

Dianne Rayson *Editor*

Education, Religion, and Ethics – A Scholarly Collection

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Pacific Theological College

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*For Iris Lily Hoskins—Mintie
And for our friend and inspiration, DB*

Foreword

This scholarly collection arose out of a *Festschrift* for Terence Lovat, Emeritus Professor at The University of Newcastle, Australia, celebrating his impressive body of scholarly work on the occasion of his 70th birthday. Many of Professor Lovat's former PhD students and other colleagues presented papers which were then compiled by Dianne Rayson into an informal publication. As participants and others saw its value, the idea grew of assembling a larger and more formal publication. *Education, Religion, and Ethics: A Scholarly Collection* is the exciting outcome of this project.

The collection contains updated research findings and insights concerning various philosophical aspects of education, including a number with explicit religious and ethical implications. The broad range of topics reflects the extensive multidisciplinary work of Professor Lovat who has supervised more than 40 doctoral projects across an array of disciplines, both at Newcastle and through other universities.

The collection is timely when one considers both new and enduring challenges facing education at school and university level. Topics addressed include what should be taught and how, the shrinking of the humanities, new insights on quality teaching, implications of new neuroscientific research, and the impact of new intercultural tensions and global conflicts. Additionally, the scholarly collection addresses a range of religious topics, including sensitive concerns about Islam and the West, Middle Eastern politics, and theological differences across traditions. In the field of ethics, some chapters similarly take up highly topical issues, including decision-making about life and death in an age of unprecedented life-saving technologies.

I commend *Education, Religion, and Ethics: A Scholarly Collection* as an important addition to individual and university libraries and I commend Dianne Rayson and the contributors for sharing their significant research findings in this

highly communicable format. The collection rightly honours Professor Lovat's scholarship across education, religion, and ethics—a springboard for exploring some of the thorniest issues of our times.

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Editor's Preface

Education, Religion, and Ethics: A Scholarly Collection is comprised of a series of chapters in the broad field of education, mostly characterised by a curriculum philosophy perspective, or religious/ethical orientation. Contributions range from the work of eminent scholars through to the fruits of freshly minted doctoral theses. While coming from a variety of professional vantage points and expertise, the chapter contents are underpinned by a common belief that the broadly philosophical foundations of any educational enterprise are vital, first to understanding and second to implementation if the education in question is to be efficacious. The work contains an implicit critique that philosophical consideration is all too often absent in a day and age characterised by instrumentalist aims and procedures, ones that elevate the importance of testing and measuring but relegate the importance of interpretation, critical reflection, and ethical rigour. The critique applies equally to educational priorities and imperatives to be found in all educational domains, primary and secondary schools, universities, and community-based education.

While covering a vast array of topics and utilising mixed methodologies, the collection shares a common view that religious and ethical insights are inextricably important to education at any level. Also common to the chapters is their reflection on and inspiration by the lifetime work of Terence Lovat (Emeritus Professor, University of Newcastle, Australia; University of Oxford, UK; University of Glasgow, UK; and Royal Roads University, Canada), who has either supervised or collaborated closely with each of the contributors. Many of the chapters also reflect the work of seminal scholars such as Jürgen Habermas, John Dewey, Edmund Husserl, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Mohamed Talbi, among others, scholars who have been central to Lovat's own educational, philosophical, and theological work.

The collection is divided into two sections, one explicitly educational in its school or higher education focus, while the other explores more broadly philosophical, theological, and ethical work with educational implications.

In the first section, *Education*, Terence Lovat offers a chapter titled *Religious and Theological Knowing: A Post-Enlightenment Educational Lacuna*. It is designed to introduce one of the central perspectives of the scholarly collection, namely, that

certain ways of knowing have been relegated to the margins of education as a result of what Habermas refers to as an Enlightenment failure. While focused specifically on Habermas's later reflections on religious and theological knowing, the chapter has broader ramifications for any underserved knowledge disciplines, including especially the humanities at a time that sees school and university enrolments plummeting across Western educational regimes. The chapter is followed by one from Gillian Houston, Terence Lovat, Ingrid Lunt, Allyson Holbrook, and Kerry Dally whose work from Oxford, UK, to Newcastle, Australia, has focused on the assumptions that underpin the higher education doctoral regime, along with their allied assessment and examination processes. Their work has served to make often-unquestioned assumptions and processes more transparent and answerable to governments and those higher education authorities that oversee such processes. This chapter, *The Viva in Doctoral Examination: A Habermasian Dialogic Occasion*, utilizes a Habermasian frame of reference in exploring findings from Houston's DPhil thesis at Oxford, one that focussed especially on the Viva (oral defence) component of doctoral examination.

The third chapter from Omar Salim is titled *Reimagining Higher Education in and for the Twenty-First Century: The Case for Integrative Education*. It focusses on the educational priorities of current North American tertiary institutions in making the case that the instrumentalist assumptions and associated practices that dominate and impose limitations on the regime could be replaced with alternative philosophies and practices, ones with greater potential to engage students in enlivened, more relevant curricula and pedagogy. The chapter refers to a vast qualitative data set from Salim's own doctoral research.

In the fourth chapter, Neville Clement summarises his own work as one of the chief investigators of the Australian Values Education Program (2003–2010) and associated research. The chapter, titled *Reimagining Values Education: Six Salient Concepts*, employs data from the initial and ongoing research to explore six concepts that, evidence suggests, serve to underpin efficacious pedagogy yet are underserved and largely unconsidered. The fifth chapter, *Values-Based Education for "At Risk" Students*, follows logically from the preceding chapter in disseminating data from a Queensland, Australia, school for marginalised boys where a values-based pedagogy has been implemented. The authors, Ron Toomey, Terence Lovat, Ron Farmer, Suwanti Farmer, and Craig Shealy, were responsible for the research and its dissemination. The sixth chapter by Sakineh Tashakori follows on from the preceding two chapters in making application of a values education framework, inspired by Habermasian epistemology, to an Iranian educational issue. The chapter, *Values Pedagogy as Educational Means of Reversing "the Clash of Civilizations": An Islam Versus the West Instance*, makes use of Tashakori's own doctoral research findings.

In the seventh chapter, titled *Dialogue in Religious Education: Balancing Theological and Educational Approaches*, Peta Goldberg addresses the ongoing debate about the appropriate location for religious education between theology and education, and the strengths and weaknesses of each conceptual approach for religious education practice. In chapter eight, *Telling a Story of Faith: Rival Narratives*

and Dialogue in the Work of Religious Education, Mark Hillis utilises a narrative approach, employing what he terms 'sympathetic engagement' in exploring ways in which Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religious educators might create opportunities for study of sacred narratives common across the traditions for mutual benefit and improved cross-faith understanding. In chapter nine, Edmund Parker reflects on the educational impact of Habermas and ways in which Terence Lovat's own work has modelled itself on it. *The Thinking of Habermas Undergirding Lovat's Educational Model* completes the first section of the scholarly collection.

In the second section, *Religion and Ethics*, Dianne Rayson draws on her vast research portfolio concerned with climate change and the relevance to the issue of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's ecotheology and ecoethics. In the tenth chapter, *Bonhoeffer's Practical Mysticism: Implications for Ecotheology and Ecoethics in the Anthropocene*, Rayson employs Terence Lovat's reflections on Bonhoeffer as a practical mystic as a prism for furthering reflection on Bonhoeffer's relevance to the greatest eco-moral issue of our generation. In the eleventh chapter, Terence Lovat explores the relevance of Bonhoeffer's theology to our understanding of certain aspects of Islam. *Bonhoeffer's Religionless Christianity in Conversation with Islamic Scholarship* reflects on similarities between Bonhoeffer's opposition to Reich Christianity and medieval and modern Muslim scholarship's opposition to certain institutional forms of Islam, most especially those that seem to condone if not endorse violence as an authentic Islamic response. In the twelfth chapter, *On the Significance of Histoire: Employing Modern Narrative Theory in Analysis of Tabari's Historiography of Islam's Foundations*, Amir Moghadam and Terence Lovat explore the space between narrative literalism and narrative memory, or interpretive history, in ascertaining how Islamic history has been interpreted to form a *histoire*, a combination of factuality and mythmaking. The differentiation between history, in the normally understood sense, and *histoire* is proposed as an important distinction to be made in any pedagogy designed to enhance understanding of Islam, both within and beyond the tradition.

The thirteenth chapter, *Arab-West International Relations: Jordan's Quest for Peace and the Role of Habermas Amid Israel's Proposed Annexation of Palestinian Lands*, sees Mohammad al-Jararwah drawing on Habermasian theory in an attempt to mitigate the relevant political disputes concerning the Arab Israeli conflict, both in terms of the confrontations at hand and potential resolutions. In the fourteenth chapter, *Multiformity and Dialogue in the Anglican Tradition: The Breakthrough of Communicative Action*, Brian Douglas uncovers the multiformity of philosophical and theological assumptions underlying Anglican eucharistic theology. He argues that the integrity of discourse in the Anglican eucharistic tradition, if not the entire tradition, depends on the understanding of and mutual respect for these varied assumptions. The fifteenth chapter, *Christian and Australian Indigenous Spiritualities of the Land*, by Christopher Sexton, draws the two named spiritual traditions into a rare conversation in their respective theologies of Land. Sexton argues for the potential for a greater complementarity between the two traditions than has been commonly acknowledged or even perceived.

In the sixteenth chapter, *The Proportionality Principle in Ethical Deliberation: A Habermasian Analysis*, Terence Lovat employs his own bioethical and theological research in applying a partly Habermasian analysis to the ancient, medieval, and modern debate about ethical principles and how best to implement them in practical ethical decision-making. The seventeenth chapter, by Paul Walker, follows on from the above chapter in utilising a Habermasian analysis to explore the bounds of informed consent through dialogic consensus. *Personhood, Autonomy, Death and Dialogic Consensus in Settings of Life-Supporting Biotechnology* derives largely from his own experiences as a medical professional reflecting on life and death decisions in clinical settings in the context of advanced technologies. The eighteenth chapter, *From Pacifism to Tyrannicide: Considering Bonhoeffer's Ethics for the Anthropocene*, is reprinted from an article in the *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion* in which Dianne Rayson considers the ethics of tyrannicide (eliminating the tyrant) from the standpoint of Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was faced with the prospect of the plot to assassinate Hitler for the greater good. In the nineteenth chapter, *From the Golden Rule to the Platinum Rule: An Auto-ethnographic Account*, Thomas Jones recounts much of his own experiences working as a chaplain and United Nations worker in analysing the shifting sands of global ethical awareness and its deficit. Part of his research included a practical recommendation and plan for a pedagogy directed to achieving efficacious global ethical awareness. In the twentieth chapter, *Ethics or Etiquette in Academic Research: Honorandi Causa LXX Diem Natalem Terentii Lovat*, Robert Crotty explores the space between the law and the spirit of the institutional ethics that guides academic research.

The twenty substantive chapters constitute updated research in fields allied to education with philosophical, religious, and/or ethical dimensions. Coming from different angles and a variety of professional vantage points, they have in common a concern to ascertain the meanings and ethical proprieties that should underpin education in their specific fields. True to the Habermasian perspective that underpins many of the chapters, and as explicated by Terence Lovat, each chapter is oriented to the drive for interpretive, critical, and self-reflective knowing, beyond merely descriptive knowing.

The collection concludes with a series of tributes, many written for the occasion of the 70th birthday of Terence Lovat, celebrated by a *Festschrift* that I held in his honour. This scholarly collection is the result of that event and acknowledges the extraordinary contribution Lovat has made across a wide range of disciplines, as well as to his students and colleagues. His work and his friendship are both greatly appreciated.

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Dianne Rayson
Editor

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Part I
Education

Chapter 1

Religious and Theological Knowing: A Post-enlightenment Educational Lacuna



Terence Lovat

Abstract The chapter makes the case for religious and theological knowing being among the ways of knowing largely lost in what Habermas refers to as a failure of the Enlightenment. Separating such ways of knowing from sectarian or enfaithing overlays and employing a largely Habermasian schema, the case proposes that religious and theological knowing constitute important means by which people in modern societies can understand themselves and their world in enhanced fashion. Furthermore, it is proposed that such knowing can facilitate the addressing of crucial societal concerns that emanate from a religious motivation, be they positive or, especially, negative motivations with potential to lead to conflict and violence. The chapter applies this thinking to education, proposing that liberal theology and interfaith religious education possess potential as curriculum means by which this way of knowing can be brought to effect.

Keywords Religious knowing · Theological knowing · Liberal theology · Interfaith religious education · Jurgen Habermas

Introduction

Jürgen Habermas refers to failures in the Enlightenment experiment. He is speaking of excesses in Enlightenment thought that drove us towards over-reliance on the rational and empirically verifiable, and so rejected the role that imagination has always and continues to play in the human commodity. Following the logic of Habermas's ways of knowing theory, the reaction has served to blind us to some of life's more nuanced realities, not only to undervalue its aesthetic and ethical dimensions but to limit our understandings of a myriad of pertinent realities about the world around us, including how we have developed as a species and human

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motivations that do not fit easily into rational and empirical paradigms of knowing. In a word, we have become less rather than more aware of who we are, of the freedoms that beckon us to continue to grow as a species and of the many ways in which our fellow human beings find meaning in life and express it, including angrily and vengefully if their needs are ignored. In this limited sense, the Enlightenment has failed, duping us to settle for less advanced and unsophisticated ways of knowing. Extrapolating from Habermas's thinking and inserting an element of neuroscientific insight, one might even say the failure has potential to stunt the ways our brains develop, perhaps rendering us less intelligent in the holistic sense, even as we become smarter in the technological sense. It would be the supreme anomaly if this contains even an element of truth, granted the promise of the Enlightenment.

Paul Feyerabend (1975) is one who took some of this brand of thinking into the world of education, being highly critical of the ways in which education systems had applied rationalistic and/or simple empirical assumptions to curriculum and pedagogy. This has been seen especially in the ways they have prioritized certain subject areas over others, on the assumed basis that they were more important to students' futures, while other subject areas have been relegated to the margins of, if not excluded entirely from, education. Michael Apple (2004) has also spoken of the fallacy of "high status knowledge" and the damage done to holistic learning when important ways of knowing are relegated to low status. Taking a leaf from the book of such thought, this chapter will explore the roles of religious and theological education, the injudiciousness of them being relegated as they have been, and the potential they possess to enlighten our understandings of ourselves and the world in which we live. In that sense, they constitute essential areas of knowing for modern systems of education to incorporate into their curriculum offerings.

Habermas's Enlightenment Failure

In his book, *Human Universe* (Cox & Cohen, 2015), the cosmologist, Brian Cox, having outlined the updated astrophysics that positions the Earth, Carl Sagan's "pale blue dot", at the edge of a universe stretching 96 billion light years across, summarizes his reflections as follows:

It seems to me ... that a small planet like Earth cannot continue to support an expanding and flourishing civilization without a major change in the way we view ourselves. The division into hundreds of countries whose borders and interests are defined by imagined local differences and arbitrary religious dogma, both of which are utterly irrelevant and meaningless on a galactic scale, must surely be addressed if we are to confront global problems such as mutually assured destruction, asteroid threats, climate change, pandemic disease and who knows what else, and flourish beyond the twenty-first century. (p. 115)

In many ways, Cox is speaking from an expansive Enlightenment viewpoint, one that sees the rights of the human community and the individuals within it superseding issues of difference, be they about gender, ethnicity or religion. The element that is of immediate interest to this chapter is where he places religion, namely as part of

the problem rather than a potential solution. The word “religion”, literally from the Latin, *religare*, means to bind or hold together. In that sense, religion should overwhelm contentions about difference, rather than exacerbate them. Even many of the Enlightenment philosophers did not question the fundamentally important role that religion played in underpinning the spiritual and moral needs of the human community and so holding it together. As an example, John Locke, arguably the supreme English Enlightenment figure, wrote a treatise titled, *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (Locke, 2000). In it, he argued for the importance of religion generally and as part of the building blocks of the new order that he presaged in his other works, an order founded on the fundamental dignity and rights of each human being and the importance of social contracts in holding the human community together. His only real caution about religion concerned the potential for competing claims of each of the institutions of religion to create division and conflict. So long as that was managed, however, he cast religion as an essentially important element in society’s fabric. His is a typical stance of the early Enlightenment figures in England, Scotland and the Continent.

Among the later Enlightenment figures, and especially as the social sciences of the nineteenth century emerge, we find a different perspective on religion, one partly but not entirely owing to the churches’ resistance to many of the Enlightenment’s initiatives. In Emile Durkheim (2008), for instance, there is a moderately generous but nonetheless complete rejection of the future viability of religion as we have known it. Religion’s usefulness to the human community is deemed largely to have passed owing partly to the community’s greater understanding of itself, how it has come to be the way it is, and where the pathways to a healthy future for it lie. For Durkheim, the fundamental ingredient in a healthy society is in its common beliefs, especially concerning moral matters. Religion’s role over the time of societal formation had been in offering a receptacle and expression for common beliefs and maintaining a moral order. While religion had served to sustain in this way a largely superstition-riddled and uneducated human community in the past, its viability would inevitably erode as the social sciences and attached education strengthened people’s understanding and so their potential to cohere around moral beliefs without the need for religion.

Durkheim’s was a partly sociological but also theological treatise. It was sociological in the sense that it entailed a theory of how society had functioned in the past and would function in the future. It was theological in the sense that it involved an incisive analysis of religion’s role in the past and why its usefulness had been spent. Durkheim was more than the average nineteenth-century secularist sociologist. His theological credentials, albeit rejected roundly by the churches, were substantial, seeming to envisage the role that theology could play in forging the enlightened understandings he foresaw for society (Rosati, 2012). Researchers have even shown how elements of John Henry Newman’s liberal theology could be brought into conversation with the Durkheimian thesis (Lawler-Brunner, 2012). There are enigmatic hints here about ways in which theology can be useful, if not essential, even if one’s agenda is to dismantle outdated forms of theology. In a word, without a theological angle on reforming itself, the old forms of theology will likely persist. I recall a

conversation with a prominent theology professor from Uppsala University speaking to the apparent enigma of Sweden, one of the world's most secular societies, having such strong university theology faculties. He proffered the view that academic theology was an essential artefact to a healthy secularism. Without it, the religious impulse in humanity becomes uninformed and rudderless. It is a salient point for an age that sees secularism and religious fundamentalism forming the boundaries of societal factionalism. The logic is that a robust theological regime at universities, matched by an equally robust religious education in schools, might have averted such factionalism by disallowing religious fundamentalism to spawn as it has in recent times. His view conformed with the broad Lockean view on the inherent role of religion and even the Durkheimian view on its usefulness in the past.

Be that as it may, Durkheim's legacy was in sounding the death knell of religion as it had functioned for millennia, along with puncturing the credibility of religious education's, or theology's, usefulness to the human community, a death knell that rang loud and clear in scholarly circles for generations to come. Hence, European Enlightenment figures of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would take things even further than Durkheim, albeit believing they were building on his schema. In effect, Durkheim's rather kindly relegation of religion was supplanted with a complete dismissiveness of its ongoing utility or even meaningfulness. Moritz Schlick, for instance, in his *General Theory of Knowledge* (Schlick, 1974), suggested that religiousness represented nothing more than a childhood fantasy stage of human development. As defined, it might have a place in childhood, a little like belief in Santa Claus, but it had no viable place in the belief system of a rational adult. Schlick was the founder of and inspiration behind the Vienna Circle (Stadler, 2015), a coalition of logical empiricists whose work focused on the so-called Verification Principle by which any belief or assertion that could not be empirically verified was relegated to a category less than what could rightly be referred to as knowledge. Such were religious beliefs and assertions, and therefore so was the discipline of theology that, according to the logic, could be nothing more than a discipline concerned with childhood fantasies. Interestingly, Schlick regarded ethical beliefs and assertions differently, arguing that ethics remained a viable branch of philosophy even though many in the Vienna Circle could not see that its assertions were any more able to be empirically verified than those of religion. A. J. Ayer (1936) agreed with these latter scholars, asserting the view that religion and ethics were in the same category of the utterly non-verifiable and so consisting of nothing more than meaningless utterances which, as such, possessed no value whatsoever in the pursuit of knowledge. Apart from mathematics and logic, Ayer's so-called logical positivism proffered that the only viable knowing pertained to scientific knowledge as monitored and guided by the Verification Principle.

Hence, from the nineteenth century and persisting well into the twentieth and even twenty-first centuries, scientific knowledge was believed to rest entirely on empirical methodology and so all human pursuits interested in knowledge were to follow suit. Among the human science disciplines, psychology and sociology developed in this way and, especially granted their influence on educational thinking, it was predictable that formal education regimes would reflect these beliefs as well.

Hence, we find the likes of Ralph Tyler (1949) generating a virtual empirical science around assessment modes which, in the spirit of “teaching to the test”, inevitably determined the direction of pedagogy. Benjamin Bloom and associates (Bloom, 1956; Krathwohl et al., 1964) built further on such thinking in the form of the taxonomies of educational objectives and their appropriate assessment categories. These taxonomies drove generations of educational thinking, in turn also influencing the ways in which the principles and practice of pedagogy were enacted in schools. Thus, the foundations for what I refer to elsewhere as “instrumentalism” in education (Lovat, 2020a, b) were being well set in place, with associated pedagogical assumptions and curriculum choices bent towards the sciences and away from the arts and humanities. These things were apparent in both school and university education.

The second half of the twentieth century saw the beginnings of a philosophical reaction to the harshness of logical positivism and attached verification criteria. Ludwig Wittgenstein (1958, 1969) referred to “language games” in making the point that the locus of human knowing is in the ways we communicate as much as in the empirically verifiable. In a similar way, Frederick Ferre (1982) said of facts that they were ‘never given in isolation from the minds that receive them’ (p. 761). For Ferre, so-called facts were really theories in the minds of those who perceive them. Imre Lakatos (1974) and Thomas Kuhn (1970) coined the notions of “touchstone” and “paradigm” respectively to connote the true basis of claims to “know”. Knowing is not the linear conforming of perception and reality, as the logical positivist would have it, nor is it about pure and simple observability because knowing is always infused with the subjectivity of the knower and the paradigms the knower constructs.

Habermas (1972, 1974) can be seen to build on the above ideas in his ways of knowing theory. For him, there are three ways of knowing, each impelled by a cognitive interest. The first way of knowing is what he refers to as “empirical-analytic” and the cognitive interest that spurs it on is about control, being assured that one is on top of the facts and figures of whatever it is one wants to know. The second way of knowing is termed “historical-hermeneutic”, impelled by an interest in meanings, including understanding what the facts and figures mean. The third way of knowing is “critical-self reflectivity”. It arises from the cognitive interest in being free, including free to know devoid of partiality or bias. To put it a little simply, for Habermas, all that Schlick, Ayer and the logical positivists had done was to concentrate on the first way of knowing as if it was the only way of knowing. Certainly, Habermas concedes that empirical verification is important for the knowing of facts and figures, but it becomes less viable as knowing develops to the second and third ways. Understanding meanings is, after all, a more subjective enterprise and being free to know is deeply personal, requiring heightened forms of reflectivity. For Habermas, this last way of knowing offers the only truly assured and authentic human knowing. It requires profound forms of human encounter, self-knowing, intuitiveness and imagination.

Hence, Habermasian literature, primary and secondary, is replete with the notion of imagination as a prerequisite for knowing of the fullest kind (Habermas, 1981;

Ingram, 1991; Fossen, 2015; Power, 2020). As an aside, there is an apparent synergy between Habermasian notions of imagination as fundamental to human development and those insights from updated neuroscience that see imagination as arguably the most vital component in human brain development (Narvaez, 2013; Narvaez & Mrkva, 2014), even why it is that the human species developed the neo-frontal cortex while other species did not. Indeed, against both modernism's and, especially, post-modernism's unimaginative conceptions of the Enlightenment project, Habermas (1981) proffers that what they have robbed us of is '... the spontaneous powers of imagination, of self-experience and of emotionality' (p. 13). For him, this is an aberration of what the Enlightenment project was intended to do (Ingram, 1991; Fossen, 2015). In this thinking, Habermas has reopened serious scholarship around several post-Enlightenment areas of knowledge that have been relegated to the margins, including aesthetical and ethical knowing (Habermas, 1990; Ingram, 1991; Duvenage, 2003; Aune, 2007) and religious and theological knowing (Habermas, 2002, 2008; Adams, 2006; Vander Schel, 2016; Verovsek, 2017).

Religious and Theological Knowing: Post-enlightenment Restoration

Habermas acknowledges the debt he owes to Edmund Husserl (1958, 2012), the nineteenth century phenomenologist who first questioned the assumptions of the simple empiricism that dominated the social sciences of his day. Husserl's phenomenological thesis maintained that empiricism relied on the belief that there was a direct and simple relationship between one's observations and the "facts" one was observing, a simple relationship often termed "referentialism" or the "direct reference theory" (Bealer, 2004; Oehl, 2020). From its beginnings, simple empiricism was a challenge to religious belief because that simple relationship did not exist. That is, about the most central religious belief, namely in a God, there was nothing to observe and therefore, it was deemed, God cannot be a "referential fact".

For Husserl, however, knowing observable phenomena was only one side of phenomenological knowing, what he would refer to as "descriptive science", the kind of knowing that relies on referentialism. While important to the entire business of knowing, and indeed Husserl perfected the knowing of observable phenomena in the notion of *epoche*, the suspension of all prejudgements so one could observe and take in what was being observed free of all assumptions or biases, this process was nonetheless only one half of what was required to truly know. Understanding the meaning of what was being observed was of a different order, an "eidetic science", or knowing of essences, as against the mere facts. For Husserl, eidetic science denoted knowing and understanding the inner meaning of whatever was being observed. He employed a religious exemplar provided by Rudolf Otto (1968), namely, the notion of *numinous*, holy or the wholly "other", to make the point that people can know in a different way from what can be easily observed. While simple

empiricists believed they had undermined religious belief based on their supposed proven method of knowing, one built around referentialism, what they failed to understand was that religious belief had never relied on this way of knowing.

Elliot Eisner (1979, 1981, 1988), Stanford-based phenomenologist, built much of his phenomenological architecture on a Husserlian foundation (Alexander, 2003; Russell, 2006). His methodology is important to this chapter in part because of its employment by religious educators in developing educational methods suitable to their craft. Mary Elizabeth Moore (1991) summarized the contribution of his phenomenological approach to religious education in the following way:

Eisner has offered a persistent critique of the over-dependence of education on science, modern technology and narrowly defined learning processes and content. He has spoken to the importance of artistry in teaching and the importance of educational imagination throughout the entire system of schooling. (p. 138)

Eisner (1979) contended that, epistemically, over-attentiveness to what can be contained by discourse can lead to what he referred to as “discursive reductionism”, a secondary rather than primary form of knowing in which knowing is assumed to be a product of discourse. For Eisner, it was the most reduced and unfortunate by-product of a simple empiricism that we fail to grasp the obvious truth that knowing precedes as often as follows from, and is always a little more than, the words that contain it. Reminiscent of Habermas’s failed Enlightenment notion, Eisner (1988) maintains that this unhelpful by-product constrains both our capacity to know and to establish efficacious educational settings. It has turned much modern research into projects that produce endless volumes of meaningless facts and figures that conform to referentialist assumptions about knowing but produce far less insights that render true understanding and even less that help to solve serious personal, social, and global problems. In contrast, Eisner’s research methodology, derived heavily from Husserlian eidetic science, took the form of what he referred to as “educational connoisseurship and criticism”:

(It) ... represents an effort to understand the meaning and significance that various forms of action have for those in a social setting. (Eisner, 1988, p. 146) Like all phenomenological research methodologies, it is ... closer in character to a hermeneutical activity than a technical one. (Eisner, 1981, p. 8)

The connection between Eisner and Habermas is to be found widely in secondary literature (Pearse, 1983; Palmer, 2022). In similar fashion to Eisner, Habermas has fleshed out elements of Husserl’s thinking in his ways of knowing theory (Habermas, 1972, 1974), seen no more clearly than in his ideas about religious and theological knowing (Habermas 2002, 2008). Like Husserl, Habermas has no interest in the object of such knowing, be it in the form of gods, spirits, or a generalised spiritual realm. His interest is purely in the architecture of people’s knowing and the disciplines we establish to deal with that knowing. For him, it makes no sense therefore to declare that religious beliefs are nonsense, based on referentialist assumptions, if in fact people find sense in them, much less constitute the supreme meanings in their lives. Furthermore, if religious knowing is in fact part of how humans claim to know, then, in turn, it makes sense that the discipline of theology can help us to

understand things, both about ourselves as a species and about the world around us, that we might not otherwise understand. Concerning the cognitive interest that might underpin religious knowing, Habermas is undecided. What he does suggest however is that the imaginativeness associated with religious knowing, one that accounts for much of what has transpired in the evolution of human civilization, should not be lost amidst a skewed understanding of Enlightenment knowledge. What Habermas is referring to as a failure of the “Enlightenment Project” is a knowledge regime dominated by and subject to simple empiricism such that human imaginativeness has been the casualty. It is a critique about ways of knowing, learning and, presumably, teaching not unlike the critiques of Husserl and Eisner.

If a case can be made for religious knowing as a vital, albeit highly contested, way of knowing, then the case for theology as a discipline of learning is clear. This is not about personal religious belief or the lack of it. As with Husserl, Eisner, and Habermas, it is about ways in which we know and the disciplines of knowledge that should deal with these ways of knowing in formal education. When we dismiss religious knowing as meaningless or anachronistic, we effectively dismiss the concerns and earnestly held positions of a huge portion of the human community. At the same time, we become blind to what motivates that portion, to what might be deemed its positive as well as negative motivations. At a time when so much human conflict appears to have a religious motivation, this can leave us dangerously unaware of what we are dealing with. One might, as examples, consider the spectre of ISIS (Islamic State of Syria and Iraq) or the Russian-Ukrainian War. In both cases, a form of religious motivation was active and explicitly so. One might wonder at the callous brutality of ISIS as it plundered, raped, and killed thousands who stood in its path or, equally, at the barbarousness of the Russian military as it set out to demolish Ukrainian civilization, with innocent civilians so clearly in its sights. At least an element in these phenomena, if not a large one, concerned religion. Let us briefly explore this claim.

Bakr al-Baghdadi (Baghdadi, 2014), in his infamous sermon at the Mosul Mosque launching the ISIS scourge, employed religious historiography to justify the *Jihad* (Holy War) he was unleashing. It was all to do with an imaginary golden age of the specific form of Islam he claimed was the only form, true Islam, as it were, pertaining to a time some 1000 years before when an allegedly perfect, divinely ordained Islam was crafted in the hands of the Abbasid Caliphate. In a word, the religious cause he was promoting was to destroy the enemies of this divinely ordained “Islamification”, as he depicted it (Lovat, 2018b; Moghadam & Lovat, 2019). Not dissimilarly, the Russian Orthodox Patriarch, Kirill, effectively sanctioned the equivalent of a *Jihad* in Ukraine in the Russian form known as *Podvig* (Grant, 2022). Also not dissimilarly, the justification for *Podvig* was a theology about “Russification”, re-capturing an imaginary ideal Russian Empire from the infidels and apostates represented by a Ukraine moving towards the “decadent West” and away from its allegedly divinely ordained status as a vassal state of Russia. Like Baghdadi, Patriarch Kirill is the mouthpiece for this theology, including being on public record for describing the Putin era as a “miracle of God” (Karpukhin, 2012).

Implications for Education

So, what do we say about education in the face of these sabre-rattling global realities? Surely, social literacy demands some level of religious literacy, some educational means at school, university, and community levels. If this is agreed, to which discipline of knowledge or subject area might this be assigned most appropriately? Candidates might be seen in modern history or sociology, perhaps international affairs. The prevailing problem with these disciplines, be it at school or university, is in the persistent influence of what Husserl, Eisner and Habermas would denote as simple empiricism, a disposition in education that tends to minimise if not ignore altogether the serious influence of religion and even more so the plausibility of theology as providing any useful insights beyond those of enfaithing. This is where I have argued over many years for the need for a robust religious education in schools and theological education as, at the very least, a viable elective in university and community education curricula (Lovat, 1988, 1995a, b, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2010a, b, 2012, 2017, 2018a, b, 2019a, b, c, *in press-a*).

Apart from Habermas's own clear delineation of religious and theological knowing as separate and apart from enfaithing concerns as such, other scholars in a variety of disciplines have made the same distinction, one important for positioning school-based religious education and tertiary theology where they belong in the curriculum. John Henry Newman (2008), in nineteenth-century Oxford, argued for the distinction between a form of theology that fitted well, if not necessarily, in a liberal or secular education (liberal theology) and one that might well be more properly conducted in enfaithing contexts (illiberal theology). Liberal theology concerned enculturation and literacy about one's own history and tradition. It honoured the fact that theology had accompanied the rise of other disciplines over time and, in that sense, possessed informative power, not only historically but integrally. It represented an important literacy if we were to understand our own history, the world around us and indeed ourselves as a species. One could debate whether illiberal theology belonged in a university, as was a growing disposition in Newman's time, but one could not argue against liberal theology as a vital university discipline if the final goal of university education was to produce the core of a literate populace. Hence, a little akin to Habermas, Newman (2008) contended that liberal theology constituted an essential educational area for an informed citizenry:

A University, I should lay down, by its very name, professes to teach universal knowledge: Theology is surely a branch of knowledge: how then is it possible for it to profess all branches of knowledge, and yet to exclude from the subjects of its teaching one which, to say the least, is as important and as large as any of them? (p. 37)

In the same spirit, we find Giorgio Agamben (2011; Dickinson, 2011), the contemporary Italian philosopher, referring to the European Union as a "theological economy". The inference is that one simply does not understand Europe if one fails to understand its religious underpinnings, nor least the persistent tensions between Eastern and Western Europe. We can extrapolate from his schema to make the same point about the ongoing tensions and conflict between the Christian West and the

Islamic Middle East, or the Christian Orthodox worlds of Russia and Ukraine, and so on. Religious and theological education have the capacity to address these matters in a direct and informed way that will rarely apply in other humanities and social science domains. It is in this vein that Christopher Andrew (2017), Cambridge-based historian and MI5 advisor, asks where the theologians (and, we might add, religious educators) are when we need their skills to fathom the religious dimensions of so many global conflicts.

The same confusion about theological orientations that Newman clarified can be seen in school-based religious education in the post-Enlightenment era. In similar vein to Newman's distinction between liberal and illiberal theology, religious education can be classified as interfaith or enfaithing (Lovat, 2009). Interfaith religious education is akin to Newman's liberal theology. Its purpose is about wider literacy, especially religious literacy, an understanding of the realities of religion as a functioning part of society and deepening understanding about different religious and other worldviews and beliefs. Enfaithing religious education, on the other hand, is a more partisan version of the discipline, one geared to engendering and sustaining the faith life of students in a specific religious tradition. While European systems of religious education have differed in their approaches in public schools, with, for instance, Germany following an essentially enfaithing approach while England and Wales follow an interfaith approach, some systems have been as confused in their approach to religious education as were the universities that Newman was railing against concerning theology. His implicit allegation was that universities that were moving to oust theology from their list of faculties were in effect throwing the baby out with the bathwater. That is why he crafted the distinction between a form of theology that might well be ousted in the public interest and one that should never be ousted. An instance of the religious education baby being thrown out with the bathwater is to be found in Australia.

Australian public education began in the late nineteenth century in the form of six colonial acts of parliament, each from one of the six British colonies of the day. Most comprehensive education in earlier times had been in the hands of the churches. As the six colonies began to supplant church control, so did the notion that public schooling should be secular in its ethos. Each of the colonial acts of the 1870s and 1880s reflects this belief. The New South Wales Public Instruction Act (1880) (NSW, 1912), as an example, states that education should be free, compulsory and secular. The secular component inevitably had an impact on conceptions of religious education, what it should comprise, how it should function and who should be responsible for it. The main provision for an explicit and separable religious education was in the form of what was termed, "Special Religious Instruction" (SRI). Unlike every other curriculum area, it was not the responsibility of the regular teachers but was to be staffed by the churches that would be given a timeslot in the school day to take their own flock aside and enfaith them. By its very nature, it arguably had the practical effect of dividing the population rather than cohering it, as religious education in another form might well have done. As such, it would inevitably become an instrument by which inter-sectarian suspicion, rather than interfaith understanding, was enhanced. The only other religious education provision in

the 1880 Act was under the rubric of “General Religious Teaching”, a non-separable component across all curriculum areas that was designed to honour the role that Christian values had played in underpinning Western societies. For the most part, the forces of secularization squeezed this would-be integrated component out of the curriculum altogether (Lovat, 2018a, *in press-b*). By the time of Federation in the early twentieth century, the only recognizable religious education in Australian schools was the highly partisan SRI in public schools and its equivalent enfaithing syllabus to be found in religious schools.

Together with Australia’s first university, the University of Sydney, placing a virtual ban on the university ever having a theology faculty, an act that would have constituted Newman’s worst nightmare, the relegation of religious education in public schools to the exclusively enfaithing domain illustrates well the religious and theological education post-Enlightenment lacuna spoken of above. At a time when religious and theological literacy are arguably more important than ever in understanding the world in which we live, Australia’s education systems, both school and university, remain devoid of the educational curricula to deal with them. In a post-Enlightenment era still dominated by nineteenth century forms of rationalism, tied to the limitations of Husserl’s descriptive science, Eisner’s discursive reductionism, and Habermas’s empirical-analytical knowing, Australia is far from being the only culprit among Western educational regimes to allow this lacuna to persist.

Liberal Theology and Interfaith Religious Education: Filling the Lacuna

Following the pathway of the Habermasian epistemological schema outlined above, interfaith religious education and liberal theology present as possessing potential to engender a distinctive way of knowing, one that could enhance inter-religious literacy, strengthen cross-cultural communication, and hence fortify the cohesiveness of multicultural societies (Habermas, 2002, 2008; Calhoun, 2013). As suggested above, they might also possess potential to respond to the challenge of Christopher Andrew (2017) and offer much-needed insights for dealing with challenges like those presented by Islamist radicalism and Russification supremacism. These are matters for serious scholarship regardless of one’s personal faith position and the point should be made that this should not be a matter of contestation between believers and others. There are those like Habermas and Agamben who infer the need for the essence of liberal theology and interfaith religious education without any personal investment in the object of religion but there are religious believers who have long argued for precisely the same kind of enterprise. For Dietrich Bonhoeffer (2010), John Hick (1995) and Mohamed Talbi (1995), as instances, they have done this because of their religious beliefs, the God they see as the object of their beliefs and the essence of the tradition, Christian or Muslim, that they follow. If one is guided by Habermasian epistemology, the integrity of one’s personal lifeworld can

only be preserved by engagement in the lifeworld of the other. Regardless of the artefact of personal religious belief or its absence, it is about the assurance of knowing in the most unfettered, emancipated way, as well as responsible citizenship through *praxis*, practical action for good. This positionality offers clues about the ways in which liberal theology in public or religious universities and interfaith religious education in public and religious schools can and should function as integrated elements of the available curricula (Lovat, 2010a, b, 2012, 2019a, b, c; Fleming et al., 2015).

Bonhoeffer (2010) contrasted a “Lord of the World” notion with the parochial and partisan God too often promoted by institutional religions, a God that conformed with a particular believing community’s lifeworld, often depicted as forbidding consideration of the lifeworld of the other. Bonhoeffer’s notion implied a critique of the narrowing effect he saw too often in religious dogma, a view reflected by Brian Cox (Cox & Cohen, 2015) above. Hick (1995) offered a similar critique in speaking of the “rainbow of faiths” that constitute the world of religions. The rainbow is only beautiful to the one who sees all of it. Those who choose to see only one colour will miss the beauty altogether. Hick’s image connoted the many ways in which he believed God could be found in different religious traditions. He referred to this God as “trans-categorical”, the only way in which God could be perceived in post-Enlightenment times, so far as he was concerned. From Hick’s point of view, those who persisted in wanting to categorize God to fit their own narrow and partisan lifeworld were not only functioning in a pre-Enlightenment time warp but, more crucially, would never come to know the fullness of God. In that sense, he is speaking historically, theologically and as a person of faith.

Bonhoeffer and Hick are among those who have challenged their native Christianity to move away from its own internal and external parochialisms to become an emissary for the more encompassing, other-focussed conception of religiousness that they believed fitted the spirit of Christianity, as well as the liberal theology that should be a natural attachment. Mohamed Talbi (1995) has promoted similar conceptions for Islam, arguing that interfaith dialogue is essential to the modern world and should underpin all theological and religious educational ventures. According to his understanding of the spirit and charter of Islam, his religious tradition should be a leader in this quest, rather than the recalcitrant so often conveyed by Islamist radicalism.

The educational challenge behind all the sentiments above, those from a faith disposition and those merely concerned with epistemological integrity, is to find a pedagogy that requires and creates safe space for students to step beyond their own lifeworld and into the lifeworld of others so to understand the world in which they are living and engaged (Lovat & Fleming, 2013; Fleming & Lovat, 2015). Habermas, relying in part on earlier work of Husserl and John Dewey (1916, 1929), as well as reflecting contemporary work of Eisner, has created that safe space and pointed to the kind of pedagogy that can enliven it. Let us return briefly to Husserl and explore equally briefly the work of Dewey, as well as recapping on the influence of Eisner.

As noted above, for Husserl, factuality and truth were best understood as ever elusive, rather than easily grasped in the way of simple empiricism or logical

positivism, and so the truth seeker had to proceed with caution. Hence, good science rendered a humble and imaginative investigation rather than the arrogant, certainty-riven methodology spawned by logical positivism. For Husserl (1958), his phenomenologically oriented methodology began with *epoche*, a suspension of judgment that ensured the mind was cleared of presuppositions and biases:

We take our start from what lies prior to all standpoints: from the total realm of whatever is itself given intuitionally and prior to all theorizing, from everything that one can immediately see and seize upon – if only one does not let himself be blinded by prejudices and prevented from taking into consideration whole classes of genuine data. If positivism is tantamount to an absolutely unprejudiced grounding of all sciences on the ‘positive’, that is to say, on what can be seized ‘*originaliter*’, then we are the true positivists. (p. 38)

Through *epoche*, one cleared the mind of blind spots that can lead to false certainties, arrogance and the defensiveness that prohibits healthy dialogue and fearless education. By clearing away these intellectual blind spots and negativities, one is ready to engage in eidetic knowing, the point of reflectivity in learning that opens the mind to grasping the essence of whatever is under investigation and, as part of that, the viewpoints and beliefs, or lifeworld, of others. It was this reflectivity element in Husserl’s phenomenological method that Habermas (1985) relies on in his ways of knowing theory, especially in exposing the imagination-filled third way of knowing.

In turn, Dewey (1929, 2020) employed Husserl’s thinking and made the application specifically to education (Garrison, 1988; Kestenbaum, 1991; Kurenkova et al., 2005). His concern was with the philosophical rigour and appropriateness of the methodological directions set by a school curriculum. Inspired by Husserl, Dewey spoke of the overarching need for a way of knowing that was about the cultivation of a mindset on the part of teachers that was, at one and the same time, self-reflective and directed towards instilling reflectivity, inquiry and a capacity for judiciousness on the part of students. His work is replete with a none-too-subtle critique of the educational philosophies and methodologies that dominated the systems he saw in his time. Dewey’s work became associated with educational reforms of the twentieth century oriented to reversing instrumentalist turns and replacing them with holism in education (Van Manen, 1982a, b).

In terms of school knowledge and allied methodologies, the affliction of discursive reductionism, as explicated by Eisner, is in its limiting of curricula and assessment to what is most easily known and testable, based on the referentialist assumptions of simple empiricism. As such, the knowing that emanates is disposed more to the safe and comfort-zone laden than to what challenges students to step out of their comfort zones, including comfort-zones of ethnocentricity and intolerance when faced with difference. The gravity therefore is towards exacerbating rather than resolving issues of inequity and injustice. In contrast, Eisner’s (1988) phenomenological approach, his educational connoisseurship, was designed to offset these tendencies and open teachers and students up to the more positive education effects that are possible. It is not surprising then to find the commendation of Moore (1991) above regarding Eisner’s influence on bolder and more far-reaching religious

education. These are the kinds of perspectives I wish to bring forward for interfaith religious education and liberal theology.

In similar vein to Eisner, albeit from without education as such, Habermas's epistemology has been a significant influence in attempts by educationists to deepen understanding of learning through the employment of more sophisticated methodologies than those determined by instrumentalism (Van Manen, 1977, 1991; Rasmussen, 1990; Doll, 1993; Outhwaite, 1994; Lovat, 2020a, b; Lovat & Smith, 2003). Habermas (1984, 1987) spoke of "communicative capacity", which is when the self-reflective knower comes to see his or her own lifeworld as just one that needs to function in a myriad of life-worlds, and of "communicative action", where the self-reflective knower takes a step beyond mere tolerance of other beliefs and values to truly understand the mind of the "other", and so take a stand to defend the other, because justice demands it, and for oneself, because one's new found self, one's own integrity, is at stake. Embedded herein is a concept about compassion, commitment, reliability, and trustworthiness that spills over into the kind of social engagement that makes a difference, to *praxis*. This is the kind of education that aims for far more than information and even communication. It aims to transform thought and practice, to truly make a difference not only to thought and empathy but to the way one positions in society and towards others. The role that Habermas has played in providing an epistemological explanation and justification for these insights into the holistic nature of learning designed to change attitudes and behaviour has been inestimable (Lovat, 2022). While essentially a philosophical perspective, Habermas's insights have rare potential to straddle the various disciplines that are informing the debate. His theories of knowing and communicative action offer, between them, particularly powerful tools for analysing the capacity of education to transform people's beliefs, attitudes, and practices. As such, they have potential to create that safe space where educational enterprises, like liberal theology and interfaith religious education, could thrive in the public curriculum and truly make a difference in the levels of literacy demanded by the complex, multi-faith, multi-worldview and multi-lifeworld in which we live.

Conclusion

Husserlian, Deweyian, Eisnerian and especially Habermasian thought, between them, would seem to offer a conceptual and practical framework for filling the post-Enlightenment epistemological and educational lacuna inferred by Habermas, one that I employ in analyzing the loss of effective religious education in schools and theological education in universities and in the wider community. The lacuna itself rests on a more limited idea of what schools, universities and community education might achieve for society than these scholars' thoughts suggest is possible and desirable, if not essential. Their scholarship in this area proffers that all levels of education can and should undertake more encompassing roles for society than those determined by referentialist-inspired assumptions about the limitations of knowing.

The education intention suggested by their thinking would accept and applaud the notion that all formal education denotes a wide-ranging agency with a charter to deal with all aspects of personal, social, and global literacy. While pertinent to any area of the curriculum, clearly such thinking is central to the quest for liberal theology and interfaith religious education curricula capable of transforming thought and practice in a sphere where levels of illiteracy and misunderstanding are rife to the point of threatening individual self-understanding and social and global cohesion.

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Chapter 2

The Viva in Doctoral Examination: A Habermasian Dialogic Occasion



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Abstract The chapter explores the role of oral defence (traditionally referred to as the “Viva”) in the doctoral examination process. It begins with reference to the literature, including by the authors, that debates its importance, its particular qualities and its impact on assessment criteria ranging from authenticating authorship, deepening understanding and enhancing the sense of closure, through to the quality of the final submission. Amidst the debate on its role, there is some consensus on the oral defence component offering the opportunity for a dialogic occasion with potential to influence positively these criteria. The chapter utilises the epistemological work of Habermas to provide theoretical justification for dialogue to play such a role. It then turns to the recent doctoral thesis of the lead author that offered rare insider/outsider evidence of the dynamics of the oral defence mechanism. Findings provide a measure of empirical verification that supports the central claims being made about the role and contribution of oral defence to the doctoral examination process, especially against the selected criteria.

Keywords Doctoral examination · Oral Defence · Viva · Pre-completion seminar · Dialogic occasion · Habermas

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The Role of Oral Defence: The Debate

The literature attests to the poles of the debate around the precise purpose and contribution of the oral defence mechanism that serves as a component of many doctoral examination processes around the world (Jackson & Tinkler, 2001; Trafford & Leshem, 2008; Kelly, 2010; Lovat et al., 2015, 2021; Dally et al., 2020). Morley et al. (2002) and Trafford (2003) agree with the sentiment expressed by Jackson and Tinkler (2001) that, ‘the Viva is not usually the key site of decision making about the outcome of the examination process’ (p. 31). In seeming confirmation of this view, a study of UK, New Zealand (NZ) and Australian examination processes (Bourke & Holbrook, 2013; Holbrook et al., 2014, 2015; Lovat et al., 2015) offered comparative data that showed the decisions made by individual examiners translating to the final decision made by the panel were at about the same rate in Australia (where there is no Viva) as occurs in both the UK and NZ (where there is a Viva). Were the Viva an essential component in influencing the final decision, it was proffered that this would have manifested itself in this comparative analysis. Nonetheless, against the perception that the Viva might therefore be an unnecessary cosmetic or the charge that it is merely there for celebratory purposes and all that really matters is the written thesis (Grabbe, 2003; Poole, 2017), Carter and Whittaker (2009) suggest that the Viva is important mainly for its potential to supplement the examination process with, ‘a genuinely dialogic occasion’ (p. 173).

The same study contained in Lovat et al. (2015) provided data that seemed supportive of Carter and Whittaker’s assessment. Especially among UK examiners, there was a concerted view that the Viva was a necessary component principally for its potential to clarify matters that might otherwise serve to be obstructive between examiner and student perceptions, to offer a level of support to the student beyond what could be provided by the written report and to provide for a sense of closure to the process, sometimes described as a ‘rite of passage’ for the candidate (Houston, 2019). Lovitts (2007) distinguished between the “technical” and “indeterminate” elements of doctoral examination, the former allowing for objective assessment but the latter requiring “tacit” judgement. It was in the latter that the essential criteria around originality (Clarke & Lunt, 2014), along with the intellectual grasp and critical thinking capacity of the candidate, were often assessed more satisfactorily.

In Lovitts’ view, dialogue between the examiners and the candidate is necessary for the requisite judgements to be made adequately. The work of Harrison, Trudgett & Page (2017) is also noted in this context. The focus of their study was on Indigenous Australian doctoral students and how the dominant assumptions in doctoral examination continue to privilege a culturally exclusive and patriarchal approach. Culturally bound notions of objectivity, independence and self-regulation dominate what counts as acceptable knowledge while notions of situated knowledge are dismissed as overly subjective. Their study focusses on and generates data from thesis examination so could be seen to strengthen the proposition of Lovitts that dialogue, or what we refer to as the dialogic occasion, might serve to redress this situation.

Similar to the view of Lovitts, the preponderance of responses from UK examiners in Lovat et al. (2015) centred on the issue of the dialogic component and its ramifications for an enhanced learning experience, as well as the product emanating from it. It also served the purpose of authenticating that the student was indeed the research author. Examiners were generally of the view that the Viva served the purpose of ensuring a more satisfactory and satisfying outcome for all stakeholders, including the final submitted thesis, owing principally to the dialogue that was part and parcel of the Viva process. ‘*It is an opportunity to get to know the candidate in a better way*’ was the way one UK examiner put it. Lovat et al. (2015) concluded that the Viva had the benefits of:

allowing for better communication between the candidate and the examiners; more nuanced feedback and the opportunity for candidate response; a stronger chance for more collegial discussion and thereby less likelihood of candidate deflation; (and) an overall greater sense of closure for the candidate. (p. 19)

In updated work, Lovat et al. (2021) and Dally et al. (2020) report on the results of a study focussed on feedback in the doctoral examination process. The research subjects comprised doctoral graduates, supervisors, and deans/directors of graduate research across multiple Australian universities. Whereas earlier Australian studies had indicated a preponderant view that the thesis alone was sufficient for examination processes, thereby agreeing with Poole (2017), results from this study suggested that some form of dialogic occasion towards the end of the process was seen as important, be it in the form of the traditional Viva or a mechanism within the last 3–6 months of candidature, known variously as the “pre-completion seminar”. Evidence suggested that these seminars are becoming more prevalent in Australia. In most cases, they function as a form of oral defence but, in contrast to the Viva, they occur before the thesis is examined.

Lovat et al. (2021) proffered that the shift towards oral defence in Australia could in part be owing to changes in the perception of the utility of the doctorate, pointing especially to the standards applied by the Australian Qualifications Framework Council (AQFC). AQF (2013) specified that graduates should demonstrate, ‘intellectual independence to think critically ... (and)... communication skills ... to present results to peers and the community (p. 17)’. Regarding the former goal, Erikson and Erikson (2019) propose that a dialogic forum is necessary in developing the skills and dispositions germane to critical thinking. Regarding the latter goal, Carless (2016) implies that effective feedback involving dialogic processes is necessary in developing the kind of intellectual independence that a graduate student should possess. For similar reasons, Åkerlind and McAlpine (2017) recommend that “doctorateness” should be seen as residing in both the thesis and the candidate, the latter connoting the skills specified in AQFC and necessarily entailing a dialogic occasion.

Hence, the notion of dialogic occasion becomes central to consideration of optimising the doctoral examination process. We will next provide theoretical justification for the learning benefit of such a dialogic occasion, employing Habermasian epistemological theory principally, before turning to updated findings from the

recent doctoral thesis of the principal author that offer empirical evidence of its benefits.

Dialogic Knowing and Higher Cognitive Interest

Habermas's (1972, 1974) "ways of knowing" theory rests on the notion of three types of knowledge, each impelled by a particular "cognitive interest". First, cognitive interest in technical control impels "empirical analytic" knowing, a form of technical, descriptive or "facts & figures" knowing. This is the fact-gathering basis of much knowing that can be useful if the interest is fully served by it (e.g. in the case of knowing how to get from point A to point B, how to assemble a piece of furniture, or how to pass a basic skills test). At this level, one does not necessarily need interpersonal communication, much less a dialogic occasion, to satisfy the cognitive interest. Second, the cognitive interest in understanding meanings gives rise to an "historical hermeneutic" knowing, a form of interpretive or communicative knowing. Here, the interest impels a way of knowing that goes beyond the facts and figures to ascertaining what they represent, and how they should be interpreted and understood (eg. in the case of understanding the significance of point B and why one should go there, the purpose and utility of the piece of furniture, or in the case of a test that involves some interpretation of the facts). This level of knowing would normally require some degree of interpersonal engagement, if not elements at least of a dialogic occasion.

Third, Habermas speaks of the cognitive interest in emancipation of knowing, in the knower being assured of the non-contamination of what is being known. The interest here is in attaining the status of being a free agent of knowing, an interest that impels a "critical" knowing, one marked by "self-reflectivity". Herein, one wants assurance that the knowing rests on the widest range of available sources, free from bias or partisan interest, including from one's own biases or partisan interests, one's comfort-zone of knowing; hence, self-knowing is an ultimate goal in the business of knowing but, as a social being, a knowing that can only come from intense dialogue with others.

Critical/ self-reflective knowing is the knowing most associated with letting go of old conceptions and forging new grounds of originality. In this respect, this kind of knowing would seem to reflect many of the stated purposes of what we describe as "doctoral knowing", a knowing alleged to be centrally about its contribution to a particular knowledge field, to be original and innovative. It entails a stretching of old boundaries of knowing by imagining, premising and perhaps "proving" that new boundaries exist or are possible. For Habermas, the knowing is finally endorsed when it translates into action, what he describes as *praxis*, practical action for change, an action that is necessarily preceded by, and entailing throughout, intense engagement with the widest possible representation of the human community.

