, political and emotional effects have consistently appealed to literature in the ways suggested by Frei and Fish. On this view, narratives are not the repositories of objective truth, nor are they a mere recipient for a pre-determined message. Narratives, when left to spin their web of enchantment, are invitations to an alternative way of perceiving and inhabiting the world. The very acceptance of the invitation already constitutes an experience of transcendence. Speaking of biblical narrative in particular, Herbert Schneidau rightly contends that "narratives transcend, even evade, theology, more surely than they serve as vivid embodiment or dramatization of it" (Schneidau, 1986, p. 133). People will look in vain for the meaning of life in books, but they may have reading experiences that make them feel more fully alive. The distinction I would make here is the distinction between a purely rational, so-called objective approach to narrative and a more intuitive, imaginative and subjective approach.

Narrative and Self-Awareness

The connection between narrative and the languages of fiction alluded to by Rebecca Nye runs much deeper than one might at first expect. Julian Jaynes in his book *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* argues convincingly that all human memory is not simply a storing up and retrieval of sensory perceptions (in the way that a computer might store and retrieve images). What takes place in the mind is an imaginative re-creation of how things must have been when we experienced whatever it is we are remembering (Jaynes, 1976). Each time we recall something, we create the story of the event in our mind's eye. Jaynes calls this propensity of the human mind to constantly create stories *narratization*. In one's imagination, one is able to recall events in which one participated through the use of a storied version of the self, an analog "I" (Jaynes, 1976). This alter ego, this narrative self, allows a person to be doing something vicariously in his imagination which he is not actually doing. "In consciousness, we are always seeing our vicarial selves as the main figures in the stories of our lives" (Jaynes, 1976, p. 64). Consciousness itself, then, uses narrative and may even be understood as a form of narrative.

If consciousness implies the existence of narratives, and if the emergence of the self in one's consciousness is the result of one's ability to make narratives, then a link between storytelling, self-discovery and self-transcendence seems obvious. If these assumptions may be granted, then the way in which we become conscious of our selves and our relationship to everything that is not our selves would appear to be tied up with our ability to tell and to hear stories. A person narratizes or emplots (White, 1974, pp. 277–304) or fictionalizes (Alter, 1981) her relationships to herself, to those around her, to God and to the world, in countless stories of varying complexity, with a host of characters which will always include what Jaynes calls the

How people narratize or emplot themselves may depend on the kinds of stories they are told about themselves during critical periods in their development. It may also depend on the kinds of fictions to which they are exposed but in which they are not present, the various experiences of the world through literature and narratives which children read, see or hear. The process of self-emplotment is undoubtedly a delicate one All manner of roles may be played by the "I", from humiliation and degradation, through the humdrum and the everyday and all the way up to glorification and exultation. We can be heroes or villains, irreplaceable or worthless, depending on the stories we consciously or unconsciously tell ourselves or allow others to tell about us. Parents, teachers, siblings, significant adults all play important roles in the attitudes and beliefs we nurture about ourselves, about life in general and about the world we live in and the people we are surrounded by. If we are encouraged to develop our imagination, encouraged to be creative and to try new things, we may begin to tell ourselves stories that foster love, hope and trust.

Conversely, if those whom we depend upon for the gift of ourselves through story stifle our creativity, our sense of self-worth and our feeling of being loveable, we may find much greater difficulty in experiencing transcendence and in feeling liberated. Therefore, the stories we tell to those who depend on us for the development of their self-identity is of crucial importance.

Conclusion

The experience of literature is often liberating; at its best, it is transcendent. When this shining event occurs, narrative gives way to *kairos*; the limitations of time and space cease to be felt. In the twinkling of an eye, readers can enjoy a sunrise on a distant planet, smell the streets of Ancient Rome or feel the pangs of hunger in a refugee camp. Stories allow us to live vicariously, to assume new identities, to form new relationships with heretofore unknown persons and to reassess the world from novel vantage points. These flights of the imagination are much more than mere escapism. In fact, as Jaynes has pointed out, all human consciousness functions on the basis of narratizing, of stories we invent in which we project a vicarial version of our selves. How we emplot ourselves and our relationship to everything that is not ourselves is at the core of the spiritual life.

The literary imagination is infectious in its ability to suggest novel and hopeful ways of responding to the challenges life throws at us. Through narrative, we

become conscious of our own ability to tell a new story about our everyday world. Things we accept as incontrovertible, historical and scientific limitations can be transformed when we weave a new tale around them. This was the experience of Robert Coles' young patient who faced the effects of polio more serenely once he had spent some time kicking about with Huck Finn; and of Bettelheim's young woman who, thanks to her unexplained fascination with Hansel and Gretel, eventually realized that she needed to liberate herself from her brother's protective but stifling influence. Looked at from another perspective, these examples of moral courage and psychological liberation might just as easily be appreciated as reading events in which readers transcend the limitations of their lives and establish new understandings of themselves, of others and of their worlds.

Story making is world making. The writer's ability to dream things that have not yet been is the very ability to animate life, to enrich it, to transform it. We recognize the spiritual in the power of the subjective, inner life to transform the objective, external world. Narrative can even transform the past, for the significance of the past like everything else in our world is a socially constructed, word-bound reality that is susceptible to change when it is emplotted differently. Transcendent spirituality of the sort encountered through literature is therefore more than a passive awareness of the world and of one's relationships. It involves no less than the construction of self and world. This is why reading is such a demanding activity: it requires no less than a re-writing and a concretizing of the story each time it is read. We re-write texts using our pre-understandings, the sum of our experiences, as our point of departure. It would not be an exaggeration to say that a reader catches glimpses of the self in and through the encounter with stories.