Ramifications for the Doctorate: The Centrality of Dialogue

If indeed there is concurrence that the Habermasian thesis possesses relevant conceptual underpinnings for the kind of knowledge for which the doctoral quest aims (Lovat, 2004, 2013; Lovat et al., 2004, 2008; Clement et al., 2015), then it is a question of how best to create a process that fits these aims. There are clearly implications for the entire process, how a candidate is prepared for, nurtured, guided, and supported by the doctoral regime in place, and especially by the supervisors. In this chapter, our specific concern is with the examination component, one that has been shown to determine much of the rest of the process, as well as having ramifications of its own for the type of knowing ultimately attained. Herein, Habermas's more expansive thinking about dialogue becomes relevant.

While, as above, empirical-analytic knowing can be achieved without human interaction and historical-hermeneutic knowing might require a degree of such interaction, critical and self-reflective knowing necessitates the highest and most sophisticated forms of interpersonal engagement, especially in the form of effective dialogue. Reaching a level of assurance that one is a free agent of knowing requires the most thorough searching out of the sources of knowing, most especially in the human community. One can no longer be satisfied to rest on traditional, politically correct, or "safe" knowing. One must go beyond extant boundaries to seek new possibilities in addressing whatever the issue might be that one's cognitive interest is driving (eg. the "problem" being addressed in the doctoral thesis). From a Habermasian perspective, such boundary-stretching exploration can only occur in the context of fulsome and efficacious dialogue.

Ultimately, the challenge will be for the knower to engage in deep self-reflectivity to ensure one's knowing is not being impeded by one's own preferred knowing but it is impossible to reach that stage of self-reflectivity without engaging maximally in the knowing that resides in the human community. Furthermore, it entails engaging not just with those whose views might conform more easily with one's own but across the spectrum of views, opinions and factual knowing. Being an emancipated agent of knowing, in Habermas's sense, requires going into unfamiliar territory as part and parcel of the stretching of thinking entailed in it. Clearly, the role of communication and dialogic capacity is at a premium in attaining this kind of knowing. An adjunct to and further development of Habermas's ways of knowing theory is contained in his notions of "communicative participation" and "communicative action" (Habermas, 1984, 1987).

Ultimately, *praxis* is underpinned by and an expression of the most effective forms of communication. In later writing, Habermas fleshes out the "pragmatics of social interaction" entailed in arriving at this point (Habermas, 2001a), what he refers to as "discourse ethics" (Habermas, 2001b), and what is referred to in literature attributed to him as "dialogical ethics" (Verlinden, 2010) or "dialogic consensus" (Walker & Lovat, 2016, 2018). The central thinking here is that true knowing, or what we might loosely refer to as "truth", the knowing that assures us that our *praxis*, our action for change, is well founded, entails dialogue of the most fulsome

and sophisticated kind possible in the circumstances. Discourse or dialogical ethics, or dialogic consensus, does not come easily. It can and probably will entail friction, confronting the unfamiliar or unwanted and being moved from one's natural comfort zone. Dialogic consensus does not connote agreement but rather a resolution of thought sufficient for moving forward. It comes at the end of a thorough process of views and counter views being put forward and negotiated to a point of "consensus" that allows all parties to engage in communicative participation and action.

Much of the above epistemic thinking seems to us to have synergy with the intentions and most desirable ambit of the doctorate and, furthermore, to be especially relevant to the ways in which the doctorate should be examined. If dialogue is at a premium in achieving the level of original, negotiated and assured knowing in the doctorate, then the role of a robust oral defence would seem to present as highly desirable, if not essential. We now turn to empirical data that enliven and illustrate the case being made.

Empirical Verification of the Benefits of Oral Defence's Dialogic Occasion

The data emanate from the recently completed doctorate of the lead author (Houston, 2019). Houston conducted forty-three interviews with candidates, examiners, and supervisors from six UK universities. Moreover, she was given privileged access to ten oral defence sessions as they were in progress, offering the rare opportunity for independent observation and its associated insights and reflections. In each case, the oral defence took the form of the traditional Viva that follows examiner reading of the thesis. In this chapter, data will focus especially on instances where the dialogic element was conspicuous and seeming to provide evidence of its being determinative of enhanced knowing and understanding of the kind that presages a more satisfactory outcome than would otherwise have been the case. Together, the observations and interviews led to the conclusion that the Viva is a significant element in the final examination, that it enhances examiners' judgements and has determinative potential to influence the outcome.

Initial evaluation of the thesis determines if the candidate has "done enough" for the award of PhD but in their detailed scrutiny examiners assess the candidate's deeper knowledge and understanding of their research and its relevance in the field, seeking originality or a contribution to knowledge. While examiners' principal focus is on the candidate's research achievements, the importance of qualities such as intellectual rigour, leadership and integrity, also emerge from the study. The Viva allows examiners to probe these personal qualities in more depth than is possible by reading the thesis. (Houston, 2019, p. 5)

Hence, a central research question in the thesis was, 'how do the opportunities for dialogue provided by the Viva affect examination outcomes?'

Doctoral candidates approaching their Viva are often nervous about the event, some in Houston's study perceiving it as a "scary" experience and perhaps not realizing that this part of the examination is not the principal site of examiners' judgements. However, as we will show, candidates are right to anticipate that the Viva will play a significant part in the examination, enabling them to explain elements of the research process not evident from their thesis. It is impossible to know from the written word or artefact exactly what the author's thoughts or reasoning were in developing and making their arguments. This is partly because of word limits in either the thesis or analytical commentary that accompanies an artefact or performance, but also because it is impossible for a candidate to relate in the thesis each decision that they make in the process of undertaking their research. For example, they might not consider a part of the process or a particular finding to be significant and therefore not give it much attention in the thesis. It is inevitable, therefore, that examiners will have questions for the candidate in the Viva arising from their reading of the thesis, and that the dialogue will assume not just a confirmatory status but enable clarification of the candidate's decision-making and thought processes at each stage of the research. Equally importantly, examiners must test the candidate's understanding of what they have found and, fundamentally, assure themselves that the work is the candidate's and not their supervisors'. The Viva facilitates corroboration of these facts.

We turn now to presenting evidence of the benefits of oral defence against the three criteria presented at the outset, namely, authentication, deepening understanding and satisfactory closure, and thesis quality.

Authentication

Many respondents, including candidates, asserted the importance of the Viva for authenticating authorship of the thesis, for example: '*The Viva is important in proving that you wrote [the thesis]*' (AHSS¹ candidate 1); '*the purpose [of the Viva] is to check that the student has done the work*' (AHSS internal examiner 3); '*it's a chance to...check that this is the candidate's own work*' (AHSS internal examiner 2); '*the purpose of the Viva is...most importantly [to show] that you've done the work*' (STEM² candidate 5) and '*It's to be absolutely sure that the person has done the work*' (STEM external examiner 3).

Some STEM examiners thought it was doubtful that a candidate could have plagiarized their work, given the nature of how research is undertaken in several disciplines, while others were influenced by the extent to which supervisors had influenced both the writing and leadership of the research. For example, '*You have to make sure that the thesis has really been written by the candidate and...not*

¹ Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

² Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

just...the supervisor, and that the work's all been done by the candidate' (STEM internal examiner 3), and *'The extent to which someone is in the driver's seat for the research that they've done...has designed the work, evaluated the data by themselves, and indeed written it up'* (STEM supervisor 2). These respondents were looking for responsibility for the research design, implementation, and presentation to have been the candidate's, and definitely not their supervisors' work. The dialogue between examiners and candidate in the Viva is fundamental to confirming these factors, which are critical to judging if the individual is capable of undertaking independent research.

Deepening Understanding and Enhancing Closure

One of the respondents described the Viva as an opportunity:

to have a real, honest discussion about how things have developed through the research, the difficulties...how did you mature through the process...and how you're able to translate this [to] whatever you find...The Viva is not there to memorize everything by heart but to put things in context...you need to be very well aware of your discipline, but you need to...explain to the other person what it's all about. (STEM internal examiner 5)

Another perceived its purposes to include the opportunity *'to address questions which arise in the course of reading the [thesis], which can be of enormous variety...ranging from factual errors to understanding concepts...'*. This supervisor added that a *'fundamental, underlying thing is...can they speak as well as write, can they write as well as they can speak?...if challenged over some formulation, are they articulate in their response?'* (AHSS supervisor 2)

These descriptions of some of the exchanges in the Viva demonstrated its significance in clarifying examiners' initial judgements of the work submitted, together with a focus on the stated purpose of the final examination, as articulated by most universities, namely, that the candidate must demonstrate they are capable of the kind of **deepened** understanding that underpins independent research. The quotations illustrate the importance of dialogue in enabling the examiners to discover what is behind the text and/or artefacts they have already accessed, together with the need to evaluate the candidate's ability to explain and defend their research and its outcomes.

In all the Vivas observed, the candidate was asked if, having had time to reflect, they would have done anything differently in conducting their research. This question often elicited information that had not been mentioned in the thesis. For example, in one STEM case, the candidate responded that they would have chosen a different unit of analysis if undertaking the research again, studying group behaviour (of a troupe of animals) instead of focusing on individuals. This led to an interesting dialogue between the candidate and the examiners that revealed additional information about how the field work had been interrupted by visa renewal. This candidate demonstrated a particularly constructive approach to examiners' questions and suggestions.

Similarly, examiners often suggested that a candidate could have done something differently, for example, in one AHSS case they asked whether an ethnographic perspective would have been more appropriate than the mixed methods adopted. In responding to this question, the candidate revealed several good reasons for their decision-making, especially during the field work, strengthening their argument as a result of this Viva dialogue. Other similar examples occurred during observations, confirming that the opportunity provided by the Viva for the candidate to explain what is behind the thesis and/or artefact is essential to the examiners' understanding of the research and therefore increases the potential for a fairer outcome, especially in cases where the candidate can clearly articulate their ideas and rationale.

The examiner-candidate dialogue was striking for its similarity to a discussion among experts in the field. The candidate was respectful of the examiners' arguments and suggestions, yet defended their approach and the choices made. They accommodated some of the examiners' suggestions, even though they were not disposed to change terminology, and agreed they would do some things differently knowing what they did at the end of the study. Much of the questioning focused on methodology and data analysis in the cultural context of the study. While the examiners were encouraging and positive throughout, they asked the candidate probing questions. (AHSS Case B)

An extended discussion of the thesis findings and conclusions became an animated dialogue among peers, showing parity of esteem, with the candidate and examiners suggesting further research. The examiners summarized the parts of the thesis they would like the candidate to strengthen. The candidate, who displayed confidence and openness to the examiners' suggestions despite probing questions, passed with minor corrections. (STEM Case C)

When interviewed, none of the candidates interviewed (9 out of 10) questioned the examiners' recommendations for changes that would improve the content or presentation of the thesis, which may have been partly as a result of being able to discuss them with the examiners and understand the purpose of amendments. In that case, the dialogic occasion provided by the oral defence component served to ensure satisfactory closure for the stakeholders, principally the candidate.

Thesis Quality

The nature of the dialogue in the Viva also gives an indication of how the thesis has been received by the examiners and the extent to which corrections will be required in order for the candidate to pass. In all the cases observed, the examiners' desire to improve the final version of the thesis was evident. Recommendations for minor corrections included: re-writing an abstract (two cases); re-writing an introduction and literature review; strengthening an archive section; re-writing conclusions; re-presentation of statistical data; and correcting typographical and other small errors. Recommendations for major corrections (two cases) arose from: (i) inadequate thesis structure and content even though the candidate had produced data and analysis

of the highest quality; and (ii) changes to each chapter, including increasing references to the wider field in which the topic was situated and to similar experiments, together with conducting more accurate tests for statistical significance to strengthen the evidence for some of the candidate's arguments.

In all the cases observed, examiners offered candidates detailed, sometimes extensive, feedback during the Viva dialogue. Most of this can be described as constructive criticism of the thesis and led to minor or major corrections as outlined above. Some examiners had marked up the thesis carefully with suggestions for corrections that were passed to the candidate at the end of the Viva as an optional aid to amending the thesis. The feedback may in some instances have been influenced by the examiners' knowledge of the candidate's situation. For example, if they were aware that a candidate had secured a post-doctoral position or were returning or progressing to another career, greater emphasis appeared to be given to academic matters such as improving statistical knowledge and techniques, re-writing elements of the thesis to achieve greater suitability for publication, or to improve structure and coherence. Feedback in the cases where the candidate's career path was unknown, or definitely outside academia, appeared more focused on corrections that would improve the thesis sufficiently to meet the PhD threshold. As against the other criteria, the dialogic occasion provided by the Viva was crucial in achieving these aims and such attention to the quality of the thesis no doubt helps to maintain thesis standards within the discipline.

Conclusion

The chapter set out to outline the nature of the debate concerning the importance of an oral defence component in doctoral examination. The literature reveals an overall inclination to endorse its importance, particularly around issues of authentication, enhancing understanding and sense of closure, and the quality of the final submission. Empirical evidence was adduced from a recent PhD that focused on the benefits of oral defence, in this case via the traditional Viva, that supported the endorsement. The PhD results provided insights that the dialogic occasion provided by the oral defence component served to strengthen the resolution of thought that, according to Habermasian thought, offers the level of consensus that allows all parties to engage in communicative participation and action.

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Chapter 3

Reimagining Higher Education in and for the Twenty-First Century: The Case for Integrative Education



Omar Salim

Abstract Every challenge we face as a society, whether social, political or environmental, calls for an integrative educational response, one that calls for ethical collaboration, a multi-discipline and systems consonance, and draws on our most comprehensive understanding of human nature and pedagogy. Yet, there is overwhelming evidence to suggest many of today's North American colleges and universities remain in a state of cognitive dissonance and are falling short of the integrative sort of learning that contemporary society demands and the holistic kind of teaching that our graduates need in order to thrive personally, professionally, and publicly. In this chapter, I draw upon my dissertation research to discuss some of the shortcomings and limitations of Canada's higher education system. I also propose a way forward by making the case for integrative education in and for the twenty-first century.

Keywords Integrative education · Instrumentalism · Neuroscience · Teacher professional learning · Transformative learning · Transversal/soft skills development · Higher and adult education · Transdisciplinary research

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss a summary of selected arguments proposed in my doctoral dissertation (Salim, 2020) that was partially inspired by the scholarly work of my doctoral supervisor, Professor Terence Lovat. Drawing upon a transdisciplinary body of scholarship (that includes Lovat's seminal work on education and beyond), I make the case that both our post-secondary education systems (PSE) and our

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conception of humanity – and by extension how education as an ideological agent legitimizes or ‘prescribes’ knowledge, reality and truth in general – is built upon the foundation and legacy of a narrow and reductive view of the Enlightenment science or scientism.¹ Here, if scientism serves as the foundation of our current educational enterprise, then I maintain that our solely cognitive/behaviourist pedagogical practices accompanied by neoliberal² capitalistic utilitarian motives serve as its supporting paradigmatic pillars. Together these three ideological structures (whether knowingly or not) holarchically³ work together to construct and keep in place today’s ‘immanent’ and ‘unchallengeable’ *instrumentalist* closed looping education systems – and by extension how most students ‘learn’ to unquestionably accept their unreflective, unrelating, and unsustainable existence (Salim, 2020).

Subsequently, I contend in this chapter, one of the major steps in initiating change in our PSE systems and beyond, will be to reverse the reductive, disconnected, and *instrumentalist* subconscious view of the present world – as normalized by the hegemonic structure and world view of scientism and supported by technical-rational pedagogical practices and neoliberal capitalistic values. As O’Sullivan (2002) tells us, since Enlightenment, “disciplined inquiry in modern science had made impressive achievements”, however, “Its achievements overshadowed the fragmentation of thought that would come in its wake” (p. 65). Thus, he argues, “By the end of the 19th century, this disciplined fragmentation would cast a shadow where any attempt at a conception of the whole, as experienced in the

¹As El-Ansary (2017) points out, there is a “radical difference between science as organized knowledge, which can refer to any level of reality, and *scientism*, which claims that modern science, defined as a strictly empirical or sensory means of knowing the material world, has a *monopoly* on knowledge – that is, that anything beyond the sensory world is unreal, impossible to prove, or purely fanciful” (para. 6). Here, like fanatical and dogmatic sacred religious paradigm (or religionism), secular scientism is an extremist and fundamentalist view on science.

²Neoliberalism can be described as an internationally networked form of capitalism currently serving as our dominant socio-economic model. Here, since the 1980s neoliberal ideology has managed through government policy and programs (that primarily serve the interest of the wealthy), to convince a large portion of the planet to surrender unqualified trust in the ‘free markets’; support government ‘deregulation’ and privatization of public services; place intense focus on the individual and blame the individual (rather than the system) for their oppression; nurture an attitude in which we disdain taxes, environmental protection, collective action and the common good; legally allows exploitation of workers under the guise of innovation, freedom, flexibility and efficiency; and grossly weaken our democracies by allowing concentration of power and resources to a few wealthy, while creating intolerable inequity, injustice, and social division and conflict for the many. In a neoliberal system, the people serve the economy, rather than the economy serving the people (Salim, 2020).

³According to Koestler (1970), “All complex structures and processes of a relatively stable character display hierarchic organization, and this applies regardless whether we are considering inanimate systems, living organisms, social organizations, or patterns of behaviour” (p. 133). Thus, Koestler argues, these complex structures are composed of a ‘holarchical’ phenomenon in which each holarchy is composed of ‘holons’ or units that are autonomous and self-reliant, but also dependent on the greater whole of which they are part. In other words, a holarchy is a hierarchy of self-regulating holons that operate both as autonomous wholes and as dependent parts.

organic world view of the pre-moderns, was abandoned” (p. 65).⁴ While there is little doubt the Age Enlightenment inspired Western civilization with the values of “human rights, life and liberty, freedom of thought and speech, social justice and equity, in a word to personal and communal wellbeing” (Lovat, 2020, p. 2). I argue in this chapter that these humanistic values have paradoxically existed alongside the rise and increasing dominance of another paradigm (scientism) and its related values of utilitarianism, reductionism, behaviourism, and closed (rather than open) ontology of secularism (Taylor, 2007). In the context of education, scientism and by extension instrumentalism has increasingly become the dominant paradigm of many Western and arguably international education systems. As I argue, and Lovat (2020) citing Feyerabend affirms, instrumentalist values and assumptions not only result in inadequate educational practice, but education is “failing in its essential character to advance the holistic wellbeing of the individual and address social ills in order to correct them” (p. 2). Subsequently, as this chapter makes clear, it is in the trance of scientism and its ideological co-conspirators that we have lost societal balance of power between the plural, public and private sectors; unable to bring consonance between the secular and sacred traditions; incapable of appreciating and accepting compromise (depending on need and context) by those who hold staunch political values and ideals; and continue to undermine our ability to deliver an ethical, efficacious and holistic education. In a sense, we have institutionalized a short-sighted and instrumentalist way of thinking and being that pejoratively nurtures our egos and emotions, inflames our homophilic (or tribal) tendencies, and prevents us from seeing a generally shared reality because we are blinded in the “narcissism of our minor differences” (Freud, 1994).

The Case for Moving Beyond Instrumentalism

My aim in this chapter is not to position one ‘ism’⁵ as superior to another, but rather to show why and how today’s hegemonic instrumentalism paradigm is a threat to our collective interests and planetary survival. As argued in this chapter, the purpose, values and outcomes of such an overwhelmingly short-sighted, utilitarian and reductive paradigm are not only suppressing the advancement of our education systems, but perhaps more alarmingly, this instrumentalism serves as both the source

⁴As Wheatley (1999), affirms, “Until the advent of western ideas originating in the seventeenth century, almost all human thought and spiritual traditions had described life in terms of interdependency and connectedness” (p. 3). Meanwhile, Merriam and Sek Kim (2011) contend, Non-Western or pre-modern systems (such as those of the indigenous (Native American Navajo, Maori and African) and also religious traditions (Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, and Confucian) all share a view of knowing and learning that is holistic, communal, life-long and informal.

⁵The term ‘ism’ is often defined as taking a ‘side with’ or ‘imitation of’ a grand narrative. It is generally used to describe particular world views, philosophies, theories, religions, social movements and artistic movements (e.g. socialism, capitalism, communism, positivism, post-modernism, constructivism, nihilism, behaviourism, and so on).

and barrier to solving planetary crisis such as climate change (Salim, 2020). As research in this chapter makes clear, today's instrumental PSE systems have been unable to inspire our moral imagination and social trust; nurture pluralism and democratic vocation/rule; and challenge and inspire the public, plural and private sectors toward societal balance⁶ and planetary sustainability.

Instead, in much of today's higher education context, the process of knowing is reduced to mere utility (grade accumulation, job training and credentialing); in which learning is primarily valued and practiced as a transactional (or informative) rather than also transformative endeavour. As I have argued in my dissertation and Fischman and Gardner (2022) affirm through their compressive study,⁷ today's PSE sector "have lost its way and stands in considerable peril" (p. xi). Many PSE institutions in Canada and across the world are not only disconnected from their intended purpose, but they are unable to deliver and prepare students for a personally, professionally and publicly enriched educational experience. As I propose in this chapter and Fischman and Gardner affirm: today's higher education suffers from "mission sprawl" and needs to focus on a holistic educational mission. An integrative mission that helps students and by extension society transcend their egocentricity, by nurturing a community of reflective learners who are open to 'change as thinkers, citizens, and human beings'.

Despite some pockets of innovation and the best intentions of many faculty and administrators, today's instrumental kind of learning atomizes courses and knowledge into 'objective fixed facts' residing in non-communicative disciplines and systems (Salim, 2020). Here, learning is erroneously understood as a 'values neutral' and solely cognitive function that is discrete and detached from our physical, emotional, moral, social, and spiritual⁸ intelligence and development (Salim, 2020). In this context, 'objectivism' is an epistemology rooted in a reductive conception of science (or scientism) that insists on a wall of separation between the knower and known. In a word, our contemporary notions of knowing in education, established and mostly unchanged since the nineteenth century, have been built on a narrow,

⁶According to Mintzberg's (2015) a balanced society is expected to stand on, "three sturdy legs: a public sector of respected governments, to provide many of our protections (such as policing and regulating); a private sector of responsible businesses, to supply many of our goods and services; and a plural sector of robust communities (think colleges and universities, NGOs and religious orders and hospitals), wherein we find many of our social affiliations" (p. xi.)

⁷Fischman and Gardner (2022) conducted in-depth interviews with more than 2000 students, alumni, faculty, administrators, parents, and trustees from 10 colleges and universities in the United States (between 2013 and 2018). Much of their study (while in the American context) affirms my dissertation findings: in which an overwhelming and alarming number of students struggle with mental health issues, stress, time management, and a lack of connection; and who narrowly focus on grades, workload, return on investment, and career success, rather than on focus on intellectual growth, transformative learning, personal development and social/civic responsibility.

⁸As I have argued (Salim, 2020), irrespective of whether one prescribes to a secular or sacred world view, the term spirituality could be understood as a broad and expansive term conveying our values, meaning and purpose grounded in the self; but also, if one chooses, connected to transpersonal growth (or something greater than the self).

deterministic and mistakenly conflated⁹ view between natural and social science research (Salim, 2020).

Yet, there is mounting and implicit agreement between many contemporary disciplines and systems of scholarship, ranging from the field of education and modern physics to developmental psychology, that there can be no separation between the knower and the known (Salim, 2020).¹⁰ Put otherwise, the knower and known are inextricably joined, and any claim about the nature of the known reflects the nature of our being.¹¹ As emerging educational scholarship (Lovat, 2020; Merriam & Bierema, 2014; Taylor et al., 2012; Jarvis & Watts, 2012; Merriam et al., 2012; Mezirow et al., 2009; Illeris, 2009) and neuroscientific research (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007; Haidt, 2012; Sternberg, 1999; Emmons, 2000; McGilchrist, 2019) asserts, knowing and learning involve a holistic or integrative constructive (primary experience) and reconstructive (secondary experience) subconscious meaning making process; in which ‘rational cognition’ serves as only one of many of other important and dynamic functions, including but not limited to: our intentions, memory, imagination, values, emotions, intuition and sociality. As I have argued (Salim, 2020) and Lovat (2020) affirms:

Modern neuroscience has, in many ways, provided the scientific evidence that supports such holism. Emotionality, sociality, morality, spirituality and the aesthetic senses are not detachments from the learning experience. They are part and parcel of it. The human function we refer to as cognition relies on all of these

⁹Here, Safi (1997), in his analysis of such a mistaken conflation (or categorical error), contends there is a profound and significant difference between the laws regulating natural and social behaviour, since the laws of natural order are based on the principle of necessity or causality (cause-effect manner), and the laws of human behaviour are determined (at least in theory) by free choice and possibility. Thus, he argues, “human action is always purposive, aiming at procuring some objects or achieving some objectives. Whether the objects of the will are significant or trivial, noble or lowly, is irrelevant here; what is central to the notion of purposeful will is that action without purpose is impossible” (pp. 52–53).

¹⁰As I have argued in my dissertation, the notion in which knowledge and reality (or being) are an inextricably linked has long been understood by pre-modern cultures, and now modern science (such as new physics) is simply re-affirming this long understood axiom. Here, Jastrow (2000) fittingly reminds us: “For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance, he is about to conquer the highest peak; and as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries” (p. 107). And, to borrow a phrase from Peter Maurin, founder of the Catholic Workers Movement, this relational and interdependent synthesis or philosophical view of reality and knowledge “is so old that it looks like new” (Day, 1945, para. 33).

¹¹As Palmer and Zajonc (2010), drawing on the work of ‘new physics’ (Heisenberg, Einstein, Bohr, and Schrodinger), contend: “The phenomena we experience are simultaneously a reflection of world reality and our specific state of mind” (p. 68). Similarly, Guba and Lincoln (1994), point out: “The received view of science pictures the inquirer as standing behind a one-way mirror, viewing natural phenomena as they happen and record them objectively. The inquirer (when using proper methodology) does not influence the phenomena or vice versa. But evidence such as the Heisenberg uncertainty principle and the Bohr complementarity principle have shattered the ideal in the hard sciences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); even greater skepticism must exist for the social sciences” (p. 107).

developmental measures in order to function optimally. Rationality is not apart from these elements of human development but rather part of them, as they are part of it. We think with our feelings, with our social, moral and spiritual impulses, and with our aesthetic senses” (p. 1).

Subsequently, as Merriam (2008) tells us:

Whether it be from non-Western epistemological systems or from our own Western perspective, it appears that adult learning research and theory building are expanding to include more than just an individual, cognitive understanding of learning. The mind, body, spirit, emotions, and society are not themselves simply sites of learning; learning occurs in their intersections with each other. (Merriam, 2008, p. 97)

In this context, Griffin (2001) offers a fitting metaphor to express the importance of this integrative view:

Learning is like playing a guitar. Most of us have been trained by our schooling to play one string – our rational mind. However, we have at least five other strings [emotional, relational, physical, intuitive and spiritual], and if we learn to play them well and keep them properly tuned, we can make limitless music in our learning and can then go on to help our students do the same. (p. 102)

Science vs. Scientism – New Physics, Systems Thinking & the Case for Holism

As argued above and Griffin makes clear in her metaphor, much of our instrumental ways of knowing and learning are the consequence of a narrow and reductive ‘one string’ understanding of science. Here, it is important to point out that there is a stark difference between ‘science’ as an organized, necessary and respected body of knowledge, which can refer and legitimize a level of reality and truth (through, for example, the epistemology of empiricism or post-positivism), and ‘scientism’, which claims that only scientific knowledge (as a strictly empirical or sensory means of knowing) has a monopoly on all theory building, conjecture and establishing reality and truth – and by extension how we should understand human nature, practice education and design our societies. This absolute and extreme view of science tends to view anything beyond the sensory world as impossible to prove, unreal and ‘magical’ thinking. In a sense, a scientistic world view (like a fanatical religious world view) are no different, since they are both dogmatic closed paradigms that believe in an ‘objective’, ‘absolute’, and ‘superior’ view of their knowledge, reality and truth. There is no consideration or respect for the ‘other’, nor any awareness, realization and acceptance of their subconscious constructive bias. Here, rather than consider a humble and open position, paradoxically involving a combination of objective, constructive and unfolding reality (in pursuit of knowledge and truth), both scientism and religionism embrace a radical, exclusivist and inevitable position – on matters related to their domains, but also on everything else (Salim, 2020).

While much of our higher education systems (along with contemporary society) persist with an instrumentalist world view, more and more scientists are shifting to an interdependent or systems thinking¹² understanding of existence (Capra & Luisi, 2014; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Wheatley, 2006; Senge, 1994). As Palmer and Zajonc (2010) contend, the architects of ‘new physics’ (Heisenberg, Einstein, Bohr, and Schrodinger), have through compelling experiments in quantum mechanics and relativity “forced many to abandon the naive materialistic paradigm in favor of one that puts experience in the place of object, and see relationship no longer as mediated solely by conventional forces between or isolated entities; a deeper holism is at play” (p. 66). In this context, Senge (1994) tells us, systems thinking could be described as the notion of interconnectedness in which “nature (and that includes us) is not made of parts within wholes. It’s made of wholes within wholes”¹³ (p. 371). As such, he proposes:

Human endeavors are also systems. They...are bound by invisible fabrics of interrelated actions, which often take years to fully play out their effects on each other. Since we are part of that lacework ourselves, it’s doubly hard to see the whole pattern of change. Instead, we tend to focus on snapshots of isolated parts of the system and wonder why our deepest problems never seem to get solved. (Senge, 1994, p. 7)

Neuroscience & Reawakening our Holistic View of Reality

More recently, McGilchrist (2019), drawing on groundbreaking neuroscience research and beyond, makes a convincing argument for our return to an integrative view of reality. According to McGilchrist, compelling new research suggests that we have largely misunderstood or neglected the way in which our left and right hemispheric brains help us think and act in the world. According to McGilchrist, while the two separate regions of our brain are inextricably linked and bilaterally work together, modern scientific research of the brain has established that there are clear differences

¹²Here, it is important to point out that while I am making the case for shift towards a systems thinking or integrative world view, I have argued in my dissertation and Capra and Luisi (2014) affirm, these two ways of knowing (instrumental (reductionist/quantitative/technical/analysis) vs. integrative (whole/qualitative/intuitive/synthesis) and their subsequent values do not need to exist in opposition, but can endure in a paradoxical or holarchical relationship. Instead, as Capra and Luisi (2014) contend, these ways of knowing and tendencies “are both essential aspects of all living systems” (p. 18). As such, “Neither of them is intrinsically good or bad. What is good, or healthy, is a dynamic balance; what is bad, or unhealthy, is imbalance – overemphasis of one tendency and neglect of the other. When we look at our modern industrial culture, we see that we have overemphasized the self-assertive [read instrumental] and neglected the integrative tendencies” (p. 18).

¹³According to Senge (1994), “Systems thinking is a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools that has been developed...to make the full patterns clearer, and to help us see how to change them effectively” (p. 7).

in function and states of consciousness (or ways of knowing and being in the world). In other words, it could be said that there are two routes of brain operation to behavior that construct, mediate and filter entirely different phenomenology, values and realities. Here, our two hemispheric regions of the brain and mind, literally pay attention in fundamentally different ways, the left being detailed oriented, while the right being whole-oriented. As such, he argues, these two modes of perception cascade into radically different world views. He writes, the right hemisphere seeks to:

- Understand things and the self (in the broader context);
- Serves as a source of experience and sees things as a whole (and as part of a whole); it is open to discovery and receptive to paradoxes; it handles metaphor and music;
- Serves as the seat of common sense; it is responsible for the distinct human ability to express sadness through crying; it focuses on the new, relationships and connectedness (rather than difference and category).

As such, McGilchrist (2019) tells us, the right hemisphere allows us to “experience...a live, complex, embodied, world of individual, always unique beings, forever in flux, a net of interdependence, forming and reforming wholes, a world which we are deeply connected” (p. 31). In contrast, the left hemispheric brain:

- Perceives the world as determined, orderly, linear, focused and tendency to classify;
- Dislikes paradoxes and is closely associated with anger;
- Self-focused and takes a short-term view;
- Works with what it already knows (supplied to it by the right hemisphere);
- Sees things as oblivious from their context, breaking them down into compartmental parts, with the goal of manipulation; it handles language and symbols;
- Attempts to ‘re-present’ reality, rather than being ‘present’ in reality;

Finally, within a left hemispheric focused mind, “we ‘experience’ our experience [of the world]...a ‘rep-presented’ version of it, containing now static, separable, bounded, but essentially fragmented entities, grouped into classes, on which predictions can be based” (p. 31).

Thus, given these unique and respective designated areas of focus, McGilchrist contends that right hemisphere, given its essential qualities and unique responsibilities (to first perceive experience and then form a coherent whole) is fundamentally designed to serve as the ‘Master’ (or default judge of interpreting our world). While, its counterpart, the left hemisphere is intended to serve as its analytical and detailed oriented ‘Emissary’ (or servant). Yet, as I have argued at length in my dissertation (Salim, 2020)¹⁴ and McGilchrist affirms: since the dawn of the Enlightenment,

¹⁴Here, much of McGilchrist’s argument regarding the domination of our left hemispheric brain/mind functioning can be deeply and intuitively affirmed in the instrumental philosophical assumptions and hegemonic world views of scientism, technical-rational pedagogy and neoliberal world order (Salim, 2020). As I have argued through the seminal works of Charles Taylor, Jurgen Habermas, Parker Palmer, Robert Kegan, Terence Lovat, Patricia Cranton and many others, such ‘scientific’ (or hegemonic ‘left-hemispherization’) of our thinking has (since Enlightenment) gradually resulted in today’s mainstream reductive, fragmented and instrumental view of ontology

Western Civilization has gradually moved to an imbalance mode of thinking about how we interpret and authenticate ‘reality’, ‘knowing’ and ‘truth’. As he puts it, over the last several centuries, we have steadily inhabited (in many ways) a ‘left-hemispherization’ [read instrumentalism] of the Western world, in which our reductive and short-sighted ‘Emissary’ left hemisphere, has overthrown the wisdom, holism and long-term thinking of the ‘Master’ right hemisphere. Put otherwise, the instrumental, ecologically detached, abstract, articulate, and self-assured left hemisphere (‘the Emissary’), has managed to usurp the more contextual, ecologically attuned, compassionate, systemic, integrative but relatively hesitant and inarticulate right hemisphere (‘the Master’) (McGilchrist, 2019).

Yet, as McGilchrist argues, this coup d’état by the left hemisphere not only provides a less ‘accurate’, ‘real’ or ‘true’ sense of reality (as compared to our right hemispheric thinking), but it has made us less ‘intelligent’ and inclined to a world that is gradually: instrumental, reductionist, utilitarian, distracted, depersonalized, decontextualized and bureaucratic; saturated with cynicism and paranoia; unreasonably optimistic, inflexible, self-righteous, scornful towards belief; lacking in trust and compassion; ceaselessly seeking control and power; suffering a fragmentation of the self and loss of the wider context that gives meaning; and has lost its default relationship with the natural environment.

In the context of higher education, the detrimental outcomes of such a ‘left-hemispherization’ of our world is both affirmed in my dissertation research (Salim, 2020) and aptly described by Palmer (foreword in Barbezat & Bush, 2014). According to Palmer, a post-secondary education system that constructs job training and economic utility as its principal aim and traditional or instrumental teaching practices, such as objectivism, as its model of pedagogy, not only stifles the very nature of holistic and meaningful learning, but also creates – as witnessed in today’s ubiquitous malfeasance of well-educated leaders in politics, business, finance, health care, education, and religion – “an ethical gap between the educated person and a world that is inevitably impacted by his or her actions, a failure to embrace the fact that one is a moral actor with communal responsibilities” (p. viii).

The Myth of Learning in Post-secondary Education

As pointed out above, this sub-conscious left-hemispheric (or instrumentalist) colonization of our minds has manifested in a short-sighted, reductive and fragmented world view, in which many of today’s North American colleges and universities are pedagogically ineffective in preparing students personally, professionally, and publicly (Salim, 2020). As Knapper (2010) tells us, “there is increasing empirical evidence from a variety of international settings that prevailing teaching practices in higher education do not encourage the sort of learning that contemporary society demands, and indeed that most university [or college] professors claim they would like to see” (p. 230). Here, despite some pockets of pedagogical advancement and

(notion of reality), epistemology (notion of knowledge) and axiology (notion of truth) (Salim, 2020). In this context, it could be said that much of the human community, is unable to authorize the wisdom and ability to see the world in more authentic, long-term and holistic ways.

the best intentions of many faculty and administrators, much of our current pedagogical approaches in higher education remain truncated by a technical-rational¹⁵ (or solely cognitive and behaviourist) approach to knowledge, learning and teaching (Salim, 2020).

As Christensen Hughes and Mighty (2010) affirm, despite the extraordinary research advances that have taken place in our understanding of knowledge, learning and teaching in higher education, remarkably in the Canadian (and international context), the “impact of educational research on faculty-teaching practices and the student learning experiences has been negligible” (p. 4). Here, as my dissertation research confirms, PSE students in Canada and across North America are underperforming in virtually every area of learning, including the basic/low-order (or informative/hard skills) forms of learning (such as literacy and numeracy); but also and especially so, in the more complex/high-order (or transformative/soft-skills) kinds of learning (arguably the focus, values and phenomenology of right-brain functioning) that are characterized by a student’s ability to demonstrate self-authorship and social/planetary responsibility, democratic vocation, communication and collaboration, critical and creative thinking, ethical and moral judgement, and the pursuit of holistic health and life-long learning (Salim, 2020).

For example, in a recent Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) study, involving more than 7500 students at 20 Ontario colleges and universities, the researchers found that 65 per cent of entering and graduating students scored at a below adequate or minimum requirement in numeracy and literacy abilities (Weingarten et al., 2018). However, while there were at least some gains found in numeracy and literacy scores (think low-order or hard-skills) of a few graduating students, remarkably the study found little to no difference between the critical thinking abilities (read high-order or soft-skills) of incoming and graduating students. As the authors of this study starkly conclude: “Postsecondary education to a large extent still teaches, evaluates and credentials information and content. Statements about the employment-related skills of graduates from academic institutions are largely based on inference, opinion, gut feelings or aspirations” (p. 10).

¹⁵According to Smith (2010), “The technical rational approach (Schon, 1983) to learning facilitation and design is a typical Western approach to learning. This approach focuses on the intellect almost to the exclusion of other ways of knowing, privileging the individual learner, autonomy, and independent thought and action over collective ways of learning that honor community and interdependence (Marriam & Associates, 2007)...The technical rational approach largely ignores the cultural (country and community mores; social), emotional (attitudes, interests, attention, awareness, and values), spiritual (perceived sense of connection, religious beliefs, matters of the spirit), and contextual needs of the learners” (p. 151).

How Corporatization or New Public Management Distorts & Denies the Integrative Purpose, Function & Progress of PSE

As argued in the introduction, the foundation of scientism and its twin pillars of technical-rational pedagogy and neoliberal capitalistic values not only ontologically, epistemologically and axiologically support one another, but they continue to keep in place today's instrumental (and left-hemispheric) pedagogical practice. As I have argued in my dissertation, many PSE institutions are unable to support and deliver integrative learning on campuses because the decision makers guiding these institutions are conceptually captured and financially incentivized (whether by choice or necessity) by today's neoliberal¹⁶ socioeconomic system (Salim, 2020). Subsequently, as I have argued and Lorenz (2012) affirms, neoliberal policies, characterized by a combination of free market rhetoric and intensive managerial control, have ushered in across the globe a philosophy and practice of human resources management technique called New Public Management (NPM). According to Lorenz, NPM can be defined as:

the idea that where service provision in the public sector cannot be privatized, it should be modernized and made to run efficiently on the model of the private sector. NPM explicitly rejects the view that public service might be qualitatively different from the provision of other kinds of goods and services, and assumes that public services – universities, schools, health care systems – are all essentially the same and operate the same way. Under NPM, citizens become customers while politicians or public servants become (ostensibly non-ideological driven) technocrats, whose job is simply to measure and control operations so as to make them as efficient as possible. A focus on achievable short-term goals; the imposition of league tables; audits and accountability mechanisms; the disaggregation of jobs into component parts; and the perpetual search for new revenue streams and efficiencies also characterizes NPM (Lorenz, 2012, pp. 601–602).

In this NPM context, PSE funding models¹⁷ and related accountability measures powerfully incentivize PSE administrators toward the phenomenology and values

¹⁶As I made the case in my dissertation, today's hegemonic neoliberal paradigm which took flight in the 1980s, has since then transformed PSE worldwide from once a public serving good (guided by a liberal arts education ethos) to now a private and utilitarian focused endeavour predominantly benefiting and serving industry, private interest and the wealthy few. Here, as Polster & Newson (2015) tells us, our PSE systems in Canada over the last 35 years "have become more commercial in orientation, more business-like in practice, and more corporate in self-presentation" (p. 1). Thus, they contend, our PSE institutions not only devalue and disincentivize transformative teaching practices, democratic vocation, public research and the value of the common good, but they "progressively work for, with and as businesses" (p. i).

¹⁷According to Peters, "Ontario's PBF model relies on 10 metrics – six related to skills and jobs, and four corresponding to economic and community impact – to calculate how much money it gives to individual learning institutions" (para. 2). Yet, as Spooner (2020) argues, Performance Based Funding models have not only failed in almost everywhere they have been implemented (especially the United States), but these kinds of NPM style policies incentives a value system in which privatization, growth of the economy and serving predominantly labour market interests trump the values of higher education for the betterment of personal and societal transformation (Peters, 2021; Salim, 2020; Lorenz, 2012).

of hierarchical control and priorities related to job training and professional credentialing, serving mostly private sector interests, commercialization of research, and enrollment/profit maximization; at the expense of collegiately and shared governance, institutional trust, a balance between serving public – private – plural sector interests, democratic vocation and rule, excellence and innovation in teaching, learning and curriculum, and an integral approach to personal, professional and public transformation (Salim, 2020). In this context, many college and university educators (and administrators) remain conceptually and pedagogically unequipped (and unaccountable) in offering integrative education. Because the culture and political system (and its values, leaders and funding models) disincentivizes if not works against the investment and adoption of such progressive and integrative pedagogical advancements. As Lederman (2022) citing McClure tells us, “despite all of this conversation around higher education being corporatized, we’ve got a set of HR practices and hiring practices that are byzantine. They reflect a state-based bureaucracy more so than a nimble, knowledge-based organization” (para. 23). Thus, it could be said that such quasi-corporatized NPM practices not only paradoxically keep in place today’s outdated and instrumentalist PSE practices; but as suggested in the following section, such instrumentalist practices are a fundamental reason we are unable to deliver an efficacious, democratic and holistic higher education.

According to Holst and Brookfield (2013), it is in this instrumentalist PSE context, that much of our teacher professional learning opportunities in adult education, “tends to disconnect learning from any particular moral, social or political purpose and to focus instead on its mechanics” (p. 23). Thus, a paradox and drawback of this quasi-corporatized neoliberal NPM system is that, on the one hand, it discourages (in many ways) PSE institutions from investing, innovating and adopting the most up to date, integrative and exemplary learning and teaching practices (Salim, 2020). While, on the other hand, industry leaders and corporations, who are responsible in maintaining the neoliberal NPM culture, ironically demand (and complain) that our higher education systems are deeply falling short of the soft-skills learning and well-rounded graduates their industry drastically need in order to thrive in the fourth industrial (or sustainable) revolution (Salim, 2021). Put otherwise, there is an increasing need and desire by society and employers alike for a full-circle kind of graduate who not only demonstrate low-order learning such literacy or numeracy, but also (and especially so) high order learning such as sound leadership, creativity, and synthesis thinking, among others (Salim, 2020). And, despite these stark contradictions, many of these industry leaders continue to support policy that shapes public education in the image of privatized business (and by extension nurtures an NPM culture); while also lobbying governments (despite accumulating record profits) to further cut their taxes – which ironically lead to austerity policies and by extension less public revenue for services such as officious public education or healthcare (Salim, 2020).

A PSE System & Teaching Practice in Cognitive Dissonance

Yet, as I argue in my dissertation study (and affirmed below), all of this suggests that today's instrumental focused system of education is simply un-incentivized, incapable and unaccountable (conceptually, pedagogically, culturally and politically) at providing such optimal and integrative learning opportunities. These trends are not only strongly affirmed in my primary and secondary dissertation research (Salim, 2020), but is corroborated, for example, by a mixed methods study on faculty development at the University of Windsor, published in 2015 by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario:

Thus, academics graduate the UTC Program only to find that Ontario's postsecondary system works against their effort to teach, design courses and assess students appropriately, as noted in the focus groups and open-ended comments identifying barriers in departmental and institutional culture, which are consistent with other higher educational research on teaching culture (Kustra et al., 2014) and with the characteristics identified by Biggs. These "distorted priorities" are to some extent the consequence of university corporatization "which illustrates misalignment at its starkest" (Biggs, 2001, p. 235). (Potter et al., 2015, p. 56)

As I have argued at length, in today's higher education landscape, 'distorted priorities' and 'stark misalignment' with regards to pedagogical practice is sadly the norm rather than the exception (Salim, 2020). Here, the evidence is clear: a significant number of faculty are systematically unsupported or unincentivized in the modern scientific approaches to pedagogy and integrative approaches to education. As Knapper (2010) points out, "most faculty are largely ignorant of the scholarship, and instructional practices and curriculum planning are dominated by tradition rather than research evidence" (p. 229). For example, while all post-secondary institutions place teaching as a priority in their mission statements and are often publicizing the accomplishments of their teaching and learning centres. In truth, faculty at many institutions receive very little if any formal or mandatory professional learning opportunities during their graduate education, entry into the field, or as experienced part/full time professionals (Knapper, 2010; Cranton & King, 2003; Christensen Hughes & Mighty, 2010). As Scott and Scott (citing Dunn & Wallace, 2016) tell us, even when faculty demonstrate the will to become better teachers, there is little to no confidence in the professional development processes in helping faculty achieve this goal. This is because many faculty development programs "are deemed irrelevant to teaching staff as they are fragmented and ad hoc, context non-specific, and ignore adult learning principles" (Scott as cited in Scott & Scott, 2016, p. 515). As a result, the practice of teaching remains largely traditional or instrumental, student learning surface, and curricula are more likely to emphasize content coverage than optimization of transformative, self-authorizing and long-lasting learning (Christensen Hughes & Mighty, 2010). In such quasi-corporatized (and pedagogically instrumental environments), Brownlee (2016) argues that "Teaching has not just fallen on the list of priorities, it has been pushed there by conscious

resource allocation” (p. 19). For example, in a published report by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, the authors argue:

One of the primary functions of many Ontario universities and colleges is to provide students with a high-quality teaching and learning experience. However, as resources are stretched and postsecondary institutions focus more on research, funding into teaching development and support has been put at risk. A number of additional challenges – including rising student/faculty ratios and class sizes, an aging faculty population, outdated methods of instruction and curriculum design, and uneven access to teaching development for new instructors – are making it even more difficult to develop and maintain quality teaching. (Grabove et al., 2012, p. 2)

Yet, these trends are not only undermining the very core mission of higher learning but runs in direct opposition to what the research suggests we should be doing when confronted with a culture of diminishing resources in PSE. For example, Ewell’s (2008)¹⁸ research with respect to successful student learning and wellbeing suggests, “it is not how much is invested in a given collegiate experience that is important; it is instead how intentionally these resources are directed” (Ewell, 2008, p. 11). This affirmed by Jensen et al., (2012) who argue exemplary education systems in the world such as Singapore [or Finland], which are often rated among the top educative systems in the world, “focus on the things that are known to matter in the classroom, including a relentless, practical focus on learning, and creation of a strong culture of teacher education, research, collaboration, mentoring, feedback and sustained professional development” (p. 2). However, as Jensen et al. contend, “These are precisely the reforms that Australia and other countries [such as Canada] are trying to embed. Yet there is often a disconnect between policy objectives and their impact in classrooms” (p. 2). With respect to Canada, Jensen et al.’s findings are more recently corroborated by a 2017 World Economic Forum report in which Singapore, Finland and Netherlands ranked first, second and third respectively in delivering high performing postsecondary education. Among the top reasons for such ranking success, included PSE access and equity [read not privatization], support for pedagogical innovation, and significant investments in faculty professional

¹⁸In his article, Ewell (2008) cites a study titled, *Documenting Effective Educational Practices (DEEP)* project by George Kuh of the National Student Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). In the study, Kuh and his team compare the spending patterns of 20 unusually effective institutions (which ranged from small private colleges to large public research universities) against similar institutions across the country. According to Ewell: “We then compared instruction-related expenditures for each DEEP institution, even when the evidence was in. We found that DEEP institutions did not spend more money per student than their peers, but they did spend it differently. Most intriguingly, they spent noticeably higher proportions of their available dollars on “academic support,” a category in IPEDS under which most institutions report resources dedicated to such things as faculty development, teaching and learning centers, and academic support staff such as tutors and counselors. These were precisely the activities that the DEEP research team noted as key contributors to a campus ethos devoted to student success when they visited these institutions” (p. 11, bold italics added).

learning. Not surprisingly, among the 148 economies assessed in the report, Canada's higher education ranking has dramatically dropped from eight in 2010 to 19th place in 2017 (World Economic Forum, 2013; World Economic Forum, 2017). As I have argued in my dissertation, this is because Canada's PSE system continues to spend its diminishing government grant allocation on non-related pedagogical initiatives, rather than on the core mission of higher education: learning and teaching. As Lovat (2019) bemoans, 'We live in an era that is blessed with the scientific understanding of learning' [yet the irony is that] 'many modern educational regimes have the evidence before them but ignore it and establish regimes of learning that are actually hostile to efficacious learning' (p. 10).

Beyond these pedagogical shortfalls, a neoliberal vision of education has led to a significant level of diminished student and faculty mental, physical and emotional health (Salim, 2020; Fischman & Gardner, 2022). In this context, a remarkable two thirds of Canadian college faculty (Chisoe, 2017) and over half of university faculty (Pasma & Shaker, 2018) work as precarious part time/contract employees. Meanwhile, the neoliberal climate of fiscal austerity and autocratic New Public Management culture increasingly undermines institutional trust and collegiality, investment in learning and teaching innovation, and marginalizes academics from important institutional decision-making processes. In this context, "decisions about quality, academic standards and student success are being made with more weight given to budgetary imperatives, rather than educational outcomes" (MacKay, 2014, p. 2). Subsequently, neoliberal policies have led to:

decreased government funding, the casualization of the academic workforce, the expansion of on-line learning, reliance on private service providers, and the erosion of academic freedom. The effects in turn have had an impact on students, manifested in skyrocketing tuition fees, a crushing student debt burden, increased class sizes, decreased services, and lower-quality education. (MacKay, 2014, p. 21)

In such quasi-corporatized (and pedagogically instrumental environments), Brownlee (2016) argues that "Teaching has not just fallen on the list of priorities, it has been pushed there by conscious resource allocation" (p. 19). For example, in a published report by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, the authors argue:

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Reclaiming Societal Balance & Holism via Integrative Education

In his 2015 book, *Rebalancing Society: Radical Renewal Beyond Left, Right or Centre*, Mintzberg argues (and Carney, 2021¹⁹ and Salim, 2021 both affirm), the root cause of today's interconnected crises arises from a growing imbalance and misalignment of values and interests between three key sectors – public, private and plural.²⁰ Thus, Mintzberg tells us, a balanced society is expected to stand on, “three sturdy legs: a public sector of respected governments, to provide many of our protections (such as policing and regulating); a private sector of responsible businesses, to supply many of our goods and services; and a plural sector of robust communities, wherein we find many of our social affiliations” (p. xi). Instead, our societies, especially over the last several decades, have been disrupted and dominated by an unhinged paradigm of private sector interest, values and entitlements – both domestic and global. Subsequently, he proposes our most viable path to balance will come through the plural sector (read non-for-profit or human associations such as colleges and universities, NGOs, unions, cooperatives, Greenpeace, Red Cross, religious orders and hospitals). More specifically, he contends, the plural sector:

... is not made up of “them” but of you, and me, and we, acting together. We shall have to engage in many more social movements and social initiatives, to challenge destructive practices and replace them with constructive ones. We need to cease being human resources, in the service of imbalance, and instead tap our resourcefulness as human beings, in the service of our progeny and our planet”. (p. xi)

Thus, he argues, our choice comes down to two options: the status quo private sector dominance leading to global devastation in which we can continue to plunder the planet, and each other; or grounded revolution, in which we (stakeholders in the plural sector such as higher education) can advocate and work toward dynamic balance.

As I have argued in my dissertation and elsewhere (Salim, 2021), such urgent need for balance first necessitates that our PSE systems (and beyond) adopt an integrative rather than instrumental paradigm. Here, beyond mounting scholarship urging PSE systems (as an important stakeholder and contributor of the plural sector) to take on leadership roles toward societal balance, there seems to be a heightened sense of awareness and growing understanding by the international community that such balance requires a “Humanistic or holistic approach to education”; in which

¹⁹In his book titled *Value(s): Building a Better World for All*, Dr. Mark Carney (2021), the former governor of the Bank of Canada and the Bank of England and now the United Nations special envoy for climate action and finance, argues we have moved from a market economy to a market society that overvalues money and private goods while systematically undervaluing public goods, such as the environment and the common good. At the heart of Carney's argument is that the question of what is valuable, has been twisted by our sense of what is profitable, and as such, “societies' values become equated with financial value” (p. 4).

²⁰According to Mintzberg, the plural sector can also be called the non-for-profit sector, the third sector or civil society. These ‘human associations’ could include but not limited to: colleges and universities, NGOs, unions, cooperatives, Greenpeace, Red Cross, religious orders and hospitals.

“economic growth must be guided by environmental stewardship and by concern for peace, inclusion and social justice” (UNESCO, 2015, p. 10). As the UNESCO report insists, today’s deeply concerning climate crisis, intolerable inequity and technological threat/disruption²¹ [not to mention a New Cold War] urgently necessitate that government move “beyond narrow utilitarianism and economism to integrate the multiple dimensions of human existence. This approach emphasizes the inclusion of people who are often subject to discrimination – women and girls, indigenous people, persons with disabilities, migrants, the elderly and people living in countries affected by conflict” (p. 10). Thus, as I have proposed in this chapter, an integrative vision and practice of education must take precedence and serve as a launching pad by which our graduates can cope with ever growing change, complexity and uncertainty; and where our societies can nurture the kinds of ideas, leaders and institutions that find common understanding, sectoral balance and avoid social/environmental calamity.