However, not everything in the reading process is open to rational scrutiny. Narrative, as we have seen, communicates truth indirectly; and as Bettelheim has shown, it makes its effects felt through the subconscious mind. In the fascination which certain stories hold for the individual we see how literature can transcend rationality, revealing the mystery of our inner lives, the mystery of selfhood. And it is this link between literature and the inner life that makes it so crucial to choose good literature for children and to present it in ways respectful of their personhood. We have heard sage advice on both these matters from Bruno Bettelheim. Rather than use literature as an excuse for what Bleich has called "the unambiguous presentation of accepted formalisms," the transmission of a message, children should be free to respond to the story in whatever way they choose (or not at all). Berryman's method is exemplary in its refusal to tell children what stories mean and in its openness to unforeseeable outcomes.

When used with spiritual nurture in mind, literature should not be critically analysed in the way one might use it for the honing of keen intellectual skills, although this use of literature might be justified in other circumstances. Encouraging the subjective response to narrative is its very raison d'être when considered from the point of view of what Hay and Nye have called of "relational consciousness". I am in full agreement with Stanley Fish when he says that the purpose of studying literature is not to make better poems but rather to make better people. Spiritually significant literature, literature that does more than merely inform or entertain, may have the

power to produce wisdom and appreciation in the heart of the reader. But since meaning is always personal and individual, there is no reliable way to choose a book that will fit every reader. A child who receives a rich education will, however, be exposed to a wide variety of narratives in the course of their schooling. The astute teacher would do well to heed the counsel of Maria Montessori who advised us to "follow the child". Literature will be evaluated not for its objective characteristics but rather for the effects it produces in the child and the careful pedagogue will pay attention to these effects in each child under his or her care.

As a final note, let us not forget that reading for children is a physical event. Children learn by doing, and the way they participate physically in story telling will affect whether or not they experience the story as liberating or as binding. Like monks chanting the psalms, their memory has a muscular dimension to it. When children can see a story unfold before their eyes through the use of figurines or felt boards at the same time they hear it, when they can set their imaginations to work in responding to the story through some creative outlet, the chances are good that they will store it in memory (or even in the unconscious) for future use in unforeseeable ways. The ultimate goal of the spiritual life is of course to help the person become the author of his or her own life's story, weaving a tale of hope and trust out of whatever life throws at them. Sometimes, this takes the genius of a Shakespeare, sometimes the playfulness of a Dr. Seuss.

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Chapter 66
Enhancing Children's Wellbeing: The Role of Sex and Relationships Education—A Case Study from Greece

Margarita Gerouki

Abstract For years, sex education was separate from schooling in Greece. Meanwhile, sexual health indicators, the number of sexual abuse cases, and child prostitution are troubling. Comprehensive sex education school program is one way to improve sexual health and promote wellbeing. Following the latest educational reform (2001), sex education found a place in the primary school, as part of the extra curriculum Health Education activities. These programs, however, are highly ignored by teachers, although teachers in general subscribe on the importance of sex education. Understanding this "paradox" provides ways to challenge teachers' current attitudes. A fuller implementation of such programs might prove the key for enhancing healthier, fuller life, and wellbeing.

Introduction

The aim of the present work is to present and discuss research findings that support the beneficial influence of school sex and relationships education programs[1] on children's wellbeing. The UK Sex Education Forum defines sex and relationships education as "learning about sex, sexuality, emotions, relationships, sexual health and ourselves." As a pedagogical intervention, sex and relationships education targets school-age populations and aims at enhancing knowledge, as well as creating attitudes, beliefs, values, and skills that will have a positive impact on young people's sexual health and wellbeing. Sexual health encompasses those cognitive, affective, and social aspects of sexuality in ways that benefit the general health and wellbeing of the individual. The World Health Organization defined *sexual health* as "the integration of the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social aspects of sexual being in ways that are positively enriching, and that enhance personality, communication and love..." (Lottes, 2000a, p. 13). Sexual health is achieved by making informed decisions regarding sexual and reproductive behavior, within the framework of societal and personal ethics.

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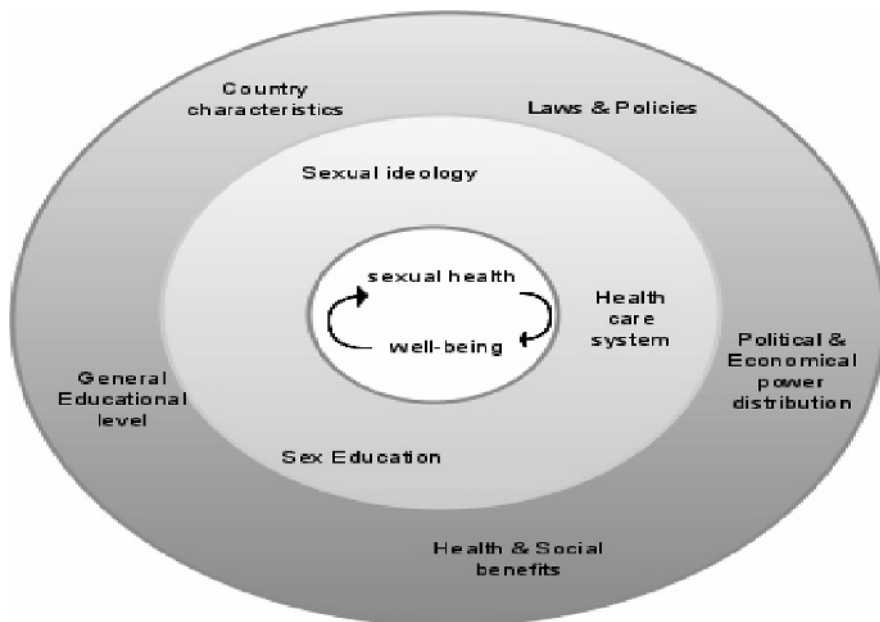
Fig. 66.1 1 Macro and micro influences to sexual health and its relation to wellbeing. Adapted from Lottes (2000b)

In this work, the concepts of sexual health and wellbeing[2] are treated as interactive, interdependent elements within the individual (Fig. 66.1). That is, sexual health affects perceptions of wellbeing, which in turn influence sexual healthy choices. According to Lottes (2000b) sexual health is being influenced by direct (micro) and indirect (macro) conditions. In the micro level, perceptions on sexual health are shaped by the individual's sexual ideology (beliefs about sex and sexuality in general); the content and extent of received sex education; and the quality and accessibility of relevant health care services (pp. 36–37).

In the macro level, the individual's sexual health is influenced by the country's special features such as political ideology, political and societal stability, Gross Domestic Product, religiosity, alcohol and drug use, and the like. Moreover, important are particular laws and policies, as well as the way political and economical power, and health and social benefits are distributed. Finally, the general educational level (literacy rate) of the society is also influential.

As the above illustration shows, education is regarded as a powerful tool for promoting sexual health and wellbeing. The important role of education is recognized in both, the micro and the macro level. However, although education is not reserved for particular establishments, still schools remain the most important institutions for the provision of organized, planned, goal-oriented pedagogical interventions that can reach high numbers, or the totality of the targeted population. Actually, it has been argued that attending school is a factor per se that reduces sexual risk-taking attitudes (Kirby, 2002a).

As a school-based intervention, sex and relationships education is essential. On the one hand, children and young people want to learn about relationships, sex, and sexuality (McKay, 2000; Milton, 2001; Halstead & Waite, 2001; Blake, 2002). On the other hand, children do not live in a sealed, protected world. They need, accordingly, help in learning how to process the many and different messages about sexuality they may receive each day from various sources. Parental guidance on the subject is not always sufficient or unquestionable as many studies demonstrate (Ioannidi-Kapolou, 1997; Thomaidis, Tsarmaklis, Ktenas, & Georgiadou, 1997; Milton, 2000, 2001, 2002; Kakavoulis, 2001; Halstead & Waite, 2001; Somers & Surmann, 2005; Selwyn & Powell, 2007). It remains important the fact that for some children school may be their main source of accurate information and education regarding sexuality issues.

Many researchers argue that sex education is most effective when given before a young person becomes sexually active. As Sears (1992, p. 25) explicitly states "the consequence of sexual illiteracy is sexually mature adolescents with intellectually immature sexual understandings." Addressing the issue early enough might be the path to healthy, responsible choices in the future. "Information given at the right age helps form sexual identity, supports self-esteem, and reduces risky behaviour" (Brandt, Cacciatore, Ritamies, & Apter, 2000, p. 98). Therefore, there is a strong consensus among researchers for introducing sex and relationships education at an early stage of the educational system (Goldman & Goldman, 1982; Ioannidi-Kapolou, 1997; Kakavoulis, 1995, 2001; Brandt et al., 2000; Milton, 2000; Halstead & Waite, 2001; Somers & Eaves, 2002; Somers & Surmann, 2005; Gerouki, 2007).

The majority of Western countries offer at some point in their education system school-based sex and relationships education, although integration of these programs to each country's school curriculum differs. Discussing about sex, sexuality, and relationships is a sensitive issue. Sexuality touches upon the most private aspects of the personality. "While sexuality involves anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry, it also includes self-concept, gender role, relationships, life-styles, religious beliefs, societal mores, and much more" (Koch, 1992, p. 252). This special values dimension, however, is the particular quality that distinguishes sex education from mere instruction (Halstead & Waite, 2001, p. 59).

As various studies establish, securing a pedagogically effective school-based sex and relationships education is a rather complex issue mainly because a number of important factors should be taken under consideration (McKay, 2000; Milton, 2000, 2001; Buston & Wight, 2001; Halstead & Waite, 2001; Wight et al., 2002; Kirby, 2002a, 2002b; Lottes, 2002; Buston & Wight, 2006). Factors that influence effective development and implementation of sex education are context and content dependent (Table 66.1). Context-related factors involve the wider community, the particular school environment, and the participants involved. Content-related conditions refer to the planning of the intervention and its underlying goals (Blake & Frances, 2001; Blake, 2002; Kirby, 2002b; Wight et al., 2002).

This work aims to offer evidence-based information, provide useful resources, and encourage further the discussion on how schools can contribute to children's wellbeing through the implementation of sex and relationships education programs.