Subsequently, to adopt such an integrative vision and practice of higher education, college and university faculty and administrators must first philosophically ‘break with’ the instrumental model of reality and knowledge (and by extension learning and teaching) in order to ‘break through’ and embrace an integrative pedagogical world view (Salim, 2020). As Palmer and Zajonc (2010) tell us:

to be truly integrative, such an education must go beyond a “values curriculum” to create a comprehensive learning environment that reflects a holistic vision of humanity, giving attention to every dimension of the human self. Integrative education honors communal as well as individual values and cultivates silent reflection while encouraging vigorous dialogue as well as ethical action. (p. 152)

As I have pointed out in my dissertation, the scholarship of integrative educational theory and pedagogical practice falls under varying labels including but not limited to: transformative, integral, holistic, alternative, developmental constructive, experiential, collaborative and values education (Salim, 2020). While unique in their own approaches, these varying designations generally recognize a full-circle view of human intelligence and development in which values, context, emotions, moral imagination and sociality, among others, are equally important in human learning and social progress. In fact, much of the integrative education scholarship and best practice examples call for the creation of equitable and accessible learning contexts and academic programs that are (1) dialogically values rich in design; (2) nurture relentless school/institutional and teacher professional learning; and (3) encourage an experiential, transformative and collaborative engagement with students and the wider community (Salim, 2020). In the context of higher education, programs and

²¹According to Harari (2017), today’s automation and AI revolution has created a much different struggle between the ‘labour proletariat’ and ‘business bourgeoisie’. As such, he writes, “With insights gleaned from early warning signs and test cases, scholars should strive to develop new socio-economic models. The old ones no longer hold. For example, twentieth-century socialism assumed that the working class was crucial to the economy, and socialist thinkers tried to teach the proletariat how to translate its immense economic power into political clout. In the twenty-first century, if the masses lose their economic value [as a result of automation] they might have to struggle against irrelevance rather than exploitation (para. 21, bold italics added).

their curriculum are developed by combining a wide and diverse variety of fields, disciplines and systems (Salim, 2020, 2021). As such, teachers embrace a collaborative, polymathic and experiential approaches to teaching; and students are offered both informative and transformative ways of knowing and learning; so that they are able to make sound, critical and self-authorizing judgments in their personal, professional and public aspirations (Salim, 2020, 2021). As Hubert and Hutchings (2004) point out, integrative education can be developed in many varieties, “connecting skills and knowledge from multiple sources and experiences; applying theory to practice in various settings; utilizing diverse and even contradictory points of view; and, understanding issues and positions contextually” (p. 13). As such, they propose, “Significant knowledge within individual disciplines serves as the foundation, but integrative learning goes beyond academic boundaries. Indeed, integrative experiences often occur as learners address real-world problems, unscripted and sufficiently broad to require multiple areas of knowledge and multiple modes of inquiry, offering multiple solutions and benefiting from multiple perspectives” (p. 13).

Introducing an Integrative Model & Practical Approach to Teacher Professional Learning

The concepts of knowledge, learning and teaching are central to the field of education, but most assume its meaning and related practice are agreed upon, yet as I have argued in my dissertation, such agreement is far from the truth (Salim, 2020). Put otherwise, the way in which a teacher perceives knowledge, learning or teaching is deeply connected to their philosophical (ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions) in which the sub-conscious constellation of values, emotions, identities, context, ideologies, beliefs and habits among others, all combine and manifest into ‘rational’ choices and pedagogical practice in the classroom. Thus, most people are unaware of the powerful internal and external philosophical assumptions (and non-rational choices) that are driving (by default) their view of reality and by extension how they behave in their day to day personal, professional and public lives (Salim, 2020). Here, as a growing body of teacher professional learning research affirms, any significant and productive change in the classroom begins with what a teacher thinks and understands philosophically about the nature of reality and by extension knowledge, learning and teaching (Salim, 2020). As Pratt and Associates (2005) affirm, consciously or unconsciously our epistemic assumptions and ideas about learning “will significantly shape, define, and limit a given perspective on teaching” (p. 72). This perspective is fittingly captured by Hamachek (1999) who writes, “Consciously, we teach what we know; unconsciously we teach who we are” (p. 209).

In light of this important philosophical starting point for change, my dissertation research responded to the call for integrative education, by (1) theoretically designing; (2) pedagogically delivering (to college educators and administrators); and (3)

qualitatively and quantitatively evaluating a heuristic integrative teacher professional learning model (that I called the 3P aims of personal, professional and public/planetary knowing). In alignment with Canada's long standing (while not perfect) egalitarian and democratic principles (and in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals), I argued that such an integrative vision of education may be advanced through UNESCO's four pillars of learning for the twenty-first century: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, learning to live and work with others (Delors, 1996) – accompanied by a fifth pillar that I added: learning to impact/influence people, society and the planet/environment (Salim, 2020). Likewise, such an integrative vision and practice of education – in which for example, learning can be better personalized and contextualized and offer informative and transformative ways of knowing/being – can be pedagogically delivered through an integrative or what I termed *U-shape* (rather than instrumental or *i-shape*) approach to learning and teaching (Salim, 2020).

In brief, a *U-shape* approach to learning and teaching means faculty are equipped conceptually and pedagogically (and supported culturally and politically by their institutions) to work closely in teams in order to facilitate a multi-perspective theme-based as opposed to a siloed and singular-perspective topic-based learning. Such a more expansive, real-life and holistic notion of education recognizes the link between the learner's knowing (epistemology) and the learner's being (ontology). As King and Baxter Magolda's (1996) research confirms, "What individuals learn and claim to know is grounded in how they construct their knowledge" (p. 165); and "How individuals construct knowledge and use their knowledge is closely tied to their sense of self" (p. 166). This notion of knowing transcends today's dominant behaviourist and/or strictly cognitive constructivist paradigm (*i-shape* approach) – in which knowledge is either downloaded from teacher to student, reduced to a solely cognitive function, or deemed only personally or socially constructed. A narrow kind of knowing that is empty of personal and social context and discrete/detached from our physical, emotional, moral, social, philosophical and spiritual intelligence and development (Salim, 2020). Instead, an integrative notion of constructivist teaching (*U-shape*) recognizes (via back and forth movement between Context, Conscious and Content) the entire learner's ways of knowing and nurtures a comprehensive philosophy of teaching and assessment. In other words, rather than promote one dominant kind of learning theory and related teaching philosophy as the most ideal, this integrative approach recognizes and appreciates that each kind of teaching philosophy simply focuses on a continuum of phenomenology and related values centered on at least three areas: (1) Teacher/subject centered – as for example, described by Prat and Associates' (2005) in their categorization of the transmission and/or apprenticeship teaching philosophy; (2) Learner/individual growth centered – labelled by Prat and Associates' as the developmental and/or nurturing teaching philosophy; (3) Society/social change centered – recognized by Prat and Associates' as the social reform teaching philosophy. Thus, based on the needs and aspirations of the students, of society and of the learning community/context, it draws and optimizes (like a Swiss Army knife) on the values, methods and methodologies of the varying learning theories, teaching philosophies and

related assessments. As such, teachers learn how benefit their students and society by finding consonance between diverse ontologies/epistemologies (i.e. secular and sacred); and practically drawing upon a wide field of traditions, philosophies, values and perspectives, included but not limited to pedagogical research (e.g. intelligence theories), neuroscience research, developmental psychology, philosophy, new physics, and Non-Western perspectives (e.g. Indigenous knowledge and world religions).

Moreover, I philosophically situated and justified this integrative vision and practice of education on Charles Taylor's open and inclusive humanistic secular ontological thesis (Taylor, 2007); accompanied by Jurgen Habermas's (1972, 1974) ground breaking theory and application of knowledge (technical, practical and critical). Here, Taylor's 'supernova' post-secular ontology combined with Habermas's integrative theory of knowledge fittingly supports the inclusive, humanistic and integrative world view and pedagogical practice that is argued in this chapter. Moreover, both of these two seminal philosophers (along with a number of other theorists from varying systems of scholarship referenced in my dissertation) seem to suggest (in their own ways) that if knowing is indeed an integrative constructive phenomenon (inseparable from our ways of being), then truth (or the Universal) may be understood as embodying at least three integrative dimensions. First, there is dimension of truth that fits within the correspondence theory of truth (or belief-to-world relationship – think scientific testing or empirical experience). Second, truth can also be understood through the coherence theory of truth (or belief-to-belief relationship – think community of truth). And, finally, truth can also embody a profound/transcendence and unfolding nature; in which the Nobel Prize winning physicist Neils Bohr, is cited by Palmer (2007) tells us, "The opposite of a true statement is a false statement, but the opposite of a profound truth can be another profound truth." (p. 65). In light of this open, humble and multi-dimensional notion of truth (that is discussed at length in my dissertation), I contend our PSE system and society would be wise and prudent to accept and appreciate that no one theory or construction of human perception or consciousness, either from a person, philosophy or tradition- scientific, religious or otherwise – may claim monopoly over truth (Salim, 2020).

Subsequently, the theoretical positions mentioned above were affirmed and justified (in many ways) by today's scientific and scholarly understanding of knowledge, learning and teaching as proposed for example by adult education research, developmental psychology, neuroscience and new physics, among others (Salim, 2020). More specifically, I used a design-based research methodology to draw upon and find consonance between the confusing²² and often non-communicating systems/disciplines/fields in order to develop a pedagogical blueprint that I called the

²²As Kirshner (2016) tells us, in the context of teacher professional learning, most educators are faced with confusing and competing "dysfunctional Balkanization of educational thought" in which teachers are forced to locate themselves squarely within a single tradition of pedagogical theory (e.g. behaviourist or constructivist or situativists or critical theorist) "– yet most do not – they are faced with a discordant array of pedagogical advice" (Kirshner, 2016, p. 2). Thus, he argues, in aggregate, this has caused debilitating consequences to the advancement of pedagogy in the postsecondary context.

Integrative Knowledge, Learning and Teaching Rubric (I-KLT). In a paradoxical way, this rubric accommodates both the ‘empirical’ (often the phenomenology and focus of the left-hemispheric mind) and ‘constructive’ (often the phenomenology and focus of the right-hemispheric mind) world views; while synthesizing a wide and diverse range of perspectives and theories on the topic of knowledge, learning and teaching. Here, the aim of this model and subsequent teacher professional learning course was to offer a coherent ‘map’ and ‘compass’ (and accompanying tools) by which educators could reflect and locate their phenomenology and underlying philosophical values, biases and related pedagogical practice; as well, it was designed to challenge, encourage and guide educators in adopting an integrative pedagogical enterprise that diverges from their existing traditional or instrumentalist teaching practices. As such, one of the unique design features of the I-KLT rubric and accompanying course included an accessible and coherent body of content for philosophical reflection²³; so to advance the idea that fragmentation and confusion in educational thought is unnecessary, since many of the competing world views, traditions and subsequent pedagogical theories are embedded in intentions, values, notions of truth and forms of knowledge that could potentially operate and exist (depending on why, how and when they are needed) in an integrative (rather conflicting, isolated or binary) fashion.

Moreover, this integrative approach to pedagogy is built on the most comprehensive and contemporary/scientific understanding of human intelligence and development: the cognitive, the affective, the social, the intentional, the somatic, the intuitive, the moral, the intellectual, and the spiritual (Salim, 2020). Accordingly, I made the case that such an integrative construction of knowing and model of education (that transcends the solely empirical or purely cognitive constructive epistemic models) and teacher professional learning (focused on both the informative and transformative kinds learning) hold immense potential to not only nurture transversal or soft-skills enrichment (such as creative, collaborative, critical and ethical capacities); but, more importantly, such a new paradigmatic foundation may inspire and equip the next generation of PSE graduates with the compassion, commitment and capability of solving today’s existential dilemmas.

Consequently, the mixed method results from my study suggested that the integrative teacher professional learning approach via the I-KLT model, had indeed, accomplished a significant measure of change in helping teacher and administrative participants shift their view toward a more integrative view and practice of knowledge, learning and teaching. However, the data also revealed that while a conceptual shift had clearly taken place among participants, a more widely adopted practical and sustainable implementation would require additional teacher professional learning commitment; deliberate practice by the participants; and a community of practice initiated by the participants. Also, change toward a more broadly accepted

²³As Korthagen (2004) points out, while there are some teacher professional learning opportunities in which teachers are engaged in philosophical development and critical reflection, “it is not always clear exactly what teachers are supposed to reflect on when wishing to become better teachers. What are important contents of reflection?” (2004, p. 78).

model of integrative pedagogy would require radical structural change in PSE education and beyond. A kind of change that necessitates institutional transformation demanded by the public and supported by college administration and government leadership and policy.

Conclusion

Given the urgency and magnitude of today's planetary challenges accompanied by the creative possibilities, the debate in higher education must move from mere intellectualism to the truth about today's pedagogical shortcomings and subsequent dysfunctional real-world outcomes. It also requires educators and administrators to accept personal responsibility and to break free from their narrow, outmoded and instrumental philosophical assumptions; in order to re-imagine an integrative vision of education in and for the twenty-first century. The time has arrived in which we (educators and administrators as influential representatives of the plural sector) must stand for and with our students and society, and demand governments, and by extension institutions of higher learning, re-establish a purpose and practice of post-secondary education that truly honours and serves the interests of all people and sentient life on the planet. This means we can no longer comfortably or apathetically sit on the intellectual or political fence and pretend that our education systems are 'neutral' and 'objective' institutions of higher learning (Salim, 2020). As the Honorable Justice Murray Sinclair²⁴ enjoined in his recommendations about redressing the horrific wrongs and injustices brought upon Canada's indigenous peoples: "education got us into this mess, and education will get us out" (Anderson, 2016, para. 10). In light Justice Sinclair's simple yet profound statement, I too believe in the power of education in 'getting us out of this mess'. And, just as today's higher education systems are seized and paralyzed by an unreflective, unrelating, and unsustainable story and related imbalance state of social existence. So too, we have the power to reclaim this story and reimagine an integrative kind of education designed for the balance and betterment of self, others and the planet.

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²⁴The Honorable Justice Murray Sinclair served as the Chair of Canada's Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2008–2015).

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Chapter 4

Reimagining Values Education: Six Salient Concepts



Neville Clement

Abstract Is development of interpersonal values the product of nature or nurture? Are values caught or taught? Current generative insights from biology and neuroscience challenge these clichéd binaries and create the possibility of alternate perspectives in reimagining values education. These germane observations have potential to enlarge values educators' understanding of the influence and interaction of social, cognitive, emotional and somatic processes engaged in the formation and enacting of values. This chapter is a speculative exploration of the importance of selected current literature in relation to six salient concepts present in the literary outputs of members the research team that was headed by Emeritus Professor Lovat. The six concepts identified are: the ecological nature of the learning environment, explicit and implicit aspects of the curriculum, learning and biology, wellbeing and the ambience of the learning-teaching environment, and experiential learning as exemplified by service learning. Perspectives from neuroscience contribute to an expanded understanding of the processes underlying the formation and enactment of values and, so, provide a stimulus in the ongoing reimagining of values education in order to support student wellbeing.

Keywords Values education · Values pedagogy · Values formation · Dynamic development · Neuroscience and education · Student wellbeing

Introduction

Values Education is practiced in a diversity of forms limited only by the imagination of the educational practitioner in turning ideas into concrete pedagogical experiences. Values education is scaffolded by framing concepts and this exposé will

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explore a selection of concepts that have emerged from the expansive literature relevant to values education. The efficacy of values education arises from a complex interplay of multiple elements. Six salient organizing concepts germane to the imagining of values education have been selected for this exposé. These include: the ecological nature of the learning environment; explicit and implicit aspects of the curriculum; biological underpinnings of learning; wellbeing and the ambience of the learning-teaching environment; and the profound nature of experiential learning as exemplified by service learning. Although this list is not comprehensive, these concepts have been synthesised from the literature on values education and are subject to ongoing refinement in the light of more recent insights arising from the literature. Furthermore, the concepts listed above are not discrete and self-sufficient but act together in values education.

In addition to outlining each of the six concepts listed above, this exposé will briefly introduce insights from the literature which have the potential to enrich these concepts. Ideas are drawn from: Lisa Feldman Barrett (2018), a psychologist and neuroscientist; Iain McGilchrist (2009/2019), a neuropsychiatrist and philosopher; Stephen W. Porges (2015, 2017), a neurophysiologist; Allan N. Schore (2019a, b), a psychotherapist and attachment theorist; and Bessel van der Kolk (2015) a psychiatrist with an interest in trauma therapy. Porges, Schore, and van der Kolk share a common interest in Interpersonal Neurobiology. All six authors approach neuroscience from the perspective of their own theoretical and disciplinary stances. Each author offers insight into one or more of the following topics: the development and functioning of the brain, the need to feel safe, the impact of trauma, and the self-regulation of affect. These topics will be discussed as they relate to the six concepts listed above. The purpose of the discussion is to speculate as to how these topics might affect the reimagining of the scope and nature of values education. A companion chapter expands on the neurobiological concepts discussed herein in relation to student wellbeing at school and the actualization of values (Clement, 2023 in press).

The Ecological Nature of the Learning Environment

At the outset, the ecological or the dynamic nature of values education needs to be recognized. Rather than conceptualizing values education as a fixed and rigid linear process moving from input to product, it is more helpful to view it as a dynamic ecology where there is complex interaction between the multiple and varied elements present in the learning environment (eg., Deakin Crick et al., 2007). A change in any one element or in the interplay between multiple elements alters the learning environment and thereby the learning that occurs in that context (Lovat et al., 2011). Conceptually this aligns with dynamic systems theory which affirms two aspects: (1) that both stability (which enables predictability) and variability (of interpersonal, cultural and contextual interplay) are complementary and not separate aspects of development, and, in fact, stability is an outgrowth of variability; and (2) that the

structures in relation to a person's actions, knowledge and emotions are not fixed but dynamic, and change according to the context and the person's multiple characteristics (Rose & Fischer, 2009; cf. Cantor et al., 2019; Siegel, 2020). Among the personal characteristics that interplay to influence learning are somatic, cognitive, affective and social aspects (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007).

Values education does not make for a narrow one only curriculum, but invites imaginative creativity in conceiving curriculum that is effective in its implementation. This is consistent with the inherent capacities of the human brain. In line with dynamic systems theory Barrett (2018) points to the principle of degeneracy, whereby the brain can produce the same outcome though different neuronal combinations. Additionally, Barrett intimates that the mind is capable of producing properties that cannot be reduced to the neural systems that produced them. The learning that eventuates is the dynamic product of the interplay between the learner and the various elements of the learning environment (Barrett, 2018). In line with this, values education cannot be restricted to one narrow approach, because diverse approaches to values education have proven to be effective (Lovat & Toomey, 2009; Lovat et al., 2010, 2011).

Explicit and Implicit Curriculum

In common with curriculum theory and practice in general, values education curriculum theory and practice draws from the diverse educational foundational disciplines of philosophy, psychology and sociology, with research ranging across a large variety of qualitative and quantitative methodologies and employing a diversity of pedagogical practices and learning formats. Additionally, teachers bring their own insights, experiences and predispositions to their curriculum theory, planning and practice and in so doing create the learning-teaching encounter (Lovat & Smith, 2003; Lovat et al., 2010). Moreover, the literature makes it clear that a rounded and holistic approach to values education involves a balancing and synchronization of the explicit and implicit (or "hidden") aspects of curriculum, which include school ambience and policy, and community and cultural influences (Clement, 2009, 2010). This means that the tenor of interpersonal relationships and transactions are of the utmost importance. Farrer's description of West Kiddlington School in England illustrates the need for congruence between the explicit and implicit curriculum so that explicit values discourse and the experience and ambience of the school environment are consistent with and complement each other (2000 cited in Clement, 2009). Although the explicit content component in values education is important, the experiential component cannot be minimized because values are ultimately experienced, observed and identified in everyday interpersonal and community interaction. Both of the explicit and implicit aspects were seen as the groundwork for the engaging in personal reflection which is a key component of values pedagogy (Lovat et al., 2011).

Further reflection on the nature and function and interaction of explicit and implicit aspects of values learning is prompted by Iain McGilchrist's (2009/2019) extensive review of the literature pertaining to the differing functions left and right hemispheres of the brain. Although McGilchrist makes it clear that both hemispheres are involved in all we do, nevertheless, functionally they process the explicit and implicit respectively. According to McGilchrist, when it comes to values, the left brain is oriented towards utility, hence, the left hemisphere is said to reconstruct the world in terms of morality. Alternatively, moral values are said to be dispositional, intuitive, unconscious and non-reductive, and therefore implicit (right hemisphere), rather than the product of the rationality of the left hemisphere. Moreover, moral judgements which are the domain of the right hemisphere, and related to moral sensitivity, which arises from empathy, are a right brain function. Furthermore, although the left hemisphere has a role in verbal communication, nonverbal aspects of communication like tone of voice and gestures are interpreted by the right hemisphere, in other words, meaning is dependent on implicit communication beyond the meaning of the actual words used. Nevertheless, as McGilchrist indicates, the right and left hemispheres are interdependent with the right hemisphere providing the grounding of experience and the left providing that conceptual analysis leading to clarity that enriches and thus adds to experience. These insights from McGilchrist indicate the need for developing sharp analysis and high quality experience of embedded values. McGilchrist's account of the differing functions of the right brain and left brain in relation to moral values presents a challenge to reflect more deeply on the nature and operations of the explicit and the implicit aspects of curriculum and their interdependence in values education. These insights broaden and deepen the realization that values education cannot be reduced to the transmission or the impartation of rational content alone, but also must take account of moral experience that is mediated through right hemisphere, non-verbal communication (see Schore, 2019a, b).

Learning and Biology

Learning depends on neurobiological processes. Increased knowledge of epigenetics and brain functioning by the neurobiological sciences during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has provided further insight into the nature of the learner that was not possible before the advent of brain imaging (eg., Cantor et al., 2019; Clement & Lovat, 2012; Diamond, 2009). This has facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of how seemingly disparate phenomenon meld together. Three pertinent areas are: the influence of the environment on brain development, brain plasticity, and the interplay between the cognitive, affective, social dimensions (see Lovat et al., 2011; Toomey et al., 2010).

Studies in epigenetics indicate that brain development is influenced by interaction with the environment, including the interpersonal, social, cultural and physical spheres. Although genes are fundamental to our biological nature, gene expression

is not predetermined but is responsive to environmental stimuli. This means that the perception of the nature-nurture binary, where one was championed over the other, is subsumed by a quest to understand the interaction between genes (nature) and the environmental influences (nurture) in shaping the development and structuring of the brain and neural processes. Furthermore, genes are turned on and off by environmental features and, in turn, genes influence the way in which the environment is experienced (for instance, Diamond, 2009). Interpersonal and social influences are important dimensions of the environmental influences as illustrated by Schore (2019a, b), who points to the importance of the epigenetic influence of the primary care giver (usually the mother) on the brain development of an infant. Schore points out that during this early period of life learning is both non-conscious and predominantly right-brained. Furthermore, Schore (2019b) comments that this influence on the brain development of the infant creates an internal working model that is life-long and that will either facilitate or inhibit growth in new socioemotional experiences (pp. 226–227); however, because of the plasticity of the brain, these models can be altered through psychotherapy. In regard to values pedagogy, this highlights the crucial importance of environmental influences, especially interpersonal and social ones, so much so, that their influence cannot be considered to be neutral and, therefore, of no consequence. The quality and ambience of the learning environment is of extreme importance for values education (Toomey et al., 2010).

Plasticity is that capability of the brain to change in response to the social and physical environment, feedback from the body, and thought (Doige, 2008). It is this plasticity of the brain that constitutes the dynamic capacity for learning and change. Doige explains the paradox of brain plasticity in that, on the one hand, it gives the capability to respond to and to learn new things by making new neural pathways or, on the other hand, to simply reinforce held positions by making them stronger by strengthening existing neural pathways. Sankey (2006) comments that the acquisition of values in the educational context help shape the brain and so influence personal choices and actions both consciously and subconsciously. This illustrates the epigenetic influence of values and values education in shaping the brain.

Another crucial framing concept in values pedagogy is the recognition of the dynamic interplay between the cognitive, the affective, the social, and the physical body, as made explicit by Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007), Porges (2015, 2017) and van der Kolk (2015). In their ground-breaking article, “We Feel, Therefore We Learn”, Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007) directly challenge the perception that cognitive elements function independently of the affective, social and somatic aspects of a person. The interplay between the cognitive, affective, and social, explained by Immordino-Yang and Damasio, means that the coaction of all three aspects together are pivotal for values education (eg., Lovat et al., 2011; Toomey et al., 2010). Also, Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007) draw attention to the basic function of the brain in monitoring our body, managing our physiology, and optimising our survival and wellbeing. As they point out, the body cannot simply be considered to be a housing for the brain (also Barrett, 2018). The importance of the feedback from the body to the brain for education and learning is further elaborated by Porges’ (2015, 2017) account of the link between visceral feedback,

physiological states, their resultant affective states, and the behaviour engendered by these states. Beyond words and “cognitive representations” the sense of safety emanates from the feelings and responses of the body to environmental features that include the physical and the social. A sense of safety is disrupted by trauma, and so affects physiological states which mediate behaviour (Porges, 2015, 2017; also Barrett, 2018). In order to offer hope for children who are neglected, abused or traumatized, van der Kolk (2015) recommends that schools engender a sense of belonging, where students can develop a sense of agency and self-regulation. Furthermore, he points out that this requires intentionality on the part of the school staff to provide an environment where students engage in learning without being distracted by being triggered by features of the learning environment. The upshot of Porges (2015, 2017) and van der Kolk (2015) is that a sense of safety, and therefore trust, is paramount for psychological wellbeing and the engendering of those related affective states is associated with optimal learning (also Sanders & Thompson, 2022). These insights are important for consideration of student and teacher wellbeing.

Wellbeing and the Ambience of Teaching and the Learning Environment

Central to values education research is the relationship between the quality of teaching and values education (Lovat & Clement, 2008a, b). The literature affirms that the quality of teaching is aligned with personal values that promote trusting relationships with students which, in turn, support student’s academic progress (Clement, 2009). Furthermore, the literature clearly demonstrates that as important as technical excellence in teaching is in high quality education, its value is blunted apart from positive concern and palpable action in regard to student wellbeing (Lovat & Clement, 2008a). Moreover, research indicates that the social and emotional aspects of teaching and learning cannot be partitioned from the cognitive engagement in learning, in other words, student emotional and social wellbeing is foundational and essential in the provision of a positive and engaging learning-teaching environment (Lovat et al., 2010; Lovat et al., 2011). It follows, then, that as well as providing a classroom ambience conducive to student achievement and wellbeing it is of paramount importance that teachers are empowered and supported by attention to their own wellbeing within the school environment (Clement, 2010; Toomey et al., 2010). A trusting school environment is identified as a feature that supports and energises the wellbeing of students and teachers (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Clement, 2010; Lovat & Clement, 2008a; Toomey et al., 2010).

Further insight into the essential need to cultivate trust and the sense of wellbeing in schools is provided by Porges (2015, 2017) who typifies the need for trusting relationships as beginning at birth with the infant-mother relationship and continuing through life (also Schore, 2019a, b). Safety is understood to be a fundamental

aspect in the building of trusting relationships and is not simply to be equated simply with the removal of threat or being physically safe. For Porges, the sense of safety has its basis in the nonconscious neurophysiological assessment of safety or the threat of danger. Feelings of safety are engendered by cues of safety that arise in the reciprocity of social interaction and which down-regulate the brain's inbuilt defence mechanisms. Detection of safety will promote calmness and social engagement, while detection of danger will evoke physiological defence responses. A sense of safety is promoted through non-verbal cues like prosody of voice, facial expression and the calmness of one's physiological state. Thus, Porges emphasizes that safety is essential to social engagement and co-regulation of physiological states. Trusting relationships promote co-regulation of physiological states of safety, and enables optimization of human capacities including cognitive performance and creativity. According to Porges, feelings of safety do not automatically arise from removal of danger, but are promoted through the cues listed above. Porges' explanation of the nature and importance of a sense of safety emphasizes that a positive ambience for learning is enhanced by attending to those features that promote a sense of safety both in teachers and students. One would expect that a sense of safety would offer an ambience for cultivating the interest and motivation to learn, as well as providing the support for learning to self-regulate any emotional challenges which might arise while learning new or difficult topics. These features align with the literature on the quality of teaching cited above.

Service Learning

Service Learning, in its variety of forms, is a species of experiential learning (Lovat & Clement, 2016). It is the purposeful engagement of students in a serving capacity, within the wider community or an activity within the school beyond the formal curriculum (Lovat et al., 2011). Taking its dynamic and power from immersion within a socially interactive activity, service learning confronts students with "real world" learning (Lovat et al., 2011; Toomey et al., 2010) which requires practical judgments as regards appropriate attitudes and actions. Service Learning resonates with cognitive, social, affective and somatic aspects as outlined by Immodino-Yang and Damasio (2007), with each of these aspects being intertwined with the others. Furthermore, the literature confirms that engagement in service learning affects a range of personal, social and academic outcomes, and points to structured reflection as being an important element in realizing these outcomes (Lovat & Clement, 2016). The qualitative study of Gibson (2009), recounting the service learning experience of high school seniors, is an outstanding example of how well facilitated group reflection provides enhanced learning opportunities in conjunction with the power of social interaction in promoting affective and cognitive engagement in learning.

In relation to the link between experience and knowing, McGilchrist (2009/2019) points to three aspects of knowing: experience, attention and the 'processing' of experience. Knowing is not possible apart from experience, but experience is

filtered through attention. Knowing is the outcome of processing experience and results in the “re-cognition” of the experience, which is the categorization of experience according to prior experience. These categories have associated beliefs and feelings. Moreover, McGilchrist remarks that processing becomes automated with the result that the world is encountered through the mind’s conceptualization of it. In values education reflection provides a means for examining these underlying assumptions (Lovat et al., 2011). Here again, co-regulation looms as important in mentoring students and guiding reflective activities, as well as for fostering a safe non-threatening environment for students to engage in reflection on their experience. In the example provided by Gibson (2009), service learning provided an opportunity for students to be challenged by novelty, while, at the same time, providing a safe environment for the processing of the experience. According to Porges (2015, 2017), seeking novelty usually proceeds from a position of safety by people who know how to return to safety, and they most likely have strong social networks.

Conclusion

This brief exposé has presented six salient organizing concepts germane to the imagining of values education as well as an exploration of ideas that might extend them. The observations offered are brief and highly condensed, but indicate directions that might be further investigated. Student wellbeing, which includes students’ perception of feeling safe, is a strong theme that emerges along with the need to support students in their regulation of their mental and physiological states. Further insights into the function and capacities of the brain, in relation to the processes of learning and knowing, have potential to evoke ongoing reimagining of curriculum theory and practice in relation to values education. Understanding the nature of self-regulation and its development can provide new clues for offering support to students in their learning about and practice of interpersonal values. In the final analysis, the efficacy of values education will be shown in the quality of social interactions which transpire. What is offered in this exposé is not meant to be a checklist of what should be done, but, rather, an invitation to reimagine what might be possible and how that can be achieved.

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Chapter 5

Values-Based Education for “At Risk” Students



Ron Toomey, Terence Lovat, Ron Farmer, Suwanti Farmer, and Craig Shealy

Abstract This chapter reports on an exploratory research project examining the impact of Values-based Education (VbE) on “youth at risk” at Toogoolawa School in Queensland, Australia. While much research is available on VbE, demonstrating its holistic effects on student achievement across human development measures, the majority has been done in regular schools. The study at the centre of this chapter represents a rare experiment by which the effects can be measured when VbE is applied to a school that deals exclusively with “at risk” students.

Keywords Values-based education · Youth at risk · Holistic achievement · Neuroscience

Introduction

Values based Education (VbE) has been persuasively described as a holistic approach to teaching and learning best suited to the present times (Lovat, [in press](#)). It is holistic because it is concerned with more than mere cognitive outcomes. It is as much concerned with the social, emotional and, most recently, the spiritual development of the learner. Goleman’s (2006) work on social and emotional intelligence indicates that there is more to learning than mere cognition. Both Damasio (2003) and Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007) have also shown with their neuroscientific work that learning is as much a function of emotion as cognition. More recent research (Immordino-Yang & Knecht, 2020) suggests that there may well be

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metaphysical factors in play as well. Thus, the thrust of VbE programs is directed towards the cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual development of the students undertaking them.

Over the past fifteen or so years, the view that learning involves more than mere cognition has found support in research about the effects of VbE. The research has unequivocally shown how VbE practices produce calmer, more trusting classroom environments (DEST, 2006), improved interpersonal relationships between teachers and students and between the students themselves (Lovat et al., 2009), greater depth of learning (Lovat, *in press*; DEEWR, 2008) and enhanced academic diligence on the part of students (Lovat et al., 2009). However, most, if not all, of this research has been undertaken in “mainstream” school settings.

This chapter reports on an exploratory research project examining the impact of Values-Based Education (VbE) on “youth at risk” at Toogoolawa School in Queensland, Australia. Toogoolawa only accepts boys who are unable to maintain a place in the “mainstream” system. Typically, it is the school of last resort for these boys who have been rejected time and again by the mainstream system. Through its VbE program, Toogoolawa seeks to transform the boys who attend the school into self-respecting, caring people capable of making a worthwhile contribution to society. The mixed method study that was conducted over the course of 2021 sought, through collecting quantitative and qualitative data, to identify the extent to which it accomplishes this goal.

The Research

Over the course of 2021, the authors conducted an exploratory, mixed methods study designed to investigate the impact, if any, that the educational approach described above had on the students. We chose to undertake an exploratory study for several reasons. Given the absence of any rigorous investigation of the effects of VbE programs on youth at risk, we thought it best to start by exploring the lie of the land. The study also needed to take account of the irregular attendance by some students as well as the unpredictability of the students’ capacity to participate thoughtfully, and with normally anticipated levels of veracity. Thus, the study was intended to explore the research questions in ways that might get a better “handle” on the issues at hand about a VbE approach to young people “at risk” and to suggest optimal ways of tackling it. In a nutshell, the study sought to explore the following: what changed about a group of children and adolescents-at-risk after a year’s engagement with a VbE program? and what might be confidently hypothesised about the causes of such transformation?

Data sources included pre and post surveys of teachers’ perceptions of growth, if any, of students’ self-esteem, their pride in their work, the quality of their friendships, how well they fit in at school, and how much they like school and see its relevance to their post-school lives. Students also completed pre and post surveys designed to provide insight to any growth in their self-esteem. A further range of

qualitative measures were then used to explore in greater depth the patterns of socio-emotional development and to seek explanations for their occurrence and, especially, identify the effects of VbE. These took the form of focus groups with staff and students, as well as interviews with both parents and students, about their perceptions of the effects of school life on those attending the school.

What Is Values-Based Education?

VbE is a holistic approach to teaching and learning intended to enable the cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects of one’s being to flourish. From a pedagogical standpoint, VbE can be thought of as a “double helix” effect (Lovat & Toomey, 2009), representing the symbiotic interaction between a school both explicitly and implicitly teaching its collectively identified prosocial values and the quality of the learning and the teaching that occurs there. That is, the explicit and implicit teaching of values and quality teaching (Newmann, 1996) constitute the two sides of the same coin. When one explicitly teaches the prosocial values underpinning the school curriculum, one changes the school’s ambience. According to the evidence, the school becomes calmer, while interpersonal relationships between teachers and students, and between the students themselves, become more trusting. Such a context nurtures a more holistic form of teaching and learning, one that demonstrably enhances the social and emotional wellbeing of the students as well as their capacity for greater intellectual depth (DEEWR, 2008; DEST, 2006; Lovat & Toomey, 2009; Lovat et al., 2010, 2011). Furthermore, subsequent research (Immordino-Yang et al., 2019; Seigel et al., 2016) suggests that an effective VbE program, such as the one at Toogoolawa, might well also have a metaphysical effect, thereby enhancing students’ capacity for integrity, transcendent behaviour and even “a sense that we are part of a greater whole” (Bergemann et al., 2011).

Toogoolawa School

Toogoolawa is a First Nations’ word meaning “a place in the heart”. The school, now in its twenty-second year of operation, is spiritually inclined but inter-denominational. It is located 50 kilometres south of Brisbane, the capital of Queensland, in a suburb of the Gold Coast called Ormeau. The school is for boys only, with an average attendance of around 120 students, aged 8–15 years, all of whom have emotional or behavioural issues which make them unwelcome in, or unable to attend, mainstream public and private schools.

Thus, Toogoolawa presents an inordinate challenge for VbE to enhance the cognitive, social and emotional wellbeing of the boys in attendance.

Through its VbE program, the school seeks to create a culture that genuinely engages the five human values of Love, Truth, Peace, Right Conduct and

Non-violence. In this context, Love is the pre-eminent, *portmanteau* value, typically expressed in the form of unconditional positive regard for all the boys at the school. The other values of Truth (being honest), Peace (being patient and tolerant), Right Conduct (respect for the law and others) and Non-violence (avoidance of anger) encapsulate the spirit of behaviours consistent with one being loving and caring.

The school attempts to have these five values inform every aspect of its day-to-day life. The five values are displayed prominently throughout the school. They are imbued in every aspect of the school's teaching program. One teacher described her attempts in instilling the values of love and caring as follows:

Right now, we're doing a geography unit of work which has an indigenous spin on it. Like one focus of our curriculum is about the value of love or caring. I try to impart this by way of the spirit of the land and the sacredness of the land and our sacred duty towards being custodians of and caring for the land and the world.

Other aspects of the school program are designed to explicitly teach the five human values that are at the centre of all school activity. For example, a teacher explains her attempts at this once again with the values of love and caring:

We actually have a program where we explicitly teach the virtues to the students. We do that via a program called Thought-of-the-Week. So, we have a value and a virtue, for example this week, and it's a weekly focus, this week, we have Love Lived as Caring. And we have a famous, like a quote, and the kids reflect on that quote and we do a story about that quote, so that the kids can see that virtue in action, in a real way. Usually, it is a story which is something that the kids will experience. We don't do fairy tales, but real events, so the kids kind of get a sense of what that virtue looks like, feels like, we always use the virtue, refer to the virtue, and to that particular virtue that we are concentrating on for the week. For example, caring, and we try and encourage the students to use like, John was caring, showing the virtue of caring by putting his friend's dishes away for example, so, we try, and get them to notice that particular virtue in their classroom, every day.

Similarly, at the end of every day, all classes conduct a session called acknowledgements where one of the values is the centre of discussion. For example, by way of enabling the students to better understand the value of Love, students are encouraged to identify an instance of loving, caring behaviour during the day by one boy towards another and formally acknowledge it. One teacher described it as follows:

One of our rituals that we do, is something called acknowledgments. So, at the end of the school day, we acknowledge each other based on the virtues, and somehow or other, when the students participate in this acknowledgment (ritual), they become more tuned to it, and they start (a) gradual process. It's not instant, they become more comfortable, because they see their peers doing it, they become more comfortable to start acknowledging people, and acknowledging how, they start noticing people living the values, and living the virtues where before all they would notice is, you know, all the bad things or all the negative things. He was talking rubbish to me. He was annoying me. Then suddenly like, actually he was annoying me, but he also helped me when I was feeling really upset. so, getting the kids to think about acknowledging each other, and noticing the virtues, and the values (in each other), that very subtly gets into their psyche and (into) their language.

As another teacher explained, such exercises go beyond the here and now: they are designed to influence the boys' very way of being:

(acknowledgements) it’s calling to that deeper part of a student. And it’s a little reminder, for them to take that little reminder, as the last thing before they leave the day, no matter what the day’s been like, that they’ve just been acknowledged. And now someone saying, “May this light of Peace (or one of the other five Human Values) go within you and stay with you all through the night”.

The Toogoolawa Boys: Then¹

The forty or so boys who participated in the study comprised a very mixed group. Essentially, there were three subgroups: boys diagnosed with one or more “disorders” for which they are often prescribed medication; boys who have suffered, often traumatically, from some form of abuse; and boys who have resorted to seriously “bad” behaviour for whatever reason and who find themselves on the cusp of “juvie”, as some of them referred to juvenile detention during interviews. The one uniting thread for all of them is their unequivocal and unrelenting rejection by what they, their parents and the Toogoolawa staff call “mainstream schooling”. The vignettes, all pseudonyms, outlined below provide insight into the way of being for many of these boys before being enrolled at Toogoolawa: their constant hypervigilant, unhappy, withdrawn and often violent selves.

Bailey

“*Bailey*” is a nine-year-old boy who lives with his mother and little sister. He has been diagnosed as dyslectic, having attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, anxiety, and oppositional defiance disorder. He has vision and speech issues. At the time of enrolment in Toogoolawa, he was considered relatively illiterate with a reading age below a five-year-old. He had suffered protracted periods of bullying in the mainstream education system. During an interview with his mother, he was described as follows:

Before coming to Toogoolawa we would have really big escalations every morning. *Bailey* would often be kicking and screaming and swearing and breaking things and everything before we went to school. The whole way to school, we had about a half an hour drive, and it would be dangerous, and he would, he would even try and get me to crash the car because he didn’t want to go to school. We had quite extreme behaviours and so that was one of the motivations for (him) actually being admitted to hospital. And he just was unhappy, just really unhappy. Always was feeling like he had no friends and I think he just felt a constant sense of rejection.

¹The names of the boys have been anonymised.

Noah

“*Noah*” is 12 years old, the subject of severe bullying. His mother left the family nearly a decade ago and he still shows signs of grief and loss. He has very severe bouts of what is called, in some therapeutic settings, oppositional defiance disorder. He struggles in social settings. His hearing impairment also makes life difficult. He struggles academically.

“*Noah*” was described by his stepmother in the following way:

Very, very, very vicious and violent. And very rude and disrespectful. If he was asked to do something, he told just him to go away, or he'd say p### off to them or eff off or whatever. If a child looked at him sideways, he bashed the child. If he didn't like the work, he'd rip it up and walk out of his classroom. He threw scissors at teachers; he smashed the smart boards in the classroom. He was in year five. He was really, really, really naughty, very naughty, and there was nothing that the school or us as parents could do to help it. And that's when the school kicked him out. No other school in the area wanted him. Because he'd already been to two other schools. And we were stuck. We thought our boy was never going to get better.

Kel

“*Kel*” was born on New Year's Day, 2010, into a household dealing with domestic violence, including verbal and emotional abuse. He clashes with his father. He suffers from anxiety and depression. At enrolment, he was assessed with poor self-esteem.

Kel was spoken about as follows in an interview with his mother:

Interviewer: ‘And what was he like before coming to Toogoolawa?’

Kel's mother: ‘He was angry and there (the other school) was a bit lost. Sort of all over the place and didn't know how to deal with his emotions. So, um, it's good here. Oh, he used to throw things and hit the wall, or he'd hit the wall, or he just smashed things.’

Zac

“*Zac*” is a fourteen-year-old boy who is diagnosed as dyslexic, dysgraphic and suffering anxiety and depression. He has been excluded from several schools before attending Toogoolawa. He has now been at Toogoolawa for 3 years.

Before enrolling at Toogoolawa, his mother describes him as follows:

Pretty much was getting suspended all the time for fighting. And, um, he was being bullied at one point and he got sick of it. So, he then became the bully because he was over people picking on him. So, then he was always suspended. If he went to school on a day, I'd get a phone call, maybe an hour later, *Zac's* done this, or *Zac's* done that. He gets into fights. I mean, he's, I think he's been suspended here. He'd be bashing things and ripping things apart. He gets really cranky. He's got a really bad mood temper. He didn't like being told no. So, when he didn't get what he wanted he carried on to the class, talked to himself just walked away.

Liam

“*Liam*” is a fifteen-year-old boy diagnosed with ADHD and oppositional defiance disorder. He is medicated for his depression. He lives with his mother, stepfather and his four-year-old sister. He has a very difficult relationship with his biological father. His mother says of him:

Well, before I put him in Toogoolawa, um, he was being bullied a lot, um, a lot because of his hair colour and just because he’s different. Um, he’s been on med... medication for quite a long time. Um, yeah, he was never happy and it (previous school) wasn’t, just wasn’t, the right place for him to go, it was more of a hindrance than a help. Like if, if he, he was in quite a bit of trouble because he didn’t know how to settle in and that the school was so big, they did not, he was just like another number. He just wasn’t happy. And having ADHD and feeling odd, like, you know, it was very hard for him and for me to deal with it.

The Toogoolawa Boys: Now

The following vignettes capture the same boys at the end of the study.

Bailey

Bailey’s teachers now describe him as fitting in very well and really liking school. From a very low base, his literacy skills are continuing to improve, and he now has a reading age of seven.

According to his mother:

Now he loves going to school...it’s really boosted his self-esteem and his confidence and his willingness to learn. So (prior to coming here) he wasn’t making a lot of progress at all, despite the fact that he’s had early intervention, since he was about 2 years old, he wasn’t making very much academic progress. And just this morning, we (she and *Bailey*) were in with Jenny (his teacher) doing some reading testing. And he is now at level 10 for reading. And he’s made about a year’s worth of reading progress and he has friends, he didn’t have friends before we came here. He, he struggled a lot socially. And so that’s been a blessing as well, he, he told me that everybody in the school knows his name, but for the right reasons. You can’t imagine how much life has changed dramatically for the better. You can see that he has more pride in himself and in what he is doing...he was awarded the most improved student intern to his classroom, which was amazing as well...he’s really flourishing. And he’s gaining a lot more independence.

Noah

Interviewer: ‘Have you noticed any improvement in his behaviour?’

Noah’s mother: ‘Oh, absolutely. One hundred and 10%. He has done the biggest 360-degree turnaround. We now have full adult conversations with him. He tells us what he learned at school. And he wants to do his projects. And, you know, he loves that they do outings and loves that every day, he gets to have something different for lunch and knows that it’s going to be healthy. And it’s just that he is a completely different person.’

Noah’s teachers rate him very highly (80%) on a 10-point scale for positive esteem, being well connected with friends, liking school and fitting in well at school. His English is vastly improved since being at Toogoolawa.

Kel

His mother says: ‘So, um, it’s good here. Cause he’s learned how to deal with these (negative) emotions. So that’s a real, that’s a positive. Oh yeah. He used to get really cranky. Yeah. And that changed since he’s coming here. Um, he knows now when to walk away, he knows he can self-regulate himself. So that’s good. He’s more sort of capable in the world for just everyday life. Even just like, um, being down the train station and knowing when he has to be there, what time I have to pick him up and make sure he’s there on time and do the right thing like that. And, um, just knowing when to be quiet and not to start fights and that on the train, like he learned, he knows all of that, you know, like to, yeah...social skills, social skills, yeah. Get on in society.

Kel’s teachers have noted his improved self-esteem since being at Toogoolawa and his capacity to make friends. He says he now likes school.

Zac

His mother describes his transformation: ‘Yeah. Yeah. He’s, um, and he just, he, he’s happy. And I haven’t seen him happy for, for a long, long time. Yes because, um, he’s not so angry anymore, yeah, and we don’t see that very often anymore, which is good. He talks to me more and he, and he, talks to my husband and I a lot more than he used to. Now he, he doesn’t lose it and get angry ...he’s generally calmed down a lot quicker.

Zac’s teachers say that he now takes great pride in his work, he has improved self-esteem and has friends. His literacy and numeracy skills are gradually improving from a low base to now being at Grade Eight level.

Liam

Liam’s mother says of him: ‘You know what I mean? Um, he’s just, just stepped up. Yeah. Um, he’s happier. I’m happier. They’re happier. Especially with all the other extra stresses going on with the divorce. Well, now he’ll stop and think before he just lashes out. He’s got more empathy for other people. Now he can feel what others are feeling. It’s nice that he’s not by himself. He’s not alone. And he loves coming to school. He actually gets himself ready to go like this morning.’

Patterns of Transformation

Claims about the transformative capacity of Toogoolawa extend beyond those of the boys’ mothers and their teachers, outlined above. The data suggest patterns of improvement in the social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of the boys, as well as their cognitive growth. For example, one of the students commented during a focus group about another boy’s social development:

I can say stuff about Lucas because I used to go to his old school, and I remember him. He’d just sit down on the chairs, and he’d never talk. I never even heard his voice at the old school once. He never used to wear the uniform. Now he’s wearing the uniform. You can see he’s talking and doing stuff. So, I think he’s more mobile and more social at this school.

Another boy, *Kari*, who has been at Toogoolawa for nearly 4 years, has also witnessed patterns of social and emotional development and better self-regulation.

Interviewer: ‘And do you actually see changes in many of the kids who come here?’

Kari: ‘Yeah, I have seen lots of changes with some kids like who have come in here like with really bad anger issues. And I see them now and they are just placid, they don’t hurt anything.’

A mother commented during an interview about the growth in her son’s emotional development and improved empathetic character:

Well, he never used to care about how other people felt or if he hurt them or if he upset them, he did not care at all. Now he does. He worries about what he says, even if it’s in the time when he might have an outburst, he’ll walk away and he’ll rethink the situation and he’ll go back now and apologize for the way. Yeah. He’s just, he’s definitely got an understanding now that other people’s feelings and emotions mean something. It’s not just about him.

Some of the quantitative data collected as part of the study also point to the positive effect that Toogoolawa has on the boys’ social and emotional development. Of the thirty-five boys who responded to the survey item, *I get on well with my teachers*, where ‘4’ was “very much like me” and ‘1’ “very much unlike me”, the mean response was ‘3.2’, with a standard deviation of ‘0.86’. This points to significance, given that within the mainstream system not only did most of them not get on well with teachers but, similarly, did not get on well with anyone, including family. Additionally, in response to the item, *I really look forward to coming to school*, where ‘4’ was “very much like me” and ‘1’ “very much unlike me”, the same thirty-five previously strenuous school resisters responded with a mean of ‘2.5’ and a standard deviation of ‘1.23’. Given the level of school resistance illustrated in the above vignettes, along with the inordinate health and social pressures on these boys, this again points to significance.

Finally, during the focus groups, several boys spoke about growth in their spiritual wellbeing. For example, one boy volunteered as follows:

After quiet time and acknowledgements, you always feel good...you go home with a smile on your face.

School Climate

The essence of the difference between Toogoolawa and the dominant “mainstream” schools that the boys previously attended is its “climate”. On the one hand, a very strong theme in the data from parents and students at Toogoolawa concerns what they describe as a “lack of fit” between their boys and the “mainstream”. They talk

about the boys being “just another number” in the “mainstream”, “being lost in the crowd”, the mainstream “not knowing how to handle him and we (parents) didn’t either”. They typically do not say this so much as a criticism of “mainstream”, but more in terms of their boys not fitting in: “He felt he was odd.” They understand that managing student behaviour in mainstream settings often entails a trade-off for schools. They have often been told by the mainstream that its primary concern is the maintenance of a safe and healthy teaching and learning environment in the school. They witness how the needs of their boys, when they exhibit challenging behaviour, are sacrificed for the needs of the many as the school seeks to reduce those challenging behaviours, primarily through deterrence by sending a clear message to students that some behaviour will not be tolerated and will incur serious consequences. They talk about: “He spent more time sitting outside the principal’s office than he did in his classroom. It just wasn’t working for him.” Thus, the boys’ “mainstream” experiences left them, for a whole range of reasons, feeling what Rabello de Castro (2004) calls their “otherness”, being different, separate.

In contrast, parents and the boys speak about feeling part of a community at Toogoolawa, of it being a “safe” place, a caring, trusting and, what school community members call, a “listening” place. The challenge for this exploratory study was to unravel how that perceived safe, trusting, caring ambience is shaped, what role VbE has in shaping it, and what VbE’s contribution is to the transformation of boys like those in the vignettes above.

Being Heard

A key discerning feature of Toogoolawa, according to both parents and students, is that, unlike in mainstream, the boys feel they are being heard at school. For instance, one mother commented as follows:

The teachers he’s got this year they listen to him. They give him the time. They definitely listen to him.

Another mother recounted the effects of the staff listening to her boy:

Mum, they listen, they really, really listen!

The teacher’s capacity for listening is essentially a practical expression of love or caring, the key value of the school. This perhaps enables one to get a fuller understanding of the “double helix” effect spoken about earlier whereby the explicit teaching of a prosocial value affects not only the learning environment but also the quality of the learning within it. For example, a teacher said in an interview:

And I’ve had another boy recently who was yelling at me, like trying to get me to buy into his storm. And I just sat there, and I listened. And I listened. And I listened. And at some point, he turns around, and he says, anyway, (suddenly calming himself) why are you so ‘bleeping’ calm?

One way to think about this statement is in terms of “listening” and “being heard” both being part of a highly interpersonal, trusting and perhaps therapeutic connection:

To testify (the boy speaks) and witness (the teacher listens) requires relationships built upon trust and respect as well as an expectation that the testimony will produce some type of acknowledgment. Bearing witness is, in fact, a process that includes the listener. For the testimonial process to take place, there needs to be a bonding, the intimate and total presence of another—in the position of one who hears. Testimonies are not monologues; they cannot take place in solitude. The witnesses are talking to somebody. (Laub, 1992, pp. 70–71)

This is consistent with the work of Tomlison (1984) on “therapeutic listening” or “relational listening” and what Rogers and Evans Farson (1957) describe as “empathic listening” that links the act of listening with trust. From this perspective, “listening” is a teacher’s way of expressing unconditional positive regard for the boy. Indeed, it is a way for the teacher to put into practice one of the human values central to all school activity: the human value of love, of caring for the boys.

Superficially, given that so many Toogoolawa boys and their parents point out that they felt victimised in their mainstream school and usually felt that their side of the story fell on deaf ears, it is easy to see why being heard might have an impact on the boys. However, it is arguable that such positive responsiveness to being heard goes beyond the superficial in ways that help explain the transformation evidenced in the vignettes outlined earlier. If Laub (1992), Tomlison (1984) and Rogers and Evans Farson (1957) are correct, such attentive listening as a form of loving or caring for the boy has another “double helix” effect of engendering trust in the relationship.

Trust

There is no doubt that Toogoolawa is a trusting environment. Statements from the boys and their parents alike all resonate with this one from one of the mothers:

He’s built a really strong connection with the adults in his class. And he trusts them.

Another mother of a boy diagnosed as autistic was able to describe the role of trust in his transformation:

He shows affection towards these staff. You know, like he will go up and give these girls a hug. You could never get this boy to give you any affection whatsoever. He won’t touch you. That’s a serious “no no”. He hates being touched, but he will go up and hug these girls and he will do the hand thing with the boys. He has got trust with these people. It takes a lot for him to trust anybody whatsoever. But with these staff (members) he’s very trusting.

The act of “listening”, when thought about as an act of relational trust, also helps one better understand how the “double helix” effect enables the slow but sure advances in some of the boys’ learning, in effect how VbE enables growth in their cognitive wellbeing. One of the teachers explained this during a focus group. In a

context where, after a long struggle by the teacher in trying to improve a boy's writing, the boy finally accomplishes a decent standard. The teacher then says, as a consequence of the trust and respect that has developed by her holding him in unconditional positive regard by constantly and non-judgementally listening to his negative responses and his resistance, she was able to say to him:

I'm not going to accept a lesser standard from you from now on.

Because setting high standards is a key aspect of quality teaching and learning, and because the values of trust and respect enable the setting of those standards, it is not difficult to see how the "double helix" effect makes a contribution, but perhaps not the only contribution, to the gains made in literacy and numeracy by some of the boys.

The Character of Staff Members

Toogoolawa's ethos of unconditional positive regard is palpable at the school. It is spoken about, and its practice is nurtured by a staff code of conduct and regular informal appraisals. It is strongly felt by all members of the community. One of the staff explained:

All our staff here, all of them, are very open, and they all come from a space of I want to help, I want to be able to make a difference, and I personally want to find different ways of living, so I live the human values, that I am a person that will always be, constantly trying to look at my interactions, and how I interact with my students whether I listen to them well enough.

Unlike the responses that the boys felt they were receiving in the mainstream systems, they feel a different kind of relationship is being nurtured at Toogoolawa. In a focus group, one of the students expressed it in the following way:

The teachers, if like you're having a bad day, the teachers are always going to help you.

Testimony to parents sensing the same reality are seen in the following:

They (teachers) meet them where they are at.

The teachers here are amazing. Like all of them amazing, compassionate, just, hmm...just the way they speak to him, treat him.

Part of a student interview eloquently captured the essence of the relationship between teacher and student:

Interviewer: 'What was so special about this particular teacher?'