Table 66.1 Factors for effective school sex and relationships education

Regarding context, sex education should	Regarding content, sex education should
• Address local needs	• Be theory based, particularly on theories that target behavioural changes
• Be linked to community support and health care services	• Be empowering for all pupils regardless nationality, gender, religious or other differences
• Involve children, parents and the wider community in planning	• Support open view of sexuality
• Be developed in a safe-school context	• Encourage self-acceptance
• Start before puberty	• Teach about contraception
• Be delivered by trained educators or peers who subscribe in the program's aims and goals	• Practice negotiation and communication skills that address social pressures
	• Occupy sufficient time in the curriculum

Discussing sex and relationships issues within an educational context and under the appropriate guidance creates an atmosphere where pupils not only feel safe to express their concerns and questions, but also learn to process information in a critical manner, as data from a Greek sex education program, presented in this chapter, support.

In the following section, the ways sex education has an affect to young people's health and wellbeing are discussed. For example, sex education programs have been beneficial in reducing pregnancies, risky sexual behavior, and exposure to sexually transmitted diseases, as well as in increasing the use of condoms and contraceptives. Young people who received sex and relationships education are more likely to delay becoming sexually active and when they do, are more likely to practice safe sex as the paradigms of the Netherlands and Finland that are presented, as well, show. In contrast, young people's sexual health is more at risk in countries where sex education programs are limited, as data from Greece indicate.

The Benefits of Sex and Relationships Education

Psychosexual development is an integral part of children's overall development. When implementing sex education interventions, practitioners aim to generate a beneficial influence on children's lives at present, as well as in the future, as healthy and well-adjusted individuals.

Children who are not educated about healthy sexuality are more at risk from exploitation and abuse (R. Goldman & J. Goldman, 1982; Milton, 2000). This phenomenon has two dimensions, however, involving both the victim and the offender. "The majority of patients with paraphilias—deviant sexual behaviors—described a strict anti-sexual upbringing in which sex was either never mentioned or was actively repressed or defiled" (Money, in Levine, 2002, p. 12). As argued, sexual

abuse is a traumatic experience for the victim, but also an indication of the offender's psychological disorder. Therefore, the role of sex education is dual: on the one hand, it might act as a preventive step when based on healthy views of sex and sexuality and, on the other hand, it might offer the child at risk the information and skills needed to understand and react to possible abuse attempts (R. Goldman & J. Goldman, 1982, p. 48). Issues of sexual and reproductive rights, questions of consent, trust, security, privacy, and the like are part of the sex education curriculum. It is also possible that classroom discussions will help some children to find the help they deserve.

Research indicates that the provision of sex and relationships education which meets specific standards has a positive impact on students' sexual health and overall wellbeing (Hubbard, Giese, & Rainey, 1998; Blake & Frances, 2001; Kirby, 2002a, 2002b; Somers & Eaves, 2002; Buston & Wight, 2002, 2006). There is no research evidence to support that provision of such programs contributes to the onset or frequency of sex, or the number of sexual partners (Kirby, 2001; Somers & Eaves, 2002; Kontula, 2004). Comprehensive sex education programs can increase knowledge, delay sexual intercourse, reduce the number of sexual partners, and increase safe sex practices. Also, sex education programs had a positive impact in reducing adolescent sexual risk-taking, unintended pregnancy, childbearing, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, thus improving overall sexual health and wellbeing (Kirby, 2002b; Kontula, 2004). In contrast, young people who reported having more frequent sexual activity received most information on various sexuality-related topics from sources like media, peers, and family whereas at the same time were exposed to limited school sex education (Somers & Surmann, 2005, p. 48).

When sex education is active implementation: the paradigms of the Netherlands and Finland

> The Netherlands is often trotted out as an example of how sex education can be handled better. [. . .] The average age for the first experience of intercourse is almost 18. When 84% use contraception; 93% of the young people say that they always use contraception; the pregnancy rate is only 4.2 per 1,000, as is the abortion rate. Both are among the lowest in the world (Roberts, 2000, p. 16).

Comprehensive sex education has been a mandatory subject in all secondary Dutch schools for many decades. At the same time many of the elementary schools discuss sexuality and contraception issues as well. The underlying belief is that education is more beneficial than denial (Valk, 2000). "Dutch policy makers use research, pragmatism, and an ethics approach that tries to teach responsibility in sexual decision making as the basis for their sexual health programs" (Lottes, 2002, p. 81).

Finland is another example of a European country that has adopted approaches that are guided by healthy rather than moralistic principles in order to deal with social problems related to sexual behaviour (Lottes, 2000a, p. 22). Finland is among the leading nations worldwide regarding the general high level of sexual health of

the population and the implementation of sexual rights (Brandt et al., 2000, p. 99). Finnish health policies recognize the interrelation between the individual condition of health and perceptions of wellbeing. In general, abortion rate, teen pregnancy rates, and teen abortion rate in Finland are remarkably low. The decline in those rates has been attributed to the enactment of particular policies that affect family planning, health care, and comprehensive sex education. The use of various contraceptive methods is highly prevalent among the population, and emergency contraception is discussed in sex education classes at school. Knowledge on sexual and reproductive issues is rated very high as well. The levels of STDs and HIV/AIDS in Finland are also low as compared to international levels (Lottes, 2000a; Kosunen, 2000; Lottes, 2002).

Greece, on the other hand, shares many characteristics that influence sexual health (see introduction) with European countries, such as the Netherlands or Finland. A significant difference, however, is to be found in the provision of sex education. The following part discusses sexual health data from Greece aiming to illustrate further the negative impact of the lack of sex education.

When Sex Education Is Missing—The Case of Greece

Data from a Greek study (Kordoutis, Loumakou, & Sarafidou, 2000) show that Greek males tend to have their first sexual intercourse a little earlier (M = 16.69) than females (M = 17.85). However, approximately 10% of 15-year-old girls and 34% of boys of the same age in Greece had already experienced their first sexual intercourse (HBSC, report 2001/2002). According to Lottes (2000b, p. 39), sexual health indicators include sexual knowledge and satisfaction; the incidence and prevalence of sexual problems; general abortion rates; teen pregnancy and abortion rates; contraceptive prevalence; sexual abuse and assault rates; maternity and morbidity rates; and infertility rates. Reports on those indicators in Greece, with the exception of maternity and morbidity rates, paint a rather gloomy picture for the overall health of the population.

Sexual Knowledge

Most young women in Greece rely on informal sources, such as friends and the media, for receiving information on sexuality issues (Mavroforou et al., 2004). The same applies to most men of all ages (Tountas, Creatsas, Dimitrakaki, Antoniou, & Boulamatsis, 2004). Most Greeks today appear to have vague, and often wrong information about contraception. For example, a very small percentage of the research respondents (30.6% of women and 14.7% of men) were able to answer correctly basic questions about contraceptive issues. At the same time, only 4% of the women seek preventive consultation with a medical expert (Tountas et al., 2004).

Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Problems

According to the Hellenic Center for Disease Control and Prevention (HCDCP), the cumulative number of reported HIV/AIDS infections in Greece by October 2006 rose to 8,080 (one of the highest such numbers in Europe). Moreover, the reported cases of infection were increasing steadily for both men and women. In 2005, particularly, there was a significantly increased rate of 50.7 per million (double compared to 2004).

General Abortion Rates, Teen Pregnancy, and Abortion Rates

Abortions in Greece are estimated to be 300,000, one of the highest abortion rates in Europe (three to four times higher than among women from the Netherlands, for example). "One in four women of reproductive age had had at least one unwanted pregnancy ending in abortion in their lifetime. The rate was one in ten in the age group 16–24 and as high as one in three in the age group 35–45" (Ioannidi-Kapolou, 2004, High rates of abortion, para 9).

Contraceptive Prevalence

According to a national survey on contraceptive use, half of the 1,500 respondents reported the use of condoms, 21.7% withdrawal, 4.8% the pill, and 3.6% the IUD (in Ioannidi-Kapolou, 2004, Low contraceptive use, para 4). The rate of non-use of any contraceptive method among fertile, sexually active women is reported to be 14–25% (Tountas et al., 2004). In a study on the sexual relationships characteristics and safe sex practices of Greek young people (18–25 years old), data indicated that about 58% of them had used a condom during their first sexual intercourse, a number that becomes lower for their most recent sexual intercourse. One quarter of the participants had used no safe sex practices of any kind during their most recent intercourse. In 80% of the cases, the condom was neither used nor discussed, whereas in the rest, one of the partners refused to use it (Kordoutis et al., 2000).

Sexual Abuse and Assault Rates

One in six girls and one in 16 boys had experienced some kind of child sexual abuse, ranging from non-contact experiences to exhibitionism and intrafamilial types, including incest (Agathonos-Georgopoulou, 1997). In a press release (November–December 2001), the Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM) voiced its concern over the problem of child sexual abuse in Greece. According to press report 15,000 children, mainly girls, under the age of 16 have been victims of sexual abuse in the last 10 years in Greece. These children, who come from Balkan,

Eastern European, or Asian countries, were forced into prostitution. One million "respectable" men (about one-third of the current sexually active male population) have paid for these kinds of "sexual services."

Fertility Rates

The general fertility rate is showing a decreased tendency in Greece, 2.33 in 1975 and 1.34 in 1998, whereas the minimum level for maintaining homeostatic population is 2.1 (Kreatsas, 2003). A further decline of the fertility rate to 1.24 is estimated for the period 2000–2005 (Tontas et al., 2004). Press reports at the same time raise the issue of the number of couples that face infertility problems in Greece to 150,000. According to various announcements in medical conferences, infertility problems are attributed to previous terminated pregnancies (Triantafyllou, in Ioannidi-Kapolou, 2004).

Sexual health indicators in Greece provide a picture of a population that faces various sexual health-related problems. Greeks seem to use abortion as a contraceptive method; often practice unsafe sex; have generally erroneous knowledge about contraception and other sexual-related issues; face infertility problems; and report many cases of sexual abuse and child abuse. Because of these data, sexual health researchers agree that Greece presents a picture of an underdeveloped country where preventive mechanisms are not employed. Moreover, to a great extent, they attribute the gaps in knowledge, as well as particular behaviors (unprotected sex), and attitudes (lack of negotiation), to the absence of systematic, structured, school-based sex education (Agathonos-Georgopoulou, 1997; Kordoutis et al., 2000; Kakavoulis, 2001; Kreatsas, 2003; Mavroforou et al., 2004; Ioannidi-Kapolou, 2004; Tountas et al., 2004).

It has been discussed so far the beneficial impact of school sex education for children's health and wellbeing. The cases of some European countries, such as the Netherlands, Finland, and Greece had been used to strengthen the argument of the influential role of comprehensive sex education. The aim of the final part of this work is to illustrate further through a case study, how sex education has had a positive influence on children's overall health and wellbeing in Greece. The Greek educational system provides limited possibilities for sex education at the moment. However, data from a sex education program that is presented here allow for some significant assumptions to be made.