Student: 'It's that he was, his opinion on life was just, he was really open about it. He wasn't forcing any religious beliefs on anyone. He completely accepted all the kids here. I don't how he did that. It was amazing. He was just really calming to be around, and he just accepted absolutely everyone, no matter how crazy you would be in the school.'

Another parent recounted how her son ‘idolises the teachers for coming here and working with the naughty children.’ It seems the relationships go beyond idolising and become more akin to Hart’s (in press) “self-in-relation”, as a mother explains:

So, I think once someone goes, ‘We want to give you a chance. We want to help you. We’re on your side’. Something sparked in his head, and he went, ‘Okay, well, let’s do this. Let’s try and be a better person that everybody knows I can be’. And I truly believe that it was because he knew that he had support. He knew he had someone that was going to back him up no matter what.

Research about the effects of VbE is replete with accounts about how it changes the quality of the interpersonal relationships within the classroom: the relationships between teacher and students as well as between the students themselves (see, for example, Lovat et al., 2009). Osterman’s (2010) work about the importance of “within classroom relationships” is especially apposite in the context of this study. She points out as follows:

The need for relatedness is a basic psychological need. When students experience belonging in the school community, their needs for relatedness are met in ways that effect their attitudes and behaviour”. (p. 239)

Osterman’s work suggests, as does the experience of the Toogoolawa boys and their parents, that children with the greatest unmet need for belonging are also less likely to receive the academic and personal support that is so critical for them. Inevitably, these children present the greatest challenges to teachers. Academically disengaged, socially at odds with their peers, withdrawal/ rejection is almost inevitable. In contrast, at Toogoolawa, the constancy of being held in positive regard, being enfolded in a range of experiences like “acknowledgements” and a values-based curriculum that exudes the five human values appears to have a “double helix” effect that ensures that these boys’ need for relatedness is being met. In turn, this meeting of needs gradually results in positive effect on their attitudes and behaviour, so establishing a necessary precursor for them engaging, trying harder and thus doing better with their schoolwork. It is easy to see how this must contribute to the patterns of transformation described earlier.

Spiritual Dimension

Another way the school attempts to develop the “whole” boy is by nurturing his “metaphysical” self. One of the staff in an interview explained this in the following way:

And our job, as the staff here, is to really relate to that spiritual nature of our students...the students’ capacity and our capacity to always be loving, always be peaceful, always be truthful, behave in the right way, in a non-violent way. So, I guess, spirituality is the essence.

Another teacher views the way she goes about her work as a spiritual exercise:

I think an example of spirituality is basically our everyday interactions. Because when we look at our students, we look beyond their behaviour, but we look at the essence, their spirit, their capacities. So, every single day, our relationships, and the way that we regard our students with unconditional love, acceptance, non-judgement, and just accepting the student for who they are.

All the teaching staff at Toogoolawa play a role in enhancing the spiritual self of the boys by employing metaphors that take them beyond the sense of being and individual body that thinks, feels and moves. For example, the students are told, as if it is fact, in the following way:

Within you is a priceless diamond covered in mud. You are the diamond; you are not the mud. That is, you are not your anger, fears, or lack of confidence. We teachers here at Toogoolawa will help you to wash away the mud so that your diamond can shine.

The staff have decided to adopt the belief that such a symbol of metamorphosis enables the students to self-regulate more easily because now they have a meaningful reason to do so.

Similarly, the metaphor which likens each student to a wave which is not separate from the vast limitless ocean assists them to recognize that everyone is their brother and sister, father and mother, and that the whole power of the universe is pulsating through them. They are not alone; they are one with the “all”.

These are but two of the variety of metaphors that are used to help lift the student’s self-perception to a higher level. For example, just imagine the effect on a self-doubting, angry, left-behind adolescent boy of being told with full authority, ‘You are a King who has gone to sleep. We will help you to wake up to the truth that you are a King. Give your full allegiance to this King within you, and soon you will begin behaving like a King.’

Furthermore, imbuing the teaching and learning program with a sense of the spiritual is accomplished in several ways, one of which is the ritual called “acknowledgements” described earlier where the boys collectively identify where one of them has “lived” during the day focussed on one of the five human values, and is then formally acknowledged for doing so. As one of the teachers explained, such exercises seek to go beyond the here and now: they are designed to influence the boys’ very way of being:

(Acknowledgements) is calling to that deeper part of a student.

Immordino-Yang and Knecht (2020) are critical of the way the ‘public school system typically focuses on the here and now and the what-can-you-recall approach?’ (p.11) and speculate, based on their educational neuroscientific work, that such exercises as “acknowledgements” and the “thought of the week”, described above, may well, in a neuropsychological sense, nurture young people’s spiritual wellbeing.

Regular meditation practice is another way that the school seeks to enable the boys’ spiritual development. As one boy said in that regard:

I’ve been here for 5 years. The quiet time yeah it helped me with my behaviour.

During an interview for a documentary, another boy alluded to how such growth is time dependent:

Interviewer: ‘So, some of the events, or rituals, or whatever you want to call them, seemed a bit weird to you, when you first came?’

Student: ‘yeah, they do at the start. When you first come here, it’s like, you think you are in a cult or something, it’s all weird and stuff. But the longer you stay, it’s like, you are doing that, it’s just calms you down and you slowly realise that the longer you do it the better you are getting.’

Others refer to a sense of “energy” accompanying the spiritual aspects of the school’s program. For instance, one of the parents said that when she is in the room at the end of the day during quiet time (meditation), she ‘can literally feel the energy’. As a consequence of experiencing assembly during a site visit, one of the authors concurs that there is a feeling of energy during assembly. Another parent reported that her child ‘really enjoys the meditation part of it because he says it just calms you, brings you down to a nice level.’

The way that the school seeks to “still” the boys and have them get in touch with their “interiority” resonates deeply with other recent neurobiological research. Siegel et al., (2016) defines mind as an emergent, self-organising, embodied, relational process that regulates the flow of energy and information. Hart ([in press](#)) makes a further point in that regard:

The aspect of “relational” adds an important dimension to knowing, that has largely been unrecognised in the model of thinking as an individualised brain as information processor. We are always self-in- relation and the qualities of those relations impact our being and our wellbeing.

All of this sits well with the “double helix” metaphor’s emphasis on the intersection of quality relationships and calm ambience with academic diligence and intellectual depth.

Spirit of Gratitude

Finally, throughout all the interviews with parents, gratitude on their part runs through almost everything that they say in relation to their sons attending Toogoolawa School. This essence is captured in the following words of one of the mothers:

So, I mean look I’m covered in goosebumps just saying this because I’ve never seen anything like this before. And it’s, honestly, I tell everybody because there’s not one negative thing I can say about this school.

This almost indefinable atmosphere of thankfulness throughout the school is commented on by visitors, including one of the authors, and is openly expressed by many of the teaching staff who often say how much they value working at the school. At the celebratory Graduation Day, many boys say something heartfelt about how they have changed for the better during their time at the school.

Perhaps contributing to this permeating spirit of gratitude in the school is the morning ritual in each class, referred to as “the Gratitude Circle”. With teaching staff setting the example, all students and adults in the class take their turn to rate on

a scale of '0 to 10' the level of gratitude they are feeling today, followed by a short explanation of why they gave that number. Students also keep a gratitude journal which facilitates keeping the spirit of gratitude alive at Toogoolawa. This is further nurtured in the homes of the boys, as one of the mothers recounted in an interview:

We talk to him several times a week about how lucky he is to be at Toogoolawa. We tell him he should feel grateful and embrace this opportunity.

Ultimately, the boys catch the essence of this spirit of gratitude too. One teacher talked about how one of the boys in her class said, with a clear tone of gratitude:

My work's much better now. Mum's proud of me.

Discussion

As noted above, we have always considered Toogoolawa School to be an ultimate testing ground for VbE. Whilst the evidence has been accumulating over the past twenty or so years that such a holistic approach to teaching and learning enables the cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects of one's being to flourish, most of that evidence has been gathered in regular educational settings. Toogoolawa School, however, with its angry, disengaged, undereducated and sometimes quite violent boys, offers a very different setting for VbE practice and so for its potential to enable cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual development in young people.

The five human values of Love, Truth, Peace, Right Conduct and Non-Violence, which are considered at Toogoolawa to be at the core of being human, define every aspect of the school. They are imbued in the teaching and learning processes, are embedded in the school structures, management, policies, language, and they come to shape the interpersonal relationships at the school. These five Values are taught both explicitly and implicitly. They inform every aspect of the day-to-day life of the school. They are at the very heart of the school's ethos.

The improvements described in many of the boys' behaviour, their engagement with school, their ways of being, trying harder with their schoolwork, and the modest gains they make with it, admittedly and understandably from a low base, are arguably the effects of Toogoolawa's approach to VbE. The form and content of the program itself, and how it is delivered, comprise a "double helix" effect: the explicit and implicit teaching of Love, Truth, Peace, Right Conduct and Non-Violence and the role modelling of them by staff help to create a trusting, caring, safe and listening climate with a common discourse around an accompanying sense of gratitude on the part of both the boys and their parents. The selves described in the "Toogoolawa Boys Then" section above become the transformed selves of the "Toogoolawa Boys Now" by way of this double helix process that gradually nurtures their growth in relational self-awareness. That growth is developed, and sustained, as an outcome of the attuned care and unconditional positive regard that the boys feel they are receiving from a very caring organisation. An email from a Youth Worker about her views on whether the students change, and if so how, why, and

over what period, captures the essence of this process of growth in relational self-awareness. It reads as follows:

In my opinion I feel these boys come to us expecting us to be the same as everyone else they've come in contact with or the same as the education system they've come from. They don't expect the unconditional love and support we give them. And because it's foreign to a lot of them either both at home and at school or just at school. It makes them nervous. So, they fight it with all that they have to prove to themselves that everyone gives up on them when it becomes too hard or they act out in any way for whatever reason. So, they bring their worst to us as much as they possibly can and as often as they can. To get us to do what they're used to and quit on them. When we don't, and we keep hitting them back with love and acceptance it creates a storm inside them because they don't know how to accept the unconditional love we're giving. It makes them start to look into themselves and why they feel the way they do and act out in the manner that they do as well. And what I see, when this storm's created, it's only a matter of time that they then realise that no matter what they have to throw at us, we're going to withstand it and love them through every single time. That's when they find their calm, their trust in the people at Toogoolawa and accept that this isn't an act. And that's when they start to try and attempt academics because they feel safe and know if they fail, we've got them.

Future Directions

As may be evident by now, results from this exploratory study powerfully affirm the impact of the Toogoolawa program, while also adding to an already compelling and growing database regarding the effectiveness of values-based approaches to learning, growth, and development (e.g., Acheson et al., *in press*; Lovat et al., *in press*). By way of conclusion – and complementary to the methodology and results reported above – we offer two future directions: (1) identifying quantitative indices of longitudinal changes among participants in values-based programs; (2) engaging values-based program staff and leaders more deeply in professional development and evaluation. Both these “future directions” involve usage of a mixed methods assessment measure in development since the early 1990s, called the Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory or BEVI (e.g., Wandschneider et al., 2015).

On the first “future direction,” we have compiled considerable evidence from the BEVI regarding the effectiveness of Values-based Interventions, including VbE, to influence multiple domains of human functioning, from increases in critical thinking and emotional capacity to enhanced awareness of, and responsiveness to, the needs and experiences of self and other. However, the complex interactions among mediators and moderators of such changes (e.g., the need to account for within-group differences) require both a sophisticated understanding of what we mean by “values”, as well as research methods that can empirically demonstrate impact across a wide range of populations and contexts, both locally and globally (e.g., Wandschneider et al., 2015). This perspective – along with lessons learned over the past 30 years of theory, research, and practice with the BEVI – are extensively documented via a companion chapter to this one, which will be published in another Springer volume, *International Research Handbook on Values Education and*

Student Wellbeing (revised edition) (Lovat et al., [in press](#); especially see Acheson et al. [in press](#)).

On the second “future direction,” the above-noted chapter (Acheson et al., [in press](#)) also presents considerable evidence regarding the need to focus not only on student / client outcomes (e.g., those who are the recipients of, or participants in, our Values-based Interventions), but how such outcomes are influenced by those charged with designing and delivering them. For example, the similarities and differences in the identities / self-structures of leaders and staff, and the social and educational dynamics arising from them, might impact on the quality and effectiveness of any intervention. Said another way, the success or failure of an intervention can depend on the self / identity structures within the group of people implementing it.

To explore such dynamics and processes within the Toogoolawa program, we conducted a professional development workshop with Toogoolawa staff which involved the voluntary completion and debriefing of the BEVI. The BEVI provides, amongst other things, an appraisal of one’s childhood /family environment, life conflicts, regrets, etc. that helps in shaping the identity of staff members. Likewise, it offers an appraisal of one’s capacity and inclination to value / attend to emotional experiences in self and others. Thus, depending on where one is placed on such scales, the BEVI offers insight into the “fit” between one’s “self” and the work required to make the intervention a success. Such data also point to the professional development needs of the staff required to enable maximum success for the intervention. What did we find?

First, there was a great deal of within-group variability for Toogoolawa staff on these scales. For example, approximately half of Toogoolawa staff members reported very highly negative experiences around their childhood /family environment, life conflicts, regrets, and the like, but high levels of capacity for valuing / attending to emotional experiences in self and others. Given that many, if not most, of the youth in Toogoolawa come from difficult backgrounds and life histories, such alignment between staff and clients at that level could offer “positives”, such as enhanced empathy, as well as potential challenges, such as over-identification and burnout. At the same time, the other half of the Toogoolawa staff showed a mirror opposite profile on these scales: substantially lower on both the negative life events scale and the emotional attunement scale. Overall, such results indicate that some staff members have very different life histories, both from other staff members as well as many of the youth at risk in the program. They also indicate that there are real differences among identities / self-structures of staff.

The possibility that such fundamental differences might well affect how “the job” and “the youth-at-risk” are experienced by staff, as well as what types of “interventions” would be more-or-less favoured, were among the topics that emerged during a debriefing process with Toogoolawa staff. The BEVI debrief enabled staff to recognise differences in philosophy regarding the best strategy for dealing with problematic behaviours by youth. It also enabled some staff to suggest the need for greater awareness by colleagues of relevant paradigms, such as attachment theory.

At this point, for Toogoolawa, we do not draw conclusions beyond the preliminary observations made above. However, in terms of future directions, findings like these point to the potential benefits of developing and implementing professional development training opportunities that open up safe and reflective spaces for consideration of these differences and similarities among program staff and leaders. More specifically, our results compel questions such as the following:

How do (a) differences in implicit or underlying theories of human development and functioning relate to (b) life histories, identity commitments, and self-structures of those who (c) advocate for, or prefer, particular approaches to intervention?

How do underlying capacities (e.g., relative degree of attributional sophistication, self-awareness, emotional access, etc.) affect inclinations to design and deliver Values-based Interventions including, but not limited to, the Toogoolawa curricula?

Do these measurable differences among staff affect cohesion and morale and, if so, how?

Are such differences associated with differences in how various staff are experienced by clients, colleagues, and program leadership? If so, what, if anything, should program leadership do about such differences?

Based upon these group results – and individual reports that are also available – could we/ should we create safe and responsive systems and opportunities for individually tailored staff development processes?

These are just a few questions that come to mind when reviewing results. Regarding future directions, we will continue to ask questions like these, gathering more data along the way, while considering attendant implications and applications for the field and profession of Values-based Education (see Acheson et al., [in press](#)).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the qualitative results presented above offer compelling evidence that the Toogoolawa program is achieving its worthy goals in a manner that is not only exemplary, but highly congruent with theoretical precepts and best practices of Values-based Education (VbE). Likewise, the quantitative results arising from the BEVI staff survey demonstrate substantial within-group variability while also pointing the way towards data-based professional development activities, along with further research questions needing to be asked. As this work continues, both in Toogoolawa and with allied VbE programs and colleagues, we look forward to continuing our ongoing engagement with this essential field of inquiry and practice in the interests of enhancing our understanding not only of how education functions optimally for youth at risk but for everyone.

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Chapter 6

Values Pedagogy as Educational Means of Reversing “the Clash of Civilizations”: An Islam Versus the West Instance



Sakineh Tashakori

Abstract “The Clash of Civilizations”, proposed in 1992 by Samuel P. Huntington, was based on the belief that the fundamental source of conflict in the world today is no longer primarily ideological or economic, so much as cultural, as this is the great division within humankind (Huntington, 1993, p. 3). Huntington proffered that this clash would feature in the post-Cold War era as warfare between Islamic and Confucian civilizations, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, Islamic and Western civilizations. Iran was one country in which Huntington’s theory received much attention, the main reason being that the conflict between Islam and the West has been one of the main axes of discourse from the time of the Islamic Revolution (Zibakalam, 2018, p. 11). This paper argues that, in this context, education can play a role in ameliorating such discourse through fostering among students a greater sense of tolerance and acceptance of cultural differences. The paper will furthermore proffer that values pedagogy, underpinned by a Habermasian epistemology, has demonstrated potential to achieve such a goal.

Keywords The clash of civilizations · Islamic civilization · Western civilization · Values education · Values pedagogy · Habermasian epistemology

“The Clash of Civilizations” Theory

Huntington considers civilization to be ‘the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species.’ (Huntington, 1993, p. 24). Accordingly, ‘civilization is defined both by common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people which is the

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levels of identity'. He believes that 'people can and do redefine their identities and, as a result, the composition and boundaries of civilizations change' (Huntington, 1993, p. 5). Sardarnia (2010) suggests that Huntington considers both cultural identity and religion as the foundations of any civilization. Furthermore, Haynes (2013) proffers that 'religion' is close to a synonym for 'culture' because the primary differentiation of one culture from another is invariably religion.

Huntington (1996a, b) proffers that in earlier times, civilizations were separated geographically so the spread of ideas took centuries to achieve. Nowadays, the technology and research that are part and parcel of globalization facilitate the rapid creation and development of ideas, values, and beliefs, including those of religions. One of the ensuing outcomes of such a situation, Huntington believes, is that the era of wars between nation states will increasingly be a thing of the past. The oncoming era will instead see wars between civilizations:

...the fundamental and dominant source of conflict in the new world is neither ideological nor economic, but cultural based on notions of identity. (Huntington, 1993, p. 5)

Conflicts between civilizations will dominate global politics and the fault lines between civilizations, especially between groups that follow different religions. These fault lines will constitute the battle lines of the future. ShojaiZand (2000) agrees that self-consciousness of civilization will become the determining factor in conflicts of the future.

Huntington believes that the main center of civilization conflict will be between Western civilizations, on the one hand, and Confucian and Islamic civilizations, on the other hand. Based on several cultural characteristics and owing to the fact that civilization identity will be increasingly important in the future, Huntington divided the world into seven or eight major civilizations. These included 'Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African civilization' (Huntington, 1993, p. 5). Huntington regards these civilization clashes as almost inevitable, offering several reasons for this assertion. They range from tensions caused by globalization, economic inequalities, and broad cultural differences. Of all the reasons, Huntington singles out religion and beliefs as constituting the main one, albeit largely underestimated.

Every religion has its own worldview, beliefs and values not just around the transcendent but also around issues of human rights and duties, freedom and oppression, equality between men and women, economic relations and political systems. Because religious beliefs normally rest on a self-validating justification, the tendency is for each religion to consider itself to be "true" in a way that other religions are not. That is, there is an inbuilt intolerance that often contributes to inter-religious tensions and conflict (Zibakalam, 2018). Lovat and Crotty (2015) refer to the "exclusivist trigger" possessed by each of the Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the tendency to revert to exclusivism whenever any of them feels threatened by another belief and especially by one of the other Abrahamic siblings. If this is true of the mainstream religious traditions, it is arguably even more true of fringe or disenfranchised religious groups where radicalization is most likely to occur. Both mainstream and fringe elements need to be considered in the

clash of civilizations between Islam and the Judeo-Christian influenced West, pre-
saged by Huntington.

Huntington (1996a, b) contends that this particular clash dates back to Islam’s
revelation era in the seventh century of Christendom and so represents a fourteen-
hundred-year-old enmity. Most especially, it dates from the first overt clashes of the
Crusades and Counter-Crusades when Islam and the West fought over the so-called
Holy Lands and Southern Spain (Lovat & Crotty, 2015; Lovat & Moghadam, 2017;
Moghadam & Lovat, 2019). As to its contemporaneity, he refers to the results of a
U.S. poll identifying the “danger of Islam”, one in which the majority of respon-
dents proffered that Islam *qua Islam* represented a danger to U.S. and Western
interests.

Huntington suggests that the clash is inevitable, in both the public and private
spheres because of the vastly different beliefs and values around fundamental issues
of human rights, gender equity and other behavioral and economic artifacts. The
direct ramifications of Huntington’s theory in U.S. policy are seen in his emphasis
on the need for controlling immigration from non-Western (principally Islamic)
societies and assimilating any immigrants into Western culture in order to achieve
“civilizational coherence”. He also favor “Americanization” over “multicultural-
ism” because the latter weakens the “American creed”. He also emphasized the
importance of maintaining Western technological and military superiority over
other civilizations, non-interference in the affairs of other civilizations, empowering
the Atlantic partnership between the US and Europe, limiting the expansion of
Islamic–Confucian states, and exploiting the differences between these two civiliza-
tions (Huntington, 1996a, b, p. 45).

Islamophobia: An Effect of the Huntington Paradigm

Huntington’s theory can be seen to contribute in part to a political and media dis-
course found commonly in the West, especially since “9/11”, that tends to malign
all Muslims, without regard to any distinction between moderate, conservative and
ultra-orthodox Muslims. Nor least of all distinguishing these mainstream identifica-
tions from the small number of Muslims associated with terrorist activity (Lovat,
2018; Haynes, 2019a, b). According to Haynes, such lack of distinguishing has
potential to fuel Islamophobia in Western countries. In addition, Haynes suggests
that partly as a result of Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” paradigm, Islam and
Muslims are considered a serious security concern and hence a threat to the survival
of Western culture and values (Haynes, 2019a, b, p. 9).

EsaZade and Sharafoddin (2015) and Bazian (2018) endorse this view, pointing
especially to Huntington’s (1993) claim that ‘Islam has bloody borders’ (p. 35). By
such claims, Huntington presents all of Islam and all Muslims worldwide as a sin-
gular community full of anger and rage, unwise and irrational, and, most crucially,
a threat to Western security. These forms of Islamophobia became widespread in
public discourse after the al Qaeda terrorist attacks on the USA on September 11,

2001 (9/11) (Haynes, 2013; Zebiri, 2008). The tendency from security experts through media and the general public was to classify not just al-Qaeda but the entire religion of Islam as a security threat (Belt, 2014). Thereafter, global attention focused on Huntington's claim of a clash of civilizations and the repeated referencing by the media to his theory (Abrahamian, 2003). Before the attack, it was more difficult to identify and explain clearly the "sometimes-fraught relationship between the West and Muslim countries" (Haynes, 2019a, b).

In addition to 9/11, Haynes (2019a, b) refers to two other key events that have facilitated Huntington's Islamophobic paradigm becoming topical, controversial, and significant. First is 'Donald Trump's 2016 presidential election campaign, which employed anti-Muslim rhetoric to garner support, a tactic which he continued to employ as President' (p. 5). Donald Trump's election in the United States was tangible proof of the public acceptance of Islamophobia, as his campaign was grounded in the notion of a fundamental opposition between the West and the Islamic East (Assumpcao, 2020). The other significant event, according to Haynes, concerned 'electoral gains of right-wing populists in several European countries who employed similar anti-Muslim rhetoric as a key electoral tactic to win voter support' (Haynes, 2019a, b, p. 2). Examples include Gert Wilders in The Netherlands and Marine Le Pen in France who claimed that Europe's Muslim immigrants posed a clear and persistent threat to European traditions of tolerance, freedom and democracy (Haynes, 2019a, b, p. 6).

On the other side of this imagined clash, Trump's Islamophobic rhetoric and policies, such as the ban on movement from Muslim countries, played perfectly into radical Islamists' (such as ISIS's) depiction of the West as an enemy civilization and a fundamental threat to Islam as a whole (Sultan & Fahmy, 2016; Alsultany, 2020). In his statement during the Presidential Campaign, "I think Islam hates us" (Johnson & Hauslohner, 2017), Trump set the scene. Later, in 2018, he appointed several Islamophobically disposed individuals to senior posts in his administration, including Mike Pompeo as Secretary of State, John Bolton as White House National Security Advisor, and Fred Fleitz as National Security Council's Executive Secretary and Chief of Staff (Haynes, 2019a, b). What these appointees had in common was their belief that Muslims are inherently dangerous, terrorist sympathizers who wish to see Shari'a Law implemented across the U.S.A. (Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2018).

Implications for Iran

Islamophobia and the slogan of "all-Muslims-as-threat" (Haynes, 2019a, b, p. 9), including sustained hostilities with the USA, intensified from the time of the 1979 Iranian Revolution and its aftermath (EsaZade & Sharafoddin, 2015; Haynes, 2013, p. 10), with Ayatollah Khomeini describing the US as a "Great Satan" in his speech on November 9, 1979 (Khomeini, 1979). He portrayed Western values as a threat to the true Islamic polity, regarding those values as corrupt and detrimental to the

moral well-being of Iranian society—a society proud of its long history, its rich cultural heritage, and its language. On the Western side, negative beliefs about Islam intensified after the Revolution through stereotypical themes. Abrahamian (2003) offers examples of anti-Islamic headlines from the *New York Times* after 9/11: “Yes, it is a matter of Islam”; “This is a religious war”; “Barbarians in front of the gate”; “Dreams of holy war”; “Dictating faith”; “The deep intellectual roots of Islamic wrath” (p. 531).

Statistics and polls of recent times reveal an increase in Muslim hatred of Westerners, especially Americans (Zibakalam, 2018). The former President of Iran, Mohammad Khatami’s “dialogue among civilizations” international policy theory proposed as a counter to the Huntington paradigm, failed to have the desired effect. According to Khatami,¹ the paradigm of dialogue among civilizations would require countries to surrender the will-to-power and instead appeal to a will-to-empathy and compassion. Without the will-to-empathy, compassion and understanding, there could be no hope for peaceful order prevailing in the world. Khatami believed that one ought to gallantly combat the dearth of compassion and empathy in the world. According to him, ‘the ultimate goal of dialogue among civilizations is not dialogue in and of itself but attaining empathy and compassion’. According to Zibakalam (2018), ‘neither the external world nor Khatami’s political opponents inside the country took his paradigm seriously, and so it has persisted more as an idea, a theme for conferences and discussions but nothing more’ (p. 13). The death knell for Khatami’s paradigm came with 9/11 which had the optics of confirming the accuracy of Huntington’s clash of civilizations. The fact that the US President of the day appeared to blame Iran, regardless of the evidence that the plot had been hatched in Saudi Arabia, became the final nail in the coffin for Khatami’s grand ideal.

9/11 and its aftermath have affected relations between the West and the United States, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, several Islamic countries, exacerbating the spread of enmity between the West and the Islamic world. According to Zibakalam (2018), the conflict between Islam and the West, led by the United States, is not principally over economic issues or nationalism or even politics, as much as it is about ideology, culture and beliefs, especially religious beliefs. In a word, the conflict is between the artefactual collections that Huntington refers to as “civilizations”:

The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, different civilizations whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power. The problem for Islam is not the CIA or the US Department of Defense. It is the West, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the universality of their culture and believe that their superior, if declining, power imposes on them the obligation to extend that culture throughout the world. These are the basic ingredients that fuel conflict between Islam and the West. (Huntington, 1996a, b, 217)

¹Mohammad Khatami, address at the Dialogue among Civilisations Conference at the United Nations, New, 5 September 2000 [<http://www.un.int/iran/dialog05.html>] (20 September 2001).

Regarding what has been noted about Islamophobia, misunderstanding and misrepresentation are persistent about Islam, increasingly putting at risk the fabric and security of civilization (Lovat, 2010). The result is ‘Islamophobic victimization’, “a ‘new’ form of racism on the basis that there was a shift from race to religion” (Awan & Zempi, 2020, p. 5). According to Awan and Zempi, while the ‘old’ racism was based on biological superiority, the ‘new’ one is based on notions of religious and cultural superiority. Effectively, the old color racism has been replaced by a cultural racism which emphasizes the ‘other’ and among other consequences, has exacerbated the sense of Muslim values and beliefs as alien to the West (Zebiri, 2008). Modood (2005, p. 24) interprets anti-Muslim prejudice as a form of cultural racism, employing the term, “Islamophobia”, interchangeably with other terms like “anti-Muslimism” and “Muslimophobia”. According to him, cultural racism is a two-step racism with color racism being the first step, then culturalism combined with color racism in a sort of “double whammy” which can be particularly potent as with the combination of nationalism and racism. Modood believes that ‘Muslimophobia is at the heart of contemporary British and European cultural racism.’ (Modood, 2005, p. 37).

Constant talk about anti-Islamism in the West and anti-Westernism among Muslims leads inevitably to an increase in tensions between these civilizations. This paper proposes that much of the tension is owing to ignorance of one civilization vis a vis the other, leading inevitably to fear and distrust that are exacerbated by the media looking to sensationalism and malevolent politicians looking to divide and conquer. The paper proffers that a means of countering counter such a reality is to ensure more informed commentary through education at all levels of both Muslim and Western societies, such that a “dialogue between civilizations” becomes possible. The education system offers an appropriate starting point for combating discrimination and misunderstandings because, according to Fine and Sirin (2008), since 9/11, young, school-aged Muslims in the US are often perceived as a national security risk. In that context, Islamophobia has become a social fact of school life for many young people in US public schools (Mir & Sarroub, 2019). In addition, according to *The Guardian*:

Fifty-five percent of Muslim students surveyed by the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) ... reported that they were bullied at school in some form because of their Islamic faith. That’s twice the national percentage of bullying reported by all students, regardless of their religion. According to the CAIR survey, verbal harassment is the most common, with non-Muslims calling Muslim students terrorists or referencing bombs. (Irshad, 2015)

In this way, a robust education could serve to replace the distrust that underpins the tensions with trust, where it is warranted. The paper proposes that a pedagogy based on values education (hereafter referred to as “values pedagogy”), underpinned by a Habermasian epistemology, presents as an educational approach with potential to achieve such an end.

Values Pedagogy

Titled variously as moral education, character education or ethics education, the variant known as values pedagogy became prominent in Australia in the early 2000s owing to an Australian Government initiative known as Values Education for Australian Schooling (DEEWR, 2010; Lovat, 2019a, b, c; Lovat, 2011). The main goal of the program concerned the wellbeing of each student and, in a related sense, the whole of society. It was surmised that positive values being adhered to by each individual constitutes the cornerstone of a values-oriented society. As such, schooling cannot surrender its responsibility to educate about and inculcate those values in its students. *The National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (DEST, 2005), a component part of the program, identified those values as *Care & Compassion, Doing your Best, Fair Go (Fairness), Freedom, Honesty & Trustworthiness, Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, Understanding, Tolerance & Inclusion*. This understanding of values pedagogy proffers that it is not merely a small component of an otherwise values neutral curriculum but an overarching approach to the entire business of education. Research has shown that such an approach has holistic benefits of not merely sensitizing students to the values that underpin their own wellbeing and that of their society but of enhancing and strengthening all the major goals of education, including the academic ones central to schooling’s purpose (Lovat, 2009, 2019a, b, c). In that sense, values pedagogy enjoys a nexus relationship with Quality Teaching (Lovat & Toomey, 2009). In the language of the 1994 Carnegie Report (Carnegie, 1996), values pedagogy builds educational capital through focusing on and contributing to the “empathic consciousness” and “communicative skills” essential to the intellectual depth characteristic of quality teaching.

Allied research has shown that values pedagogy improves student attitudes and behaviors not just through greater understanding of the values but also through living them out in a way that contributes to society through good citizenship and ethical practice (DeNobile & Hogan, 2014, p. 1). Values pedagogy is therefore a means by which the major goals of quality teaching, namely, student comprehensive achievement, can be realized. As such, the focus of values pedagogy is ‘on the teacher’s capacity to engage students in the sophisticated and life-shaping learning of personal and social/ moral development’ (Lovat, 2019a, b, c, p. 5).

Values pedagogy is underpinned by Habermasian (1972, 1974) and Dewey (1964) epistemologies, both of which reject the plausibility of values neutrality in education. Each in its own way focuses on values-laden pedagogy that saturates the learning experience in values-filled environments as well as in explicit teaching that transacts about values (Lovat, 2019a, b, c). Habermas’s ‘theory of knowing’ gives especial importance to reasoned and compassionate reflection and self-reflectivity as the supreme knowledge because it helps to free one from false or inadequate knowing through facilitating critical thinking that sifts all claims to knowing and ascertains their meanings for the self. Habermas (1984, 1987) builds on his theory of knowing with theories of communicative capacity and communicative action as

the ultimate outputs of true knowing. These entail tolerance and acceptance of others and finally taking a stand for justice and being true to oneself (Lovat, 2019a, b, c).

Considering the power of self-reflectivity, as above, values pedagogy inspired by Habermasian epistemology possesses educational potential to address the issue of Islam and its relations with the West. Given the tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims, and the stereotypes that are regularly broadcast on Western television, values pedagogy has the potential to soften negative attitudes towards Islam and to provide a means of improving communication and understanding between groups characterized by religious and/or values differences (Lovat, 2010, 2019c). Evidence from interventions in values pedagogy show that tensions around these matters can be eased both by the enhanced safety and security implicit in the pedagogical approach as well as by explicit transaction of values through curriculum content. The implicit safety of strengthened classroom relations entails greater acceptance of difference, so creating the kind of interculturally sensitive environments wherein all comers, especially those representing difference in culture and religion, can feel secure (Lovat et al., 2011):

...to re-engineer a school culture' so the school could 'promote and nurture itself as a safe, compassionate, tolerant and inclusive school. (DEST, 2003, p. 96)

When a safe learning environment is created, anyone in the classroom setting, allows him/herself to speak their own views and differences without fear of being judged, ridiculed or disrespected. It also enables them, irrespective of their own religious beliefs (or lack of them), to identify and assess sympathetically the nature and consequences of belief in others (NSW, 1985, p. 33). As proffered, achieving this reality in the classroom necessitates both implicit and explicit dimensions of values pedagogy. The implicit is in creating an environment of trust, respect and care that, before a word is said, challenges the preconceived beliefs and consequent behaviours one will bring with them from their heritage and wider cultural 'life-world'. It is at this point that the student sees, for example, that a Muslim who is not respected outside the school is honoured and respected by a whole school community. Or a teacher and school that previously might have mocked Muslims for their dress, food, or worship, learn through the influence of the pedagogy to accept them as they are. It becomes clear to all that this is an environment that will not allow anti-Muslim prejudice to go unchallenged. When a whole school embraces this modelling, transformation of belief and behaviours is most likely to happen (Lovat, 2010; Lovat, 2011, 2019c).

At the next stage, it is necessary to make explicit through the way curriculum content is taught why creating an environment of respect, trust, care and acceptance is vital to the betterment of each individual and to society as a whole. This is done through self-reflectivity that allows one to distance oneself from whatever beliefs and ideas he/she inherited from the past, to challenge them, to move away from the comfort zone one has created and finally to transform one's own beliefs and behaviours. When self-reflectivity is applied in the educational setting, it challenges students' beliefs and so can make a difference in the way the non-Muslim student approaches the Muslim student and the issue of Islam in general, either as their own

faith or as the faith of the other (Lovat, 2010). In a word, the students come to see that whatever beliefs and values they brought with them are but one set, one life-world in a Habermasian sense, and to consider the rights of others to their own lifeworld.

It is useful to consider the Habermasian ways of knowing theory in confirming or disconfirming the Islamophobic stereotypes that exist in society. At the level of empirical knowing, there is an array of facts, figures and evidence in the media to confirm the belief that Muslims are troublemakers. At the level of communicative knowing, the conversations may not challenge the person and, as a result, one can be easily convinced that Muslims are terrorists by referring to these conversations. It is only at the level of self-reflectivity that one challenges oneself and thinks that one may not have properly examined all the evidence, perhaps one too easily accepts everything for fear of escaping their own comfort zone or comes to the conclusion that what one confirms is not based on evidence but rather on preferences and prejudices of his/her upbringing, family and culture. Only when one faces such challenges, tries to change one's view of Muslims and comes to accept the majority of Muslims as normal human beings, can one claim to have truly understood them (Lovat et al., 2011).

Regarding implementing two Commonwealth funded projects in Australia, *The Values Education Good Practice Schools Project (VEGPSP) from 2005 to 2008* and *the Values in Action Schools Project (VASP) from 2008 to 2009*, the aim of one cluster of schools engaged in the study were to broaden understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim clusters and to understand the ‘other’ within the school through an array of organized excursions that took students out of their environment and placed them within the environment of the other, complete with pedagogical attachment that ensured engagement with the other (Lovat, 2010). The clusters attracted the attention of the public because they offered opportunities to bridge the gap between Muslim and non-Muslims through communicative capacity, empathic character, self-reflectivity and the like (Lovat, 2010). This kind of education that is especially important in countries where multicultural and multi-religious people live together provides an environment in which both Muslim and non-Muslim learn the language of acceptance, respect, care, integrity and social responsibility in front of each other. In addition, Muslims see that their beliefs and ideas are respected and they have something of value to add to their society.

Transformation can happen not only to the way one looks at Muslims, but to anyone with any prejudice, religion or culture. Whenever these prejudices are put aside and one learns to look, judge, respect, accept and trust people away from one's personal intentions and beliefs, can one hope that the tensions Huntington mentioned will disappear. School is the best place in which such transformation can occur, taking the input of the entering children and transforming the output (Lovat et al., 2011). In fact, ‘schools are ‘engine rooms’ of multiculturalism and integration, sites where we learn not only the grammar of formal literacy, but also the ‘grammar’ of respect and cooperation’ (Lovat, 2010, p. 14). It is the duty of educators everywhere to inform themselves and their students about the Islamic tradition as evidenced from the best sources (Lovat, 2016), and as a result make a change in

the lives of all student cohorts, including those suffering the negative effects of being from a minority and often misunderstood religious culture. As a whole, there is hope that Huntington's "clash of civilizations" can be turned into President Khatami's "dialogue between civilizations" by values pedagogy.

Conclusion

This study intends to show how values pedagogy can be utilized in addressing Huntington's "the Clashes of Civilization" and, as a result, President Khatami's "Dialogue among Civilizations" becomes possible. Also, it aims to uncover the reasons behind current Islamophobia worldwide and how values pedagogy can be utilized in any school setting, regardless of public, private or religious schools, to soften the tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims and lead to greater tolerance and acceptance of differences in religion and culture.

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Chapter 7

Dialogue in Religious Education: Balancing Theological and Educational Approaches



Peta Goldberg

Abstract The chapter considers the long-term debate about the appropriateness of religious education conforming to an educational or theological model, exploring the territory between the two models. It proposes a synergy in the form of a dialogical model, supported by updated research.

Keywords Religious education · Dialogue · Theology · Dialogical learning · Dialogical education · Dialogical pedagogy

Introduction

This chapter proposes that dialogic approaches for Religious Education should be grounded in, and reflective of, education epistemologies rather than theological epistemologies. In recent years, various scholars have suggested that religious education would benefit from incorporating dialogical approaches into classroom learning and teaching (Grimmitt, 2000). Some existing approaches to teaching Religious Education incorporate and acknowledge the importance of dialogue and how learning could begin at any point in the hermeneutic circle according to the needs of students (Lovat, 2002). In the literature, terms such as ‘dialogical learning’, ‘dialogical pedagogy’, and ‘dialogical education’ are used interchangeably to describe learning environments which are participatory and egalitarian. Approaches used include dialogue-intensive pedagogies, cooperative learning, social constructivist approaches and critical pedagogy. The prime purpose of such dialogical education is to move from monological methods of instruction and replace what Freire called

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a banking concept of education where students are considered empty vessels to be filled with knowledge.

Currently, Catholic schools in Australia that have been part of the *Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project (ECSIP)* led by Pollefeyt and Bouwens from KU Leuven are encouraged to implement a hermeneutical-communicative dialogical approach for Religious Education (Lombaerts & Pollefeyt, 2004). This approach, largely influenced by communicative hermeneutics and processes developed for inter-religious dialogue, is grounded in a theological paradigm rather than an education paradigm and tends to be ‘top-down’ rather than grounded in the lived reality of students. In describing the Dialogical School model, Pollefeyt and Bouwens state:

a *Dialogue School* fosters a hermeneutical Catholic theology, explicitly aiming at encounter and dialogue about philosophical, religious and moral issues, regarding the Catholic story as a privileged conversational partner. . . . the *Dialogue School* aims for a deep encounter between tradition and context, in which the Catholic tradition is renewed and revitalised for people today. (Pollefeyt & Bouwens, 2014)

To address the distinction between theological and educational approaches to dialogue, a brief overview of the development of dialogical approaches within the Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council (1962–65) will be provided and then the development of dialogic approaches within education will be traced with the aim of broadening understandings of dialogue and its application in contemporary Religious Education classrooms.

Dialogical Approaches in the Catholic Church

Dialogue became a prominent motivator and theme at the Second Vatican Council when Pope Paul VI encouraged the bishops to engage in dialogue with the world. Pope Paul VI’s first encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam* (On Dialogue) (1964), not only gave direction to the Council but also infused the word dialogue into the Council’s vocabulary (Lane, 2011). Dialogue between the church and the world, the church and society, the church and other religions, and the church and non-believers was promoted in several Conciliar documents but most especially in *Nostra Aetate* (In Our Time) (1965). This document signalled the end of an exclusivist position as the Church moved towards an inclusivist position with respect to other religions maintaining that while one’s own religion expresses the truth; other religions also contain teachings of truth and value. As a corollary to this inclusivist stance, the Church urged its members to begin to engage in interreligious dialogue.

Later in the post conciliar period, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue outlined four forms of dialogue: dialogue of life, dialogue of action, dialogue of theological exchange, and dialogue of religious experience (1991). Interreligious dialogue, grounded in anthropological foundations, seeks not simply mutual understanding but also proclamation of the truth of one’s faith: participants witnessing to the truth in word and action. Consequently, dialogue within a

theological context is not only an engagement with the beliefs of others but also entails a recognition of one's own beliefs.

The principles of interreligious dialogue are largely grounded in the philosophy of hermeneutics presented by Hans-Georg Gadamer (1976). Gadamer wanted to understand the 'other' and proposed a sophisticated analysis of language, culture, and the dynamics of understanding. Interreligious dialogue seeks to promote a shared search for the truth among the participants and, in the encounter with the other, there is the possibility of discovering new truths.

Following this theological line, the Congregation for Catholic Education has in recent years picked up the theme of dialogue recommending that Catholic schools should "through dialogue present young people with an open, peaceful and enticing view of the Other" and that communication between teachers and students should favour "mutual listening" (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2014). The theme of witness is considered significant: "this dialogue is not a compromise, but rather a framework for reciprocal witnessing among believers who belong to different religions" and participants are reminded to "avoid relativism and syncretism" (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2014). Approaches to dialogue which are grounded within a theological paradigm are not easily transported to Religious Education classrooms.

Dialogue in Education

Dialogue as a shared inquiry has been an educational method since the time of Socrates. While the term dialogic is widely used in scholarly works about education, it is applied through a range of pedagogies from Socratic instruction to constructivist ideas of Vygotsky (1978), to Freirean liberator pedagogy (1970). All of these pedagogies advocate the virtue of interactive engagement in the development of knowledge and understanding. Today, dialogical forms of education are examples of the intersection of the political, pedagogical and philosophical. At the heart of all dialogic theories is the distinction between external views of dialogue and internal views.

Dictionary meanings of dialogue contrast it with monologue. Bakhtin (1981), however, develops his understanding of dialogic from his reading of Dostoevsky's novels. For Bakhtin, dialogic education is more than shared inquiry, rather it is a distinctive and original way of understanding the meaning of texts. Texts and book are dialogues from the voice of the author including the many voices engaging in dialogues within the text itself. The difference between a monologic and dialogic utterance in a classroom setting is that a monologic utterance involves student acceptance of the fixity of meanings expressed through 'authoritative' texts and talk, while dialogic utterances involves student resistance, reshaping and re-accentuations of these meanings by populating them with their own intentions and appropriating them by adapting them to their own "semantic and expressive intention/s" (Bakhtin, 1981).

The main protagonists discussed in this section establish the foundations for contemporary approaches to dialogue employed in school classrooms today. Dialogical approaches for Religious Education should draw more significantly on these traditions rather than those from theology.

Socrates

Socrates believed that learners could be provoked to inquire, search for evidence, and reason for themselves. Socratic dialogue repositioned the role of the teacher from holder and transmitter of knowledge to one who assists students in the quest for evidence via reasoned argument. Socratic dialogue is a form of cooperative, argumentative dialogue based on asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking with the purpose of drawing out ideas and underlying presuppositions. The Socratic method searches for general, commonly held truths that shape beliefs and scrutinises them to determine their consistency with other beliefs (Renshaw, 2004). Socrates distinguishes ‘disputatious’ and ‘friendly’ forms of dialogue where the purpose is to propose and oppose, to formulate arguments and to put forth counter examples and counterarguments.

Buber

For Martin Buber, the education process was more than analysing, comparing, and evaluating categories of thought, it included knowledge derived dialogically. Even though Buber admired Socrates, he did not accept his method of questioning. While Socrates made the distinction between ‘dead’ words of written accounts and the ‘living’ words of speech, Martin Buber’s thesis was that all living and by implication, all education, flows from engaging and being engaged in genuine relationships. Buber proposed that people communicate in two basic ways: ‘I-It’ and ‘I-Thou’. In I-It relations, we remain outside our interactions by controlling the beginning, middle and end; the subject discussed; and how it is defined. We see the other as an object of our experience, use that object for some purpose, and add the achievement of that purpose to the content of our knowing. In contrast, I-Thou relationships are reciprocal engagements. We speak with our whole being and experience, the dialogue is an event in our lives. According to Buber (2004), a person becomes fully human only in I-Thou relationships. He characterised the I-Thou orientation as listening and understanding, while the I-It orientation objectifies the other and is ultimately about controlling the other. The I-it is monologic because it assumes a single true perspective within which everything is situated; it is one-sided and controlling. The I-thou is dialogic because meaning always assumes at least two perspectives at once and the gap between them opens the possibility of an infinite number of new perspectives and insights.

Buber also outlined three types of communication: Genuine Dialogue, which may be spoken or silent, occurs when each participant is fully present to the other/s and intentionally tries to establish a mutual relationship with them; Technical Dialogue which is motivated primarily by the need to understand something or gain information, and the third type, Monologue Disguised as Dialogue occurs when one participant is only interested in imposing his or her point of view to the exclusion of all others.

Instead of focusing on teacher-centred or student-centred models of education, Buber concentrated on the relationships between student and teacher, and teacher, student, and the course material. He said that in every genuine dialogue there were three, not two voices. The first voice of the person speaking, the second voice of the other person in the dialogue and the third is the voice of the relationship itself which inspires and speaks through the first two voices. As an adult educator, Buber worked to draw students into the space of dialogue (Kramer, 2013). He said that the teacher should be empathetic and critically reflective, listening respectfully to the voice of the other and listening attentively to the voice of the moment.

Freire

In the 1970s, the Brazilian-born educator, Paulo Freire, added a new dimension to the dialogical tradition: the idea that dialogical teaching is more democratic, egalitarian, human and liberating compared with purely didactic and oppressive monological modes of teaching (Freire, 1970). Freire argued that education based on the traditional curriculum methods employed in Brazil oppressed the local people because it inducted them into the language and knowledge of the ruling class and alienated them from their own cultural practices and traditional knowledge. He advocated a dialogic approach, not to make friends with the students, but to challenge them to become critical cultural researchers and actors within their own circumstances (Freire, 1985).

Many teachers who espouse critical pedagogy and embrace Freire's vision of praxis and conscientisation may be aware of its roots in Marxism, but only a few are aware of how his vision ties to religious faith, particularly Catholicism and liberation theology. According to Stenberg (2006), teachers, and especially teachers of Religious Education, would benefit from an enriched understanding of the ties between critical pedagogy and Christian liberation theology.

Freirean critical pedagogy has been criticised by some feminists and scholars espousing post-structural and post-colonial perspectives (Burbules, 2006). They focus on unconscious dialogue which concerns not just who is speaking or not speaking but what gets left out and what remains hidden.

Bakhtin

In the 1980s, Bakhtin (1986) raised the issue of dialogue as a tool for theorising teaching and learning. His view of dialogue goes beyond the idea of a give-and-take structure and he makes a distinction between authoritative voice and persuasive voice. The authoritative voice remains outside us and we neither accept nor reject it. The persuasive word is internal, creative, and productive, awakening new and independent words and does not remain in a static condition. Bakhtin distinguishes between the inside space of dialogue and the outside space. He shows how the voices of other people are interwoven into what we say, write and think, theorising that thinking and knowing occur in and through dialogic speech which acts as an interface between a speaker and a real or imagined audience. Bakhtin refers to the ‘super-addressee’. This is the idea that every dialogue generates a third voice or position, that of the witness or the ‘super-addressee’. Wegerif (2013) considers that “invoking the super-addressee, or the absent other, is a very important strategy for education into thinking”. Ultimately, what makes an utterance dialogic and meaningful is the capacity to respond to otherness and to signal reciprocity in relation to, but not necessarily in agreement with, a speaker or text.

Bakhtin’s epistemological stance highlights meaning and learning as emerging from the interactive act of drawing from and rearticulating the thoughts and languages of others. For Bakhtin (1986), dialogue is shared inquiry as opposed to social conversations or inquiries that are monologues. His writing on the dialogicality of language and thinking has heightened awareness of the mediating role of speech and audience in classroom activities. He demonstrated how it was possible to document the way students “appropriate and use—ventriloquate—the words of the teacher, textbook and other students to construct their own understanding of concepts” (Renshaw, 2004). Bakhtin highlights how meaning is constructed interactively through drawing upon and ‘revoicing’ the languages of the disciplines and the vernacular into dialogues so that the language of the school curriculum can be made accessible and meaningful to students.

Vygotsky

Often referred to as a dialogic educationalist, Vygotsky, in his well-known concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) encourages the teacher to engage with the perspective/s of the students and vice-versa. He argues that a child gets involved in a dialogue with a ‘more knowledgeable other’ and gradually, through social interaction and sense-making, develops the ability to solve problems independently and to do certain tasks without help. His theory of social constructivist learning involves multiple representations of reality presenting the complexity of the real world. Constructivist learning environments emphasise knowledge construction rather

than knowledge reproduction particularly collaborative construction of knowledge through social negotiation, rather than competition among learners.

Burbules

Burbules (1993) identifies four types of classroom dialogue: dialogue as instruction, dialogue as conversation; dialogue as inquiry, and dialogue as debate. Dialogue as instruction involves teacher support in the form of modelling and scaffolding with the aim of reaching a definite conclusion; dialogue as conversation involves sharing information, experiences and opinions through questions and answers to build a community of shared knowledge and understandings; dialogue as inquiry resolves a question, problem or dispute in an outcome agreeable to all. It involves asking questions and offering explanations to decide the best approach to an issue to build consensus in problem-solving. Dialogue as debate shows the challenges and merits of alternative positions and involves participants interrogating opposing viewpoints in order to defend their own with the aim of building stronger arguments and sharpening focus to gain clearer understandings. The different types of dialogue express different views of knowledge, authority, questions, learning, consensus, and moral responsibility.

Each type of dialogue has the potential to become anti-dialogical: conversation can become meandering chat; inquiry can become an obsessively narrow, end-driven endeavour; debate can become argument; and instruction can become manipulation (Burbules, 2000). Interestingly, Burbules challenges the canonisation of dialogue as a pedagogical ideal indicating that employing a single approach to pedagogy is not the solution to all the problems of teaching (Burbules, 2006).

Burbules identifies six traditions that have influenced the concept of dialogue in relation to education (Burbules, 2000). The first, influenced by scholars such as Dewey and Barber, sees education as essential to democracy and that learners should develop the capabilities and dispositions to engage in dialogue in the public sphere. The second, influenced by some versions of feminism and referred to by more strident feminists as ‘good girl’ feminism (Burbules, 2000), contrasts the antagonistic features of dialogue with a more receptive stance promoted by feminists such as Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings who encourage a non-confrontational view of dialogue which is more open, receptive and inclusive of women’s values than the stereotypical norms of masculine behaviour. Educational dialogue which privileges the more adversarial mode of interaction discourages or dismisses tentative and cooperative forms of dialogue and in their view discriminates against females in schools and in the public sphere generally. The third tradition, grounded in Platonic views of dialogue, stresses the role of communicative interchange as a proving a ground for inquiries into truth. Freire and others indicate that this type of philosophical conception of dialogue rests upon a view of knowledge as absolute and unchanging—something that many would feel uncomfortable with today.

The fourth tradition, hermeneutic views of dialogue, tends to emphasise dialogue as an inter-subjective understanding and emerges from Buber's I-Thou relation. Hermeneutic dialogue emphasises the relational and to-and-fro movement of question and answer as an avenue toward understanding, agreement and consensus. Hermeneutic-communicative dialogue strives for mutual understanding as a pedagogical ideal. This model of hermeneutic dialogue is the one promoted by Pollefeyt and Bouwens (2014) as being appropriate for Catholic Religious Education classrooms. However, there are four problems with this model: it lacks capacity to critique; it fails to recognise that students have or will adopt a wide variety of views; it does not engage with issues of power and inequality; and it fails to take account of difference and diversity and may even have a tendency to assimilate these.

The fifth tradition, which is reflective of most contemporary critical views of dialogue in education, is exemplified in the ground-breaking work of Freire, and developed by others such as Giroux, McLaren, and Shor. Freirean dialogue is regarded as a practice with intrinsic critical and emancipatory potential. This form of dialogue is an essential component of the Critical Model for Religious Education proposed by Lovat (2002) as are the writings of Habermas. Lovat's model, grounded in Habermas' ways of knowing theory, serves the emancipatory interest and is self-reflective. His Critical Model requires students to examine positions and counter positions, to investigate, research and critique so that nothing is taken for granted. By combining the critical thrust of Groome's Praxis Model with the structure of Moore and Habel's Typological model, Lovat's Critical Model offers an important approach to teaching Religious Education which can be applied in both faith-based and Government school systems. The model also opened up opportunities for dialogue between teacher and students, between students and students, as well as dialogue with culture and dialogue within and between traditions.

Burbules' sixth tradition, a postliberal view of dialogue, includes Habermas' model of communicative dialogue. Habermas begins his account of communicative rationality by drawing a distinction between "a success-oriented attitude" and "an attitude oriented to reaching understanding" (Habermas, 1991). 'Attitude' for Habermas refers to ways in which participants in a dialogue can orient themselves to each other. He proposes some norms for dialogue: everyone is allowed to partake in the discourse; everyone is allowed to question any assertion; everyone is allowed to introduce any assertion into the discourse; everyone is allowed to express his/her attitudes, desires and needs; and no speaker may be prevented by internal or external coercion from exercising his/her rights established in the earlier rules. While the rules might be criticised, the insight provided is that we need shared social rules if we are to open up the space for thinking between coercion and unreflective consensus.

The six conceptions of dialogue while different, have some features in common. They all place crucial emphasis on dialogue as the foundation for social and political discussion and disagreement. They all privilege dialogue as a basis for arriving at understanding and knowledge, and they all recommend dialogue as the mode of pedagogical engagement best able to promote learning, autonomy, and an understanding of one's self in relation to others.