Enhancing Children's Wellbeing Through a Sex Education Program

For many years, sex and relationships programs have been excluded from school-based interventions in Greece. The educational reform of 2001, however, introduced Health Education[3] in the form of interdisciplinary, extracurricular activities for the primary school. Health Education is an optional choice for teachers who are

interested in working with project-based methods. Sex and Relationships Education is one of the thematic units proposed for the development of various Health Education programs (Gerouki, 2007). However, as research indicates, the diffusion of sex education programs is particularly limited. Only 1.6% of the Health Education programs introduced in 2003–2004 were on Sex Education (Gerouki, 2009).

Case

The case study that is to be presented and discussed below comes from a joint sex education program conducted in 2003–2004 in two schools in the same geographical district of Greece. The material for presenting and discussing this program is based on the teachers' interviews (two separate semi-structured interviews), the unpublished teachers' report for the local Health Education office, as well as pupils' material (drawings and a play) produced as part of the program. All these were kindly provided by the teachers of the program for the research's purpose.

The participants were 15 pupils (10–11 years old) in the 5th grade in a rural school and 22 pupils (11–12 years old) in the 6th grade in an urban school in Greece, and their female teachers. The first teacher was a novice teacher having had 2 years of working experience at the time. The other one was an experienced teacher with a 20-year-long experience. The implementation of sex education as a topic was decided on by the teachers individually and was met with great enthusiasm from the pupils of both classes.

There were three principal influences on the teachers' decision to develop and implement a sex education program: the good working relationship they had with the Health Education coordinator of the district, who had originally suggested to them sex and relationships as a Health Education program; their need to implement something new and different; and the fact that, although they were working in two different schools at the time, they had already met and appreciated each other not only professionally but also personally. In their report, they also referred to the need to challenge the children's misconceptions on the subject of sex and help them adopt a positive attitude toward sexuality, an attitude that would be beneficial for these children in the future. They described their main goals as helping children to get to know their own body and the body of the "other"; to be informed about the basic hygiene rules; to be able to understand the changes in their bodies and be prepared for forthcoming changes; to be able to address and communicate sensitive (taboo) issues and feelings of guilt regarding sexuality; to prepare themselves for healthy gender relationships by gradually becoming aware of their personal and societal rights and responsibilities. Finally, they refer to the need to educate children on issues of sexual harassment and abuse (Mazokopaki & Kotsifaki, 2004, unpublished report).

The teachers had 1 h weekly and worked approximately 7 months to complete the program. However, both of them reported that they used many more teaching

hours (up to five) every week due to the interest in the subject that pupils showed. The title of the program was "Sex Education. Let's talk with our children about sex" and it was constructed around seven thematic units: Getting to know my body; Family; Gender equality; Sexual harassment and abuse; Love, Falling in love and sex; Intercourse and contraception; Gender relationships; and Homosexual relationships.

The program was based on material that the pupils or invited speakers brought to school; material the teachers could locate from various sources such as books, magazines, brochures, or in some cases, the Internet; and a few books and leaflets that the Health Education coordinator provided. Throughout the program the teachers used different approaches and teaching methods, mainly experiential techniques such as free association, group discussions, free or control conversations, and role and drama play. There were also group work activities such as producing artifacts, preparing and conducting interviews, and participating in experts' seminars. Some of these seminars provided by local psychologists or other health experts were organized for the parents as well.

Data Analysis

The following analysis aims to introduce the teachers' opinions as these were discussed in two separate interview accounts. Initial ideas for the coding came from the particular focus of the interviews which was to explore teachers' experiences when introducing a sex and relationships program. However, some codes were reconstructed in order to represent better the teachers' discussion concerning their experience. Teachers were asked to describe the program and discuss its aims and impact on the various stakeholders, namely the pupils, their parents, the teachers themselves and the wider school community. In most cases they were prompted to illustrate their accounts by using examples. Both interviews were recorded, and the transcripts were coded using NVIVO. The working language was Greek, this being the native language of the teachers and the researcher.

Findings

When the two teachers were asked to discuss the impact this program had on their pupils' wellbeing, a number of common issues within their interviews were identified. More particularly, through this program the teachers reported that they had the possibility to enhance existing knowledge levels; to challenge misconceptions on sexuality issues; to improve communication between pupils and their parents; to challenge current behaviors and encourage their critical thinking; to enable their students to develop negotiating and conversational skills; and to influence positively the pupils' self-perceptions.

Promoting Knowledge

The teachers believed that their pupils were familiar to a certain degree with the contents of the program, but at the same time their knowledge was rather superficial and not always accurate; and they still had a lot of questions to ask.

> They had information, because at that age and even at a younger age, children want to know about themselves and others, but there were cases of children who had received information from inaccurate sources, like talking with peers (D. §152).

> We had a lot of pictures and other material [when discussing the human body and genitals] . . . it was not the first time [for the pupils to see those] but they did not know how the inside part is. They did not know that the female reproductive organs are inside. They did not know what happens there. But they knew about the outer part (S. §332).

Halstead and Waite (2001) argue that children of this age, especially boys, are unable to make a distinction between films that offer accurate factual knowledge on conception or contraception issues as opposed to fictional ones. However, the implications are more serious when the source is some "adult" material. "The kids told me they had read a lot of porno magazines. They have seen movies too" (D. §158). The fact that some boys were familiar with pornographic work might be an explanation "for the links they often made between sex and violence, and their view of sex as a cause for much hilarity" (Halstead & Waite, 2001, p. 69).