Conclusion

For most teachers, implementing dialogic pedagogies requires not only a change in their discourse but also a shift in their knowledge and beliefs about teaching and the role of dialogue in learning and its potential benefit for students. Eck (1993) reminds us that “We do not enter into dialogue with the dreamy hope that we will all agree, for the truth is we probably will not”. She reminds us that dialogue requires exchange, criticism, and reflection. Dialogue denotes turn-taking between conversational partners. Vygotsky and Bakhtin remind us that socially situated language is shaped by audience, so it matters whom we ‘face’ when we talk. If one method of dialogical education is emphasised over and above other methods, as is the hermeneutical-communicative dialogical approach of Pollefeyt and Bouwens, because it is driven by enhancing Catholic identity, attention becomes fixed on common knowledge and shared cultural resources while the different ways that individuals internalised or appropriated those resources are overlooked.

The key pedagogical lessons that can be learned regarding dialogic approaches for Religious Education are that students are able to engage with religious questions and use religious language and received ideas in different ways to negotiate viewpoints and understandings. Using a variety of dialogical approaches not only gives voice to students but also develops critical thinking skills. Dialogical approaches to Religious Education enable students to be active participants in their learning as they negotiate and critique various ideas from their own experience, religious and social communities, culture and various disciplines. Such learning and teaching maximizes student input as claims raised by others shed new light on individual’s views.

If dialogic approaches are to be successful in Religious Education, they need to be more than an exchange of personal narratives, more than simply questions and answers, and more than reaching consensus. Dialogical process in Religious Education must give emphasis to the agency of students and develop skills of analysis, critique and praxis and therefore should be grounded in and reflective of education epistemologies rather than theological epistemologies.

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Chapter 8

Telling a Story of Faith: Rival Narratives and Dialogue in the Work of Religious Education



Mark Hillis

Abstract The chapter considers the role of narrative, especially dialogical narrative, in the conceptualisation and implementation of religious education. Special attention is paid to the story of Abraham's/Ibrahim's near sacrifice of his son in the scriptures of three faith traditions. A multi-step pedagogical approach is offered by which narratives may be thoughtfully unpacked in religious education.

Keywords Religious education · Narrative · Dialogue · Pedagogy

Introduction

This study is based in a perspective that takes scriptural narratives seriously and with a high regard for their potency and potential relevance for life today. My own adherence to a particular faith need not hinder me from acknowledging the existence of shared stories and rival narratives in the scriptures and traditions of other faiths.¹ I am naturally curious about parallel narrative traditions. Therefore, if I were to ignore other peoples' myths, as Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty calls them,² it may be a sign that I am insecure in my own faith and feel a need to be protected from alternatives. An invitation to explore the sacred narratives of others is an opportunity to see differently, and therefore to apprehend one's own faith tradition from a different angle. The focus here shall be the story of the near sacrifice of Abraham/Ibrahim's son. As will become clear, although the Jewish, Christian and Islamic faiths have

¹ See Robert C. Gregg, *Shared Stories, Rival Tellings: Early Encounters of Jews, Christians and Muslims* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

² Wendy D. O'Flaherty, *Other Peoples' Myths* (New York; MacMillan, 1988). O'Flaherty has a highly developed theory of myth, whereby myth is not opposed to rationality, but is arguably an important rational category.

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diverse readings of the same essential narrative, I would suggest that an educational interest favours curiosity, listening, and thoughtful study, suspending rivalry. The approach taken in this essay will be to briefly explore how some Christian, Muslim, and Jewish writers, theologians and artists interpret this major narrative event. An attempt shall also be made to outline an approach by which religious educators in schools, interfaith groups, faith communities and other inquirers may respectfully explore the sacred narratives of the three Abrahamic faiths.

By adopting a narrative approach employing ‘sympathetic engagement,’³ it is reasonable to expect that religious educators can negotiate a pathway to mutually rewarding discourse among those persons who work with narrative texts. Even in school contexts where religious education may be seen as in some way controversial, or somehow inappropriate for government-run institutions, there have been some successful externally provided programs, which model sympathetic and dialogical approaches. Narrative discourse is an important component in these programs.⁴ Abraham is a major figure for Jewish, Christian, and Islamic faith. The term ‘Abrahamic faiths/religions’ has been used as a phrase to encourage interfaith dialogue,⁵ despite each religious tradition using the Abrahamic narratives differently.

The *Aqedah* in the Tanakh

The Jewish Bible’s (Tanakh or Hebrew Scriptures) book of Genesis, Chap. 22, verses 1 to 19, tells the story sometimes called Abraham’s near sacrifice of his son Isaac, and in Jewish tradition, the *Aqedah* (‘binding’ of Isaac). For Jewish and Christian communities, this story takes place within the long narrative saga spanning from Genesis Chap. 11 through to Chap. 25, verse 11. The account in Genesis 22 is preceded by the divine promise that Abraham would become a great nation,

³The notion of ‘sympathetic engagement’ is adapted from Paul Ricoeur’s narrative theory whereby he asserts that participation in understanding is possible for and available to ‘outside readers’ by means of imagination, sympathy, and rigorous study. See Andre LaCocque and Paul Ricoeur, *Thinking Biblically: Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies*, trans. D. Pellauer (Chicago: Chicago University Press 1998), xvii.

⁴The “Together for Humanity” program is one that has been run successfully by the organisation of that name in many schools in Australia, and with which I have had some personal experience. See Together for Humanity, “Fostering students’ interfaith and intercultural understanding.” <https://www.togetherforhumanity.org.au/> Also encouraging the building of relationships and dialogue across religious and secular groups is Affinity Intercultural Foundation <http://affinity.org.au>

⁵For this essay, the significant reference is Terence Lovat and Robert Crotty, *Reconciling Islam, Christianity and Judaism: Islam’s Special Role in Restoring Convivencia* (London: Springer, 2015). Note also Angelika Neuwirth, “The Challenge of Biblical Passion Narratives: Negotiating, Moderating, and Reconstructing Abraham’s Sacrifice in the Qur’an,” in *Narratology, Hermeneutics and Midrash: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Narratives*, ed. Constanza Cordoni and Gerhard Langer (Gottingen: V&R Unipress, 2014), 251–64.

the father of many generations, by whom the nations of the earth would bless themselves.⁶

However, Abraham and Sarah were childless. An attempt to bring about the fulfillment of the promise is related in Genesis 16 with the union of Abraham and 'Hagar the Egyptian', female slave of Sarah, at Sarah's initiative. A son, Ishmael, was born. Despite the fact of this son's birth, the story unfolds that the intention of God is that Sarah shall give birth to her own son and that he will be called Isaac. In the meantime, Sarah became estranged from Hagar, purportedly due to Hagar's contempt for Sarah.⁷ Eventually, Hagar and Ishmael are driven away to the wilderness of Beersheba, by a seemingly reluctant Abraham (Genesis 21).⁸ In Chap. 22, 'God tested Abraham'.

The drama of the test is difficult to exaggerate: "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and ... offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you."⁹ The narrator ponders over the journey to the mountain, takes time to mention servants and a donkey, the cutting and collection of wood. Isaac asks Abraham the fateful question, "the fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham replies, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son."¹⁰ Then: the erection of an altar, the binding of Isaac on the altar, the taking of a knife to slaughter his son and, suddenly, the messenger of the Lord God calling urgently to Abraham, not to harm the boy. Abraham had endured a horrifying test. A ram, caught in a thicket by its horns was seen by Abraham, taken and sacrificed as a burnt offering "instead of his son."¹¹ God's covenant blessing is restated, seemingly as a consequence of Abraham not withholding his son from sacrifice.¹²

This was only the beginning of the story of the impact of the *Aqedah*. The Genesis account unquestionably lies behind the subsequent Christian work on this scripture. Only the letter to the Hebrews and the letter of James specifically mention the binding of Isaac,¹³ without re-telling the whole story. In the Gospels, references to Abraham are made as exemplary exhortations or rebukes by various characters, including Jesus. Saint Paul makes a number of references to Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael and Isaac in his rhetorical and allegorical argumentation about relations between Jewish and Gentile followers of Jesus.¹⁴

It is also likely that Qur'anic and other Islamic texts about Ibrahim, Ishaq/Isaac and Ishmael/Ishma'il were informed by the Hebrew account, a view supported by a

⁶Genesis 12:1–3, reiterated with the promise of the land in Genesis 15:1–6 and 17:1–8.

⁷Genesis 16:5.

⁸Genesis 21:8–20.

⁹Genesis 22:2.

¹⁰Genesis 22:7–8.

¹¹Genesis 22:13.

¹²Genesis 22:16–17.

¹³Hebrews 11:17–19; James 2:21–24.

¹⁴Significantly, in his letters to the Roman and Galatian Christian communities.

number of scholars.¹⁵ Jewish interpreters and artists have never ceased to work with it. Christian and Muslim interpreters and artists have also wrestled with the story. It is reasonable for us to appreciate that during the formation of the Islamic faith in Late Antiquity, there would have been widespread knowledge of similarities and differences amongst the various religious communities. On this somewhat shared ground of knowledge, the potential for dialogue, as well as polemic, would have subsisted in the ancient world. In our own era, by contrast, there is little religious knowledge to begin with, and a greater need for religious and historical literacy to enable any dialogue or debate to take place.¹⁶ That is why I am suggesting that the exploration of scriptural narratives is so important for religious education today. We shall return to that observation later in the essay.

The Binding of Isaac in Christian Tradition

For Christians, the emotional power of the story of the binding of Isaac has stimulated some of the most creative theological and artistic imaginations. Caravaggio's 1602 painting of *The Sacrifice of Isaac* is a confronting work of art (Fig. 8.1).¹⁷

Abraham is depicted holding down the young Isaac, poised to lunge at his throat with an obviously sharpened knife. An angel is intervening just in time, restraining Abraham's arm, and pointing to the ram close by, not "caught in a thicket". The ram is a sign of God's providence, yet it remains a horrifying picture, perhaps because of Abraham's clearly lethal intention. How did this brutal action ever come to be seen as an ultimate example of faith? For Søren Kierkegaard, in the nineteenth century, it is a troubling event that can never be trivialised or domesticated as a suitably pious and exemplary act. Certainly, Isaac was saved from sacrifice, but the risk taken by Abraham seems inexplicable.

The following poem by Wilfred Owen,¹⁸ poet and soldier in World War I, "The Parable of the Old Man and the Young," appears in W. Sibley Towner's scholarly Christian commentary on Genesis:

¹⁵ See, for example, Gregg, *Shared Stories*, Chaps. 4–6; Neuwirth, "Biblical Passion Narratives," 251–3; Terence Lovat and Robert Crotty, *Reconciling Islam, Christianity and Judaism: Islam's Special Role in Restoring Convivencia* (London: Springer, 2015) 78–81; Gordon D. Nickel, *The Qur'an with Christian Commentary: A Guide to Understanding the Scripture of Islam* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2013), 20.

¹⁶ Lovat and Crotty, *Reconciling Islam*, 11–28; Neuwirth, "Biblical Passion Narratives," 251; Christian Grethlein, "Interreligious Learning—The Career of a Concept," in *Basics of Religious Education*, eds. Martin Rothgangel, Thomas Schlag and Friedrich Schweitzer (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2014), 385–96.

¹⁷ Figure 8.1. The Sacrifice of Isaac, Michelangelo Caravaggio, 1603. <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Binding_of_Isaac#/media/File:Sacrifice_of_Isaac-Caravaggio_\(Uffizi\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Binding_of_Isaac#/media/File:Sacrifice_of_Isaac-Caravaggio_(Uffizi).jpg)> [PUBLIC DOMAIN].

¹⁸ Owen was killed 1 week before the Armistice was declared in Europe, November 1918, fighting the German army in France.



Fig. 8.1 Caravaggio, *The Sacrifice of Isaac*

*So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went.
And took the fire with him, and a knife.
And as they sojourned both of them together,
Isaac the first-born spake and said, My Father,
Behold the preparations, fire and iron,
But where the lamb for this burnt offering?
Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps,
And builded parapets and trenches there,
And stretched forth the knife to slay his son.
When lo! an angel called him out of heaven.
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad,
Neither do anything to him. Behold,
A ram, caught in a thicket by its horns;
Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.
But the old man would not so, but slew his son,
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.¹⁹*

The shocking twist in Owen's poem, where Abraham actually kills Isaac, was not the first example of such imagining. Kierkegaard, as a theologian and philosopher, was fascinated by the story. The whole of his work, *Fear and Trembling* is devoted to it.²⁰ The first chapter is given to alternate ways of telling the story of the binding of Isaac. However, the final outcome in each of those tellings is the same. It is elsewhere that he offers the following meditation:

¹⁹W. Sibley Towner, *Genesis* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 191.

²⁰Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, trans. Alistair Hannay (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

When Abraham and Isaac reached the place that God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound Isaac, lit the fire, drew his knife, and thrust it into Isaac. At that moment God stood by Abraham's side in bodily form and exclaimed: "What have you done? Oh wretched old man! That was not what I asked of you at all!"²¹

For Kierkegaard, neither conventional morality nor institutional religion could cope with the Abrahamic narrative in Genesis 22. Abraham breaks with convention. Abraham's willingness to set off to the mountains with his son, trusting God, requires a 'teleological suspension of the ethical.'²² In a passage dripping with contempt for the established Church in Denmark at the time, Kierkegaard wrote:

Abraham I cannot understand: in a way all I can learn from him is to be amazed. If one imagines one can be moved to faith by considering the outcome to this story, one deceives oneself, and is out to cheat God of faith's first movement, one is out to suck the life out of the paradox. One or another may succeed, for our age does not stop with faith, with its miracle of turning water into wine; it goes further, it turns wine into water.²³

This was part of Kierkegaard's passionate response to the implicit horror of the *Aqedah*, and led to deeper theological work. Exploring the radical faith of Abraham is a challenge to reason and to faith. As Paul Ricoeur comments, reflecting on the worlds of literature: 'We lock literature up in a world in itself and when it breaks out as subversion, it turns against the moral and social order.'²⁴ In this way at least, Owen and Kierkegaard are allies. They look into the narrative with utter seriousness and find that faithfulness is at stake and in question. Do we trust in the dark testing and the wondrous provision of the God who is faithful, described in Genesis?²⁵ Are human institutions more worthy of our trust? God, after all, did not finally require the sacrifice. The state often does. As we continue to reflect on the texts, and to wonder about appropriate educational approaches to them, we need to keep in mind the historical realities of relations amongst the religious traditions concerned. Slander, barbarity, crusades, fear, and mutual exclusion have marred attempts to hold informed and enlightened dialogue across and within the formal religious and political divides of these Abrahamic faiths for centuries. Yet scholars, educators, and religious adherents have often taken the opportunity to pursue dialogue, whenever governing states and opportunities allow, and even when they do not.²⁶

²¹ Søren Kierkegaard, *Provocations: Spiritual Writings*, ed. Charles E. Moore (Farmington PA: Plough, 1999), 89.

²² Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 85.

²³ *Ibid.*, 66–67.

²⁴ Mario J. Valdes, ed., *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

²⁵ Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 185–94.

²⁶ Laurie L. Patton tells the story of two men, Mohammed (Muslim) and Kumar (Hindu), whose friendship in India endured the Ayodhya riots in 1992 and the Gujarat riots in 2002, despite community hatred and opposition to their intentional meetings though those times. "The Doorkeeper, the Choirboy, and the Singer of Psalms," in *Interreligious Hermeneutics*, ed. Catherine Cornille and Christopher Conway, (Eugene, OR: Cascade), 229–49.

The Near-Sacrifice of Abraham's Son in the Qur'an

Commenting on Islamic scriptural material, Gordon Nickel affirms that the Qur'an mentions three scriptures of the Jews and Christians ('People of the Book'). They are the Torah (*tawrāt*), the Gospel (*injīl*), and the Psalms (*zabūr*). Each of these scriptures are described in 'the most positive and respectful ways'.²⁷ The Qur'an also claims to 'confirm' the pre-Islamic scriptures, and tells the stories of biblical characters in a referential style that assumes familiarity with the Bible stories among the audience. That familiarity will have taken other forms than textual study. The verbal sharing of stories throughout the Middle East will have included what became Jewish Rabbinical and Christian apocryphal works.²⁸ Certainly, Muslims believe that their faith has improved and superseded Judaism and Christianity. Yet, despite the centuries of conflict, trouble and rivalry, there is a lingering potential respect in the heart of Islam for the People of the Book. My perception is that this is one reason why Terence Lovat and Robert Crotty envisage, for Islam, a 'special role in restoring Convivencia',²⁹ expressing a new hope for an era of tolerance and peaceful co-existence among the children of Ibrahim, Sarah and Hajar. Such a seemingly utopian vision for interreligious dialogue would require Islam to undertake a 're-examination of its roots' in the way exemplified by the Tunisian, Mohamed Talbi.³⁰ It would require also, to say the least, the abandonment of stereotypes held by many of the committed adherents within each faith's multiple communities towards each other. Lovat and Crotty also advocate strong secular and religious educational initiatives that are needed if younger generations are to approach the faith of others with an expectation of peaceful co-existence.³¹

The Qur'an has a vast number of references to Ibrahim in many of the 114 Surahs.³² Ibrahim is a revered figure, one of the great and righteous, a *hanif*, a Muslim, one who lives his life in complete submission to Allah.³³ He is a primary example of one who properly honours the unity of God. The references to him are dispersed throughout the Qur'an, yet with few narratives of any length comparable to the Jewish scriptures. Surah 37 contains one of the longest single segments

²⁷ Nickel, *The Qur'an with Christian Commentary*, 20.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Lovat and Crotty, *Reconciling Islam*.

³⁰ Lovat and Crotty, *Reconciling Islam*, 119–26.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 125–7.

³² John Kaltner and Younus Y. Mirza, *The Bible and the Qur'an: Biblical Figures in the Islamic Tradition* (Sydney: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 10, suggests that there are 70 'mentions' of Ibrahim in the Qur'an; whereas Gregg, *Shared Stories*, 187, claims that there are 245 'references' to Ibrahim.

³³ *Al-Qur'an*, an English translation by Ahmed Ali (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), Surah 3:67.

honouring Ibrahim.³⁴ Within it we find the narrative of the near-sacrifice of his son, who is traditionally taken to be Ishmael, his first-born.³⁵

Surah 37: ‘O Lord, grant me a righteous son.’ So We gave him the good news of a clement son. When he was old enough to go about with him, he said, ‘O my son, I dreamt that I was sacrificing you. Consider, what do you think?’ He replied, ‘Father, do as you are commanded. If God pleases, you will find me firm.’ When they submitted to the will of God, and laid (his son) down, prostrate on his temple, We called out: ‘O Abraham, You have fulfilled your dream.’ Thus do we reward the good. That was indeed a trying test. So We ransomed him for a great sacrifice, and left (his hallowed memory) for posterity. ‘Peace be on Abraham.’ This is how we reward those who do good. He is truly among Our faithful creatures. So We gave him the good news of Isaac, apostle, who is among the righteous. And We blessed him and Isaac. Among their descendants are some who do good, but some who wrong themselves.³⁶

The intensity and complexity of the Abraham/Ibrahim narratives share some similarities in presentation and commentary throughout Islamic, Jewish and Christian scriptures. Intriguingly, the thought that the righteous and exemplary Ibrahim/Abraham would be prepared to carry out such a horrific command without question (as both the Qur’an and the Jewish Tanakh imply, though differently) has stimulated interpretations that tell a story of collaboration between father and son over the proposed sacrifice.

Angelika Neuwirth argues that from an initial adaptation of Jewish scriptural sources, the Qur’anic emphasis on the binding of Isaac asserted the unemotional transcendence of Allah in relation to human affairs.³⁷ In the Qur’an, ‘human suffering is understood as a divine test that must be met with perseverance, without emotion. Agony should be neither sorrowful nor jubilant’.³⁸ For a Muslim, then, the willingness of Ibrahim to sacrifice Ishmael was an act that was also embraced by Ishmael. For Ibrahim it is an act of utter surrender and submission to Allah, including the trusting complicity of his son. It is, therefore, a rival telling of the near-sacrifice of the son, by comparison with Jewish and Christian renditions. However, in dialogue with others, one would be wise to defer pronouncing conclusions about distinctive and shared aspects of the story prematurely.

In an Islamic illumination from Shiraz, Persia, circa 1410 CE (Fig. 8.2),³⁹ one may notice the seemingly calm assurance of the colourful divine messenger. Allah has declared that Ibrahim has fulfilled the vision/dream. Ibrahim’s demeanour also appears to be calmly confident. The prominence of the ram, as in each of the figures

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Surah 37:83–113.

³⁵ Some early commentary identified the son as Isaac. However, the enduring tradition has been to identify him as Ishmael (sometimes rendered Ishma’il). See George Bristow, ‘Abraham in the Qur’an,’ in Nickel, *The Qur’an with Christian Commentary*, 90.

³⁶ *Al-Qur’an*, Surah 37:100–113.

³⁷ Neuwirth, ‘Biblical Passion Narratives,’ 255–63.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 260.

³⁹ Figure 8.2. Sacrifice of Ishmael. Islamic illumination. Shiraz, Persia, c.1410 CE. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Binding_of_Isaac#/media/File:Timurid_Anthology_Zhertva.jpg> [PUBLIC DOMAIN].

Fig. 8.2 Sacrifice of Ishmael



for this essay, is the clear sign of Allah's provision. Notice that Ishmael is only a youngster, despite the tradition in the texts to describe him taking part in an adult conversation with his father.

In their own ways the Qur'an and extra-biblical Jewish rabbinical texts are one in presuming that Abraham/Ibrahim's son was adult and engaged in adult conversation about the impending sacrifice. In Jewish tradition, it is the targums⁴⁰ and rabbinic sources pointing out that Abraham and Isaac were in perfect agreement concerning the sacrifice and that Isaac was not merely a passive victim.⁴¹ There is also evidence of this rival telling (i.e. rival to the version in the Torah) in Josephus, Philo, and 4 Maccabees.⁴² How could such traditions have arisen? Neuwirth suggests that they arose because the ideal pious figure of Abraham could not be seen to intend an act of cruelty on his son. It is also significant, suggests Neuwirth, that a culture of martyrdom had arisen at the time of the Maccabean rebellion against the

⁴⁰Targums are Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible, and are also counted as Midrash or textual interpretations.

⁴¹Karin H. Zetterholm, *Jewish Interpretation of the Bible: Ancient and Contemporary* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 100.

⁴²Ibid., 100.

Seleucid occupation. Young men, some encouraged by their parents, were offering their lives.⁴³

It is difficult to know where to go with rival versions of the *Aqedah* in extra-biblical literature, especially when one also discovers evidence of the supposed compliance of Isaac in the early Christian Church. In the *First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians* we read:

For what reason was our father Abraham blessed? Was it not because he wrought righteousness and truth through faith? Isaac, with perfect confidence, as if knowing what was to happen, cheerfully yielded himself as a sacrifice.⁴⁴

The Qur'an possibly represents an intentional distancing from martyrdom and expiatory sacrifice so prominent in Late Antiquity among Christians. Although the Christian scriptures do not contain a developed theology of atonement based upon the binding of Isaac,⁴⁵ the symbolism of the *Aqedah* applied to the self-sacrifice of Christ certainly influenced the teaching of the early Christian Church, adding to the symbolism of its theology and art.⁴⁶

A different angle on cross-influence is contained in this suggestion by Zetterholm:

It is remarkable that the idea of the atoning power of Isaac's sacrifice is prevalent in so many late rabbinic texts, and it cannot be ruled out that the rabbis adopted these ideas from groups of Jesus-oriented Jews.⁴⁷

At the very least, the study of the cross-fertilization of texts and ideas between emerging Christian traditions, rabbinic Judaism, and early Islam is a stimulating field of study and valuable background for narrative dialogue.

This section concludes with a comment about the naïve mosaic picture of the *Aqedah* (Fig. 8.3),⁴⁸ appearing on the floor of the 519 CE Beth Alpha Synagogue in Israel. It is a segment of a larger biblically themed mosaic. As with Figs. 8.1 and 8.2 in this study, the son is portrayed as a child, contrary to the impression given by the rabbinic discourse. Robert C. Gregg observes that the artists do not depict Isaac as an adult. Instead, the focus is upon the figure of the ram. Gregg sees this as an example of 'artistic midrash'.⁴⁹ Notice in Fig. 8.3 that the ram is central to this segment of the mosaic. He is tethered, which may signify a reference to the Day of Atonement tradition. Another way of looking at the ram is to see that the tethering

⁴³Neuwirth, "Biblical Passion Narratives," 255.

⁴⁴Clement of Rome, "The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians 31:4," in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus (Vol. 1)*, eds. A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, and A. C. Coxe (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885).

⁴⁵Zetterholm, *Jewish Interpretation*, 107.

⁴⁶Ibid.; Gregg, *Shared Stories*, 140–53; Neuwirth, "Biblical Passion Narratives," 253–6.

⁴⁷Zetterholm, K. H. *Jewish Interpretation*, 108.

⁴⁸Figure 8.3. Portion of a floor mosaic on the 519 CE Beth Alpha Synagogue in Israel depicting the *Aqedah*. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Binding_of_Isaac#/media/File:Beit_alfa02.jpg> [PUBLIC DOMAIN].

⁴⁹Gregg, *Shared Stories*, 147–8.



Fig. 8.3 *Aqedah*

may imply preparedness. This is not accidental. This is the Lord God's provision. The ram is, perhaps, a symbol of redemption for Israel.

A Narrative Dialogical Approach to Learning from Different Traditions

A narrative such as the near sacrifice of Abraham/Ibrahim's son⁵⁰ is one that can form the basis for numerous dialogical opportunities, as each religious tradition has a store of accessible shared and unique materials. Whether in a group setting with adults or high school students, the facilitators would be wise to begin with a sharing of the basic scriptural narrative from each of the traditions represented. Prior to meeting, facilitators may agree upon a format for the meetings that are planned, including protocols for presentation, listening, reflection, discussion and evaluation. The important initial step is to allow participants to hear each other's core narratives. For Jewish and Christian participants, the core text would be Genesis 22 from the Tanakh, and for Muslim participants, Surah 37 from the Qur'an.

If the encounter proved to be sufficiently productive, further sessions could be planned where extra material may be introduced, including (for example) the sharing of intersecting contemporary social or personal stories and reflections. Were that to occur, frequent reflection and evaluation would allow for the suggestion and

⁵⁰In the Biblical and in the Qur'anic tellings of this particular story, no attention is given to Sarah or Hagar/Hajar. There is more attention given to Sarah prior to and following Genesis 22. Hagar also features in Genesis, prior to Chap. 22. The Qur'an does not mention Hajar by name, though there are allusions to her. In the broader Islamic tradition, Hajar is revered as the mother of Ishmael, through whose family line Muhammad would come.

planning of future actions together or separately, depending upon context or need. Intriguing suggestions of possible trajectories for such dialogue and learning together are outlined in a largely narrative form by Laurie L. Patton.⁵¹ Employing what he refers to as a ‘present-day history, even ethnography, of interreligious encounters’ to practice what he labels ‘pragmatic pluralism’, Patton strives to emulate the ‘dynamics of *convivencia*’,⁵² borrowing that term from historical circumstances presumed to have pertained in medieval Andalusia.⁵³ Patton tells stories of interfaith activism, of contemporary collaboration in his home city of Atlanta. He asserts that in the Atlanta context interfaith dialogue has overcome its common reputation for temporary, one-off gatherings with trivial outcomes.⁵⁴ In line with Patton’s thinking, although deriving from a more formal approach to interfaith work, is an offering from Mustafa Abu Sway.⁵⁵ Sway’s article and the following comment from it is, I suggest, a valuable contribution to protocol planning for interfaith educational events:

A serious interfaith dialogue will highlight commonalities without ignoring serious differences. This approach is different than the all-embracing, thematically eclectic and politically correct dialogue as found in some circles that deliberately drop the Islamic sources.⁵⁶

For religious educators it will always be imperative to plan carefully, appropriately, and respectfully, honouring the traditions that are to be represented in any learning process or activity involving interreligious dialogue.

In a discussion of other peoples’ myths and of their ancient, classic texts, O’Flaherty observes that there is an archaic strangeness about them that can render them mysterious and difficult to interpret, even by the guardians of those texts.⁵⁷ These texts do, however, continue to capture fascinated, appreciative, scholarly, and dedicated audiences and communities that use and apply them in their lives and in the practices of their faiths.⁵⁸

⁵¹ Patton, “The Doorkeeper,” 229–49.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 229.

⁵³ *Al-Andalus* is the name given by the Arabs to all of the Iberian territories under Muslim rule from 711 to 1492 CE. *La Convivencia* expresses the underlying desire for “harmonious co-existence.” Lovat and Crotty refer to it as a potential model for interreligious peaceful co-existence.

⁵⁴ Patton, “The Doorkeeper,” 234.

⁵⁵ Mustafa Abu Sway, “Dialogue and Discernment in the Qur’an,” in *Criteria of Discernment in Interreligious Dialogue*, ed. Catherine Cornille (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books 2009), 122–42.

⁵⁶ Abu Sway, “Dialogue and Discernment,” 123.

⁵⁷ O’Flaherty, *Other Peoples’ Myths*, 50.

⁵⁸ See Edgar Conrad, “Re-reading the Bible in a Multicultural World,” in *Religion and Multiculturalism in Australia*, ed. Norman Habel (Adelaide: AASR, 1992), 324–35, where Conrad disparages attempts by both fundamentalist and historical-critical readers to domesticate biblical texts as ‘familiar’. See also Constanza Cordoni and Gerhard Langer, eds, *Narratology, Hermeneutics, and Midrash: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Narratives from the Late Antiquity through to Modern Times* (Gottingen: Vienna UP, 2014); and Danna N. Fewell, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative* (NY: Oxford UP, 2016).

Why explore the same narrative across three traditions? One answer to that question follows on from O'Flaherty's quotation above. There is an alien quality to the binding of Abraham's/Ibrahim's son that has troubled commentators for many centuries, and from each of the faiths. The desire to learn more about it means to leave no stone unturned. As the writer and literary critic, Ursula K. Le Guin, has said:

We have to learn what we can, but remain mindful that our knowledge does not close the circle, closing out the void, so that we forget that what we do not know remains boundless, without limit or bottom, and that what we know may have to share the quality of being known with what denies it. What is seen with one eye has no depth.⁵⁹

Such thinking is well underwritten, for example, by Paul Ricoeur's notion of the 'wager' of meaning. Ricoeur is in no doubt that major texts such as the Bible and the Qur'an hold great promise for yielding significant meaning because of the authority and reputation gained through centuries of scholarly engagement, faith community development, devotion, and commitment. Ricoeur concludes that this is possible through 'imagination and sympathy, as the minimum condition for access to the meaning of these texts'.⁶⁰ For Ricoeur, these texts are multidimensional and plurivocal. They are also accessible to more than one community of faith.⁶¹ In his seminal work on symbolic thought, Ricoeur outlines the wager of meaning. Adventurous and creative educators will not be put-off by Ricoeur's approach to interpretive outcomes. It is a wager, after all, not a guarantee:

One must abandon the position-or rather, the exile-of the remote and disinterested spectator, in order to appropriate in each case a particular symbolism. . . . How shall we get beyond the 'circle of hermeneutics'? By transforming it into a wager. I wager that I shall have a better understanding of man [sic] and of the bond between the being of man and the being of all beings if I follow the indication of symbolic thought. . . . In betting on the significance of the symbolic world, I bet at the same time that my wager will be restored to me in power of reflection, in the element of coherent discourse.⁶²

In the case of facilitating interfaith dialogue, respect for the texts we are dealing with is paramount. Respect for other participants is also necessary. A narrative format appears to be conducive to the temporary suspension of rivalry as each party agrees to allocate time for listening to the stories of others.

For many years, Terence Lovat has been an advocate for religious education in schools. Lovat has advocated for a form of religious education that accommodates both confessional witness to religious experience and the academic study of particular religious phenomena, through respectful immersion and participant-observation.⁶³ Lovat's use of this method has also migrated into his collaborative interfaith

⁵⁹ Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, rev. ed. (London: Orbit, 2003).

⁶⁰ LaCocque and Ricoeur, *Thinking Biblically*, xvii.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, xv.

⁶² Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. E. Buchanan (New York; Harper and Rowe, 1967), 354–5.

⁶³ Terence Lovat, *Teaching and Learning Religion: A Phenomenological Approach* (Wentworth Falls: Social Science Press, 1995); *What is This Thing Called R.E?* (Katoomba: Social Science Press, 2002); and "Religious Education: Robust and Bold for a Multifaith Era," in *Journal of Religious Education* 50, no. 3 (2002): 29–35.

theological work with Robert Crotty.⁶⁴ Lovat's approach has always involved inter-faith perspectives. My own focus on Lovat's work has been to elicit the way his phenomenological approach engages with faith-based narratives.

In evaluating the work of several theologian-educators who have a considered theory of narrative, I proposed that narrative helps create a connection between the 'worlds' of individuals and/or groups, simply because stories provide concrete scenarios based in human experience. Whether the stories presented are considered fictional, factual, or otherwise does not alter their experiential qualities. Narrative facilitates dialogue because this common ground of the story has been created. Its impact on the storyteller, the hearers and readers may therefore be explored in any situation, and perhaps especially when the conditions and protocols for sharing and dialogue have been well prepared.

Through theoretical research and practical investigations of religious education events, the above contention assisted in the discernment of five roles of narrative in religious education: world-making; world-confirming; world-imagining; world-disrupting; and world-transforming.⁶⁵ When stories are told, scenarios are created, effectively presenting an immediate 'world' of experience. The world-making role enables tellers and listeners to engage sympathetically with the events that are narrated and with the lives of the characters. World-confirming occurs for participants when they identify with any of the characters or circumstances in the narrative; it also occurs when they are able to enter the story world, or find that they are able to relate to the storyteller and others who gather. World-confirming also occurs when participants sense that they are able to detect whether the story presented helps to clarify their own faith, values or worldview.

The world-imagining aspect is also available to those who hear the story and sympathetically relate with, or disengage from, the narrator, depending on the circumstances. The world-disrupting possibility occurs if those hearing the story find it particularly inspiring or disconcerting: raising questions, shaping comparisons and heightening attentiveness. World-transforming possibilities may arise when participants in the learning environment, over time, make decisions about next steps. Will they create opportunities for change? What action might they take in response to the learning process? Will they organise to act, for example, in response to community experiences of prejudice or hate-speech?

To adopt a narrative dialogical approach to learning with each other, using the story we have before us, and the roles of narrative as a background guide, the process steps may look like this:

Step 1: Entering the story world that has been 'made' by the narrator.

Participants become fully available to the experience of each particular rendition of the story, from the Tanakh and also from the Qur'an. The narrations may be

⁶⁴Lovat and Crotty, *Reconciling Islam*.

⁶⁵See, for example, Mark K. Hillis, "Clash and Confluence: Roles of Narrative and Worlds of Meaning in Religious Education," *Panorama: International Journal of Comparative Religious Education and Values* 18, Summer/Winter (2006): 58–70.

presented on the one occasion, allowing time for reflection between each one, or on separate occasions. The important first thing is to tell the stories.

Step 2: Initially responding to the story world.

The participants in dialogue share their immediate responses to each story, with the guidance of a facilitator, teacher, or group leader. Freedom is needed for participants to be honestly responsive to the text after this particular telling. There is no judgement or evaluation of initial reactions.

Step 3: Becoming immersed in and studying the worlds of this story.

This is the step at which the leaders and dialogue partners share their resources, which may take the form of reference works or commentaries. Alternatively, this step could incorporate remembered interpretations, film versions of the story or character studies. Immersion in scholarly and/or other resource material is compared with the responses made at step 2.

Step 4: Wondering and exploring how the story addresses you today.

At this point participants evaluate their responses and continue with the thoughts and feelings aroused by the narrative encounter. Connection may be formed with characters or events in the story. Strong feelings and/or imaginative insights may be expressed and held within the group.

Step 5: Wondering and inquiring how the story addresses others today.

Participants pay particularly respectful attention to the reactions, ideas, and insights of others in the group who come from diverse faith communities or backgrounds. This is the point at which a group takes difference into account: the perspectives of others are considered, and the impact upon oneself is open-ended. Persons may experience a sense of being confronted by others' perspectives or may feel that their own thoughts and feelings are confirmed in some way. One may discover that even in a supposedly 'homogenous' community, plurality will often be a factor, particularly of the intra-faith kind. Many persons who engage in religious discourse have more than one faith tradition, experience, or exposure in their heritage or personal history. This is an expression of what theologian Allan Loy refers to as 'radical pluralism' that 'disables triumphalism'.⁶⁶

Step 6: Telling meta-stories and discerning meanings.

As we have observed, Muslims, Jews, and Christians share some narrative traditions. They also offer different perspectives and rival tellings, configurations, and approaches through their texts, life-contexts, and experiences. One cannot rely upon romantic notions about storytelling creating an easy unity amongst dialogue partners. The discovery of plurality can be enriching, but it is also challenging,

⁶⁶Allan Loy, "Christianity among the Religions" ed. Uniting Church in Australia: National Working Group on Relations with Other Faiths (1997).

potentially confronting and uncomfortable. Yet, the concrete and indirect features of narrative communication have value and potential for strengthening communication amongst participants. Sharing intersecting stories and meta-narratives is another step in the process of discovery and learning from one another.⁶⁷ Jürgen Habermas' notion of 'intersubjective recognition' may be a gift that participants receive from one another at this stage.⁶⁸

Step 7: Deciding for action.

This is a serious step for dialogue beyond a particular faith community. So much depends upon the agreed agenda of all parties, their initial reasons for coming together and their long-term goals. As mentioned above in the discussion of the *world-transforming* role of narrative, a great deal relies upon the context, the questions raised and the imaginations of participants. Teachers or facilitators getting together, for example, to explore an intentional interfaith experience within a peaceful community will form a very different group from that of community-based religious leaders meeting to respond to a social crisis.

Lovat calls for religious educators to work with greater commitment and passion in the pursuit of understanding their own and others' faith traditions. He wants to encourage a deeper motivation than simply 'learning about' faith, and draws from the work of Habermas⁶⁹ to emphasise his purpose:

The knowing that most truly marks out human intellectual endeavour and has the capacity to transform self and community is critical or self-reflective knowing.⁷⁰

Lovat argues that this is an urgent task, requiring self-reflective struggle to 'strip away' the prejudice and ignorance towards other cultures and faiths that is "so often the source of intercultural misunderstanding, bigotry, hatred and violence"⁷¹ Lovat is advocating dynamic interfaith studies that seek to make a positive and practical difference in society. There are some indications in his work that give incentive for a narrative approach to be pursued, as discussed above. Lovat's approach presumes passionate engagement with narrative in teaching and learning, intent upon positive transformation for individuals and communities.

⁶⁷ As, for example, in the work of Patton, "The Doorkeeper."

⁶⁸ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. F. Lawrence (Oxford: Polity Press, 1990), 322–4.

⁶⁹ Particularly, Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans J. J. Shapiro (Oxford: Polity Press, 1987).

⁷⁰ Terence Lovat, "Knowing Self: The Ultimate Goal of Interfaith Religious Education," *Journal of Religious Education* 51, no. 2 (2003): 3.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Conclusion

In this essay we have, in a way, been gathering around a story of faith. It is an ancient story, with many tellings, some of them rivalling each other for attention from readers, hearers, interpreters, and spectators. It is also a story that continues to disturb those who encounter its depths. Through the inescapably radical surrender of Abraham/Ibrahim and Isaac/Ishmael to a transcendent divine will, is it a story that will constantly subvert established human institutions: social, legal, religious? How could we not encourage those who are, in a sense, the guardians of these story traditions, to gather in dialogue and seek, with others, to explore their hopes for a better world?

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Chapter 9

The Thinking of Habermas Undergirding Lovat's Educational Model



Edmund Parker

Abstract The chapter analyses an element of Terence Lovat's educational work against the background of Jurgen Habermas's epistemology.

Keywords Jurgen Habermas · Ways of knowing · Critical theory

Introduction

Dewey argued for an environment in education that would enable students to develop the ability to think critically for themselves. In basic harmony with this outcome is the later work of Jürgen Habermas. Habermas was a member of the Frankfurt School—a group of social scientists, critics of culture, and philosophers that were associated with the Institute for Social Research founded in 1929 at Frankfurt, Germany. Habermas was the leading representative of the second generation of scholars within the school. The Frankfurt School is not recognised so much for its theories or doctrines, as it is acknowledged

for its program of 'critical theory of society.' Critical theory represents a sophisticated effort to continue Marx's transformation of moral philosophy into social and political critique, while rejecting orthodox Marxism as a dogma.¹

The approach of critical theory is "primarily a way of doing philosophy, integrating the normative aspects of philosophical reflection with the explanatory achievements of the social sciences."² Its goal is: to link theory and practice; to provide insight concerning oppressive circumstances; to empower subjects to change these

¹James Bohman, 'Frankfurt School,' in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Robert Audi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995), 279.

²Ibid.

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oppressive circumstances; and in so doing to achieve emancipation for humans; thus bringing about a rational society that delivers satisfaction for human needs and power.³ The first generation of the school passed through three phases, with Habermas reacting to the final phase. It would be useful to explore the key aspects of Habermas' arguments as they potentially relate to issues that inform this chapter.

Habermas and Lovat

Terence Lovat indicates that at the time Bloom's distinctions of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in education were being challenged, Habermas put forward a concept of education and learning that focused on (1) technical knowing, (2) interpretive knowing, and (3) critical knowing.⁴

According to Habermas, any area of study reveals three distinct types of human *interest*, and each type of interest leads to a 'way of knowing'. The first interest is in *technical control* which leads to an *empirical* type of knowing: at this point, the learner wants *answers* to questions, wants to know the *rules* and the *laws* which govern any discipline. The second interest is in the *inner workings* of any discipline, which leads to an *interpretive* type of knowing: here, the learner wants to *understand*, to *make links* between one thing and another, to be on the inside of the subject: in this regard, it is a little akin to Stenhouse's 'Initiation' and 'Induction' functions.

It is in the third interest that the distinctiveness of Habermas can be seen. Over and above the interests in technical and interpretive understanding, there is the quest for what he terms *emancipation*. People yearn to be *free*, and to *form their own opinions*, to *think for themselves*. Knowledge is only truly knowledge when it liberates us from what he calls 'bondage to the past'.⁵

Habermas also placed special emphasis on the notion of 'praxis' in contrast to theory alone. When critical reflection takes place in combination with theory and practice, and the intent is to bring about change, then emancipation can happen. Lovat maintains, "The idea, again, is that education is of no value if it only fills heads with a set of information or even fills hearts with predictable and stereotyped attitudes. Education, ultimately, must give people *power* and the *will* to improve the human lot ... in that sense its ends are quite *unpredictable*."⁶ This enables Lovat to call it 'the sharp end of education.'⁷ It is a time when change happens, when barriers

³ Ibid.

⁴ Terence J. Lovat, *What is This Thing Called Religious Education: Summary, Critique and a New Proposal* (Wentworth Falls: Social Science Press, 1989), 31, 32. Now reprinted as a second edition *What is This Thing Called R.E.: A Decade On?* (Wentworth Falls: Social Science Press, 2002).

⁵ Ibid., p. 32.

⁶ Ibid., p. 33.

⁷ Ibid.

are broken down, when new structures are set in place, and to use Lovat's expression, "new lights going on in people's minds."⁸

Action Research

Action Research is one of the more prominent methods used to translate Habermas' ideas and concepts into practice. One of the purposes has been to transform 'communities of self interest into learning communities.'⁹ When used within an educational system for the development of new approaches to learning, the stages of this process are as follows:

1. The interaction stage, a 'feeling out' time when a new set of ideas for example is tested on some fellow teachers or peers.
2. The critical intent stage where everything in the present system that may need revising or updating is placed under close scrutiny.
3. The group deliberation stage when a thorough analysis of the situation takes place.
4. The enlightenment stage when everything is seen in a new way, with particular attention given to assumptions (presuppositions) and organizational controls that may inhibit the forward movement of the enlightenment itself.
5. The enlightenment deliberation stage when the goals, aims, intentions and the objectives of the new approach or curriculum are set out.
6. The praxis stage, when implementation takes place.¹⁰

In his book *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, Habermas describes a range of ethical and moral issues, combining his ideas of communicative ethics with a theory of social action.¹¹ His propositions were derived following an examination of social psychology within the domains of interpersonal and moral development. It seems evident that there was a deliberate intention on the part of Habermas to move beyond the realms of cultural traditions alone, and to search for something deeper and more universal. In his approach to moral theory and morality, Habermas comes "closest to the Kantian tradition"¹² of seeking enlightenment, but not at the expense of the loss of ethical and moral principles.¹³

These concepts from Habermas function in harmony with Lipman's 'philosophy of children.'¹⁴ Furthermore, the 'philosophy of children' approach and the

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 34.

¹⁰ The ideas presented here are from Lovat, *What is This Thing Called Religious Education?*, 33–34.

¹¹ Jürgen Habermas *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (Oxford, Polity Press, 1990).

¹² Thomas McCarthy, 'Introduction', *ibid.*, vii.

¹³ A critique of many of the ideas of Habermas, and its relation to critical theory is presented in J. M. Bernstein, *Recovering Ethical Life*, London and New York: Routledge (1995).

¹⁴ See comments below regarding Lipman.

emancipatory themes of Habermas add to the arguments of this essay. That is, they support a model of educational and philosophic understandings that are not locked into exclusivity practices. By nature of its methodology, the principle of exclusivity opposes viable ‘philosophy of children’ options, and would also reject the emancipation ideology as enunciated by Habermas.

We have set out here in a broad set of terms the form of educational processes that enhance and facilitate optimal inclusive readings of narrative texts. In an ideal situation, the educator has the ability to access a wide knowledge base and is also comfortable with situations of direct questioning and inquiry. This form of education cannot take place if an individual is unduly concerned with protecting his/her turf and status. What is needed is an ongoing quest for understanding on the part of the educator and student, and a sense of learning humility that enables inquiry to proceed.

Implementing Lovat’s Model in the Wider Pacific Region

The author, in conjunction with Gwayaweng Kiki, as the major researcher, have written three articles that directly and indirectly deal with the insights of Lovat. Beginning with Papua New Guinea (PNG), the research focused on the problems of a Western style education that was imposed on PNG national students.¹⁵ This first article presented a report on Kiki’s PhD thesis that critiqued a Western ideological way of education in a PNG Lutheran Seminary. A second article expanded the concepts enunciated by Lovat, and used by Kiki and Parker, into the wider Pacific region.¹⁶ In the third presentation the concept was widened to include those, in any location that needed an enabling and satisfying way of implementing a critical way of knowing as advocated in a Lovat/Habermas way.¹⁷ These three articles can be resourced in one location.¹⁸

For any educator who has worked in PNG, it is patently clear that a Western ideological set of values does not work for most indigenous learners. Many PNG students, in finding that they are swamped by data overload in a language that is not their own, slip into a passive mode of learning, often at a rote level. Lovat’s goal in

¹⁵Gwayaweng Kiki and Edmund A. Parker “Issues in Seminary Education for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea,” *Journal of Religious Education* 56, no. 2 (2008): 32–9.

¹⁶Gwayaweng Kiki and Ed Parker, “Is There a Better Way to Teach Theology to Non-Western Persons? Research from Papua New Guinea that Could Benefit the Wider Pacific,” *Australian eJournal of Theology* 21, no. 2 (August 2014): 108–24.

¹⁷Gwayaweng Kiki and Ed Parker, “Education that Enables and Satisfies,” *Australian eJournal of Theology* 23, no. 1 (April 2016):43–55.

¹⁸Edmund Parker and Gwayaweng Kiki, *Education that Enables and Satisfies*. Saarbrücken, Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing (2017), 8–69. [Page number references to the three published articles will be as found in the book *Education that Enables and Satisfies*.] Check with Ed Check use of name.

education is to enlighten both the thinking processes and the affective components of a person's being. This moves beyond the Technical and Interpretive aspects of knowledge into that of Critical knowing. This approach becomes freedom producing for the student(s). John Dedemo Waiko in quoting K. Powell makes a telling comment:

I remember being completely inhibited during my first years at school. I could no longer make fun through speech. My quick wit was no use to me. I was like a vegetable. I was controlled by the limits of my vocabulary. My days were spent listening to my teacher. Many questions I wanted to ask remained unasked because I did not have the ability to express them in English. Eventually I found it much easier just to sit and listen rather than to speak. So I just sat and listened.¹⁹

One of the real problems was that the students in PNG were frequently alienated from any worthwhile educational learning because the approach had been to present them with an educational system that tended go down the path of obeisance to Western World values. Most persons that have not lived in PNG are unaware that there is a vast multiplicity of languages and dialects, and that even the educated Papua New Guineans do not always converse in English.²⁰ In 1996, almost twenty years after PNG independence, Denis MacLaughlin and Tom O'Donoghue said,

Students entering tertiary institutions in Papua New Guinea, in the main, are induced into a milieu consonant with the goals and structures of higher education of western countries, a process which in many respects is very much alien to the cultural experiences of most students. This class of perspectives may precipitate sets of varied and complex problems, thus hindering personal and professional growth among students.²¹

Enabling and Satisfying Educational Principles

We now turn to a set of educational principles that will enhance learning, facilitate a sense of openness, and produce an approach to learning that is both enabling and satisfying. These principles undergird and sustain Lovat's insightful usage of Habermas' critical knowing in the task of producing education that is freedom

¹⁹K. Powell (n.d.) *The First Papua New Guinea Playwrights and Their Plays*, Port Moresby, University of Papua New Guinea (n.d.), 18, cited in John Dademo Waiko, *A Short History of Papua New Guinea*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press (1993), 129–30.

²⁰One family that I know (and this is typical), the wife and the husband have different local languages that they converse in, but not to each other. The husband has a PhD from Australia and is a University lecturer, yet they speak in their home using the lingua franca *tok pisin*. This is not talking about the 1980s, 1990s, but actually prevails in 2020. The Australian Administration of PNG prior to independence set up an educational model that selected the elite that could then move into indigenous leadership. This therefore largely bypassed the average student. It has not gone away post independence and still persists.

²¹Denis MacLaughlin and Tom O'Donoghue, *Community Teacher Education in Papua New Guinea*, Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea Press, (1996), 3. Both Kiki and myself recognized the quality of what Lovat had suggested concerning principles of education.

producing. Matthew Lipman,²² and the adaptations by Splitter and Sharp,²³ are well focused. These authors argue that teaching students to think philosophically will not necessarily turn them into philosophers but will teach them to use their abilities to think and to understand their world.

Teaching for Better Thinking

The major principles of the Lipman approach are set forth in his book *Thinking Children and Education*. These principles are enunciated in twelve separate chapters. In 1995, Splitter and Sharp presented Lipman's ideas concerning 'philosophy for children', adapting his concept to an Australian educational environment. Splitter and Sharp first discuss the concept of the classroom as a community of inquiry, and then they examine the dynamics of such an inquiring community. They state,

The transformation of the classroom into a community of philosophical inquiry represents a paradigm shift in education, one with far-reaching implications for teaching (including teacher education), learning (including classroom culture), curriculum and assessment, yet one which is consistent with the highest standards of rigor and (self-) discipline.²⁴

Their argued position has much substance. Within their paradigm, education does not become a matter of rote learning, or of indoctrination, or of prescriptive formats. Instead, there is adequate room for open discussion, and the teacher works in the same learning modality as the students.

A Community of Inquiry

Splitter and Sharp commence with the idea that 'education should be concerned with the improvement of thinking, where the concept of thinking is to be interpreted as broadly as possible.'²⁵ These authors make clear their term 'thinking' is not an investigation of cognition. Rather, teaching of 'thinking' is the cultivation of 'both the skills and the dispositions which are conducive to thoughtful and reasonable behaviour.'²⁶ They view a number of strategies as aids to 'thinking'. Thus for

²² Matthew Lipman, ed., *Thinking Children and Education* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1993). Lipman began his work in the 'philosophy for children' approach in the late 60 s.

²³ Laurance Splitter and Ann M. Sharp, *Teaching for Better Thinking* (Hawthorn, Vic.: Australian Council of Educational Research, 1995).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 247.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

example, we want children to value good reasons, to clarify things successfully and coherently, to ask insightful and probing questions, to use analogies skillfully, and so on.²⁷

In the development of thinking, they advocate that the capacity for judgment should be strengthened, and quote from Dewey thus, 'to judge is to weigh pros and cons in thought and decide according to the balance of evidence.'²⁸

Dynamics of an Inquiring Community

For optimal functioning of communities of inquiry, there needs to be a strong focus on the exchange of dialogue that takes place. 'One of the key themes... is reciprocity: the idea that a certain mutuality or 'give-and-take' is fundamental to thinking.'²⁹ Self-awareness and self-identity are part of this reciprocity, and as C. S. Peirce claims, 'to be a self is to be a possible member of some community.'³⁰

Making of Meaning

The experience of others should not allow one to forget their own private happenings and insights. 'Implicit in what we have said so far is the idea of duality between one's private experiences, thoughts and feelings on the one hand and a more public, more impartial perspective from which matters can be judged (more) objectively on the other.'³¹

Dewey's Contributions

Lipman, also Splitter and Sharp, premise their ideas on the concept of the creation of a reasonable place for inquiry to take place. Their propositions suggest that inclusive readings function better within democratic educational approaches in which the educator and the student both have autonomy to pursue their tasks. John Dewey, although along a different line of approach, would agree. An American philosopher,

²⁷ Ibid., 10.

²⁸ Ibid., 12, from John Dewey *Theory of the Moral Life* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston [1932] 1960), 90.

²⁹ Splitter and Sharp, *Better Thinking*, 32.

³⁰ See *ibid.*, 33.

³¹ Ibid., 65.

social critic and educational theorist, Dewey dealt with a wide range of issues concerning educational principles. As Delaney states,

The ideal social order for Dewey is a structure that allows maximum self-development of all individuals. It fosters the free exchange of ideas and decides on policies in a manner that acknowledges each person's capacity effectively to participate in and contribute to the direction of social life. The respect accorded the dignity of each contributes to the common welfare of all. Dewey found the closest approximation to this ideal in democracy, but he did not identify contemporary democracies with this ideal. He was not content to employ old forms of democracy to deal with new problems.³²

Dewey was not proposing that individuals should ignore their past experiences, nor that they should forget the lessons and learning of the past. Rather, he was suggesting that the past cannot be valued for its own sake alone. This, he suggests, simply represents a nostalgic approach to the past. Instead, the past is better used to guide "those critical capacities that will enable us to deal with our ever-changing world effectively and responsibly."³³

There is reciprocal relationship between education and democracy because, in the fullest sense of the term, education cannot exist without democratic ways of thinking, and democracy cannot exist without an appropriate educational approach. "Democracy is itself an educational principle, an educational measure and policy."³⁴ Thus, if democratic ways of approaching ideas are not present, then it may only be a short step to indoctrination or worse coercion.³⁵ Importantly,

Only as the schools provide an understanding of the movement and the direction of social forces and an understanding of social needs and of the resources that may be used to satisfy them, will they meet the challenge of democracy.³⁶

Significantly, Dewey has used the term 'understanding' rather than the word 'knowledge'. This is because knowledge can refer to information alone, without understanding. Yet, according to Dewey, understanding is the spring of intelligent action.³⁷ Students need to be shown where to find, and evaluate, and to apply information in ways that benefit local communities and the wider society in which they live. In reality, the role of education is not to fill heads with data and information. Rather, it is the development of ways of teaching, thinking, and behaviour that demonstrates insight and responsibility on the part of both teacher and student.

³²C. F. Delaney, 'Dewey, John,' *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed., Robert Audi (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 200.

³³Ibid.

³⁴John Dewey, *Philosophy and Education* (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield/Adams, 1958), 34.

³⁵Ibid., 36–7.

³⁶Ibid., 48.

³⁷Ibid., 49.

Conclusion

The chapter has outlined ways in which the distinctive influence of Terence Lovat's educational work has been influenced by Jurgen Habermas, along with other doyens of education. In turn, the chapter notes how Lovat's work in religious education has influenced educational projects with especial reference to education in the South Pacific.

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Part II
Religion and Ethics

Chapter 10

Bonhoeffer's Practical Mysticism: Implications for Ecotheology and Ecoethics in the Anthropocene



Dianne Rayson 

Abstract The chapter will present Dietrich Bonhoeffer as a practical mystic and his ecotheology as an expression of this mysticism. His ecotheology will be proffered as a way in which theology can respond to the climate crisis and forge new understandings by which Christians can and should take responsibility for the Earth at a time that is experiencing the damaging impact of human activity upon it.

Keywords Dietrich Bonhoeffer · Climate change · Anthropocene · Ecotheology · Ecoethics · Practical mysticism

Introduction

The chapter introduces the concept of practical mysticism as found in the Abrahamic tradition, especially through the work of the third century philosopher and theologian, Plotinus. It then makes application to the work and witness of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Second World War martyr at the hands of the Third Reich. Bonhoeffer's theology has persisted in finding relevance to a range of social and political issues well beyond his own times. The chapter explores this relevance in relation to climate change in the age of the Anthropocene, an era that is experiencing the impact of human existence on the Earth's sustainability in a way not seen before. Resistance to the notion of climate change is found in several spheres, including through a theology that separates the spiritual from the Earthly in ways that justify exploitation rather than care of the Earth. Bonhoeffer's theology, especially in his Christology, is seen as a means of redressing this separation. For Bonhoeffer, the incarnation means there can be no separation between the spiritual and the Earthly. God has endorsed God's own immanence in a way that demands Christians take

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responsibility for sustaining and preserving the Earthly, amounting to what can be called “Earthly Christianity”. This ecotheology is cast as an expression of Bonhoeffer’s practical mysticism.

Practical Mysticism

Malcolm Muggeridge (2004) refers to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Second World War martyr, as a mystic to connote the depth of his prayer life and the largely contemplative state in which he wrote much of his theology, especially in the last 2 years in his prison cell. Peter King (1995) points however to Bonhoeffer’s suspicion of the mystical tradition in Christianity, contrasting it with the worldliness implied in *etsi Deus non daretur*, that God’s command to us is to live in the world as if there is no God. At the same time, King does liken this assertion from Bonhoeffer with that of the unapologetic mystic, Meister Eckhart, when he says:

Man’s last and highest parting occurs when, for God’s sake, he takes leave of god ... and gives up all that he might get from god. (p. 29)

Hence, King uncovers something of an anomaly, one that he resolves by referring to Bonhoeffer, along with others, as “contemplatives for our time”. He speaks of notions such as “postmodern spirituality” and even draws on neuroscience in the form of “right brain theology” to make the point that, as times change, so do our estimations of notions like mysticism.

Terence Lovat (2012) speaks into this space by referring to Bonhoeffer as a “practical mystic”. Bonhoeffer’s mysticism, he says:

is characterized by its exceptional humanity and engagement with the realities of life, including an essential interfaith, and faith to non-faith, engagement. If a mystic at all, one might say Bonhoeffer was a pragmatic one, one who employed his mystical gifts to engage all the more readily with the challenges that beset him. (p. 183)

In contrast to King’s suggestion that we need a new paradigm for the notion of a pragmatic mysticism, Lovat proffers that there is an old paradigm to draw on, namely, “practical mysticism”, to be found in the earliest days of Christianity, if not pre-dating it. John Nwanegbo-Ben (2017), after all, refers to the sixth century BCE philosopher and mathematician, Pythagoras, as a pragmatic mystic, one who was able to combine a mystical apartness from the world with active engagement in it. Nwanegbo-Ben suggests that his mysticism and mathematical scholarship combined to make him, by reputation, one of the most engaging teachers of the ancient world (Cornford, 1922; Stanley, 2010).

Lovat (2006, 2012) points to Plotinus, the third century Egyptian philosopher and theologian, as the architect of practical mysticism for the Christian era. Plotinus’s fame was in teaching his students about the vital difference between public and private spirituality and the necessity to cultivate both if they were to succeed in the world:

Public spirituality was constituted of outer expressions of religiousness and for the benefit of the outer world. Private spirituality, on the other hand, concerned what passed between individuals and their god. (Lovat, 2012, p. 185)

For Plotinus (1964), public spirituality was important for social cohesion and, for the individual, fitting into a society that demanded public displays of religiousness. Much of Plotinus's teaching of junior members of society was about how to conform to such requirements so that they could advance in public life (Armstrong, 1996).

For all its importance, public spirituality was far from sufficient as a life-force for Plotinus. Indeed, overly conforming to the demands of public spirituality without the balance of private spirituality could lead to an arid, purely cosmetic existence. In Plotinus's terms, all the public spirituality in the world could not guarantee salvation. The soul could still be lost. True religiousness and conformity to God's will could only be finally achieved through private spirituality:

Plotinus's fine detailing around mysticism is important because he is regarded not only as having captured the best of what went before him in Greek philosophy, but he was also most instrumental in the development of higher forms of mysticism in the later developments to be found in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. (Lovat, 2006, p. 2)

Lovat refers to the Jewish scholars of mysticism, Idel and McGinn (1999), when they capture Plotinus's understanding of the highest form of mysticism as his "favoring of love over understanding" (p. 22), an expression of the overwhelming importance of private spirituality if one is to conform one's life to God's ways. At the same time, Plotinus is at pains to avoid the idea that private spirituality can be sufficient in itself. For him, healthy citizenship is to be found in both holiness and worldliness, one who conforms to God's ways and one's civic duties, understanding the distinction but the essential interrelationship. Plotinus (1964) himself coins the term, practical mysticism, as a way of connoting the balance between the two forms of spirituality:

Action always has some good or other in view—a good for oneself, to be possessed. Possessed where? In the soul. The circuit is complete: through action, the soul comes back to contemplation. (pp. 167–168)

Lovat (2006) proffers that Plotinus's practical mysticism was especially important to the way the mystical tradition formed in medieval Islam and later Christianity. He refers to Hamid al-Ghazali and Thomas Aquinas as exemplars in this regard. Ghazali (1991), one of the key architects of Sufism and an exponent of Islamic epistemology, speaks of all authentic knowledge coming from God and that its importance is solely in its practical application:

Knowing on its own was useless; its only usefulness was in impelling benevolent action. So, in [Ghazali's] *Book of Religious Learnings*, we read: *the learned are the heirs of the prophets. The best of people is a believing learned man (sic) who does good ...* It is not the path of the showy mystic, the pietistic or the sanctimonious. It is the path of the one who aligns knowledge, beliefs and practical action with the understanding of self that allows this conjunction to issue in a personal integrity. (Lovat, 2006, p. 4)

Similarly, Aquinas (1936), in part influenced by Ghazali and other medieval Muslim scholars, transformed Christian understanding of conscientious knowledge from

one primarily conformed to the dictates of the church to one of autonomous commitment to practical action for good:

Aquinas ... elicited a new form of moral knowing in the concept of *synderesis*, described in the *Summa* as an inborn facility that urged us not only to seek truth but to put it into practice. (Lovat, 2006, p. 5)

In turn, the influence of practical mysticism in later Judaism is seen in the writings of Moses ben Jacob Cordovero. For Cordovero (1974), there can be no claim to true mystical experience without demonstrating commitment to God in God's *sephiroth*, God's immanence:

As God was ... totally immersed in the practical matters of life, so the true mystic must engage in practical action which conforms to godly practice. (Lovat, 2006, p. 5)

Cordovero went on to tease out what this meant in practice. He referred to thirteen attributes of God's *sephiroth* that the true mystic would attempt to emulate. In doing so, he underlined the essence and distinctiveness of practical mysticism:

These attributes were clearly beyond normal human virtue and that was the point. They could only be achieved through mystical experience but, in turn, the mystical experience was identifiable and confirmed only by their having been achieved. (Lovat, 2006, p. 5)

Bonhoeffer as Practical Mystic

It is in this vein and against this background that Lovat (2006, 2012) posits Bonhoeffer as another exemplar of the Abrahamic practical mystic. It is a position seen to accommodate both Muggeridge's claim that Bonhoeffer is well regarded as a mystic and King's cautionary assessment that while he was skeptical of austere mysticism, Bonhoeffer is rightly seen as a contemplative for our times, again suggesting the notion of practical mysticism. Lovat (2006) points to Bonhoeffer's personal struggle with the Reich Church, to his persistent question, "who is Christ for us today?", and to his notion of "religionless Christianity" as symptomatic of his aversion to pietistic formulaic religiousness and any trappings of austere mysticism that might accompany it. Yet, as King suggests, his contemplative, prayer-filled life remained an inherent part of who he was and how he lived out his Christian faith. He was, in that sense, the active contemplative and the contemplative active in one. He was a model of Ghazali's believing learned man who does good, of Aquinas's seeking truth only to put it into practice, and of Cordovero's emulator of God's *sephiroth*. Bonhoeffer as practical mystic is shorthand for each of these concepts.

Lovat (2006) refers to Cordovero's notion of practical mysticism as a nexus between mystical experience and emulation of *sephiroth* as being especially pertinent to Bonhoeffer. Cordovero emphasised that emulating *sephiroth* was beyond normal human capacity but, through mystical experience, it was rendered possible. At the same time, the authenticity of the accompanying mystical experience was tested and measured, found wanting or not, by the successful achievement, or not,

of emulation. It is a way of understanding the extraordinary witness provided by Bonhoeffer, especially in his prison theology. Through a contemplative prayer life that rendered a form of mystical experience, his struggle with the Reich Church became a means of greater rather than lesser faith, his answer to the persistent question, “who is Christ for us today?” took the form of a vibrant Christology about God’s immanence, and the notion of “religionless Christianity” became a conceptual way of shedding anachronistic institutionalism to allow Christians the freedom to emulate God’s own activism in the world. The faith of the religionless Christian was captured in Bonhoeffer’s notion of “arcane discipline”, a faith characterised by conformity between one’s beliefs and one’s actions:

The sign of its authenticity would not be in the “cheap grace” of enfaithment but in the costly grace of conforming one’s life and actions to the essential charter of Christianity to make a difference. (Lovat, 2006, p. 5)

Bonhoeffer’s reference to the *Arkanzdisziplin*—the arcane discipline—goes a step further yet. In attempting to retrieve the Christian practice of sequestering the confession, prayer, and sacrament of the Early Church from the ‘world’, Bonhoeffer attempted to turn the work of the faithful community outward, for the sake of others. In this, Bonhoeffer was emulating the servanthood of Christ for the sake of the world. Participating in Christ meant that the world could only benefit from the presence and work of the church rather than being hammered with religious garb and norms. For Bonhoeffer, the arcane discipline meant protecting the hidden mysteries of the faith in the heart of the church and not “thrusting them on the world in triumphalism”, and at the same time preserving authentic worship. The world should be protected from violation by religion, and faith too should be protected from religiosity. From prison in May 1944, Bonhoeffer wrote that “we can be Christians today in only two ways, through prayer and in doing justice” (2010, p. 389). Otherwise, the church should be silent.

Making a Difference in the Anthropocene

The twenty-first century is characterised by the threat of catastrophe by anthropogenic global heating and climate disruption. Humans have so polluted the land, sea, and sky that our mark is made in Earth’s very crust. This geological signature is comprised of plastic, nuclear waste, metals, and fertilisers, creating unique ‘technofossils’ (Waters et al., 2016). The mark on the face of Earth, coupled with the recognition that humans are now the most significant force on the Earth System, have led to the proposed geological term, Anthropocene: the age of humans, said to have commenced variously from the start of the Industrial Revolution or since 1950, the beginning of the Great Acceleration of technology, population, and waste (Steffen et al., 2015).

We share this world with creatures whose very existence humans have imperilled as we initiate the sixth mass extinction (Cafaro & Primack, 2014; Ceballos et al.,

2015). Our interference in the Earth's operating systems has caused breaches in a number of planetary boundaries and serious compromise of most of the others (Steffen et al., 2015; Lade et al., 2020). The increase in the Earth's core temperature resulting from the greenhouse effect of atmospheric pollutants is altering the climate, manifested in 'weather weirding', including more severe and frequent extreme weather events than in the past (A. King, 2017; WMO, 2022). Abnormal is fast becoming the new normal.

Oceans are warming in an attempt to 'hide' the excessive heat and maintain homeostasis. As they heat and expand, along with melting icecaps, the waters rise up on shores that submerge the island homes of Pacific Islanders, so impelling the world's first climate refugees (Tollefson, 2022). Many more such refugees will follow. Mass migrations, along with food and water scarcity, are among the *sequaliae* predicted by those who study climate science and its adaptation. The changing climate will see the increase in tropical diseases and the re-emergence of diseases once thought defeated. New diseases migrating across species are already emerging and those once considered to be exclusively tropical are spreading into other areas (IPCC, 2022).

The disparity between the wealthy and the poor (where 1% owns 50% of the world's wealth) becomes even more significant in relation to climate change (Rohner, 2020). The wealthy are the most culpable and yet will suffer the least. The poor of the world, from countries that have emitted the least carbon into the atmosphere and have benefitted least from industrialisation and technology, will continue to suffer the greatest since they are less able to adapt to extreme events, food scarcity and loss of habitat. Wars impelled by scarcity of food, water and land are foreseeable (IPCC, 2022).

Cascading problems and tipping points make the climate crisis not just a complex problem, but arguably a 'wicked' one: there is no analogue, no single solution, and no guarantee of success (Robinson, 2019). Failure, in this case, means existential threat to ecosystems, species, and even humanity. As we move out of the Holocene, more than ten millennia of relatively stable climate in which human life has flourished and developed, and enter the Anthropocene, we enter a *kairos* of instability and uncertainty for the continuity of human life on Earth (Waters et al., 2016). It is indeed, in Bonhoeffer's words, the ambiguous twilight of creation (1997, p. 130).

The notion of ambiguity is one which recurs in Bonhoeffer's writings, reflecting his rejection of a divided world of false dualisms, preferring to describe reality which, whilst unified, is experienced in grey and difficult choices, not so much between good and evil but more often in seeking to live responsibly when there is no clear 'good' path. Kevin Lenahan (2012) has described it as standing responsibly somewhere between silence and speech. Arguably, it is another way of characterising Bonhoeffer's practical mysticism, standing between the silence of contemplation and the speech of activism. In this case, when faced with the situation of climate catastrophe, what would Bonhoeffer's response have been? True to form, he would have contemplated deeply on the problem and striven to address it theologically. His activism, the practical outreach of his mystical experience, would be encased in a

theological argument and proposition. Attempting to formulate this theology is the task of the remainder of this chapter.

Bonhoeffer and Climate Change

Bonhoeffer did not address the issue of climate change itself so one has to read back into his theology to imagine how he might have framed his position. The strongest clues are to be found in his theology of creation, his Christology, and the intersection between the two. Bonhoeffer's profound Christian faith would lead him to see Christ as the foundation of all creation. This is what the incarnation meant to him. Through the person of Christ, God had entered the world and become part of it in the most profound sense. God was no longer to be identified merely as transcendent, other and divine, but as immanent, an integral part of creation. Creation was blessed, sacred, and validated in a way beyond its pre-incarnation status.

Moreover, Bonhoeffer's ontological understanding of humanity and creation can be seen as one of sociality rather than dominion. This is so because of the nature of the relationship between humanity and God, first glimpsed in the creation narrative and considered by Bonhoeffer in the idea of participating in the "one reality" (2005, p. 195). Furthermore, it is a suffering reality, again modelled for humanity in the notion of the Suffering Christ, God entering into a suffering creation.

Rayson and Lovat (2014) argue that Bonhoeffer was influenced in his creation theology by his interest in the Indian religions, especially through the work of Mahatma Gandhi, another who has been classed as a pragmatic mystic (Sharma, 2001). Bonhoeffer came to appreciate in the Indian experience that suffering for and through nature demonstrated an intrinsic understanding of our oneness with it (2012, pp. 246–257). Reaching a position of willingness to suffer is the ultimate freedom, and this becomes possible as a manifestation of apprehending the Suffering God (2005, p. 244). As Lenehan (2012) summarises it:

We can clearly see Bonhoeffer's conviction that in Christ the interrelationality of all reality has been reconciled and restored, and that Christ is the *Mittler* [Mediator] of reality who continually makes that re-created relationality possible within reality. (p. 522)

As the Suffering Christ is present throughout all of creation, relationship is therefore both made possible and mediated by Christ. Humanity's position in relation to non-human nature reflects the sociality possible from human to human: we acknowledge and respond to the Suffering Christ in the face of the 'other' (Bonhoeffer, 2010, pp. 45, 49; 2012, pp. 355–360), regardless of the 'otherness' of that being, I suggest. The God who suffers is both paradoxical and essential, for the judgement of God supersedes success as a measure of humanity:

The figure of misery and of pain. This is how the reconciler of the world appears, upon whom humanity's guilt has fallen, pushing Christ into shame and death under God's judgment... The figure of the judged and crucified one remains alien, and at best pitiable, to a world where success is the measure and justification of all things. (2005, p. 88)

The extension of this premise is that we recognise the immanent Suffering Christ in creation around us. Bonhoeffer explored this theme in *Creation and Fall* describing creation as being “subject to God in devout worship”; even the formless, mute world was already worshipping God before creatures were made (1997, p. 36). Bonhoeffer perceives the human “belonging” to Earth as a mirror of the immanence of Christ in the world: Christ, who is both vulnerable and resurrected:

The ground and animals over which I am lord constitute the world in which I live, without which I cease to be ... I am not free from it in any sense of my essential being, my spirit, having no need of nature, as though nature were something alien to the spirit. On the contrary, in my whole being, in my creatureliness, I belong wholly to this world; it bears me, nurtures me, holds me. (p. 66)

Humanity’s relationship with creation is demonstrably flawed, reflecting the desire for domination borne of selfishness, rather than dominion of care and servanthood.¹ In Bonhoeffer’s words, “Out of the original image of God has emerged a usurped equality with God ... they have misappropriated the origin and made themselves their own creator and judge” (2005, p. 300). Rowan Williams (2011) demonstrates that theologies that do not involve humanity in reconciliation and restoration of creation are, in the context of a climate crisis, a barrier to people of faith participating in the reality of the world.

What is evident in Bonhoeffer’s theology, and where there is more than a measure of perceived similarity with the Indian theologies he was investigating, is the sense of the interrelatedness of all creation, living and non-living. James Lovelock (2000) would later describe the whole of Earth as a self-regulating super-organism, but Bonhoeffer was more interested in how a deep Christology must be first perceived and then enacted in the human relationship to the rest of creation.

Accordingly, in humanity’s relationship with God, Bonhoeffer recognises a role in bringing about restoration and reconciliation with the world. Far from the Genesis 2 *fiat* to “till and keep” the garden, and appreciate it for pleasure, the human role in the biosphere has been uneasy at best and destructive at worst. At the base of humanity’s behaviour towards the environment is an attitude which does not recognise what Indian natural theologies might call the ‘life force’ of non-human nature and the interconnectedness of all life, where human life is an equal partner and where an attitude of respect for life force, or *jiva*, underpins action, both intentional and inadvertent. Western thought regarding the environment, aided and abetted by an inadequate natural theology of dominion and stewardship, has tended towards attempted mastery and exploitation. In contrast, Indian natural theologies have engendered a relationship with the Earth that is more respectful and useful to the development of an eco-theological ethic. The discipline of non-violence which Gandhi articulated appealed to Bonhoeffer precisely because of its consistency with the latter’s inherent Christology. For him, a relationship of non-violence with non-human nature might well better reflect the intention of ‘dominion’ in the creation narratives of

¹ Dominion derives from the creation story in Genesis 1:26 that humankind would ‘have dominion’ over a variety of species.

Genesis (Bonhoeffer, 2012). In an allied sense, Bonhoeffer is moved to ask if our actions toward the Earth conform to the image of Christ, precisely because his theology is grounded in the centrality of Christ.

Practical Mysticism in the Anthropocene

During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns in Australia, research demonstrated that, unable to attend religious gatherings, people increased their engagement with the natural world and this was considered as a spiritual practice. Amongst Australians who do not consider themselves religious there was also a self-reported spirituality that they felt was enhanced by spending time in nature (Rayson et al., 2021). Like Bonhoeffer and countless people the world over, there seems to be an affinity with the natural world that inspires awe and wonder and an openness to things transcendent (Silvia et al., 2015; Ballew & Omoto, 2018). Various systems and practices acknowledge this tendency, from the wisdom of feng shui to the revival of *shinrin-yoku* or 'forest bathing' in Japan. Neuroscience confirms our physiological responses to the colours blue and green, just as immunology confirms the benefits of forest bathing (ten Brink et al., 2016). It is no wonder then, that during pandemic lockdowns, release time spent not just outdoors, but specifically in natural environments, was valued as a spiritual practice. It also validates the growing number of people who consider themselves 'spiritual but not religious' (SBNR)² across some western countries (ABS, 2017; Pew Research Center, 2020, 2021). There is an intersection then, between the practical mysticism of the likes of the Desert Fathers and Bonhoeffer, and the nature-inspired spirituality of many people who are engaged in activism against climate change. Historically, the difference between 'spiritual' and 'religious' has fluctuated: at times well separate, at others, almost one and the same. The various iterations of practical mysticism demonstrate the 'language' of practical engagement, of 'doing good', and of faith that manifests in works, is the type of "non-religious language" that Bonhoeffer promotes (2010, p. 390).

Hence, a type of "non-religious Christianity" (p. 445) that is relevant for the Anthropocene can draw on nature-inspired spirituality (Ashley, 2006). It can be incorporated into the foundations of a mysticism that subsequently emerges as ethical engagement with the world. As this globe continues to heat and reach tipping points that will keep unravelling the finely tuned homeostasis that we as humans have known for the past 11, 500 years of the rise of human cultures, climate activism will become increasingly important. Religious organisations might do well to recognise both the intrinsic value of creation care and social justice (such as care for climate refugees, food security, disaster response) and its role in fostering authentic spiritual experiences in a new era of existential uncertainty.

²Pew Research Centre defines this group's religion as 'nothing in particular'.

Bonhoeffer called for a nonreligious interpretation of the Christian faith that is based not on a redemption *from* the Earth—to a future heaven, a different time and place—but rather a redemption *of* the Earth, in the here and now. The reality of God becomes meaningful when God’s own engagement in the world is recognised and mimicked. The turn to nature and the surge in environmental activism reflect a type of Christian faith that Bonhoeffer might have envisioned had he lived into the Anthropocene.

Conclusion

Finally, as Lovat’s own review of practical mystics has demonstrated, the combination of spiritual practice that holds mystical experience and ethical agency in tandem can be recognised throughout the ages. In Lovat’s own contribution across a range of disciplines it is possible to similarly recognise the practical mystic at work: not “beating others over the head with dogmatic triumphalism”, but pressing into social issues that require patience, determination, and wisdom.

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Chapter 11

Bonhoeffer's Religionless Christianity in Conversation with Islamic Scholarship



Terence Lovat

Abstract The chapter explores the key and most memorable notion, *Religionless Christianity*, from the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, drawing it into conversation with similar dispositions to be found in the theologies of select Muslim scholars. The chapter furthermore analyses elements of radical Islamism through the eyes of the experiences of a Reich Church that led Bonhoeffer to such a seemingly radical notion. It concludes with reflections on how Bonhoeffer might have applied his thinking to contemporary issues and events.

Keywords Bonhoeffer · Religionless Christianity · Islam · Radical Islamism · Sayyid Qutb · Mohamed Talbi

Introduction

The article builds on earlier work that refuted a populist assertion that Bonhoeffer would be hostile to Islam on the basis that it represents to contemporary times a similar threat as Nazism was in the 1930s and 1940s. The article takes a contrary view that there are not only indications in Bonhoeffer's corpus of a kindly view towards Islam but, moreover, elements in Bonhoeffer's theology, especially in the notion of religionless Christianity, that might have potential to enhance our understanding of Islam, including around some of its more contentious contemporary attachments, as to be found in radical Jihadism and oppositional Islamic theologies.

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In doing so, the article explores scholarship that draws Bonhoeffer into conversation with key Muslim scholars of various ilk, such as Ibn Tufayl from the medieval period and Sayyid Qutb and Mohamed Talbi from more recent times. It concludes by reflecting on wider lessons to be learned from the exploration with potential to enhance our understanding of religionless Christianity, especially as Bonhoeffer might have continued to explore it today.

Bonhoeffer and Islam: Refuting a Populist View

In earlier work (Lovat, 2017), I addressed the allegation made in Metaxas (2010) that Bonhoeffer would have been influenced negatively about Islam by Hitler's purported adulation of its warrior culture. My counterview rested on several grounds but the most crucial was that any evidence we have of Bonhoeffer's estimation of Islam, slim as it is, is positive. The latter evidence emanated from his time in Southern Spain and North Africa in 1924 from where he wrote to his parents about his generally positive impressions of Islam and his desire to study it more intensively (Bonhoeffer, 2002, p. 120). He came back to some of this thinking when reflecting later, in *Ethics*, on the emerging role of technology (Bonhoeffer, 2005, p. 117). In recent work, Ferdinand Schlingensiepen (2010) challenged Bonhoeffer scholars to do the work on Islam presaged by Bonhoeffer at a time when it seemed most important.

Moreover, I pointed to Bonhoeffer's well-recorded fascination with the Indian religions (Bonhoeffer, 2007, p. 152), impelled largely by the witness of Gandhi, whom he had hoped to visit. Had he come to know Gandhi's own influences, he would soon have seen the importance of Islam among them. Gandhi's own words on Islam as a religion that had influenced both his spirituality and his practical action by its integration of faith and action would likely have served to reinforce Bonhoeffer's earlier impressions (Gandhi, 1949).

Hence, I considered Metaxas's assertions to be ill-founded and essentially refuted on evidential grounds. Nonetheless, the refutation was useful in forcing me to consider the issue of Bonhoeffer-Islam intersections more closely, which is what this paper now addresses. The scholarship offers several clues as to ways in which Bonhoefferian theology and wider perspectives can facilitate enhanced understanding of the essential nature of and important developments in Islam, as well as ways in which Christians might be helped to reflect on matters in their own tradition. A helpful starting point in this exploration concerns the interface between the notion of religionless Christianity, a key artefact of Bonhoefferian theology, and related notions to be found in Islamic scholarship.

Religionless Christianity: Institutionalism Versus Essence

Bonhoeffer's notion of religionless Christianity has been the subject of vast scholarship (Wustenberg, 1998; Pugh, 2008; Hooton, 2020). While there have been multiple interpretations of the term over the years, including overly radical ones suggestive of a "Death of God" move in Bonhoeffer, Eberhard Bethge (2013) tells us clearly that such interpretations are misdirected. Far from connoting a removal of God from the world, religionless Christianity points to the idea of God, in Christ, being central to the world. Christianity is not merely the Christ Event in a particular time but an event as contemporaneous as it is historical. Religion is the form that Christianity has taken over the centuries, a form that is serving to retard rather than advance the cause of Christianity. It has also posited a powerful God of religion and so distracted from the humble God in Christ to be found in the gospel. In that sense, the collapse of religion, as Bonhoeffer believed he could see happening, can be interpreted as a blessing. Peter Hooton (2020) summarizes the optimism he reads in Bonhoeffer in the following way:

Religion is not to be confused with faith ... Through faith in Jesus Christ, we are called not to religion but to new life with God. (p. 3)

If religionless Christianity is a radical term, then it is radically Christological and cannot be properly understood other than in that context. It is inextricably tied up with Bonhoeffer's central question, "Who is Christ for us today?" (Bonhoeffer, 2010, p. 362). In this sense, even though the term first appeared in the letter of 30 April 1944, it is best seen as an extension of a longitudinal theological journey by which he had come to see religion and faith as distinctive and finally as oppositional. The journey began with a grounding in liberal theology that, in part, had attempted to discern the Jesus of history from the Christ of faith (von Harnack, 2011), an early attempt to see through the institutionalism of religion. At another time, the journey relied on Barth's explicit contrasting of religion and faith, one that finally defined religion as "unbelief" (Barth, 1961). Throughout the journey, Bonhoeffer (2001) had spoken persistently of "cheap versus costly grace" as a way of differentiating between the outer shell of religiousness and the inner conformity required of faith, the latter constituting an "arcane discipline" (Bonhoeffer, 2000, p. 50). It was a journey that led him to consider positively the demythologization project of Rudolf Bultmann as one possessing intellectual integrity and honesty when most around him regarded the project as a threat to everything on which Christian institutionalism rested (Bonhoeffer, 2006, p. 29; Clements, 1981; Congdon, 2013). Far from rejecting it, Bonhoeffer actually suggested that the project did not go far enough because it still left Christianity overly tied to "religion" (Bonhoeffer, 1996, p. 514; Gregor, 2013). Arguably, most sharply, it was a journey that saw him, as early as 1935, refer to the outer shell of the Reich Church as no longer serving Christ but the "antichrist" (Bonhoeffer, 2011, p. 72). In a word, it was

a theological journey that sharpened his sense of how Christianity had been overtaken by a particular institutional form, one that historians of Christianity would likely refer to as a Roman imperial form (Crotty, 2017).

Religionless Christianity therefore does not represent in any way a nod to godlessness or even an exaggerated secularism. Neither does it refer to an abandoning of the foundational congregationalism of the church. What it does denote on Bonhoeffer's part, however, is a newfound scepticism towards and critique of a particular institutional form that had become associated unhelpfully with Christianity. There is little doubt that his scepticism and critique were influenced by the spectre of a Reich Church effectively espousing Hitler as Messiah (Comfort, 2012) and as '...the new authority over the meaning of Christ and Christianity' (Salomon, 2007, p. 219). It is little wonder he saw this church as serving the antichrist.

We might then be content to say we understand what Bonhoeffer is rejecting in the notion of religionless Christianity but what exactly is he attempting to grasp? What is left of Christianity once religion is dispensed with? Perhaps it is useful at this point to refer briefly to the work of Edmund Husserl, the nineteenth-century Swiss philosopher and architect of transcendental phenomenology, not as a perfect fit but as a schema that might help in ascertaining some of the nuances in Bonhoeffer's thinking. As we will see, Bonhoeffer has been a powerful figure in influencing twentieth-century phenomenology:

Bonhoeffer ... can be both helpful and provocative for phenomenology ... perhaps most importantly of all, Bonhoeffer provides rich resources for actually *doing* phenomenology. (Gregor, 2016a, p. 205)

In turn, twentieth-century phenomenology owes its origins in large measure to Husserl, so reversing the line of influence seems an obvious thing to do.

Husserl (1983) was at pains to distinguish between science that dealt with "matters of fact" (descriptive science) and science that dealt with "essences" (eidetic science). While principally a scientist, it is not insignificant in this context to note that the prime exemplar of eidetic science that he utilized was an explicitly spiritual, indeed mystical, one (Otto, 1958). Husserl's critique of the sciences of his day was that they focussed overly on the "real", constituted of endless contingent instantiations of whatever was being studied, but they failed to grasp the "irreal", the universal essence of what was being studied:

transcendental phenomenology will become established, not as a science of matters of fact, but as a science of essences (as an eidetic science). (Husserl, 1983, p. xx)

Unlike other phenomenological methods that focussed on the "real" (the contingent instance), transcendental phenomenology would focus on the "irreal" (the universal essence).

As suggested, applying a Husserlian gloss to Bonhoeffer's religionless Christianity might help in ascertaining just what it was that Bonhoeffer was glimpsing as an alternative to the institutionally formed Christianity he was rejecting. We might say that this institutional form represented the "real", the endless contingent

instantiations of a form that failed to contain and convey the “irreal”, the universal essence of Christianity. To put it arguably too simply but perhaps helpfully, the contrast is between a Christianity steeped in historically bound institutionalism of particular times, places and circumstances and one freed to live out its essential purpose at any time, in any place and under any circumstance. The original Christ Event occurred in a particular time, place and circumstance but its essence is timeless, placeless and beyond any particular circumstance. In *Ethics* (Bonhoeffer, 2005), Bonhoeffer says that the resurrection belongs in the sphere of faith. It does not annul the penultimate, meaning it was an earthly event, but it presages a new life, eternal life that presses in on earthly life and finds its own space within earthly life. If not, Christ might as well be in the tomb. Hence, the risen Christ must be freed from institutional forms that would tie it forever to the past in order to allow it to press in on earthly life today. No institutional form should become a de facto “real” that disallows the one and only “real” that matters (the Christ Event) from persisting as the “irreal”, pressing in on contemporary life, as relevant and translatable today as it was in its original form.

This juxtaposition of institutionalism as the “real” versus essence as the “irreal” is useful in setting up a conversation between Bonhoeffer and Islam. Indeed, it is arguable that Islam confronted the juxtaposition much earlier than Christianity, and certainly earlier than Bonhoeffer. The work of Ibn Tufayl (2009), a twelfth century scholar of Islam's Golden Age, tells the story of a feral child who grows up on a desert island and intuits the principles of Islam without the need for instruction or institutionalism of any kind. Implicit in the story is the notion that the essence of Islam is beyond the various institutional forms it takes. For Tufayl, the Qur'an Event, just like the Christ Event, occurred in real time, place and circumstance but its essence is timeless, placeless and circumstance neutral. Otherwise, it is locked into that past context and its significance for today is lost behind the camouflage of religious institutionalism. In other words, the Qur'an Event is “real” but the institutional forms in which it has become encased leave it as a past event robbed of its timeless, placeless, circumstance-neutral universal essence, the “irreal”.

What Tufayl is pointing to here is a form of “religionless Islam”, in a Bonhoefferian sense, a non-institutionalized spirituality that is in touch with the godly in a way that institutionalized forms of Islam had lost. This is what religion, in Bonhoeffer's sense of it, does. It glorifies “real” contingent instantiations of the past but inhibits understanding of the only real of the past that matters and so loses the essential “irreal”. In an extreme circumstance, therefore, Christianity can come to serve the antichrist and Christians in their millions cannot see the anomaly. Such is the blinding power of religion. Just as Bonhoeffer's notion was clearly a critique against these forms of Christianity, so Tufayl's work was a none-too-veiled critique of elements of the institutionalized Islam of his day. This related especially to those who strived to elevate Islam's esoteric elements at the expense of its rational foundations (Bashier, 2011).

I will proceed now to explore these issues and their ramifications through bringing Bonhoeffer into conversation with two key Islamic scholars of recent times, Sayyid Qutb and Mohamed Talbi.

Bonhoeffer and Qutb

Mona Siddiqi (2016) draws attention to some interesting comparisons between Bonhoeffer and Sayyid Qutb (1960, 2006, 2018), the imputed spiritual father of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Beyond the cosmetic similarities of a common birth year, their signature writings being from prison and their untimely executions by the tyrannical regimes they were opposing being referred to by their followers as martyrdoms, there are more serious points of theological overlap. Both scholars use their respective scriptures and tradition to justify their opposition to the technically legitimate autocratic regimes under which they suffered, in Qutb's case an Egyptian tyranny consisting of British colonial power complete with a puppet king and puppet Islam to do their bidding. Both men are subject to ongoing debate about their complicity in religious-justified violence. Indeed, the spectrum of positions on Bonhoeffer's pacifism versus tyrannicidal intentions (Nation et al., 2013; Fortin, 2015; Green, 2015a, b; de Jonge, 2015; Nissen, 2009; Burkholder, 2017) is replicated in the case of Qutb, with scholarship and popular commentary positioning him as the incarnation of Jihadist violence, at one end, and as a badly misunderstood, perhaps naïve but essential pacifist, at the other (Holbrook, 2010; Calvert, 2013).

Perhaps of greatest interest to this paper is that both scholars regard their respective traditions, Christianity and Islam, as superordinating the institutional dimension. Like Tufayl whom he had read, Qutb also posits a kind of "religionless Islam" in juxtaposing the State-sponsored and controlled Islam he confronted, much as Bonhoeffer did with his religionless Christianity versus the spectre of the Reich Church. Qutb saw the world divided between faithlessness (*Jahilliyya*) and Islam. It was on a trip to the USA that he believed he saw most clearly how Christianity had succumbed to *Jahilliyya* under Western influence. This helped him to see how the same had happened to the Western-influenced, State-sponsored institutional form of Islam in his own country. The essence of Islam could not therefore depend on institutional forms. It had to rely on a covenant between individuals and their God. In a sense, we see Qutb proffering a type of arcane discipline of his own. Most clearly, we see the spirit of Tufayl in the sharp distinction he draws between institutional Islam and the universal essence of Islam. Like Bonhoeffer in regard to Christianity, Qutb believes the revelation that is Islam happened at a particular time, in a particular place and in the context of a designated circumstance, commonly referred to as the revelation era, or what here I refer to as the "Qur'an Event".

So, there are some important points of similarity between the experiences of Bonhoeffer and Qutb and, perhaps more arguably, some similarity in the theological distinctions they proposed in attempting to save the essence of their beloved traditions from the spoliations of certain forms of institutionalism. In Bonhoeffer's case, religionless Christianity is best understood as an attempt to ascertain the Christological essence of Christianity enveloped in thousands of years of an institutionalism that no longer fitted the world come of age that Bonhoeffer could see unfolding before him (Bonhoeffer, 2010). For Qutb, the attempt is to restore the

Qur'anic essence to a tradition that has succumbed to forms better reflecting the values of secularism and the spoliations of colonialism than the principles of the Qur'an (Musallam, 2005; Mohamed, 2008; Solama & Freidman, 2012). In this sense, there are reflections of Tufayl's understanding of Islam as denoting a Qur'anic essence that defied the ease of institutionalism he saw before him. Tufayl's story of the feral child was not suggesting that Islam was constituted of an amorphous universal essence but rather that the Qur'anic essence could be discerned and lived out by any believer in any time and place, a notion constituting more than a hint of a Bonhoefferian arcane discipline. Tufayl was no more advocating a godlessness or secularism than was Bonhoeffer or, indeed, Qutb. In all three cases, their target was the religious institutional form that had failed to preserve the essence of the tradition to which they were committed. In all cases, a Husserlian distinction between "real" institutionalism and "irreal" essence is useful.

Bonhoeffer and Talbi

In contrast with the incidental links between Bonhoeffer and Qutb, there is a direct intellectual line between Bonhoeffer and Mohamed Talbi, the Tunisian Qur'anic historian whose name is associated with taking the Qur'anic fight to the radical Jihadists in order to expose the fallaciousness of the case they make for the Qur'an legitimizing, indeed enjoining, divinely endorsed violence. The intermediary in the line is Paul Ricoeur, phenomenologist and onetime Chair of Philosophy at the Sorbonne, France. Ricoeur acknowledged the key influence of Bonhoeffer on his own work, especially that around religious narrative (Gregor, 2016b). The decision to employ Husserl in the attempt to better understand Bonhoeffer's religionless Christianity is further endorsed when one considers the extent to which Ricoeur acknowledged his own indebtedness to Husserl (Ricoeur, 1967). Indeed, a case could be made for Ricoeur's notion of faith built around second naïveté being reflective of both Husserl's distinction between the "real" and the "irreal" as well as inspired by Bonhoeffer's notion of religionless faith (Wallace, 1995).

Talbi was heavily influenced by Ricoeur when completing his own doctorate at the Sorbonne. He employed what was referred to as a "vectoral method" in analysing Islamic sacred sources. It centred on reading for the *maqasid*, the essential message or ultimate intention behind the narrative. Talbi (1995, 2006, 2011) utilized this method not just to undercut – but indeed rubbish and demolish – the ways in which the radical Jihadists employed Islamic scriptures to justify their murderous ways.

Making use of Husserlian and Ricoeurian perspectives, Talbi sees the Qur'an as a once-for-all-time divine revelatory intervention, originally in the "real" but with a universal essence that is "irreal". The problematical method that the Jihadist employs, however, is that it constrains the Qur'an to the "real", seeing it as a source that can only be read and interpreted literally, and so tying Islam to a past event with no capacity to interpret the *maqasid* for a different time, place and circumstance.

The institutional forms that have developed over time are what bind the Jihadist to this understanding. In a word, the binding power is in religion, in much the same sense as Bonhoeffer was suggesting in his religionless Christianity notion. For Talbi, the *maqasid* is the timeless, placeless, circumstance-neutral “irreal”, the universal essence of the revelation. In terms of Ricoeurian second naiveté, it is faith that both retains the myth but also sees through the institutional clothing to ascertain the message lying within (al-Dakkak, 2012).

Roman Rogowski (in Michnik, 1993) refers to a common method utilized by Bonhoeffer and Talbi, a “trans-literalist interpretation” of their respective traditions, both of them striving to uncover and reveal for today’s generation not only the true meaning to be found in their scriptures but in their entire tradition. To employ the Husserlian perspective, they want to move beyond the contingent instantiation of institutionalism to the universal essence of their traditions. It is implicit in Bonhoeffer’s central question ‘who is Christ for us today?’ (Bonhoeffer, 2010, p. 362) It is a notion that goes beyond merely unpacking the essential meaning of the gospels but also of the entire tradition. For Talbi, it was in the central questions that implicitly underpin the entirety of his vectoral method, “what is the Qur’an for us today?” and “what is the *maqasid*?” In both cases, Bonhoeffer’s and Talbi’s, their questions constitute a search for the universal, timeless, placeless, circumstance-neutral essence of their respective traditions.

Evidence indicates that Talbi might well have gone further than Bonhoeffer in the quest to answer these central questions, a benefit no doubt of living to ninety-five years of age, rather than thirty-nine. If Talbi was correct in seeing his work inspired by Bonhoeffer, however, then perhaps we get from this work some indication of where Bonhoeffer might have gone had he lived to such an age. So, where might Bonhoeffer have taken us in continuing to answer his own big question? What are some of the more far-reaching ramifications of his religionless Christianity in the light of Talbi’s work? First, let us see how Talbi’s work has been applied to urgent matters in Islam before drawing out possible implications for Bonhoefferian work on Christianity.

Talbi’s Extended Work

The further we go down the track of Talbi’s vectoral method, the more obvious it becomes that discerning the *maqasid* in the Qur’an is just the beginning of the process necessary to moving the tradition from its dependence on any number of contingent institutional instances to finding and restoring its universal essence, to answering the central question, “what is the Qur’an for us today?” Partly through his inspiration, there has been a significant Muslim scholarship in recent times exploring not only Islam’s other primary sources, such as the Sunnah and Shari’ah Law, but also its secondary sources, especially those that germinated over the first few hundred years of Islam’s formative period, sources that in many ways became more defining of Islam as it developed in the second millennium of Christendom than the Qur’an and other primary sources (Haddad, 2012; al-Qari, 2013;

al-Yaqoubi, 2015). These are sources that have shaped and formed Islam as a religion, in Bonhoeffer's sense, in its institutionally-bound forms. Indeed, they have played much the same role as what we might refer to as the secondary sources of Christianity that abounded in its first few centuries, be they the theological commentaries of the Fathers or the pronouncements and doctrinal formations of the early Councils (Brown, 2003; MacMullen, 1984).

A case in point is seen in the work of Muhammad al-Tabari, ninth and tenth century Persian scholar, and his so-called *History of the Prophets and Kings*, or simply the *History* (Yarshater, 1999). In its unfiltered "real" sense, it has been taken commonly to be a factual history of Islam that recounts events from the beginning of the world through to the revelation era and beyond. On analysis, the *History's* main purpose was clearly not to recount a bland history but to apply a theological and political overlay that positioned Islam at the centre of God's plan for the world, the culmination of the Abrahamic project, the supersession of Judaism and Christianity. Moreover, its sharpened theological and political purpose was to endorse a particular institutional form of Islam as being the only one acceptable to God, the true Islam, as it were. Specifically, the *History* served as an apologia for the Abbasid seizure of Islam in the mid-eighth century, an attempt at congealing the multiple strands of proto-Islam, more often than not by force, into a singular entity, dare we say a "religion", the only true religion, the Islamic *polis* or, indeed, the "Islamic State" (Lovat & Crotty, 2015; Lovat & Moghadam, 2017; Moghadam & Lovat, 2019).

Hence, the "real" institutional instance propagated by the *History* served well a narrowly defined institutional Islamic form in a particular time, place and circumstance. The *History* justified the exclusion of and even violence towards competing Abrahamic forms, Jewish, Christian and others that it deemed as infidel. Moreover, and arguably of greater significance, it justified exclusion of and violent opposition to those many competing proto-Islamic forms that abounded in the Middle East at the time. Muhammadans, Ishmaelites, Hagarians, Saracens and Twelvers (Shi'ites) were now held to be apostate, those responsible for the fracturing and weakening of Islam that the Abbasids were supposedly in the business of fixing. Abu as-Saffah, the first Caliph of the Abbasid Dynasty, goes down in history as "the Butcher" for the blood spilled, an inordinate portion of it Shi'ite blood, in the birth of that dynasty, of that "Islamic State" (O'Leary, 2016).

The power of a secondary source, like the *History*, to inspire and motivate radical Jihadism is seen clearly in the case study of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Bakr al-Baghdadi's (2014) infamous sermon at the mosque in Mosul in 2014, the veritable launch of the ISIS scourge by this self-styled Caliph of "Islamic State", is a case in point. To the allied security forces, it was a mystery. The ISIS fighters had previously been considered part of the coalition fighting to overthrow President Assad of Syria; in that sense, they were considered as being "on our side". So, why they were now turning on many of their fellow Muslims who had also been fighting against Assad, as well as denouncing and attacking the Western forces that had been assisting them, had Western analysts mystified. Furthermore, the text of Baghdadi's sermon was hard to unravel, with some denouncing parts of it as "gibberish" and others even questioning whether it was truly Baghdadi, granted he was, by reputation, a coherent scholar (JTTM, 2016).

The sermon functioned on two levels, one transparent and the other opaque. The transparent element purported to make generous use of the Qur'an, referring to skewed and misplaced verses 126 times throughout a roughly forty-minute sermon. The intention was clearly to call on the Qur'an to make it appear that the genocide Baghdadi was urging was divinely endorsed. It has not been difficult to show that a reputable and commentary-informed interpretation of these verses renders them as inappropriately utilized. They are simply not saying what Baghdadi wanted his audience to believe. Only those with limited knowledge of the Qur'an could be fooled by the transparent element (Lovat, 2018).

In contrast, the opaque element was more difficult to fathom and therefore far more sinister. Eventually, it became clear that Baghdadi was drawing on a deep historical theological tradition in Islam inspired especially by the Abbasid Caliphate (al-Tabari, 1985; Kennedy, 2004). Indeed, Baghdadi's own inspirational figure was Abd Allah ibn Muhammad, the first Abbasid Caliph. He is better known as "as-Saffah" (the blood shedder) for the butchery that accompanied the Abbasid coup. According to legend, as-Saffah had given a very similar sermon in launching the Abbasid Caliphate and legitimizing the attendant bloodshed.

The point of the case study is in illustrating that the source Baghdadi relied on, that of as-Saffah's call to violence, was not to be found in the Qur'an or any of the primary Islamic sources, and this for the obvious reason that these sources all predated the event by centuries. On the other hand, we do find it in Tabari's *History*, a *histoire* from Islam's first few centuries whereby the tradition took on institutional religious forms that served the political and power aspirations of the time. When Jihadists like Baghdadi utilize the Qur'an in the way he did, the Qur'an is left looking like the violence-prone, hate-filled text that has become a common Western perception. The case study illustrates that, in fact, the Qur'an is not the true inspirational source for this ISIS, or perhaps any Jihadist, ideology. In this case, the inspiration is to be found in a secondary source from Islam's politically riven, theologically fractured formative period.

This is just one of countless instances of how a *histoire*, saturated in mythology, more concerned with the "real" power struggles of the day than with preserving the "irreal" of the Qur'an Event in its pristine and universal form, has been far more determinative in shaping radical Jihadism than anything to be found in the Qur'an. To apply the Husserlian schema again, it is an example of how an apparently inspirational source can be locked into an institutional "real" by religion and, in the process, lose the universal essential "irreal".

Ramifications for Bonhoeffer's Religionless Christianity

The task from here is to consider what lessons there might be for Christianity. Are there similar *histoires*, creative theologies and purported histories that have left Christians with the unhelpful institutional forms that Bonhoeffer referred to as "religion"? Just as Tabari's *History*, built around a particular politick in a time, place and

circumstance that belongs to the past, has blinded and misled sections of Islam to engage in execrable deeds today in the name of what they believe is Islam, have similar works, especially from Christianity's formative centuries, served the same misleading purpose? It is by grappling with these issues that we might begin to see what Bonhoeffer perceived by religionless Christianity, a Christianity freed from unhelpful institutional forms tied to a past to which we owe nothing, one released from "real" instantiations belonging to particular times, places and circumstances to be its "irreal" essential self for all time, place and circumstance.

We might consider for a start some of those early Church Councils, invariably encased in the politics of the day, including those of a pagan empire (Crotty, 2017). We might ask why it is that the resulting formulae played and/or continue to play such a divisive role and have wrought so much violence over the years, Christian on Christian and Christian on non-Christian (Ayers, 2006; Esler, 2017). We might consider why it was so apparently easy for Pope Urban II to cite Augustine's City of God theology in urging the warriors of the First Crusade to put to the sword Muslims and Jews on the basis that Christianity enjoined such execrable action (Riley-Smith, 1980; Cowle, 2019). Bringing the issue into the arena of Bonhoeffer's direct concerns about religion-filled Christianity, we might ask why it was so relatively easy for Hitler to tap into Christianity's deep-seated anti-Semitism to wield his ugly agenda. Hitler and his deputies would have wanted us to believe the gospels were the prime source. As early as *Mein Kampf* [1925], Hitler (1998) was citing Jesus overturning the tables in the Temple (Gospel of Matthew 21) in proposing himself as following Christ's work in confronting the Jews. As with Baghdadi's employment of the Qur'an to wage his war, Hitler's case was a highly dubious one, easily able to be unpicked by the least of biblical scholarship.

Also similar to the Baghdadi case study, where the most sinister dispositions were embedded in Islam's secondary sources, is that the deeply lain dispositions, beliefs and bigotries to be found in Christianity's secondary sources had come to take on a "real" status, arguably beyond the "real" of the Christ Event and its attached gospel testimony. The works of the Fathers are so laced with anti-Semitism (Chrysostom, 1979; Morrison, 2008; Doerfler, 2011), they were bound to lay the foundations of a persistent spurning of the Jews, a xenophobic disposition just waiting for an event such as Hitler perpetrated to eventuate. Similarly, literature around the so-called "theological anti-Judaism" that abounded in the formulae of the early Councils could not help but cement those foundations (Nicholls, 1995).

We might continue to ask, as Bonhoeffer might well have, why it is that Christians so often interpret their faith as enjoining belittlement of others, if not indeed violence towards them, and protecting perpetrators rather than the patently innocent? Why are Christians so often lined up against gay rights, gender equality and indeed human rights in general whereas a pure reading of the gospels and modelling from Christ's actions and words around the Prodigal Son, for instance, would seem to lead to such different dispositions and action? Why is it that, of late, institutional Christianity has been so persistently and doggedly on the wrong side of history in the child abuse scandals when the least reading of the gospel would render 'suffer the little children to come to me' (Gospel of Matthew 19:14)? Is it that, like Tabari's

History in Islam, secondary sources in Christianity's politically riven formative years have come to have a "real" status that has effectively overtaken the status of the original Christ Event and attendant gospel testimonies and so locked the entire tradition into the past, exacerbating rather than facilitating the mission to be its universal, essential "irreal" in today's world?

Cyril Hovorun (2017), the Orthodox theologian, speaks of those early Councils and doctrinal formation as being the scaffolds put around the building during times of repair, but which have remained so long they are now seen as the building and people have forgotten what the real building ever looked like. The challenge is to finally take down the scaffold to recover the building, a clear religionless Christianity analogy. In a day and age when the institution has been brought to its knees by scandals so clearly related to aberrations that are so palpably attachments of "religion", in Bonhoeffer's worst sense, can we afford any longer to turn a blind eye to the questions one clearly senses Bonhoeffer would be asking?

Conclusion

I argue therefore that bringing Bonhoeffer into conversation with Islamic scholarship, especially through the lens of his religionless Christianity, has potential to enhance our understanding of important developments in that scholarship, including in ways that Bonhoeffer himself has inspired it. At the same time, the conversation has potential to recoil and force consideration of ways in which Bonhoeffer's religionless Christianity project is far from complete. In some ways, Islamic scholarship is behind where Bonhoeffer would take it but, in other ways, it might be a better reflection of where Bonhoeffer's thinking and action would be had he lived to further develop the critique implicit in his theology.

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Chapter 12

On the Significance of *Histoire*: Employing Modern Narrative Theory in Analysis of Tabari's Historiography of Islam's Foundations



Amir Moghadam and Terence Lovat

Abstract Muhammad al-Tabari's *History of the Prophets and Kings*, or *The History*, is one of the earliest and most important of Muslim historiographical works. It provides insight into the early development of Islam, not so much for its history as for the ways it was interpreted and understood. Through modern historiographical analysis and scriptural exegesis, the chapter explores the space between narrative literalism and narrative memory, or what we might call interpretive history. We refer to narrative memory as *histoire*, a combining of factuality and myth-making. The focus is especially on the ways in which Tabari himself imagined and interpreted the Islamic past, including Qur'anic evidence, employing it not so much for literal as for political purposes. As such, his work is best understood not as a reliable history in the modern sense but as a politically inspired recollection, revealing how politics were shaping interpretations in Islam's first three hundred years. Granted the ways in which Tabari's work has been employed for ongoing political purposes, including to justify violence in modern times, the importance of understanding its original purpose and genre is greater than ever.

Keywords Islam · Historiography · Religious narrative · Tabari · Talbi · Jihadism

Introduction

The *History of the Prophets and Kings* (*The History*) was written by Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, a Persian historian and historiographer, born in 839 CE and died in 923 CE. It is a mammoth tome of 39 volumes, narrating the origins of Islam as

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not merely the beginnings of another religion but as a grand cosmic event, a turning-point in the history of the world and God's plan for it. As such, it spans from the beginning of time up to Tabari's own time and, in a sense, beyond through predictions of where the world is heading. While the narrative presents as history in the modern sense, its contents, and the fact that it was written some two and a half centuries after the "grand cosmic event" which sits at the narrative's centre, suggests that it is far more than a mere history of the facts. The employment of modern narrative and, especially, historiographical analysis offers the opportunity to gain insight into its true purpose and, hence, its importance.

Religious Narrative: Between Narrative Literalism and Narrative Memory

Narrative literalism (Gilliot, 1985) denotes that the purpose and meaning of a text is to record factual events. It is found commonly in descriptive journalism, record-keeping of any kind, including legal and political verbatim keeping. Historical narrative is often accepted as a literal account of events but is, as often as not, overlain with interpretation, dependent on the writer's powers of objectivity or not. Narrative memory, on the other hand, denotes that the purpose and meaning is found in the world of imagination and mythmaking, with elements similar to narrative fiction (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). To the extent that historical narrative is more than a mere literal account of events, there is inevitably an element of narrative memory to it. This does not mean that historical narrative is entirely made up, but merely that it is subject to the author's suggestive memory in his/her milieu as well as interpretation and, as such, liable to an element of mythmaking, be it for aesthetic, advocacy, or even blatantly political purposes. Where the writer's interpretation is in play, then so are fragments, if not more than fragments, of imagination and mythmaking (van der Laan, 2016).