Health 21, the health for all policy framework for the WHO European region, discusses the impact of sex education on young people's lives. "Unnecessary emotional stress is created by the lack of information and understanding about issues to do with sexuality, bodily changes and functions and emotional feelings" (p. 27). Particular incidences in the class illustrated the practical utility of sex education for enhancing individual's health.

> A boy came to talk to me about a problem that he had not realized was a problem. We were discussing hygiene issues and I talked about how boys should clean their genitals. I noticed this boy looked bothered. During the break he started crying. I asked him what had happened. He described his problem to me. It seemed like he had phimosis.[4] I reassured him that it is not serious and called his mother. She did not have a clue. When they had been to the doctor she came to school to thank me (S. §127–142).

For some pupils, due to family cultural particularities the school sex education programs are the only way to receive knowledge about sexuality-related issues. One of the teachers noted: "I had [5] pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. . . that is. . . these children, in their families. . . they were not allowed to have such discussions" (D. §76). It has been found that pupils' ethnic and religious background influences the level and content of similar conversations at home. For these pupils learning in school plays a more integral role (Milton, 2001; Somers & Surmann, 2005; Selwyn & Powell, 2007).

Encouraging Communication

According to the two teachers, another important outcome of the program was that classroom discussions helped to establish communication channels between parents and children. O'Donnell et al. (2007) argue that to an important degree, parents can help their children to delay sexual activity. Moreover, children from a young age wish to discuss sexuality matters with their parents. This program, as teachers comment, gave the opportunity to many families to start discussing sensitive issues.

> They [the parents] told me how much they liked it when children were coming home enthusiastic to search and learn... to find what we had discussed at school and talk with them. This gave the opportunity in many families for the parent to open up towards the child and the child towards the parent. To start talking... the grounds were set for a more meaningful bond between the child and the parents (D. §190–196).

However, parents and children also acknowledged that this was not always easy.

> ...some of the children tried [to discuss with their parents], and they came back to tell me that it was not possible. And at the same time parents were coming in to say that their children are approaching them, but they were embarrassed to discuss (S. §408).

Occasionally, the teacher became the mediator in this intrafamily communication. "I told them that you should learn to discuss with your parents and that sometimes parents are embarrassed to talk about these issues. It is not that they do not care or that they do not want to, but they are embarrassed and this is the reason" (S. §408).

Developing Skills

Both teachers thought that program discussions assisted in creating a trustful classroom environment where children felt free to express themselves and discuss their worries (Fig. 66.2).

Children had "opened up" because of the program and freely discussed their beliefs, fears, or worries. "There were these two cases where children came to tell me personal secrets" (S. §124). "The fact that they could talk about something which is 'forbidden' automatically gave them the opportunity to say things that were difficult to express otherwise" (D. §176).

As a result, teachers could provide some concrete advice and help the pupils further.

> A girl told me that some neighbor did something to her... [a gesture of indecent touching]. I told her to stay away from him, but if this happens again she should go straight to her mother or father, that she should not keep it a secret (S. §244).

Classroom discussions on sexuality-related issues helped pupils to learn about the feelings and views of the opposite sex (Allen, in Halstead & Waite, 2001, p. 73). At the same time, these discussions had a positive effect on overall attitudes toward democratic dialogue.
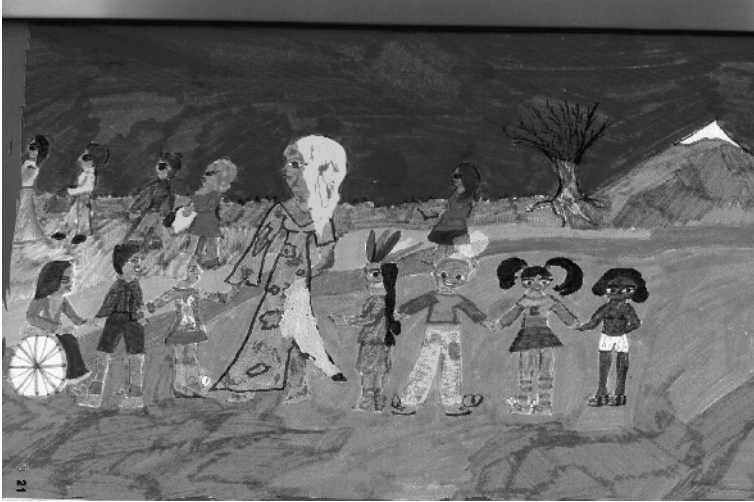
Fig. 66.2 A child's drawing. Illustration for a story about love as part of the program "Health Education–Sex Education" (the adult figure in the middle bears a great resemblance to the teacher of the class)

> We have learnt to discuss, for me it is very important. To be able to listen to what the other person has to say even if you do not necessarily agree... isn't it, it is very important. And even the fact that they were talking without insulting or dismissing each other. I told them that we should listen to all points of view because nobody knows everything, but by listening to different viewpoints we learn and construct our personal point of view. I considered that a success, that we learnt to proceed in a dialogue (D. §372).

Dialogue is the fundamental ingredient for building negotiating and critical skills. "The main task of dialogue in the classroom is to operate at the interpersonal level, building identity and empowering young people for citizenship in a plural global world" (Leganger-Krogstad, 2003, p. 185). Moreover, learning to discuss about sexual-related issues is crucial for being able to maintain healthy and satisfied life. For example, Kordoutis et al. (2000, p. 778) attribute the lack of discussion on condom use among young Greek adult couples "to the complete absence of negotiation culture about sexuality and sexual behaviour," emphasizing in addition the important role of education for developing negotiating skills.

Creating the opportunity for conversation and the conditions for open discussion on sensitive issues has been a source of pride for the teachers. They had felt that in that way they served their pupils' needs: "we have set the grounds for further reflection" (D. §370), and that this effect had long-lasting consequences. "The kids were so enthusiastic, even now when I meet them [four years later] they still discuss that program" (D. §184). "... and some of these kids, I do not mean that I did it... I just helped a bit, we can say it like that, they are wonderful kids" (S. §412).

It has been found that school sex education program implementations can alter participants' "views, intentions or behaviours in a concrete way" (Buston & Wight,

2006, p. 148). The teachers of this program also felt that, overall, their sex education implementation had a positive effect on pupils' personalities, as well as on their interrelationships. Especially some of the children who were shy, they did have the possibility through the program to open up.

> I asked them what they learnt from such films [porno]. . .. I told them love is not that. . . and because of these films I explained to them that women are viewed as sex objects. . . and then we discussed these issues (D. §171–172).

At other times current practices, especially gender-related ones, were the focus of many conversations. "I challenged them to start tidying up their room for a few days [the boys of the class considered cleaning a girl's task], and some [boys] did it. A mother called me to ask how I managed to change her son so much" (S. §396).

Conclusions

> Ignorance is the greatest of the problems (D. §291).

Among the most important targets for school-based educational practices is to provide children with the appropriate tools and skills that will enhance sensible decision making and healthy living practices for them in the future. It has been found that "participating in a high school comprehensive sexuality education course could have an impact on adult life behaviors or beliefs" (McCaffree & Matlack, 2001, p. 356). The development of emotional and social skills, necessary for responsible decision making, negotiating, developing friendships and relationships, is among the objectives of sex and relationships education. An increase in sexual knowledge in relation to the development of negotiating and decision-making skills sets the groundwork for a healthier living. By providing a well designed and appropriate sex education intervention, we might be able to create an atmosphere of security, trust, and understanding that children need in order to learn how to respect and accept others; to cultivate mature behavior; to understand sexual abuse; and also to improve overall health and wellbeing.

As data from this work support, school sex education programs can positively influence children's wellbeing, even in cases like Greece, where provision of sex education is still in a hybrid stage. The teachers talked with great enthusiasm about the program. For them it was a means to make an impact on their pupils' lives. Although it was not easy, mainly because there was no previous experience, no specific material, and no explicit framework authorized from an official source (such as the Ministry of Education), they felt that their pupils, because of this intervention, received information that facilitated understanding about themselves, their bodies, and others. Also, they were able to cultivate negotiating and communication skills and discuss issues that interested or bothered them. Classroom work for the sex education program encouraged communication between children and parents. At the same time, teachers found opportunities to encourage critical thinking on issues of gender relationships and sexuality as well.

A school classroom is like a small community. Relationships among members are dynamic and any situation, pedagogical or not, does not have a mono-dimensional impact. Any educational program that benefits the pupils of the class has at the same time a positive influence on the teachers' self-perceptions. To conclude this work, the teachers' own words will be quoted to describe the impact this sex education program had on them. These few words at the same time are a reminder that the wellbeing of the individual is achieved through the collective:

> While dealing with this subject we received in exchange the children's trust, respect, appreciation and love. There are a few ways to earn those valuable presents from the children. One of the most important ways is giving them truthful and honest answers to their questions, answers that do not underestimate them but can create life ties for them and for us!

Notes

1. The focus in this work is comprehensive sex education that emphasizes the benefits of abstinence while also teaching about contraception and disease-prevention methods (Starkman & Rajani, 2002). Abstinence programs that place sexual activity only within the marriage and promote abstinence as the only way to be protected from disease, have not been found successful to their goals (for a more detailed discussion on the subject, see Blake & Frances, 2001; also Levine, 2002). They have not positively influenced young population's sexual health as far as sexually transmitted diseases or rate of teenage pregnancies are concerned (McKay, 2000; Blake & Frances, 2001; Starkman & Rajani, 2002). Also, the evidences supporting the positive impact of abstinence programs to delaying sexual activity until marriage is but limited (Starkman & Rajani, 2002, p. 313).
2. A distinction should be made between the concepts of "wellbeing" and "sexual wellbeing". WHO defines sexual wellbeing as "the identification of sexual versatility and individuality in the sexual experiences and needs of each society and its members" (in Lottes, 2000, p. 13). In this chapter, wellbeing is treated as a more general condition that is influenced by individual perceptions and indicators of sexual health, among other factors.
3. The focus here is mainly on sex education programs provided in primary schools (grades 1–6). In secondary education (grades 7–9) Health Education was introduced in 1995. However, never has there been time allocated in the curriculum for Health Education activities. That means that secondary teachers and students who are interested to explore any Health Education topic should do that at the end of the official school day, as an extra-curricular activity. In the primary school, however, time (4 h for grades 1–3 and 2 h for grades 4–6 weekly) for Health Education interventions was given through the "flexible zone" time arrangement.
4. It is a condition where the foreskin cannot be fully retracted from the head of the penis.

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