Taylor (2016) speaks of "collective narrative", a form of social imaginary whereby history and legend blur in providing individuals with meaning and communities with ways of representing their collective life. Thompson (1984) defines the social imaginary as '... the creative and symbolic dimension of the social world, the dimension through which human beings create their ways of living together and their ways of representing their collective life' (p. 6). In most collective narrative, there will be elements of fact and fiction which are not necessarily linear and chronological but more about shared archetypes and a network of intertextualities. This is how best to understand religious narrative, a collective narrative focussed on the religious domain. To an extent, against the disposition of a largely secularist era, Taylor (2007) argues that religious narrative remains as important as ever in understanding humanity and finding ways of binding the human community in mutual respect and harmony. At the other end of the scale, misinterpreting religious

narrative has potential to impel and exacerbate tension, conflict, and even violence in the human community.

Ricoeur (2011) devoted much of his scholarship to the issue of religious narrative and finding the space between narrative literalism and what we are calling narrative memory. For him, religious narrative was best understood as one of the many poetical ways in which humanity searches for meaning, using signs, symbols, and texts. Like all narrative, religious narrative was typically a mix of literalism and fiction or, to put it another way, the factual and the mythical. As with all narrative, understanding the mythical element was crucial to grasping the narrative's meaning. If one could grasp its meaning in this way, one could maintain the essence of religious faith through what he referred to as the "second naïveté", in contrast to the "first naïveté". The first naïveté conformed with narrative literalism, pure and simple, taking the narrative as factual and historical in the most literal sense. Ricoeur could see that while this might have worked well for the population at large once upon a time, it had become less and less plausible in a modern era characterised by critical thought, including biblical critical method in the Judaeo-Christian world (Schweitzer, 2001).

This increasing critique about the form of credence to be given to the Bible left modern-day Jews and Christians with two choices, either to maintain a narrative literalist stance despite its undermining by critical method, or to search out the meaning behind the narrative in a way that accommodated such a method. This latter way was what Ricoeur (2011) referred to as second naïveté, whereby one's faith rested on the veracity of a text replete with mythmaking but nonetheless true in a more profound sense than merely being literally true. Indeed, Ricoeur regarded faith resting on the second naïveté as a more mature faith than one that relied on the Bible being a literal recording of events, a faith that he saw as dangerously naïve and increasingly fragile. In a word, while the Bible no doubt contains elements of factual history, these are not what gives it its meaning, and it is the meaning behind the text that matters, including in its potential to preserve one's faith (Wallace, 2000). To put it another way, it is not the history but the *histoire* of religious narrative that preserves its meaning (Moghadam, 2015; Lovat & Moghadam, 2018; Moghadam & Lovat, 2019).

Religious *Histoire* in Judaeo-Christianity

Bultmann (1984) argued for the importance of understanding the narrative memory, or mythical, element in the Bible by suggesting that continuing to rest one's faith on narrative literalism alone lacked potential for sustainability and would ultimately put the entire tradition, in his case Christianity, at risk of defaulting in the face of modern methods of textual analysis. He proffered that the very preservation of Christianity demanded that biblical scholarship turn its urgent attention to a demythologisation methodology.

Ehrman (2006, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016) was among several scholars who effectively took up Bultmann's challenge by applying modern methods of textual analysis to the Christian gospels so intensely that he founded a method that went by his very name. The "Ehrman Method" is a comprehensive form of textual analysis in the sense that it utilises an array of analytical tools, including linguistics, historical and social analysis, and hermeneutics. It is a method that leaves no stone unturned in attempting to understand how the text came to be the way it is, where it has been interfered with, re-oriented or re-translated, where it has been designed to serve a wider social purpose because of the history going on around it, and finally what the author(s) was intending to convey, what the text meant to those writing and re-writing it, and what it was intended to mean to readers in terms of their values, beliefs and identity. While Ehrman does not employ the Ricoeurian term, his work can be seen as laying more solid scholarly grounds for Ricoeur's second naïveté. Ricoeur was speaking as a philosopher and phenomenologist, making no pretensions to be a biblical scholar. In contrast, Ehrman is one of the more notable biblical scholars of recent times. Like Bultmann, his prime interest was in discovering the narrative memory, or mythmaking, element in the gospels and in demythologising them in order to discern their alternative meanings.

Unlike many of his predecessors in biblical scholarship, Ehrman had available to him a corpus of texts that were discovered progressively throughout the twentieth century, namely, the so-called "Nag Hammadi Library" (Robinson, 1978) and the "Dead Sea Scrolls" (Vermes, 2012). The alternative gospels discovered from Nag Hammadi are referred to popularly as "Gnostic Gospels" (Pagels, 1979). Together with other writings, they often project a Jesus and an image of Christianity that was theologically a variant of, if not opposed to, the church's direction at the time of their attempted disposal, probably in the fourth century of the Christian era.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered between 1947 and 1956, constituted a much larger collection, many of them far older than the Nag Hammadi texts and shedding light not just on the emergence of Christianity but also on the multilateral nature of the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Old Testament. For Ehrman, these discoveries have been central to the kinds of probes in which he has engaged. His work on the Nag Hammadi Library has been especially prominent in rendering new understandings of the way that depictions of Jesus emerged from the politically riven first three centuries of Christianity, with at least a rich devotional mythmaking rendering it a narrative beyond what could be taken as factual or historical in the literalist sense. At the same time, Ehrman has contradicted those who might wish to suggest that the entire Christian corpus is fictional. His balanced method points to the overwhelming likelihood that the gospel testimony is based on a measure of factual history, including that there was an historical character that conforms to the image of Jesus, and, to that extent, the gospels represent an element of narrative literalism. Nonetheless, a little reminiscent of the prescient caution offered by Ricoeur, Ehrman sees the fragility of a Christian faith that relies too heavily on a literalist interpretation or, to put it another way, on sacred texts as simply recording factual history, rather than constituting a *histoire* wherein the historical and the mythical blend in creating meaning (Moghadam & Lovat, 2019).

Religious *Histoire* in Islam

Recent Islamic scholarship has arguably not been as robust in applying modern textual analytic methods to its sacred corpus as we find in Judaeo-Christianity. The main issue with the scholarship is that it is still grounded in the scholarship's devotion to the established notion of the past. Nonetheless, there is the germ of a scholarship that seeks to look beyond a narrative literalist approach to the Qur'an and other sacred sources (Arkoun, 2002; Bashear, 1991, 2004; Johnston, 2007; Talbi, 2011) as well as other important narratives in the Islamic tradition (Eloueri Cornell, 2019). An especially important scholar, one influenced by Ricoeur, is Mohamed Talbi (1967, 1995, 1996, 2002, 2006, 2011, 2015; Talbi & Jarczyk, 2002). He was a Qur'anic historian and theologian whose work has been impelled largely through his desire to counter the influence of radical Islamists and so-called Jihadists. While many Muslim scholars and others have been prepared to call out the aggressive literalism that leads to Jihadism, none have done it more strenuously nor more methodologically than Talbi (Nettler, 1998, 1999).

For Talbi, the Jihadists' methodological problem rests on their acceptance of the Qur'an as a form of narrative literalism. His persistent critique is that they can quote the words of the Qur'an but entirely lack any understanding of their contextual meaning. Granted his influence by Ricoeur when completing his doctoral studies at the Sorbonne, it is not surprising to find Talbi employing Ricoeurian categories in applying the critique (Lovat, 2018). His textual analytical methodology in relation to the Qur'an renders a form of second naiveté, in which the essentials of the narrative's meaning are retained even when narrative literalism is superseded. Indeed, like Ricoeur, Talbi implies that the essentials of the narrative are to be found in the mythical element and that these can only be ascertained once narrative literalism is suspended. Talbi (1996) employs the language of searching for the *maqasid*, the meaning or ultimate intention behind the narrative, as an essential methodological step if one is ever to know what the sacred text is conveying (Johnston, 2007; al-Dakkak, 2012). Far from the abandonment of narrative literalism constituting a risk to one's faith in the sacred text, it is precisely through this abandonment that one can come to grasp the *maqasid*, the message within the text. The fundamental problem with devotional methodologies, including those relied on by the so-called Jihadists, is that they do not progress their understanding to this point, and so might know the words but entirely lack understanding of their contextual, temporal, and discursive milieu. In their case, the result is seen in their call to malevolent actions that are contrary to, rather than following from, the message that Talbi (2015) and others (Bauer, 2021) contend is contained in the text.

An example of subservience to narrative literalism and failing to search out the *maqasid* is seen in the infamous sermon of Bakr al-Baghdadi at the Mosul Mosque in 2014, an event that constituted the veritable launch of the ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) scourge. Baghdadi drew on a pseudo theological tradition and the *mise-en-scène*, or normally accepted meaning, deeply grounded in the Islamic imaginary that, similar to his own position, represented subservience to narrative

literalism. The pseudo theology related to an eighth century revolution inspired by the Abbasid Caliphate, constituting a purge of what was regarded as infidel forms of Islam (Kennedy, 2004). Baghdadi's inspirational figure was Abd Allah ibn Muhammad, the first Abbasid Caliph, commonly known as "as-Saffah" (the blood shedder or butcher) because of the blood spilled in the Abbasid establishment.

Baghdadi's recourse to theology was not merely of a general nature but specifically to the core of the Islamic salvation narratives through generous literalist reference to the Qur'an (126 times) and using the setting described by religious traditions about the first Abbasid Caliph's sermon throughout his own 40-min sermon. The intriguing point here is that the Abbasids themselves tended to materialise the Muslim imaginations of the earlier Islamic figures (Moghadam & Lovat, 2019). As an example, Baghdadi cites Sura 4, verse 74, when he said:

We fight in obedience to Allah and as a means of coming closer to Him. We fight because He – the Glorified – commanded us to fight ... promising us one of two good ends (death or victory) ... he who fights in the cause of Allah and is killed or achieves victory – We will bestow upon him a great reward. (Baghdadi, 2014)

Baghdadi's reading implies that the Qur'an constitutes narrative literalism. According to him, the verse represents a context-free and interpretation-free command from God for Muslims to engage in a violent holy cause to prove their fidelity and so receive their eternal reward. In contrast, Ali (2002) illustrates that far from being the call to wholesale slaughter of innocents, as Baghdadi interprets the text, the context behind this verse relates temporal-political dynamics within and between Muslims and their competitors, in their own time. Free of the context and the critical hermeneutics thereof, the meaning behind the verse was able to be flipped to mean the opposite of the original intention. In Talbi's terms, Baghdadi was choosing to present the verse in narrative literal fashion, as against conveying the *maqasid*, because the literal account served his purpose. Talbi (2015) is especially critical of Jihadists, like the theologically trained Baghdadi, who should know better. By knowing better, we might say Talbi believes a Qur'anic scholar should understand the difference between a sacred source as *histoire*, rather than history, and so containing elements of mythmaking alongside factuality. It is the nature of religious narrative, as important to Islam as to any religious tradition.

There have been many inspirational sources for Talbi's scholarship both within and beyond Islam. Among those beyond Islam, none would be more important than Ricoeur, as indicated above. Among those within Islam, most crucial would seem to be the way in which the seminal work of the ninth century historical theologian, Muhammad al-Tabari, should be read. Indeed, the importance of subjecting Tabari's work to Talbi's vectoral method is underscored when one notes that, along with the Qur'an, Tabari's *History* was the prime source on which Baghdadi relied for the content of his Mosul sermon.

The History: A *Histoire*

Under the reign of the Abbasids during the mid-ninth and early tenth centuries of the Christian Era, the Persian Muhammad Al Jarir Al Tabari used earlier Muslim narratives, together with his Qur'anic knowledge, to construct a unique narrative, titled, *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*¹ - or simply *Tarikh E Tabari*, *The History of Tabari* (Yarshater, 1999). The mammoth work, consisting of 39 volumes, takes the reader from the beginnings of the world up to Tabari's own time and beyond. At its centre is the establishment of Islam under the leadership of the Prophet of God, presented as a divinely inspired turning point in the history of God's plan for the world. *The History* would go on to enjoy unprecedented status as the supreme reference regarding the theological significance of Islam (Shoshan, 2004).

In modern scholarship terms, Tabari might be conceived of as combining the disciplines and skills of Talbi and Ehrman. He was both an historian and textual exegete, analysing sacred source material, in his case principally the Qur'an, for its meaning. As a result, what he delivered in *The History* is a prime representer of *histoire*, a partly anecdotal recollection of the past, in the normal sense of the word, and partly a mythmaking, highly creative interpretation designed to provide a significant and meaningful meta-narrative for early medieval Muslims premised against the entirety of world history. While focussed largely on Islam's most sacred source, *The History* itself has come to enjoy the status of a veritable sacred source, most particularly for its construction of Islamic beliefs, values, and identity. In that sense, it has become a prime example of religious narrative. As such, just as with any religious narrative, be it the Bible, the Qur'an or any other eminent source, its significance is badly undersold if it is understood as representing nothing more than narrative literalism, as indeed Baghdadi is guilty of. Talbi knew that the significance of any sacred source would be found in the space between narrative literalism and narrative memory, or mythmaking and, from the way he analyses Qur'anic material along with the way he constructs *The History*, one suspects that Tabari knew it as well.

Ehrman's work served to illustrate that the Christian gospels were neither pure narrative literalism nor pure fiction. His research conclusion was that they capture important factual events, albeit reinterpreted differently across the four canonical gospels and even more differently once the gnostic gospels are accounted for. At the same time, the many overt interpretations and reinterpretations serve to illustrate the element of mythmaking implicit in their intentions. Interpretation and mythmaking in specific contexts are the business of what we refer to as narrative memory. Common to all the gospels was an intention to propose the advent of Jesus of Nazareth as an event beyond the mundane and, indeed, as a momentous intervention by God in the history of the world. Differences in the various gospels can be traced to different interpretations, or theologies, concerning the precise nature of this intervention and, hence, how one is to conceive of Jesus as human, divine or both.

¹The History of the Prophets and the Kings.

In Talbi's terms, ascertaining the *maqasid* can only happen if one understands these differences. Such is the nature of mythmaking.

Similarly, we find in *The History* some arrangement of accounts narrating the ideas and milieu of the formative era leading to the emergence of Islam (Ohlig & Puin, 2010; Goldziher, 2006; Luxenberg, 2007; Nevo & Koren, 2003; Crone, 2004; Wansbrough, 1978). On the other hand, we find other narrative that is either impossible to verify, such as accounts about the world's beginnings, or that is clearly designed to offer the reader an interpretation favourable to Muslim ideology. In this case, God is said to have intervened in the history of the world through a revelation to the Prophet and the establishment of Islam. Furthermore, Moghadam (2015) and Moghadam and Lovat (2019) argue that the interpretation is especially favourable to a particular species of Muslim and that the species in question coincides with advocates of the Abbasid Caliphate. The view is underpinned in part by the research of Martenonson (2016) who sees that an element in Tabari's motivation in his writing of *The History* was to justify the Abbasids as the true and rightful heirs to the revelation, and hence the leadership first given to the Prophet by God. In this sense, not only was the establishment of the first community of Islam a turning-point in the history of the world but, in a sense, so was the overtaking of Islamic leadership by the Abbasids. If one is to apply Talbi's vectoral method to the text, searching out the *maqasid*, the meaning behind the text, one needs to understand both this historical context and the intention behind the author's mythmaking.

The notion of Tabari constructing narrative heavy in interpretation and even replete with mythmaking fits broadly with the reputation of the school of thought with which he is associated. *Jariri* is the school of Islamic jurisprudence which, it is alleged, Tabari's followers founded and is named after him (Brown, 2014). *Jariri* was notable for its liberal approach to scholarship and a range of social issues (Stewart, 2002). It encouraged a rational approach to Qur'anic interpretation (Martenonson, 2016), an approach that would differ appreciably from one disposed towards narrative literalism. It is therefore not so far-fetched to suggest that Tabari was, in his time, a well-trained scholar of intertextualities with a sophisticated sense of the role of sacred text and equally well-developed methodology in dealing with it. Far from the stereotype of fundamentalist Islamic scholarship assumed often in Western circles, Tabari might well be seen as a textual scholar of the Talbi ilk, albeit well before his time. As we have argued elsewhere (Moghadam & Lovat, 2019), this being the case and alert to the importance of religious narrative as explicated above, it is clear that ascertaining the *maqasid* in *The History* requires similar levels of textual analysis as are needed when applied to sacred sources, such as the Qur'an. Such is the nature of a text that, while taking the cosmetic form of a narrative literal history, is in fact better conceived of as a *histoire*. Granted the literalist use of the stories contained in *The History* by Baghdadi, the importance of understanding the difference between history and *histoire* becomes apparent, as does its relevance to modern-day scholarship and indeed modern-day events. As Taylor (2007, 2016) has proffered, religious narrative persists as part of what can hold the human community together or, indeed, tear it apart (Ward, 2006).

Conclusion

The chapter addresses the vexed issues of sacred text as filling the space between narrative literalism, or factuality, and narrative memory, or mythmaking. Employing updated textual and historiographical analysis, including critical biblical scholarship in Judaeo-Christianity and similar emerging scholarship in Islam, the chapter examines the genre of religious narrative. The case study focusses on Muhammad al-Tabari's *History of the Prophets and Kings*, or *The History*, one of Islam's most important commentaries. While named a history, as though it should be understood as the form of narrative literalism that merely describes and records factual events, the methodology applied in the chapter, we argue, renders it as a *histoire*, a narrative that contains at least as much mythmaking as factuality.

Employing the textual analytic methodology of Ricoeur and Talbi, the chapter argues that the real meaning to be found in *The History* is contained in the myth-making elements. As Talbi proffers, so does the chapter, that understanding any sacred text as the kind of religious narrative that combines elements of factuality and mythmaking is not to reduce its importance but, rather, to allow the narrative to be what it was first intended to be. Granted the maleficent use to which Tabari's *History* has been put in recent times, including being used by prominent Jihadists to call for wholesale violence towards innocent parties in the name of Islam, the importance of understanding the meaning of the text becomes more important than ever. In working to this end, the chapter focusses attention on the ways in which Tabari himself seems to have understood and interpreted Islamic history, including Qur'anic evidence, employing it not so much for literal as for political purposes. As such, his work is best understood not as a reliable history in the modern sense but as a politically inspired *histoire*, revealing how politics were shaping interpretations in Islam's first three hundred years.

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Chapter 13

Arab-West International Relations: Jordan's Quest for Peace and the Role of Habermas amid Israel's Proposed Annexation of Palestinian Lands



Mohammad Ahmad Hasan Al-Jararwah

Abstract This article argues that the emergence of the era of unceasing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, terrorism, socio-political and religious dilemmas, fueled primarily via forms of geo-strategic intransigence, lack of rational communication practices and political self-reflections, impels Habermasian epistemological insights imperative of mitigating the relevant political disputes concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict, both in terms of the confrontations at hand, as well as resolutions. On this basis, this article proposes content for Habermasian epistemological insights to inform leaders and politicians about a dynamic advancement in the formation of moral thought and political action, to develop an enhanced comprehension of their geo-political engagement and stabilisation in the region. In considering the positive and negative interpretations of the relationship and extant hindrances between Arabs and Israelis, the socio-political challenge is to enhance the understanding of the knower through increasing knowledge of the other and utilising leading characteristics of contemporary political thought.

Keywords Arab-West international relations and foreign affairs · Jürgen Habermas · Arab-Israeli conflict · Middle Eastern politics · Israeli-Palestinian conflict · Counter-terrorism

Introduction

In an era that has seen Arab-West international relations deteriorate due to vested interests, unceasing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and terrorism, socio-political and religious dilemmas emerge and necessitate contemporary initiatives to

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constructively deal with them. One of these intransigent dilemmas is the recent Israeli plans to impose sovereignty over the Jordan Valley and illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian soil, with a potential American support. Whilst contemplating such an intransigent dilemma, along with previously conducted negotiations, one can envisage the vital role of Habermas's epistemological insights in mitigating the relevant political disputes. This can be accomplished via engaging communicative rationality and benevolent reflection to develop logical platforms of thought necessary for a more interconnected understanding and well-grounded foreign policies. In this respect, the application of Jürgen Habermas's intuitions appears to have the potential that enables a cohesive comprehension of actions by the international community, whilst taking advantage of their synergies.

Placing peace and stability as the heart of the global development agenda has not been a straightforward mission, but instead a complex undertaking. It is for this reason that global peace and stability require an immediate reconfiguration of explicit necessities of strategic and cooperative policies by articulate decision makers, political leaders and representatives. However, geo-strategic disputes and economic competitions tend to restrain the ability of nations to maintain cohesive international relations towards one another. These competitions and disputes can be attributed to not being in line with individual and state demands, ambitions and struggles, particularly when global security is most concerned. In this connection, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is an example that can be followed of a balanced Arab nation that is well-known to having positive foreign relations with various Western nations, including Australia, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (US). Nevertheless, at times of Arab-Israeli conflicts and political disagreements, these relations shrink considering Jordan's steady stance towards Palestine and the Hashemite custodianship of Jerusalem holy sites. Jordan's balanced domestic administration, rational approaches, pro-Western policies tend to safeguard Jordan's progressive success to date on the international arena, which potentially led to conducting free trade deals, enhanced international collaboration and decreased tensions amongst political rivals in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. In endorsing the case for applicable Habermasian intuitions towards peace and security in the MENA region, and considering the current state of affairs among Arabs and Israelis, the paper is suggesting a diversity of Habermasian guiding principles that safeguard political negotiations and constructive dialogues.

The Foreign Relations of Jordan

Historically, Jordan and Western nations have collaborated on various regional and international issues, including trade, counter-terrorism, extremism and international security. Due to Jordan's developing economy and lack of natural resources,¹

¹Mohammad Ta'Amnha, Susan Sayce, and Olga Tregaskis, "Wasta in the Jordanian context," in *Handbook of Human Resource Management in the Middle East*, ed. Pawan S. Budhwar and Kamel Mellahi (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2016), 399.

enhanced and constructive foreign relations with Western nations are vital for Jordan's regional objectives and rejuvenation of Arab nations. It is also worth noting that the typical distinctive nature of Jordan's balance of trade is associated with an overall annual deficit which relies heavily on foreign aid contributions and donations.² This makes it imperative for Jordan to maintain effective inter-governmental and inter-ambassadorial relations with Western nations, as well as other members of the Arab League. Geographically, Jordan is wedged between south of Syria, west of Iraq, northwest of Saudi Arabia and east of Israel and the Palestinian territories. Jordan's geographical and strategic location signifies a necessity for the nation to meaningfully invest in effective bilateral and economic ties with economically developed nations.³ After an unquestionable decline in Arab-Israel peace negotiations, Jordan began to make constructive relations with Western nations via transitioning itself into a key player in the peace process and negotiations held between Israel and Palestine.⁴ In this context, Jordan's roadmap and attempts aim at restoring peace among the Israelis and the Palestinians based on the two-state solution that could ultimately envisage an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel.⁵ On the contrary, Israel, supported by Trump's administration has reacted antagonistically against mutually signed peace agreements with Arab nations, including the 1994 Wadi Araba peace treaty with Jordan, pressing for geographic expansion and economic gains across various illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.⁶

In an already troubled region, a potential political disruption, or even a military action, is undoubtedly counterproductive to the negotiations that occurred over the last three decades. Importantly, a political distribution can further complicate the current state of affairs in the MENA region, placing further burdens globally and creating chaos and destabilisation. For these reasons, it can be stated that the application of Habermasian insights facilitate diplomatic and bilateral platforms to bring differing political schools of thought together and enhance the levels of balanced comprehension to collaboratively bring about a much-needed global response and resolution to the recent Arab-Israeli dilemma.⁷

²Raphael Patai, *Kingdom of Jordan* (Princeton, United States: Princeton University Press, 1958), 106.

³Saleh A. Al-Zu'bi, "Jordan's Foreign Policy: Regional and International Implications," in *Politics and Economy in Jordan*, ed. Rodney Wilson (London: Routledge, 2005), 186.

⁴Hassan A. Barari, ed., *Israeli Politics and the Middle East Peace Process, 1988–2002* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 108.

⁵Jeremy M. Sharp, *Jordan: Background and US Relations* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2010), 15.

⁶Glenn E. Robinson, *Building a Palestinian State: The Incomplete Revolution* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 15.

⁷Mohammad A. H. Al-Jararwah, "Consolidating Arab-West International Relations: A Habermasian Approach for Our Times," *West East Journal of Social Sciences* 7, no. 2 (August 2018): 23, https://westeastinstitute.com/journals/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/1805_al-jararwah.pdf

Jordan's Quest for Peace and Relations with Western Nations

After the assassination of King Abdullah I bin Al-Hussein in 1951, Jordan was the first to pay a hefty price due to the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflicts. Post the assassination, King Hussein bin Talal carried out the struggles for peace followed by King Abdullah II. Since ascending the Throne in 1999, King Abdullah II has concentrated on peace, regional security and economic matters, combating terrorist organisations via a joint global response and contribution.⁸ To accomplish this, Jordan signed various collaborative agreements with Western nations and contributed towards the creation of rational political and military dialogues to defeat terrorists and their ill-fated ideologies. In addition, Jordan joined the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations, deploying military personnel, providing support and ensuring emergency aid during humanitarian crises and natural disasters.⁹ Jordan also served as a host nation to the thousands of Syrian and Iraqi refugees over the last two decades, cooperating closely with the international community and support agencies, as well as deescalating the violent situation and preventing further loss of life.¹⁰

Via joint global military exercises and operations, including the fight against the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), security and counter-terrorism initiatives, along with trade deals, became one of the most crucial themes of Jordan's cooperative relations with the US and other Western nations.¹¹ In this context, it can be stated that Jordan's longstanding history in fighting extremism, terrorism and encouraging interreligious and inter-civilisational dialogues, is evident in the present time. This is in addition to Jordan's strategic approach that relies on moderation, political comprehension and mutual dialogues, including critique and rational thinking to bring stability to the region. By the same token, the constructive legacy of reciprocal relations between Amman and Washington, inherited by King Abdullah II and his calls for a Global War on Terrorism, brought both nations closer. Jordan's vital role in the war against terrorism was greatly recognised and led to an increase of US foreign aid to Jordan from \$228.4 million to \$1.557 billion in 2003.¹² This signifies the vital role of Jordan in bridging political gaps and creating peace and stability among rivals in the MENA region. However, for this geo-strategic and political role to continue, Jordan must continue to promote its role on the Arab and international arenas, particularly in relation to the centrality of the Palestinian cause

⁸ Curtis R. Ryan, *Inter-Arab Alliances: Regime Security and Jordanian Foreign Policy* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2009), 168.

⁹ Sharp, *Jordan: Background and US Relations*, 26.

¹⁰ Eyas Ghreiz, "The Syrian Refugee Crisis in Jordan: Challenges and Future Opportunities for NGOs," in *Syrian Crisis, Syrian Refugees*, ed. Juline Beaujouan and Amjed Rasheed (Durham, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 120.

¹¹ Rana F. Sweis, *Voices of Jordan* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2018), 44.

¹² O. Al-Rfouh Faisal, "Foreign Policy Under King Abdullah II," in *The Palgrave Handbook of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, ed. P. R. Kumaraswamy (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 375.

based on a democratic and rational engagement with other nations involved. In this connection, Jordan's approach calls upon the international community to address Israel's one-sided decisions and the necessity for Israeli decision makers to adhere to international law and protect peace, which is a regional and global objective for Arabs, Israelis and Western nations alike.

In a recent interview with German *Der Spiegel* magazine, King Abdullah II conveyed various political messages to the international community and Israel in which an emphasis on the two-state solution occurred, portraying it as the only way for all parties involved to move forward towards peace and stability. The most important of these messages was Jordan's joint agreement with many Western nations and the international community that opposes the implementation of the law of force in the Middle East. King Abdullah II illustrated in a statement, that Jordan is considering all the options for responding, if Israeli government annexes parts of the West Bank, which could potentially lead to a clash with Israel.¹³ Considering the rising tensions, it can be stated that these emerging political events and warnings fired by leaders require further attention and an in-depth knowledge on the part of the knower in order to examine the factors that fuel the Israeli decision to annex further Palestinian lands. For this reason, and to increase the competence and political rationality in communication and effective engagement in the respective region, the targeted audience need to be enlightened about broad intimations on how Habermas's intuitions are fruitful if not necessary in overcoming the political disputes at hand.

The Role of Habermas

Undoubtedly, the MENA region is perceived as a home for various intransigent socio-political, economic, regional and religious conflicts among rivals, a perception often stressed in mainstream Western media. This is in addition to the apparent lack of cohesive interaction and constructive communication among nations, as well as the absence of recognition towards human cognitive interest. In this connection, Habermas asserts that a rational understanding of facts and events can be achieved via unleashing the human cognitive interest from various hurdles, including captivity.¹⁴ Consequently, it can be stated that the application of Habermas's socio-political epistemologies provides platforms for contemporary socio-political strategies to be implemented to guide future international cooperation that satisfies the rigorous

¹³Amos Harel, "Annexation Could Kill Jordan Peace Deal, Israeli Defense Officials Believe," *Haaretz*, 17 May, 2020, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israel-annexation-peace-jordan-king-west-bank-1.8851073>

¹⁴Terence Lovat, "Aristotelian ethics and Habermasian critical theory: A conjoined force for proportionism in ethical discourse and Roman Catholic moral theology," *Australian E-Journal of Theology* 3, (2004): 6, http://aejt.com.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/395658/AEJT_3.15_Lovat.pdf

criteria of effective international relations and enhances dynamic conclusions.¹⁵ Moreover, the role of Habermas's intuitions is deep in strengthening global socio-political cooperation and reciprocal relations, and importantly, developing a rational understanding of political disputes. This can be attributed to Habermas's notions that emphasise the necessity to reveal rational critical communication, emancipation, and the possibility of reasons to pursue rational interests.

In the case of Jordan's quest for peace and global security, as well as the current Israeli annexation plans of Palestinian lands, Habermas's explanation is constructive, meaningful, and leads to fruitful outcomes. When scrutinising Jordan's approach to such a current dilemma, one can notice a clear understanding of reasons and rationale that aims at creating a human society based on rational comprehension and mutual respect towards the liberties and demands of all individuals. This creates a necessity for the Israelis to form an understanding of a liberating wave towards the Palestinians in which the protection of their freedom, independent state and rationale of society is achieved and well-kept. Therefore, Habermas's critical theory calls for democratic principles to be reinforced and colonisation projects to be repudiated.¹⁶ In his attempts to endorse everyday reasoning and rationality, Habermas articulates and promotes the constructive implications of rationality when mutual communication occurs and perceives everyday reasoning as a platform oriented towards a communicative rationality.

In this connection, it is emphasised that in order to avoid the experiments of socio-political and religious trials, institutions need to perform a crucial role in guarding people from dipping into political extremism and falling into the misery of prosperous capitalist economy.¹⁷ To accomplish this, Habermas's theory of communicative rationality can effectively guide rational negotiations and mutual engagement, which endeavours to achieve and sustain consensus.

Considering the above illustration, Habermas transitions the concept of rationality from the individual to the social.¹⁸ This is particularly vital for the current Arab-Israeli dilemma, where illustrations of Habermas's communicative action are directed towards solving political speech, especially within the public sphere.¹⁹ This will allow negotiators to channel their geo-political demands into political bodies

¹⁵Mohammad A. H. Al-Jararwah, *A Habermasian Analysis of Arab-West Inter-Governmental and Inter-Ambassadorial Relations: Implications for Western Diplomatic Training* (Doctoral diss., the University of Newcastle, Australia, 2018), 33, https://nova.newcastle.edu.au/vital/access/manager/Repository/uon:33300?f0=sm_type%3A%22thesis%22&f1=sm_date%3A%222018%22

¹⁶Mark Murphy and Ted Fleming, "Communication, Deliberation, Reason: An Introduction to Habermas," in *Habermas, Critical Theory and Education*, eds., Mark Murphy and Ted Fleming (New York: Routledge, 2010), 7.

¹⁷James Gordon Finlayson, *Habermas: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2005), 14.

¹⁸Michael Schaefer, Hans-Jochen Heinze, Michael Rotte, and Claudia Denke, "Communicative versus strategic rationality: Habermas theory of communicative action and the social brain," *PLoS one* 8, no. 5 (May 2013): 4, e65111. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0065111

¹⁹Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: Polity Press, [1962]1989).

and accomplish their political objectives via exchanging good reasons and responding rationally to the subjects being discussed.²⁰ In the context of Arab-Israeli disputes, it seems that the Western world can play a critical role to effectively address such an exigency of pragmatic political negotiations, and create rational methods of understanding towards the demands of Jordanians and Palestinians in the MENA region. In this regard, it can be argued that by applying acts of emancipation via acknowledging the efforts and opinions of individuals, marginalisation and lack of cohesive understanding can diminish. This can be accomplished by standing for justice and effecting change through the utilisation of transformational learning associated with the development of communicative capacity and communicative action.²¹ This enables a path for pinpointing standard procedures for reinforcing knowing, learning and instruction to be created for mitigating socio-political disagreements. Hence, Habermas's intuitions can be operative in overcoming political hindrances via rational manners, and enhancing methods of critical-reflection, and therefore, self-criticism for fruitful Arab-Israeli outcomes that prevent the MENA region from falling into a new chaotic era.²²

Conclusion

This paper has concentrated on identifying constructive Habermasian ramifications for pragmatic foreign policies, and offered opportunities to inform Western decision makers, political leaders and representatives about the applicability of Habermas's intuitions for mitigating the current Arab-Israeli dilemma over the proposed annexation of occupied Palestinian lands. From the notions discussed above, it is determined that the existing challenges between Arabs and Israelis can be attributed to the lack of rational communication practices and political self-reflections. These can facilitate a political sphere for different schools of thought to come together and form reciprocal agreements over disputed matters. This paper has endeavored to identify various blind spots and various biases within the Israeli foreign policies towards the Palestinians and subsequently suggested Habermasian methods to lessen the existing forms of political apprehension and a possible renewed disruption in the MENA region. Considering this, the paper called upon rational Western nations to comprehend the demands of Jordanians and Palestinians alike, without which, constructive outcomes with the Israeli counterpart and future peace resolution may have minimal chances to occur.

²⁰Jürgen Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Massachusetts: Polity Press, [1976]1991).

²¹Terence Lovat, "Jurgen Habermas: Education's reluctant hero," in *Social theory and educational research: Understanding Foucault, Habermas, Derrida and Bourdieu*, ed. Mark Murphy (London: Routledge, 2013), 69.

²²Al-Jararwah, *Consolidating Arab-West International Relations*, 21.

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Chapter 14

Multiformity and Dialogue in the Anglican Tradition: The Breakthrough of Communicative Action



Brian Douglas

Abstract The chapter scrutinises a multiplicity of eucharistic theologies within the broader Anglican tradition. It categorises them according to their philosophical underpinnings, focussing especially on realism and nominalism and explores the potential synergistic point in an approach described as moderate realism.

Keywords Eucharist · Anglican · Communicative action · Dialogical action

Introduction

An analysis of the epistemology of the Anglican eucharistic tradition shows that a multiformity of philosophical assumptions is at its heart (Douglas, 2006). Under the supervision of Professor Terence Lovat, I conducted research involving 156 case studies revealing a multiformity of philosophical assumptions underlying Anglican eucharistic theology which varied between realist and nominalist philosophical dimensions. Writings of Anglican theologians and liturgical material further demonstrated that the prevailing philosophical dimension of the Anglican eucharistic tradition was more nuanced as ‘moderate realism’. The integrity of discourse in the Anglican eucharistic tradition was dependent on the multiformity of these philosophical dimensions centred on how sacramental signs work in relation to what they signify (Douglas & Lovat, 2010a).

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Realism Versus Nominalism

Anglicans adopting a realist analysis see the signs of the Eucharist, bread and wine and the offering of these signs in the Eucharist, linked in a real way to Christ's body and blood and Christ's once and for all sacrifice. Christ is said to be really present in the elements and the eucharistic celebration and in the dynamic remembrance of Christ's sacrifice in the eucharistic offering. Moderate realism links the sign and the signified in a way that is not fleshy or physical but real, mysterious, spiritual and supernatural.

Nominalists do not accept this analysis and instead argue that the signs are not linked to the signified in any real way but rather by a linguistic and textual analysis centred on the faith of a believer and typically revealed in the text of Scripture in a propositional manner. Nominalists sever the participatory link between the signs of the earthly sacrament and the heavenly signified reality such that the signs become a reminder only of a past and completed transaction with no real contextualisation in the present apart from the enquiring mind. As Hans Boersma argues, nominalists in denying the participatory relationship between earthly objects and the heavenly reality, no longer see 'earthly objects (as *sacramentum*)' receiving 'the reality (*res*) of their being from God's own being. Rather, earthly objects possessed of their own being' (Boersma, 2011, p. 75). Such univocity 'renders the created order independent from God' (Boersma, 2011, p. 76). This means that in a nominalist analysis the natural and the supernatural become two distinct orders, rather than one that is intimately linked, where nature could pursue its own ends without any supernatural involvement. Lovat and I conclude that this multiformity of eucharistic doctrine is inherent in the discourse of Anglicanism (Douglas & Lovat, 2010a).

From a realist perspective, the Anglican theologian Rowan Williams argues that Christ's life and identity, is strictly identical in both the signs of the Eucharist, that is, bread and wine on the one hand and the signified body and blood of Christ on the other. The particulars or the signs of the Eucharist, however, and the particular of Christ's body and blood are not numerically or strictly identical even though in a moderate realist framework the signs share a strict identity of nature. The life and identity of Christ are therefore to be found in both his literal body and blood and in the signs of the Eucharist, but the signs of the Eucharist, the bread and wine, can never be strictly identical with his literal body and blood in the sense that bread cannot turn into flesh and wine cannot turn into blood. Williams says, in an attempt to exclude such fleshy or immoderate realism, that:

The force of the Gospel text ... seems to be more to do with a kind of extension of the reality of Jesus' presence to the bread and wine. They too bear and communicate the life of Jesus, who and what he is. By eating these, the believer receives what the literal flesh and blood have within them, the radiant action and power of God the Son, the life that makes him who he is. (Williams, 2007, p. 116)

Realists, therefore, are careful to distinguish between a corporal or fleshy presence and sacrifice of Christ in the Eucharist, what has been called immoderate realism (Douglas & Lovat, 2010a, p. 857; Douglas, 2012, 1, pp. 55–57), and a real, spiritual,

mysterious, supernatural presence and sacrifice, which has been called moderate realism (Douglas & Lovat, 2010a, pp. 55–57). Immoderate or fleshy realism is excluded in the Anglican tradition as it is in all other Christian traditions, occurring only in corrupted versions of realism (Rubin, 1997, 2012, pp. 447–468). Moderate realism remains the most significant and prevailing philosophical assumption underlying Anglican eucharistic theology and is frequently employed by Anglican theologians, as I explored in the eucharistic theology of the leader of the Oxford Movement, Edward Pusey (Douglas, 2015a).

Moderate Realism

This moderate realist analysis implies as Rowan Williams argues that ‘Jesus “passes over” into the symbolic forms of his own word and gestures, a transition into the vulnerable and inactive forms of the inanimate world’ where ‘the material elements of bread and wine are to be made holy by the prayer that associates them with the flesh and blood of Jesus’ (Williams, 2000, p. 215). This means for Williams that ‘the eucharist hints at the paradox that material things carry their fullest meaning for human minds and bodies – the measuring of God’s grace and of the common life this formed – when they are the medium of *gift*’ (Williams, 2000, p. 218). For Williams, in this type of realist analysis, the signs of the Eucharist are much more than mere reminders of the past and completed event of Christ’s presence and sacrifice, as a nominalist analysis implies. Rather, moderate realism implies that material things are the means by which that presence as a gracious gift is known in the Eucharist in the here and now and by which that sacrifice is renewed and made available as a gift to all who receive it.

Nominalist analysis of Anglican eucharistic theology rejects the notion of a real presence of Christ’s life and identity in the eucharist, localisation instead a theology of justification by faith alone. Nominalists deny any realist identification between the sacrifice of Christ and the present celebration of the eucharist, such that this mediates the grace of God to the communicant, since they reject the notion of multiple exemplification of Christ’s nature or localisation as incoherent and focus instead on personal and propositional faith.

Peter Jensen following this line of thinking in modern times describes the Eucharist as a meal that takes place at millions of places around the world on a weekly basis where the aim is to ‘share a meal in memory of a certain man’ (Jensen, 2002/2012, pp. 403–411). This meal is described as ‘a sort of perpetual wake’ which ‘has lasted for two thousand years so far’ (Jensen, 2002/2012, p. 409). He also describes the Eucharist as ‘a projectile launched from antiquity into our own time; it constantly turns up amongst us and says, “never forget this man”’ (Jensen, 2002/2012, pp. 409–410). Jensen’s central thought here seems to concern remembering and eating and drinking as an act of faith and will by the enquiring mind in a propositional manner: a bare memorialism. He speaks of ‘remembering’ in the sense of bringing to mind an event, completed in the past but subjectively

remembered in the present with thanksgiving but without sacramental instrumentality or dynamic remembrance and without the idea of multiple exemplification or localization. For Jensen, the Eucharist functions as ‘a perpetual and effective reminder of the sheer stature of Jesus Christ’ (Jensen, 2002/2012, p. 410). The Eucharist therefore is a reminder only, acting as the moment of remembering a past and completed action (the work of Christ) and the giving of thanks and praise for the benefits of that action in people’s lives without any realist linking between the signs and what they signify. It therefore remains fixed within a past context rather than transcending the hermeneutic of human thought.

Any discussion of Anglican eucharistic theology and the multiformity of philosophical and theological assumption underlying it, arises out of the inherent contested tradition of Anglicanism itself, especially at the present time (Heaney & Sachs, 2019). At times these differences and tensions between parties and individuals are acrimonious, but at other times the multiformity is acknowledged and dialogued (Douglas & Lovat, 2010b; Douglas, 2012, 2015b, pp. 90–107). The idea of multiformity or plurality is integral to the patterns of Christian tradition and more fundamental to the doctrine of God as a Trinity of unity in diversity than any particular issue, such as eucharistic theology, although of course, eucharistic theology shares in that plurality. Rowan Williams has argued that it is difficult to understand the patterns of Christian experience if such patterns are ‘reduced to a single form underlying their differences, or that one strand alone is valid or authentic’. For Williams ‘we need an account of God that grounds them [patterns of experience] in their plurality and so demonstrates their unity in diversity’ (Williams, 2000, p. 168). For Williams the Trinity appears as a comprehensive model for making sense of the patterns of experience in human spirituality since ‘only such a “pluralist” doctrine of God can allow for the equal validity of finding God as the fundamental and indescribable ground of all’ (Williams, 2000, p. 168). Such multiformity or plurality found in the unity of the Trinity provides an account for Williams of the multiformity found and dialogued more generally in Christian experience and this of course can include eucharistic theology. This does not mean however that multiformity or plurality is relativism and in fact Williams argues that it is the opposite of relativism, since despite the variety of the world’s forms as experienced by the human mind, there is still an underlying and absolute oneness for which perceptible difference is completely irrelevant (Williams, 2000, p. 169). Oneness and unifying structure in this sort of scheme cannot be separated from differentiation as is found in the multiformity and plurality of the patterns of Christian experience.

Multiformity, Plurality and Habermas

It was this expanded view of multiformity, informed by Professor Lovat’s knowledge of dialogue and the work of the twentieth century German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, that led me to new research. I was able to incorporate aspects of Habermas’ work in my doctoral thesis, specifically concerning a dialogue approach

to theological education in the Anglican Communion where rival and dissonant voices were active in the Anglican eucharistic tradition (Lovat & Douglas, 2009). Theological education in this wider sense, is recognised as involving much more than the mere appropriation of the hermeneutic interest of a church party or the acquisition of technical knowledge about eucharistic theology, but rather the ability to reflect critically, not only on the knowledge of the tradition as a whole but on interactions where participants engage with others in the sharing of differing and complementary views, ideas, traditions and interests. Such an approach places value on the experiences of the participants who are seeking shared understanding as well as on the specific knowledge of the tradition. It is this critical interest that distinguishes a dialogue approach from the often adversarial and acrimonious debate involved in the defence of a party position typical of the Anglican tradition. Party positions, often closely associated with the ownership of knowledge and the sacred nature of that knowledge, tend to close down the sharing of information, idealise the hermeneutic interest and emphasise the appropriation of an established tradition.

Habermas speaks of the importance of 'interactions' among speakers and hearers rather than 'actions' by particular groupings or individuals (Habermas, 1984, 1989). It is this emphasis on the experience of people and the sharing of that experience with others that moves dialogue and communicative action beyond what McCarthy, in reference to Habermas, calls 'hermeneutic idealism' (McCarthy, 1984, p. xxvi) or the conceptualising of society from the perspective of participants whilst at the same time remaining blind to the causes, connections and consequences that lie beyond the horizon of everyday practice. Any criticism of or rejection of hermeneutic idealism is founded on the belief that a person's hermeneutic interest, or the hermeneutic interest of a tradition is not sufficient to understand the complexity of experience and society as a whole. In addition, hermeneutic idealism often leads to the assumption that the appropriation of a particular hermeneutic interest is the focus of intellectual activity and this in turn limits adequate consideration of the ways in which such activity should be conceptualised and proceed with critical interest. Appropriation of a particular hermeneutic interest can idealise the knowledge and interests of that hermeneutic and so exclude the knowledge and interests of other hermeneutics by privileging particular knowledge and interests over the knowledge and interests of other hermeneutics. If this is the case, then it may mean that a tradition as a whole remains unconsidered in any adequate fashion and that can become impoverished through its concentration on the supposed purity (its sacredness of particular knowledge and interests) of particular technical and hermeneutic interests and by seeking the appropriation of any one interest with the result that critical interest is limited.

This line of thought has much broader implications that Anglican eucharistic theology and theological education and so Professor Lovat and I were able to broaden the discussion, using Habermas' insights and some historical research to higher education more generally (Douglas & Lovat, 2010c) as well as eucharistic theology (Douglas & Lovat, 2012) specifically, and eucharistic liturgies (Douglas & Lovat, 2010b). The notion of a sacramental universe also allowed us to point to the multiformity within the Anglican eucharistic tradition (Douglas & Lovat, 2011).

The usefulness of Lovat's insights in relation to Habermas's theory of communicative action were also explored in relation to interfaith dialogue (Douglas, 2014) and in my teaching in courses related to interfaith dialogue at Charles Sturt University, Canberra, Australia.

The usefulness of Habermas' and Lovat's understanding of dialogue through communicative action also provides hope for the troubled life of the Anglican Communion in its present situation. The Anglican Communion is presently convulsed by division relating to sexual morality and marriage where some have withdrawn from relationships with other members of the Communion. Some critics from within the Anglican Communion, in particular provinces from the Global South and other conservative voices, such as the Global Anglican Futures Network (GAFCON), express a conservative hermeneutic and idealised view of orthodoxy within the Anglican Communion and perceive a 'different gospel' in places like the USA and Canada, since these parts of the Communion have allowed the marriage of gay people and the ordination of practising homosexuals. GAFCON's withdrawal from dialogue and prosecution of hermeneutic idealism works against dialogue and conversation and limits the abundance of fellowship in the Anglican Communion as a whole. Such actions plunge the Communion into the exclusiveness of hermeneutic idealism at the expense of dialogue in a very diverse Communion and limits conversation on issues of fellowship and communion. It also denies that contestation can be useful as dialogue and imposes a false view of unity which is dictated by a belief that there is only one narrow orthodoxy. Rigidity and conservatism of view centres on particular moral issues and not the more universal dimension of shared fellowship and the ability to engage with others in a critical manner, even if there might be significant difference of opinion. Hermeneutic idealism is not sufficient to understand the complexity of a system such as the Anglican Communion. Dialogue, such as that outlined by Habermas and advocated by Lovat, is prevented in the Anglican Communion by the actions of some in the prosecution of a hermeneutic idealism.

The type of critical interest Habermas suggests, brings about 'the emergence of a higher-level form of life characterized by a linguistically constituted form of intersubjectivity that makes communicative action possible' (Habermas, 1984, pp. 10–11). In such a form of life, language functions as a medium of not only reaching understanding and transmitting cultural knowledge, but it also functions as a means of socialisation and social integration, reaching beyond itself. This means moving beyond a particular hermeneutic interest and into the area of the binding and bonding force of criticisable validity such as open and accepting fellowship provides through the abundance of God's love and grace. Dialogue or communicative rationality in action does not therefore mean the abandonment of subjective meaning or particular hermeneutic interests and the focussing on the intersubjective alone, but rather a redirection of critical interest. This involves an acknowledgement of the 'ego' of the speaker who has expressed experiences (the subjective aspect of a hermeneutic interest) but also the 'ego' that refers to someone as a member of a social group who is entering into an interpersonal relation (the intersubjective) with (at least) one other member. (Habermas, 1984, p. 90). For an expansion of this line

of argument see Douglas (2020, 2022a, b) all of which have been inspired and led by the work of both Habermas and Lovat.

Conclusion

The usefulness of Lovat's approach through dialogue and communicative action, based as it is on Habermas, holds out hope for the Anglican Communion, not only in the analysis of its eucharistic theology but in terms of its shared fellowship in a contested time of its being. For me, this usefulness has broadened my vision and pointed me in new directions which are emerging and hopeful.

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Chapter 15

Christian and Australian Indigenous Spiritualities of the Land



Christopher Sexton

Abstract The doctoral thesis, *A Theology of the Land: Terra Australis from Christian-Indigenous Perspectives* (The University of Newcastle, Australia, 2017) explored the relatively unresearched space between mainstream Christian and Australian Indigenous spiritualities, with special reference to creation and most especially around the issue of the Land. The investigation focused on perspectives to be found in the Hebrew Bible and Christian Scriptures that emphasise notions of God's immanence through to incarnational presence, finding points of synergy with those Indigenous perspectives that highlight the spiritual in Creation. The thesis was intended to challenge those traditional and extant views that position Christian and Indigenous spiritualities of Creation and the Land as theologically and practically incompatible, presenting the counter view that there is more room for conciliation than has been explored to this point in time. Employing a practical theological methodology, the thesis posits that finding and exploiting this point of conciliation is not merely a matter of scholarly interest but an imperative for reconciliation and for justice to be done to Indigenous peoples.

Keywords Land · Spirituality · Indigenous · Christian

Christopher Sexton died before the publication of this work was completed.

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Foreword from the Supervisors

Terence Lovat and Kathleen Butler
The University of Newcastle, Callaghan, NSW, Australia

Christopher Sexton graduated with his PhD on 21 April 2017; his topic was *A Theology of the Land: Terra Australis from Christian—Indigenous Perspectives*. We were delighted to be present for the happy occasion, little realising that it would be the last time we would see him. Chris died tragically just a few months later.

Chris was dedicated to his topic, not merely as a scholar but as a conscientious citizen, lawyer, theologian, and devoted Christian. He believed passionately that there were better ways in which colonial settlement might have approached, learned from and accommodated itself with Australian Indigenous beliefs, especially about Land and Creation. He saw Christian theology as inevitably part of the complex story that was blind to this potential for accommodation. As a result, Chris believed that institutional Christianity had lost much credibility as a custodian and protector of creation, not being the driving force for greater eco-ethical positioning and action that it should have been. He furthermore believed that enhanced engagement with Indigenous spirituality and beliefs was a way in which Christianity might come to understand its own inspirational sources better, so serving to recover this credibility.

Chris was ever conscious of his own limitations, especially about his entitlement to speak with authority about Indigenous perspectives. To offset this limitation, he took pride in his deep encounters with Aboriginal scholars and street people. This humble approach to scholarship arguably led to his achieving much of what he set out to do, namely, to construct a meaningful conversation between two spiritual traditions with far more to offer to each other than has commonly been the case.

We have picked the eyes out of his thesis in providing this heavily edited version of his doctorate.

Introduction

For Aboriginal Australians to be separated from their Land – the country of their Dreaming – is to be separated from that which gives them fundamental identity, security and life- sustenance. Yet, in a little more than 200 years, Australia’s European settlers and their descendants have seriously damaged the life-sustaining capacity of their Land. There is no escaping the fact that the Australian Christian churches represent an element of that destructive settlement. The thesis explores the cultural, socio-political and economic factors that have led to this eco-crisis, primarily from a theological perspective.

Theologically, the thesis rests on the conjunction of natural and practical theology. While natural theology (informed by select biblical theology) provides the

conceptual foundations, it is practical theology that underpins the methodology. The result is seen in the formulation of an eco-mission theological statement with recommendations for future action regarding the treatment of the Land.

Stewardship, the “greening” of the church and the caring for and healing of the Land (*cura terrae*), is presented as a pneumatological concern for the church in that it implies an awareness of the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God within Creation. The Land thus becomes a metaphor for God’s eschatological acts for healing, peace and renewal. An eschatological hermeneutics, accompanied by the *habitus* of humility, should become concrete and visible in acts of reconstruction, that is, redistribution and restitution of the Land in order to address problems of poverty and spiritual divide. Poverty alleviation and land restitution cannot be separated from one another. Poverty is the result of economic violence, the abuse of power and materialistic, ecological exploitation.

Christians purport to believe that God created the universe and holds it in existence at every moment. They believe that God delights in all the creatures of the Earth (Proverbs 8:30–31) and finds the whole of Creation good (Genesis 1:31). The two accounts in Genesis show that human beings are made in the image and likeness of God and are to be responsible for the care of all creation, a God-given role which Christians must surely take seriously.

It is therefore an urgent task for Christians today to be reconciled with all Creation and to undertake faithfully their responsibility of stewardship of God’s gifts. Achieving such reconciliation requires honest acknowledgment of the ways in which God’s Creation has been harmed through human actions and failings to act. What is needed is a conversion, a change of heart, such that future actions will be restorative.

A practical Christian theology of the Land should encourage a *habitus* of sharing and hospitality by all within the human community. At the same time, it should encourage an eco-spirituality within the demands of a holistic understanding of healing. In order to achieve this, it needs to position with humility in acknowledging the supremacism, neglect, dismissiveness and consequent destructive actions of the past and replace these dispositions with receptiveness of an ancient, wise tradition from which it can learn, including to reflect better on the wisdom inherent in its own tradition. By learning about other, we learn about self.

Research Plan

The thesis is not an attempt to interpret Aboriginal spirituality in Christian terms, nor least of all to impose or imprint a Christian template on Aboriginal religion. Rather, it seeks to explore ways in which Western Christians might be able to engage in a fuller and more productive encounter and dialogue with and reception of the unique perspectives of Aboriginal spirituality.

I also emphasise that I am not setting out to address Aboriginal spirituality as an issue of personal experience. In that respect, I come to the thesis as an “outsider”,

albeit attempting to study it employing autoethnographical, as against more distant observational methodologies. Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal (albeit as an “outsider”) accounts in order to understand cultural experience in the context of the other. This approach challenges the canonical, distant observer manner of conducting research when representing others, treating research as being as much a political, socially-just and socially conscious act as a work of observation.

The central and critical aim of this thesis is to provide a theologically sound and practical answer to this fundamental question:

If the Land is sacred, how can its life-sustaining capacity be discovered, particularly in light of the present situation of fractured relations between all Australians, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and their Land?

In response to that question, the objectives of the thesis are to support, by literature review and associated analysis, the following key propositions:

1. The life-sustaining capacity of the Land might be better discovered and appreciated when non-Aboriginal Australians enter into relationships of dialogue, collaborative action and mutual respect with Aboriginal Australians, those living and, as a mark of respect, with those since departed. In so doing, they might gain new insights into the meaning of the Land as sacred.
2. A new appreciation of the Land as sacred will provide new insight into the mystery of God as the Creator who requires the trust and cooperation of all His people to fulfil the design of the New Creation as the reconciliation in Christ of fractured relations between peoples, and between peoples and the Land.
3. The primary relationship between the Australian Aboriginal people and the Land is spiritual. Thus, for them, the Land is sacred. Connected to this land relationship is the existence of “The Dreaming”. The Dreaming remains the primary source of personal and community identity. This reality is difficult for Western philosophical categories of thought to capture or contain. It is the constant life reference for the Aboriginal people and always entails reference to the relationship of a person with natural creation; that is, it refers to a place or natural physical feature of the Land.
4. The insight offered to Australian Christians to address the imbalance in their relationship with the Land comes through an Aboriginal perspective on the Word of Scripture, as expressed in this critical question. Through the wisdom of Revelation residing in Aboriginal culture for many thousands of years, their lives and words assist and guide all Australian Christians to rediscover the Word of God in new ways in the Land.
5. The dialogue about the Land and the law remains immensely contentious, but the battle lines and the boundaries have shifted and blurred. Some things have remained constant: the Aboriginal communities, throughout the maelstrom of change in the eighteenth to twenty-first centuries, have managed to maintain a traditional sense of identity and a clear vision of their unique and perpetual relationship with the Land.

6. For Australian Christians of non-Aboriginal descent, the possibility of developing a theology of the Land must be based on discourse and founded on mutual respect between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, with the Land as the primary focus. In such discourse, the thesis argues that the question of a just restoration of rights to the Land held sacred must be of central importance; so, too, the question of responsible land use for sustainable living remains central.

Navigating Across Religious Cultures

The first dilemma to face concerns culture and the way one understands it in both a Christian and non-Christian context. The history of Christianity is necessarily tied to the development of Western culture. For most of the so-called missionary era, Christian churches focussed on concepts such as mission and conversion, assuming they had a superior religious culture to offer to Indigenous peoples. In more recent times, attitudes and approaches have changed in many of the Christian churches, ones more attuned to notions of difference and equivalence, rather than those of Christian supremacism. The thesis makes use of this shift in thinking to propose practical theological ways in which the two spiritualities might be better aligned.

One of the most difficult challenges in formulating a theology that captures the essence of the two spiritual traditions concerns the central concept of how to discern and understand the notion of divine, especially around the concept of the existence of one supreme God. The concept of one supreme God is central to Christianity since it is a monotheistic faith. A supreme God seems to be more readily accepted within the Western framework since hierarchy with an overarching leader at the top is an integral part of Western society. For instance, political systems are ordered under the head of state and even Western science functions around the notion of hierarchical classifications. Hence, ideas of structured religious leadership with laity subservient to authority figures, including one God over all of Creation, makes perfect sense. In contrast, the Australian Indigenous framework is less prepared to accept the notion of hierarchical structures as essential in any sphere. As a result, the notion of a single, all-powerful divine figure, one God, does not fit so easily. This must be understood if notions of divinity are to be conversed about meaningfully. Herein, practical and natural theology will take the Christian further than more dogmatic forms of systematic theology. Practical theology as method and natural theology as conceptual underpinning of the thesis are explicated below.

Research Insights Through Practical and Natural Theology

As a theology of action, practical theology, in the view of Gerben Heitink (1999), is derived primarily from the paradigm of the social sciences rather than the humanities for its method. It is best understood as an arm of critical theory, including an

element of phenomenology. From Jurgen Habermas, Heitink employs the use of the paradigm of “communicative action”, which safeguards the critical perspective. In the thought of Paul Ricoeur, he finds a model of phenomenological interpretation that connects the hermeneutical perspective of the human sciences with the empirical perspective of the social sciences. Heitink demonstrates how practical theology can successfully bridge the gap between “understanding” and “explaining”. Practical theology is more than mere practice; it is a strategic perspective that links the hermeneutical with the empirical in order to achieve an integrative theological model that underlies the theological task as a whole. The resultant theological task that results pertains to that of the critical researcher, rather than one merely of faith. This frees the theologian to adopt the critical distance essential to a methodology that allows reaching beyond one’s own faith position, in this case allowing the Christian theologian to engage in an exploration of Indigenous research.

The Indigenous research undertaken in the thesis similarly originates from the tradition of critical theory, one guided by the goal of liberating people from domination, powerlessness, and oppression. As such, the critical Indigenous researcher is keenly aware of the need for community members and research participants to take control of their futures and to undertake research that fosters emancipation, democracy and community empowerment in overcoming the power imbalances that have previously marginalised and even silenced certain voices (Bishop, 1987; Edwards, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Grieves, 2008).

As a practical theologian, I intend to formulate a perspective on Aboriginal spirituality which explores the need for a change of *praxis* and spirit within Australian non-Aboriginal Christians in order to enable an understanding of the Aboriginal experience that might facilitate a resolution of the problem relating to the “divide” between Australian Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, Christian or otherwise. In other words, I intend to utilize a Christian theological methodology as a way of leading to new understandings for all Australians. This stands in direct contrast to those Christian theological perspectives that were associated with colonisation and Western settlement and, as such, have been complicit in causing the problem, rather than overcoming it. In a word, this is a practical theological methodology with an action, *praxis*, orientation.

So, to the allied role of natural theology as the conceptual underpinning. I approach the thesis as belonging primarily to the field of natural theology, as distinct from biblical, revealed, dogmatic or systematic theology. Natural theology may be defined as the practice of philosophically reflecting on the nature and existence of God independent of real or apparent divine revelation or scripture. Traditionally, it involves weighing arguments for and against God’s existence. It is contrasted with revealed theology, which may be carried out within the context of ostensible revelation or scripture. Natural theology develops arguments about God based on the existence of the cosmos, the very concept of God, and different views of the nature of the cosmos, such as its ostensible order and value (Taliaferro, 2010). As seen in the work of Thomas Aquinas (1920, 1924), natural theology is the study of God and God’s attributes separately from the understandings gleaned from divine

revelation; that is to say, it is a study of God based primarily on reason. The objects of this method, Aquinas referred to as “preambles” to faith:

The existence of God and other like truths about God, which can be known by natural reason, are not articles of faith, but are preambles to the articles; for faith presupposes natural knowledge, even as grace presupposes nature and perfection the perfectible. (Aquinas, 1920, article 2)

Paul Helm (1982) defines natural theology in the following way:

By “natural theology” ... is meant the procedure of establishing or making probable certain theological propositions about the existence and character of God, from premises of a non-theological character. Not only non-theological, however, but also premises the truth of which is acceptable to any (or almost any) rational man. (p. 9)

Meanwhile, Sproule, Gerstner & Lindsley (1984), define it as follows:

Simply stated, natural theology refers to knowledge of God acquired through nature. Classically, natural theology does not stand in contradiction to divine revelation nor does it exclude such revelation. In fact, natural theology is dependent upon divine revelation for its content ... Natural theology refers to a knowledge of God acquired from God’s revelation of Himself in nature. (pp. 25–26)

The conjunction of natural and practical theology serves as the cornerstone of the thesis in that, as above, while natural theology provides the conceptual foundations, it is practical theology that provides the methodological foundations. In short, the conceptual foundation of the thesis relies upon a natural theological investigation, of the kind posited by Aquinas, while the methodology is essentially one of a practical theological application leading to the development of an eco-mission theological statement together with recommendations for future action of the treatment of the Land.

Practical theology entails a dynamic process of reflective, critical inquiry into the *praxis* of the church in the world and God’s purposes, carried out in the light of Christian Scripture and tradition, and in critical dialogue with other sources of knowledge (Heitink, 1999). As a theological discipline, its primary purpose is to ensure that the church’s public proclamations and *praxis* in the world faithfully reflect the nature and purpose of God’s continuing mission to the world. It is, in essence, a hermeneutical theology, theological reflection that begins in the context and crisis of ministry, seeking to read the texts of Scripture in light of this context and then instill action aimed at redressing the crisis.

Jurgen Moltmann (1990) suggests that a “hermeneutics of origin”, which grounds theology in Scripture alone (*sola Scriptura*), must understand that Scripture is grounded in Christ, not only historically but eschatologically:

The hermeneutics of Christology’s origin must therefore be complemented by the hermeneutics of its effects. (pp. 43–44)

Meanwhile, Douglas Hall (1989) suggests:

The hermeneutics of practical theology seeks what is normative in Jesus Christ, as the inspired source of the written Word and the objective reality of Christ as the *praxis* of the Holy Spirit in the context of ministry. (p. 105)

I will discuss the relevance of context and locus in a practical theological approach, as well as the interrelatedness of theory and *praxis* in seeking an adequate response to God's intentions for the world as determined by a natural theological appraisal and as perceived from the biblical tradition. Wolfhart Pannenberg (1976) writes:

As a theory of the churches' activity which include the history of the Church, practical theology will have to recognise the fundamental importance of missiology to its general theme. The mission directed to all mankind is not simply the practice of which originally created the Church, but also the ultimate horizon on which the whole life of the Church must be understood. By its origin in mission, the individual community is drawn into a history of divine election which looks towards a future in the kingdom of God—it is inserted into a Christian life-world which transcends its own particularity. (pp. 438–439)

One of the main focal points of this thesis concerns the Christian church and hence, within the Church, the underpinning theology becomes critical. Christians' faith in God and their attitude to the world from a theological perspective will most likely determine their theology of mission and this will primarily determine the nature of their mission in society (Borthwick, 2012).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's seminal work that goes by the name of *Creation and Fall* underscores the "earthboundness" of his theology, where his "theology of life" gradually assumes the shape of a "theology of earth" (Rasmussen, 1996). Bonhoeffer (1997) himself describes the creation of humankind in this vein:

God fashioned humankind out of dust from the ground and blew into its nostrils the breath of life. Here, again, everything takes place in a very down-to-earth way. (p. 75)

Bonhoeffer illustrates that the Church exists both as an end in itself as well as a means to a greater end, namely, the eschatological reality of the "already" and the "not-yet". This is particularly relevant because it means that this unique form of human assembly exists for the sake of itself, as God's missional intention is to devise a New Creation, as well as a gathering of love and new life, where people can live in restored communion with God and with one another.

In the context of the topic of this thesis, a distinction should also be made between "theology" and "spirituality", especially in the trickier waters of Christian and Aboriginal cultures. While the term "theology" is often applied in a way that refers to systematic reflection on the intellectual content of Christian faith, its body of beliefs and the discipline of study focused on them, the term "spirituality" is often applied in a way that refers to the reaction against a purely materialistic world view.

Here, Vicki Grieves (2008) makes a valid and forceful point in arguing that an Aboriginal theology cannot simply be grafted onto Western knowledge and culture. In particular, she refers to Bill Edwards (2002), a missionary with the Pitjanjatjara people, who cautioned against the assumption that an Australian Aboriginal theology exists within Christianity because the deeper exploration of language and culture reveals a more substantial contribution to the contemporary Australian search for meaning:

Indigenous spirituality cannot be grafted onto Western ontology as a "perspective" and essentially a part of the same belief system – it is a vibrant and enduring tradition in its own right. It is important to consider parallels with other Western belief systems in this context,

such as modern psychology. Edwards, too, warns that most of the contemporary rhetoric about spirituality reflects the modern emphasis on the self, individualism, with little or no consideration of others....

The concept of spirituality pervades everything; it is ever-present in the physical, material world. (Grieves, 2008, p. 375)

It is the aim of the thesis to demonstrate that there is no such divide, and that such an artificial separation is to their mutual impoverishment.

Conclusion

Some of the conclusions that I reach at the end of the thesis include:

1. Unlike in Western thought, it is impossible to divorce Aboriginal culture from spirituality and a sense of the sacred. Unlike in Western thought, there are no discrete elements in Indigenous culture that can be categorised as “religion” or “spirituality”. As such, the values of the community are representative of the spiritual values and laws that have been passed down from one generation to the next, often through Dreaming stories.

What is required of Western scholars in the development of a holistic and systemic theology of the Land is a more informed and deeper exploration of the concepts of “spirit” and “spirituality” so that what is brought into modern discourse is a more authentic reflection of traditional patterns of thought and expression. Aboriginal cosmology can then make a real and genuine contribution to the contemporary search for meaning, especially in the domains of the definition of spirit, the relationship of spirit to the environment, and in relationships between people, with other living things and with the world around them.

2. The New Creation, conceptualised in the work of Bonhoeffer and others, enables and empowers the Christian community to reclaim the broadest base of revelation in the pre-Christian era. What was excluded is now able to be included. In the concept of the New Creation, the whole Christian community can welcome the tradition, rituals and the law of Aboriginal Australians as a central dimension of the Creator’s revelatory activity in the Land. This is not, however, to presuppose that either unified Christian or Aboriginal communities exist.
3. There needs to be a paradigm shift within the caring ministry of the Christian churches. Care of the soul (*Cura animarum*) should be supplemented by care of the Earth (*cura terrae*). For this to be achieved, a theology of the Land should address the reality of those who are displaced, dispossessed, dislocated and poor. The Land invites, indeed compels, a practical theological ecclesiology to introduce an ethics of *habitus* as reflected in the New Testament virtue of humility. Humility as *habitus* ensures that *cura terrae* does not succumb to the exploitation of *dominium terrae*.
4. The Church needs to devise and employ programs of environmental and eco-theological education at various levels. State and national jurisdictions, in

particular, need to build on fundamental policy statements in specific ways to ensure that eco-theological or eco-mission issues remain an essential part of the Church's awareness. This would be applied, for example, in the form of public statements, group studies with mission advocates, and the like. An eco-theological awareness also has to extend directly to the general worship life and spirituality of the Church. It is arguable that, in many instances, ecologically-based worship remains largely a fringe activity, and that worship reflecting an Earth-awareness is not common at the local level.

The heeding words of Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2008) are particularly instructive:

At this level, "critical Indigenous qualitative research" is always already political. The researcher must consider how his or her research benefits, as well as promotes, self-determination for research participants. According to Bishop (1987), self-determination intersects with the locus of power in the research setting. It concerns issues of initiation, benefits, representation, legitimacy, and accountability.

Critical Indigenous inquiry begins with the concerns of Indigenous people. It is assessed in terms of the benefits it creates for them. The work must represent Indigenous persons honestly, without distortion or stereotype, and the research should honour Indigenous knowledge, customs, and rituals. It should not be judged in terms of neo-colonial paradigms.

Finally, researchers should be accountable to Indigenous persons. They, not Western scholars, should have first access to research findings and control over the distribution of knowledge. (p. 15).

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) suggests:

In listening to the stories of Indigenous storytellers, we learn new ways of being moral and political in the social world. We come together in a shared agenda, with a shared imagination and a new language, struggling together to find liberating ways of interpreting and performing in the world. (p. 37)

When Australians of non-Aboriginal descent grasp the spiritual relationship of the Australian Aboriginal people to the Land, they can begin to rediscover and value their own fundamental relationship with the Land. In the discovery of a new relationship of respect for the Land, Australian Christians will find that the sustaining myth of Creation, namely the God of Creation, is revealed in the Land. With a new appreciation of the Land as sacred, Australians will be motivated to work for the restoration of the Land where it has been degraded due to the overuse or misuse for the sake of production for profit well beyond sustainable levels.

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Chapter 16

The Proportionality Principle in Ethical Deliberation: A Habermasian Analysis



Terence Lovat

Abstract The chapter will explore proportionality as a methodology for ethical deliberation that straddles the two ends of the ethical debate. At one end is an approach referred to as absolutist, universalist or deontological, an approach that rests on belief in givens, an authoritative regime of fixed and immutable rules governing all right and wrong. Herein, the end can never justify the means. At the other end is a school of thought referred to commonly as situationist, consequentialist, utilitarian or teleological, an approach that assumes there are no fixed rules, that each human being and societies as-a-whole are free to gauge rights and wrongs relative to the situation at hand. Herein, the end can justify the means. Proportionality rests between these two extremes. It acknowledges that there are authoritative rules that determine ethical deliberation but that they are not static and able to be applied in unqualified fashion to any situation. Proportionality connotes the rigorous methodology by which individual humans and societies consider the generalised rules and how they might be applied most ethically in the situation at hand. It is proposed that exploring Habermasian epistemology facilitates enhanced appreciation of the benefits that can be derived from the principle of proportionality.

Keywords Ethical deliberation · Proportionality · Deontology · Teleology · Habermas

Introduction

A scientific age demands a scientific methodology for ethical deliberation and a moderately post-scientific age demands a moderate scientific methodology. A moderately post-scientific age is one that still relies on science yet is more conscious of its limitations than was once the case. Much of the history of ethics is characterised

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by an antiscientific absolutism, to be found in both Hellenistic philosophy and the theological ethics of the Abrahamic religions. Ethical right and wrong is decided by authorities, be they the lawmakers or religious hierarchy. Contemporary successors to this ethical approach battle for credibility in an age of scientific analysis and freedom of thought. On the other hand, some of the more radical attempts to inculcate scientific analysis and individual freedoms into ethical decision-making, sometimes referred to as situationist or utilitarian, have been found wanting as apparently directionless or simply failing to respect limits to autonomy. It is into the space between these two extremes that the principle of proportionality fits. The term is derived from Aristotle's notion of proportionality in finding the mean position between extremes. It is a position that seeks to preserve the best of absolutist and situationist approaches while avoiding their inherent pitfalls. In that sense, it is proffered as a viable approach to ethical deliberation in a moderately post-scientific age. The chapter will attempt to justify this assertion by exploring the strengths and pitfalls of the hard ends of the debate, so to see more clearly the benefit of proportionality. It will do this by examining how the debate has played out over time and in philosophical, theological and epistemological regimes. Finally, it will apply a Habermasian lens to the examination.

Ethical Positionality Over Time: Deontology Versus Teleology

I have argued elsewhere (Lovat, 1991, 1994, 2004) that it is possible to assign ethical positions from different eras and in different regimes to debates to be found in the classical Hellenistic period of Western philosophy. For instance, Plato's ethics (Plato, 1987; Annas, 2008; Brown, 2017) are normally associated with a school of thought known as deontology. From his teacher, Socrates, Plato learned that the goal of ethical behaviour is *eudaemonia*, happiness or wellbeing, and that this goal is best served by conforming one's behaviour to universal principles concerned with the Good, the Just and the Right. At the end of the day, these principles are fixed and, in some sense, come from above. For Plato, they came from the gods, and they conformed with the way a perfect society, as conceived of in his *Republic*, should function. Everyone's wellbeing, from the rulers to the serfs, would be served best when they conformed their actions to these universal principles. Hence, deontological ethics connotes a set of rules that applies everywhere regardless of the circumstances.

Augustine of Hippo (Augustine, 1972), the great Christian theologian of the fourth century of the Christian Era, goes down in history as an ardent Platonist who saw in the latter's philosophy the moral justification for the church as it was developing during that century. Augustine's *City of God* theology re-worked much of Plato's imaginative thought regarding the *Republic* to claim that the church was its enlivened reality, the true perfect society under God. The Republic's wise ruler was the Pope and all the layers of Plato's pyramidal hierarchy could be applied equally to the church. Just as Plato justified the need for an absolutist, or deontological,

approach to ethical deliberation based on the inherent corruptibility of human senses, so did Augustine through a theology of Original Sin that rendered humanity incapable of ascertaining the Good, the Just, the Right without direction, one coming ultimately from the Pope through the bishops and clergy. For Augustine, the only good and informed conscience was one that conformed with the directionality of the church.

For the most part, the Christian church, Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant, has strayed little from Augustine's theological ethics, although the Orthodox and Protestant churches have differed on the role of the Pope. Nonetheless, the architecture of Platonist Augustinianism and the deontology thereof has persisted as the most usual Christian ethical standard, and the same could be said of Judaism and Islam. In recent decades, archetypal Christian ethicists of the twentieth century, such as Paul Ramsey (1970a, b), John Rawls (1971), Alan Donagan (1977), John Harvey (1979) and William May (1989) fundamentally based their positions on the deontology espoused by Plato and Augustine. A common position taken by them is that ethical standards ultimately fall over when they are not seen as universally binding in all circumstances.

In contrast, and as conveyed to us by Plato (1989), the approach to ethical deliberation of Protagoras, the Hellenistic Sophist, would seem to represent the obverse of Plato's deontology. Instead, Protagoras is seen to offer a philosophical justification for teleology, an approach that suggests, contrary to deontology, that the end can and indeed should justify the means. In its extreme form, this situationist, or utilitarian, approach can impel that the end is all that matters and therefore the only ethical consideration to be made. It is sometimes described as relativist, in contrast to absolutist, because there are no universally binding rules, no Good, Just or Right that should stand over the human community and determine how it should act regardless of the circumstances. It is labelled situationist because the particularities of each-and-every situation need to be considered in order to determine optimal ethical action. Arguably, Protagoras's most memorable epithet was that "man (sic) is the measure of all things", meaning, in essence, that each human being has the inbuilt capacity through their own sense experience to work out what optimal ethical action requires in the particular situation in which they find themselves. We can surmise that it was this belief that spurred Plato on to make Protagoras a particular target of his vitriol, impelling Plato to underscore the inherent corruptibility of human sense experience and hence the need for adherence to universal principles overseen by divine authority.

While it is difficult to find ardent and explicit exemplars of Protagorean teleology in early Christianity, the nature of Gnosticism in the early church (Roukema, 2010; Freeman, 2011) suggests that it contained elements of theological ethics closer to teleology than Platonic deontology. The Gnostics' central beliefs were that each individual was imbued with powers of God-given wisdom that superordinated any terrestrial authority's attempts to subdue that wisdom. While ethical deliberation as such was not especially prominent at the time, such central beliefs would seem to suggest that the Gnostics would have been opposed to absolutist-oriented ethics. The fact that Arius (Williams, 2002), the archetypal Gnostic theologian of the fourth

century, risked his very life in opposing attempts being made at the Council of Nicaea (325CE) to subjugate Christology to the will of the Emperor, added to the fact that Augustine of Hippo saw Gnosticism as the greatest threat to the architecture of his *City of God* theology, offer more than a clue that in Gnostic Christianity lay the germ of a teleological approach to ethical deliberation.

In later Christianity, no clues were needed to determine the position of an ethicist like Joseph Fletcher (1966, 1979). In his book, *Situation Ethics* (Fletcher, 1966), he argues that modern scientific methodologies demand a new approach be taken to ethical deliberation. In what is essentially an attack on the dominance of deontology in Christian ethics, Fletcher argues that all the conscientized Christian needs to make ethical choices is to follow the spirit of *agape* (love) modelled by Christ in the gospels. While Fletcher has been criticised as effectively establishing his own universalism in the determinative notion of *agape*, Harvey (1979) even suggesting that the notion runs through Fletcher's work like a greased pig, nonetheless the interesting philosophical point is that Fletcher clearly assumes that the individual Christian is imbued with the level of autonomous wisdom that they are able to make valid ethical choices without the need for any authority to guide them. In this sense, Fletcher presents as a Gnostic of sorts, one pursuing an overtly teleological approach to ethical determination. Other prominent twentieth century ethicists who took a similar position are J.J. Smart (1961), Marcus Singer (1961) and Peter Singer (1975, 1979, 2001).

Hence, ethical debate in the twentieth century can be seen to have replicated similar philosophical and theological ethical debates in the ancient and early medieval worlds, so setting the scene to consider the place of the proportionality principle.

Proportionality: The Mean Between the Extremes

Aristotle (1985; Urmson, (1988), pupil of Plato and inheritor of the Socratic and Sophist legacies, would rely on all that went before him but, at the same time, change it. Of all the ancients, Aristotle was the scientist, a disposition shown in a range of ways and influencing many scientific disciplines for millennia (Leroi, 2014). Not unexpectedly, he took much of this disposition into his philosophy, especially in relation to his belief in natural law (Burns, 1998), a belief that humans possess intrinsic values that allow them to know right from wrong. He naturally takes this belief into his approach to ethical deliberation, an approach that relies in part on the tradition he inherits, especially through Plato, but in part on a stream of thought most inimical to Plato. For Aristotle, there was a supreme good, or well-being principle (*eudaemonia*), just as Plato proffered, but not one that could simply be applied as an ideal in all situations. In a word, being true to eudaemonic principles meant using the wisdom bestowed by natural law to make the kinds of judgements that fitted the reality of the situation.

As suggested, in Aristotle, we find much that is owed to his teachers, Plato and Socrates, but also much that resonates with the perspectives of the Sophists,

especially Protagoras. His *eudaemonic* ethics are concentrated on what will achieve *eudaemonia*, wellbeing or happiness in the richest sense, for a human being. In that respect, his goal is identical to that of Plato and, presumably, Protagoras. The difference is that whereas Plato believed the key to achieving *eudaemonia* lay in conforming one's mind and actions to the universal principles of the Good, The Just and the Right, and Protagoras saw the key in rejecting the very idea that such universal principles even existed, Aristotle found a middle path. The closest he came to defining the Good, the Just and the Right was as "right proportion" (Urmson, 1988), a path of moderation. "Moderation in all things" is the epithet commonly attributed to him. Moderation is the means by which *eudaemonia* can best be achieved (Hughes & Fitzsimons, 2016).

In Aristotelian terms, moderation provides the philosophical basis for the principle of proportionality in ethical deliberation. Otherwise known as proportionalism (Cavanaugh, 1995), proportionism (Lovat, 1994, 2004; Lovat & Gray, 2008; Walker & Lovat, 2016) or proportionate reason (Kockler, 2007), the principle of proportionality holds that the soundest, most moral, and viable ethical deliberation occurs in the space between adherence to universal principles, on the one hand and, on the other hand, sensitivity and attentiveness to the circumstances surrounding any particular situation requiring ethical decision-making. To put it simply, it is a compromise between deontological and teleological approaches that, like all compromises, proffers to underscore the strengths of both approaches while circumventing their weaknesses (Curran, 1999).

Thanks partly to the Christian Crusades of the Middle Ages and the bringing to the West of scholarly Islamic works, including the preservation of Aristotelianism almost lost to the West at the time, Thomas Aquinas (Aquinas, 1936) would craft a philosophical theology based firmly in Aristotelian natural law theory. In ethical deliberation terms, this move shifted much of Christian theology from reliance on Augustine of Hippo's closed Platonic deontology to Aristotle's openness to a measure of teleology. In effect, according to Aquinas, humans could employ their God-given wisdom to reflect on their world, their own humanness and even postulate truths about the world beyond. God had given humans the power to think for themselves, within reason, including the capacity to consider universal principles but also ascertain precisely how to apply them in the circumstances in which they found themselves. In a word, each individual human possessed the potential for an autonomous informed conscience. Aquinas spoke of *synderesis*, an inborn faculty that urges us not only to seek universal truths but to apply them in practice in particular situations (Aquinas, 1936, I. q. 79, a.12). This is classic Aristotelian *eudaemonic* ethical theory.

Aquinas employed the notion of *synderesis* to connote the kind of proportional judgement needed to achieve the optimal *eudaemonia* in the situation at hand. The way in which the notion of "double effect" (Kockler, 2007; McIntyre, 2019) is attributed to Aquinas suggests a practical means by which proportional judgement could be applied to a particular situation. Moreover, the ethical approach known as Virtue Ethics could be interpreted as a practical approach to achieving the optimal *eudaemonia* granted the situation at hand (Hursthouse & Pettigrove, 2018).

The approach is based firmly on Aristotle's doctrine of the "golden mean" whereby virtue is conceived of not as an idealised entity so much as a practical mean between two extremes.

In the twentieth century debates about such matters, Christian theologians like Richard McCormick (1973), Timothy O'Connell (1978) and Charles Curran (1968, 1999) represent much of the Aristotelian and Thomist approaches to ethical deliberation. McCormick, especially, is explicit in utilising the notion of proportionality in fleshing out his concept of "pre-moral" deontological principles that set directions but are not binding and might well be modified depending on the context of the ethical action under consideration. He also employs the language of ethical deliberation as entailing "ambiguity in moral choice" to capture the same essential proportionality principle (Gustafson, 1974). Meanwhile, and as illustrated above, Curran employed the notion of a "compromise principle" to achieve much the same end as McCormick (Grecco, 1991). Beyond Christian ethics, proportionality has continued to enjoy support from moral philosophers, especially in relation to issues of causation (Shoemaker, 2001; Yablo, 2003; Raatikainen, 2010; Zhong, 2020).

Nonetheless, for all the apparent benefits of finding the mean between extremes and preserving what is best at both extreme ends, proportionality seems often to fall foul of both sets of opponents (Vaassen, 2022). Deontologists rail against it in the same way they rail against situationism on the basis that there seems no point in acknowledging universal principles that can be massaged or apparently ignored if the situation seems to require it. Certainly, this has been the position in recent times in the Catholic Church, where the proportionality espoused by the likes of McCormick and Curran has been roundly condemned and these scholars censured (Roberts, 1997; Fox, 2010). Equally, ardent teleologists find it unconvincing that a scientific methodology should be hampered by having to take account of universal principles that, in their view, are fatuous at best (Fletcher, 1966).

Hence, proportionality as a mainstream form of ethical deliberation seems to have weakened since its highwater mark in the late twentieth century. Kalbian (2002), in an article titled *Where have all the proportionalists gone?* suggests the school of thought persists subliminally through the persistence of Virtue Ethics only because it seems less threatening to the devotees of either of the extremes. It is interesting to reflect that McCormick's and Curran's fate resembles that of Aquinas who, for much of his life, was an object of suspicion and, in the years after his death, saw much of his work condemned by the church (McCabe, 2008). Furthermore, in turn, their fate resembles that of Aristotle himself whose work was roundly rejected as insidious in the years after the Fall of the Roman Empire and the ascendancy of the Roman Church in the West. Were it not for his works being preserved in the Byzantine Empire, and especially by Muslim scholarship from the seventh century, they might well have not been recovered in the West, as they were from the ninth century onwards (Lohr, 1969). Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (Eco, 2004) captures in fictional form the reality of the threat posed to conservative medieval forces in the church by Aristotle ("the Philosopher") and Aquinas ("the Theologian"), a threat that could even impel and justify murder, as the novel proffers.

History therefore suggests that there is something about the proportionality principle in its attempt to find the mean, the point of moderation, the compromise, that is profoundly threatening to those who prefer the certainties or freedoms they find at either end of the spectrum to facing the fact that in most ethical deliberation, there will be few certainties and inevitable limits on freedom. Whatever the reason for the persistent resistance to proportionality, it seems its credibility and usefulness would be well served by reference to a firmer philosophical and epistemological underpinning. It is in this context that I turn to Jurgen Habermas, the German philosopher and epistemologist.

Habermasian Ways of Knowing

Epistemology is about knowing and about knowing how we know what we claim to know. One of the strengths of the epistemology of Habermas (1972, 1974, 1987) is in exposing the limitations of any claims to know that rely on simple hierarchies of truth, such as proposed in deontological regimes. At the same time, it shows up the limitations of an over-reliance on the kinds of social scientific methodology we find in teleological schema. In resolving these deficiencies, Habermasian epistemology proposes a way of knowing that builds on yet supersedes both deontological and teleological schema. My own proposition is that this new way of knowing has potential to provide the greater philosophical and epistemological fortification to a proportionality account of ethical deliberation required of our moderately post-scientific age.

Habermas's explanation for apparent divisions in knowledge are that they result from "cognitive interests", virtually functions of the brain. These cognitive interests are what impel knowing. There are three cognitive interests and, hence, three ways of knowing. First is an interest in technical control that impels a knowing he describes as "empirical analytic". This knowing serves the human interest in the "facts and figures" elements in knowledge, otherwise referred to as descriptive knowing. To know about the First World War, as an example, is to have some knowledge of how long it went on, which countries were involved, how many died, were wounded, survived, etc. For Habermas, empirical-analytic knowing represents an important first step in knowledge of anything. It is, however, just a stepping-stone to more profound forms of human knowing. Habermas's second way of knowing is impelled by the cognitive interest in understanding the meaning of whatever it is that is being considered. Unlike empirical-analytic knowing, the contents of which can be stored in printed records or a computer, "historical-hermeneutic" knowing requires intersubjectivity, human communication and attached reflection. Grasping the meanings entailed in the First World War necessitates communicating with others, either directly or indirectly through accessing the stories of those who experienced it and their accompanying reflections and, finally, through our own reflections on their reflections. The cognitive interest behind it is more complex and the knowing that results is more human, less likely to be found in computer storage.

The third way of knowing, which conforms with Habermas's supreme and most human way, results from the cognitive interest in being emancipated, free from any captivity, including to truth being denied us. It is one thing to know the facts about the First World War and another to know the meanings behind the facts, but it is supremely human to want to know that what we know is the truth about the War. The way of knowing that results from this human interest is described as "critical" or "self-reflective". In either the first or second ways of knowing, we are liable to delusion. In the first way of knowing, we might be given to accept certain "facts" that suit either our own or our cultural group's predispositions or biases, for example, the First World War from the British, rather than German perspective. In the second way of knowing, we might similarly accept uncritically the meanings that fit the reflections of stories told from the British side, rather than, say, the Turkish side. In other words, it is possible that we can still be insulated from critiques that are outside our immediate frame of reference. As such, there is no necessary commitment to ongoing critical appraisal of the nature and function of the ways of knowing themselves, to the sources of our knowledge and the uncovering of partial, skewed or blatantly fallacious evidence, nor, finally, to self-knowing, to uncovering the truth about ourselves as the source of our knowing, granted our own potential blind spots and prejudices. Without this third way of knowing, any learning does little more than offer information about facts or understandings that are outside and apart from oneself. It is critical, self-reflectivity knowing that forces one to scrutinise and appraise the adequacy of those facts and understandings and to evaluate their meaning for oneself. Hence, without this way of knowing, the so-called facts and understandings derived from knowledge-gathering can become a means of bondage, rather than emancipation, bound to our own lifeworld and blind to the life-worlds of others.

Applying Habermasian Epistemology

Many of the assumptions about knowledge that are implicit in Habermas's first way of knowing apply closely to the deontological frame of reference. The common feature of various schema of deontological ethics is in the search for the "facts" of ethics, those givens from some authoritative source that should determine all ethical deliberation, regardless of the situation at hand. Understanding the epistemic basis of deontology allows us to see better both its strengths and weaknesses. For Habermas, knowledge of the "facts", in the empirical-analytic sense, has its place in the search for truth but, if taken to be the fullness of knowledge, results in an inadequate and disempowered understanding. The alleged givens are filtered through human perception and intersubjective communication that is invariably unacknowledged in deontological schema. The failure to see this leads to what Habermas describes as illusion and sterilized knowing.

Apart from the apparently naive assumption concerning the possibility of accurate and universal agreement about givens, another aspect renders this way of

knowing less than adequate as a complete way of ascertaining truth. Things are ever-changing in the human community, especially around matters ethical, about how the Good, the Just and the Right apply to gender roles, social class or even the legitimacy of slavery. Hence, even if we accept the importance of conceptions such as the Good, the Just and the Right, it seems they are more than mere static, timeless conceptions detached from dynamic change and evolution in the human community. It seems that to remain viable across time, they require ongoing reflection based on engagement in intersubjective communication. Herein, the second way of knowing, historical-hermeneutic, emerges from the cognitive interest in interpreting for meaningfulness.

Historical-hermeneutic knowing has some natural affinity with the teleological approach to ethical deliberation. By eschewing the notion of universal principles that should determine such deliberation in all circumstances, the teleological approach is freed to consider all the elements entailed in any particular situation, be they the intentions of the moral actor(s), the details related to the circumstances, or the consequences of the action under consideration. In Habermasian terms, this is what historical-hermeneutic knowing is all about and the method applied is a pseudo social scientific one. It serves well the goal of teleologists like Fletcher (1966) who, on the basis of applying this kind of social scientific methodology in his situation ethics, was able to overturn the traditional deontology in Christian ethics around issues as diverse as abortion, euthanasia, and cloning, to name a few. In the secular world, Singer (1975, 2001) shows the potential of teleology to overturn even stronger erstwhile taboos in his work on animal liberation and interspecies sexual activity.

For Habermas, intersubjective communication and its allied understanding has a firm place in the quest for truth but historical-hermeneutic knowing, like empirical-analytic, is nonetheless lacking an essential ingredient, especially for those who would argue, like the ardent teleologist, that it constitutes a sufficient basis for knowledge on its own. Its weakness is in the very terms of intersubjectivity because the very notion of intersubjective understanding assumes that there is a yardstick for knowing beyond each individual's subjectivity. On what basis, however, does this knowing rest if all universals are denied? What is the goal of intersubjective understanding if there is nothing beyond it? For Habermas, following this path can lead to a bottomless whirlpool of relativity whereby anything can ultimately be justified, including some of the abject immorality he experienced firsthand in the time of the Third Reich (Lovat, 2022). Hence, the need for some balance between these ways of knowing, a compromise or perhaps a new way of knowing altogether, one that combines the best of each while avoiding the worst.

Outhwaite (1994) argues that it is in Habermas that we find the blending and balance of what is best, and to be preserved, in Enlightenment thought with what is best about the attraction of postmodernist thought. We might take this assertion as a clue to the balance we find in his ways of knowing theory because this balance resembles the kind of moderation, mean between the extremes, or proportionality to be found in Aristotle and Aquinas. In Habermas's "critical" or "self-reflectivity" third way of knowing, impelled by the cognitive interest to be free in one's knowing, we find the balance between attendance to the notion of universal givens as well as the need for

these givens to be accommodated to fit the realities of a dynamic human community engaged in intersubjective communication in search of truth. Within the terms of the balance, we find Habermas proposing not so much a compromise and mutual pollination between two different ways of knowing as we find a new way of knowing altogether. While this unique way of knowing rests partly on the balance between the objective and the subjective, between concern with facts and concern with understandings, it issues in a knowing which is quite beyond either of them or even the coalition of both.

It is useful to consider the proportionality principle in ethical deliberation in light of this new way of knowing. As suggested above, Aristotle's natural law theory should be understood as something beyond a mere compromise between the extremes of Platonic and Sophist thought. While it does have the practical effect of balancing some of the demands of these thoughts, it is clearly proposed as providing the basis for a knowledge that transcends either or both (Burns, 1998; Murphy, 2002). The way it is presented, this knowing involves a methodological as well as a cognitive component. That is, the knowing comes not only from cognition of the supreme good (*eudaemonia*) but from the making of judgments about how, when and where it should be applied in particular instances. Accordingly, the notion of the "golden mean" that stands behind Virtue Ethics is not so much a relativistic stance between two harsher extremes as it is an entirely different and purportedly superior way of both conceiving of and ascertaining ethical truth. Again, we find the notion of a conjunction of right thought and right action as essential to the effecting of this truth. As noted above, Aristotle employs the phrase "right proportion" as indicative of this conjunctive notion (Gregory, 2001).

Similarly, when Aquinas employs Aristotelian thought for his own natural law theory, he intends it to be more than a mere compromise between Augustinian deontology and pre-Renaissance sense-perceptual theory (Murphy, 2002). It is proposed as *the* theory by which truth can be apprehended. Augustine's apparently blind faith in the givens of revelation and his Platonic rejection of the capacity for individual informed conscience are both superseded. At the same time, Aquinas adheres strenuously to the reality of deontological truth. It is a natural law theory that rests partly on deontological and partly on teleological methodology, a knowing that relies on revelation as interpreted by church authority but also on a God-given capacity for humans to employ their sense-perception in ascertaining how this revelation might apply in their own lives. His conception of *sensus fidelium* suggested that the common conscience of the faithful might finally be the surest arbiter of ethical deliberation, so strongly did he believe that God had planted an inborn capacity to ascertain ethical truth in the individual. McIlroy (2007) points to Aquinas's belief that the light of reason had been implanted by nature, hence by God, in every human to guide them in their actions.

As with Aristotle, so with Aquinas, this is more than a compromise or balance between Platonic deontology and Sophist teleology. It is a whole new way of understanding human capacity to ascertain ethical truth through ethical deliberation. As with Aristotle, it is a way that involves both conceptual and practical engagement on the part of the individual. Aquinas captured this conjunction between the cognitive

and the practical in his notion of *synderesis*, an inborn disposition and so representing a gift from God, yet one which directed what Aquinas (1936 I q. 79 a.12) described as “practical intelligence”. *Synderesis* rendered humans with the capacity for truth, but truth could only be had by one who both sought out and put into practice the truth that was discovered. Again, we find in Aquinas a theory of truth, a way of knowing, which assumed a conjunction of the cognitive and the practical, of the conceptual and the methodological.

The value of proportionality against an unqualified absolutism is that the former contains a flexibility and a facility for addressing ethical issues in a contemporary way that the latter lacks. Its value over and against situationism is perhaps a little harder to grasp. Utilitarian positions in general have, after all, held somewhat of a monopoly over the past few decades in their claims to suitability to our new pluralist society. Hence, the popular tendency from the 1960s onwards has been to treat ethics as mere social science, with all the research methodology and consensus-seeking stratagems proper to the hard end of social science. The trend is seen most clearly in the phenomenon of the “Institutional Ethics Committee”, a coagulation of stakeholder representatives that is charged with determining ethical protocol in any given instance. Its method of attaining same is one of investigation, deliberation, and democratic resolution. In theory, there are no “givens” that should be privileged and no stakeholders with more rights of discernment than any other. In extreme cases, the results of deliberation can be uploaded to software and the supposed ethical protocol downloaded on a spreadsheet. If this was suitable to the forms of plurality found in Western societies of the 1960s to 1990s, it is questionable how adequate they are today. Contemporary societies like Australia, the USA, UK, and Canada, with their growing portions of fundamentalist Christianity, significant Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist populations, and the increasing trend for seeking answers to life’s big questions through “New Age” movements and non-scientific ways of knowing generally, are pluralist in a way that much of pure-bred social science can fail to note or admit. In this new pluralism, there is an apparent distrust of the mundane world of the social scientist, and a strong seeking of positions best described as “other”. In this sort of pluralist society, hard-core situationism and utilitarianism, along with their methodologies of ethical deliberation, require modification (Lovat, 2004).

It could be argued that Habermas’s critical, self-reflectivity knowing, with all its epistemic assumptions, can help us to re-visit the ancient and medieval thoughts of Aristotle and Aquinas respectively and, in so doing, to understand them in fortified fashion. In particular, a Habermasian gloss on the notion of “right proportion” might allow us to see that, deeply embedded within is a theory of truth that does not merely build on, synthesise or complement competing theories, but transcends them to provide a new and superior form of knowing. Aristotle, Aquinas, and Habermas have it in common that this form of knowing is, ultimately, the only way of knowing the truth.

So, I propose the epistemic grounds for a far more fortified account of the proportionality principle in ethical deliberation, one that can offer a compromise between two less viable extremes but, at the same time, offer far more than that

merely practical expedient. If one follows the epistemic line of the Habermasian gloss on Aristotle and Aquinas, it is not merely that the extremes are less viable but that they are less epistemically sustainable as well. While it might be attractive for some to believe in deontological “givens” and for others to hold to the supremacy of intersubjective understandings, the Habermasian verdict is that neither will deliver the truth. Both are liable to delude and disempower. Only in “right proportion”, a quest for truth that builds on yet supersedes both in its conjoining of cognitive apprehension and practical action, can truth, including ethical truth, be attained (Lovat, 2004).

Conclusion

The chapter has attempted to summarise key points in the debate around ethical deliberation, a debate found in ancient, medieval, and modern times, across cultures and the religious/ secular divide. For the past two and a half millennia, one finds a pattern of opposing streams of thought, classed broadly as deontological and teleological, with attempts to compromise between them in a stream of thought referred to as the proportionality principle. While history would suggest that proportionality often fails to satisfy either opposing end, the chapter proffers that it possesses unique potential to underpin the kind of ethical deliberation needed in a moderately post-scientific age, such as found in contemporary times. The chapter utilises Habermasian ways of knowing theory to fortify the credentials of the proportionality principle as suitable to ethical deliberation in these times.

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Chapter 17

Personhood, Autonomy, Death and Dialogic Consensus in Settings of Life-Supporting Biotechnology



Paul Walker

Abstract The chapter explores issues of life and death decision-making in the context of modern technologies of life support. It utilizes traditional bioethical principles and makes use of a Habermasian analysis of dialogic consensus in forging ways of stakeholder collaboration on consensual decision-making.

Keywords Autonomy · Biotechnology · Dialogic consensus · Life support · Personhood

Introduction

Given that contemporary medical biotechnology is able to maintain physiological life for prolonged periods, it is appropriate that we revisit, from a moral philosophical perspective, how we might allow an autonomous human person to die in settings of life-support technology (Walker & Lovat, 2015b). This question is important. In 1979, Peter Singer wrote that it is the characteristics of rationality, autonomy and self-awareness which are the basis for human beings having the right to life; and that respect for autonomy cannot apply when there is no capacity for autonomy (Singer, 2011). In 1996, Tristram Engelhardt wrote that if a human being no longer has rationality, there is no longer a claim to personhood. There is no longer any autonomy to affront (Engelhardt, 1996). In 2004, James Walter wrote that ‘when the properties that define humanhood are absent, the patient is not considered a moral subject who possesses any rights to healthcare’ (Walter, 2004).

So, these two words—personhood and autonomy—are important. They underpin the question ‘how may an autonomous human person die in settings of life-supporting technology?’ My purpose here is to re-visit the decision-making process

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around commencing and withdrawing biotechnological life support in critical care situations.

From a secular perspective, life may be understood to exist at two levels. The first is biological or physiological life—the beating of the heart, the ventilation of the lungs. The second is the essence or the meaningfulness of life—our personhood. Correspondingly we have two understandings of death (McMahan, 2003). The first is the death of the human biological organism, the second is the death, as ceasing to exist, of the human person; the loss of the essence or the meaningfulness of life. Death owing to disease is only morally evil if it is caused by human action. However, since life support biotechnology is quite capable of maintaining biological or physiological life, there is at least a potential to control death, by choosing to withdraw life support. Does our withdrawal of life support, which is then followed by the death of our patient, make us morally culpable? In a court judgment handed down in 2013, a 17-year-old patient failed in his application to be allowed to refuse potentially life-saving treatment. In denying his application, the judge said ‘the sanctity of life is a more powerful reason for me than his respect for the dignity of the individual’ [The Sydney Children’s Hospital Network v X [2013] NSWSC 368 para 49 (Supreme Court New South Wales 28 March 2013)]. Positioning the sanctity of life, regardless of its quality, as the first principle of medicine, may not be helpful. Singer has argued that rather than prioritize the sanctity of life, we ought to aim to reduce suffering (Singer, 2011).

To further examine the question of how, from a moral philosophical perspective, we may allow an autonomous person to die while supported by medical biotechnology, it is helpful to consider what we conceive a *person* to be, and what conceptions of *autonomy* may be useful to the discussion. Then we are able to consider a moral philosophical basis for assessing the benefits v the burdens of on-going care for our patient on physiological life support—dialogic consensus (Walker & Lovat, 2016).

Personhood

I consider four possible conceptions of human personhood. These are (1) being made in the image and likeness of God, (2) being human born, (3) having rationality, and (4) a relational conception of personhood.

The first conception of personhood is that a person is ‘made in the image and likeness of God’. Leaving aside discussion about what God actually looks like, the chief characteristic of this understanding of personhood is often categorized in terms of having a soul infused from the ‘moment of conception’. Several issues are at least potentially problematic with this characterization. First, there is no single ‘moment’ of conception. Second, if ensoulment defines personhood, then when does personhood begin? This will obviously have implications for commencing and terminating life support in the very young. Twinning is possible during the first 10–14 days after conception. So arguably a person (singular) can’t be said to exist until there is no longer the potential to twin, that is to become two persons. Third, if

the singleton conception does twin, where does the second soul come from? Does the first soul die and two new souls arrive, or does the first soul split into two, or does the first soul go to the first person and then the second soul to the twin?

The second conception of personhood is that a person is born of a human mother, looks identifiably human and has physiological life—breathing, heart beating, digestion. Or has the potential to. For example, babies, who cannot yet walk or talk, other things being equal, will do so in time. That is, being human born, of itself, confers personhood. So, under this human-born understanding of personhood, when does personhood begin? ‘At conception’ is complicated by issues around timing, twinning and ensoulment, so arguably 14 days. Or does personhood in fact begin at birth? Two thoughts are offered here. First of all, an anencephalic, if identified as a foetus, in most jurisdictions can have an abortion at any gestational age (Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, 2010) (ethics committee consultation may be required). However, if born, to then kill the child is illegal, in almost every jurisdiction (Verhage & Sauer, 2005). So, is there something of moral relevance in the act of drawing that first breath of air into our lungs? Does it imply some change in the moral status of the foetus-now-child with anencephaly? Secondly, consider an older mother, who undergoes amniocentesis for Down syndrome (Taylor, 2000). It is negative but there is a chromosomal inversion, of uncertain significance. After discussion, she and her family decide to abort. Post-mortem shows the foetus to be normal. It may be that from the perspective of that foetus almost certainly, and from that of the mum and her family very probably, it would have been better to go to term, then to evaluate the clinical condition, and then to consider ending life.

The third conception is that personhood entails the ability to think, to feel, to speak, to be self-aware, to have autonomy, to have moral agency, and to be able to be held responsible. These I group together as ‘rationality’. For Aristotle, the actuality of thought was life (Aristotle, 1952). Renee Descartes, in saying ‘I think therefore I am’ (Descartes, 1999) separated rationality, from being a biological human being or homo sapiens. He argued that it is rationality that makes us a person. Under these criteria then, certain humans are denied personhood: foetuses, anencephalics, infants, young children, the unconscious, the intellectually handicapped, the psychotic, demented and those in a persistent vegetative state. Unless we introduce the notion of potential—which re-captures foetuses, infants, young children; and reversibility—which re-captures the unconscious, However, this conception of personhood still leaves aside anencephalics, psychotics, the intellectually handicapped, the demented, and those in persistent vegetative state.

I suggest however, that these three conceptions of personhood are a limited and partial abstraction from the whole human person. Our personhood, the essence or the meaningfulness of our life is embodied and embedded in a shared world and it is this that makes us worthy of moral respect. In this conception, our personhood develops in the course of the experiences we have in our life. It is necessarily situated in the world of others—the understanding of phenomenology. Thus, the fourth conception I offer is that personhood is relational. Our being in the world of persons is defined by our lived experiences, our inter-subjective bonds. Our identity exists within the concept of relationships in a community of others. Further, our

vulnerability when critically ill and on biotechnical support, should be a significant focus of moral concern as clinicians who care for these patients. So that is why, when I see my aged and dementing father in a critical care unit, it is his lived experiences, my memories, our family bonds, which defines his personhood, and not his soul, his appearance, or his rationality.

Autonomy

I also consider four conceptions of autonomy (Walker, 2018). Amongst the traditional four pillars of medical ethics: (Beauchamp & Childress, 2009) autonomy, beneficence (actions should promote good), non-maleficence (actions should minimize harm), and justice (obligations related to fairness), autonomy is considered to be the first and most important principle (Raanan, 2003), more important even than beneficence. Philosophically, several interpretations of autonomy in clinical settings are possible. Immanuel Kant's autonomous patient makes decisions free from the controlling influence of others, exclusively in accordance with their own values (Deligiorgi, 2012). John Stuart Mill's neo-liberal patient has the liberty to express their freedom, even to harm themselves, provided they do not harm others (Mill, 2002). Edmund Pellegrino's autonomous patient would argue that to override a patient's choice for any reason is to violate their good as a human being (Pellegrino, 1985). On these conceptions of autonomy, patients have the right to demand and to receive all treatments, without consideration of feasibility, cost or resource limitations.

However, these three conceptions are inadequate because they are derived from rational self-legislation (Kant), they give the individual primacy (Mill), even to the exclusion of clinicians who are experienced in critical care (Pellegrino). Ultimately, they are individualistic, and do not sufficiently recognise that our critically ill patient supported by biotechnology, is in fact in a world filled with others who care for them, and with limitations to their individual freedoms set by the reality of their clinical condition. Put another way, the lived body (personhood) is more than 'a thing', it includes our situation in the world (de Beauvoir, 2011). So, I contend that bioethical autonomy in our post-modern epoch, derives from our relationship with others in our moral lives. It is in our interdependency that we find our moral worth. As much as personhood is relational, so too is autonomy.

Death in Settings of Life-Supporting Biotechnology

Seeking to fortify the foundations for death in settings where physiological life is supported by biotechnology, may be especially relevant if we feel that may be in some way causative of death, through our involvement in the withdrawal of life support technology.

Traditionally, three frameworks have been considered. The first is the Principle of Double Effect. This is applicable when a single action can have two (or more) outcomes—one (or more) good and one (or more) harmful. For example, the dropping of bombs on munitions factories, with the identifiable, but unintended, consequence of killing civilians alongside, is justified under the principle of double effect. The second is the Principle of Doing versus Allowing, which distinguishes between acting and not acting. It contends that actively holding someone's head under water is different from standing by and watching them drown. Active euthanasia by lethal injection is held to be different from passive euthanasia by withholding antibiotics for pneumonia. I see troublesome deficiencies in both double effect and in doing versus allowing. Arguably, both the situation of prescribing treatment to relieve suffering while foreseeing the death of the patient, and the withdrawal of life support with the foreseeable death of the patient, are identical in terms of cause and effect. In either case, an inevitable sequence of events is triggered. I see no need for the moral philosophical perspective to disguise this by making it appeal to other principles. Indeed, if patient autonomy is uppermost in our decision making, then arguably informed consent to an action that may cause death, is more fundamental than whether we do, or we do not, plan to hasten death.

The third principle is what used to be called ordinary versus extraordinary care, which later became known as proportionate versus disproportionate care, and is most usefully termed Benefit versus Burden analysis. It looks to the quality of the life to be lived, not just its quantity; in terms of the good which may follow from intervention or withdrawal of intervention.

Two points need to be made here. First, our contemporary era is characterized by a wide plurality of ethical perspectives, values, social and cultural beliefs, and ways of living. Consequently, significant cultural, religious, social, ethno-political and value diversity have developed within our communities (Walker & Lovat, 2019). There are equally viable concepts of the 'good life', and how it should be lived; which may not be readily compared in terms of what we might term their 'goodness quotient'.

Second, in critical care situations, more useful than speaking of 'the best interests' of the patient, under a virtue ethics framework the end-goal of the clinician-as-Agent is to maximise the *good* of the patient in the sense of health in all its dimensions. Edmund Pellegrino identified a hierarchy of four Goods of the patient (Pellegrino, 1985). First is the Biomedical Good—an instrumental good—for example, the correct drug in the correct dose, given to the correct patient. From the perspective of clinician-patient dialogue, providing sufficient factual information, in a way that the patient can understand, is the basis for patient autonomy. Next is the Perceptual Good of the patient—how they understand the situation and values the treatment options from their perspective. This good is necessarily subjective and reflects conceptions of the quality or the meaningfulness of her life. Next is the Good of the patient as a Human Person—grounded, in Pellegrino's understanding, in patient autonomy. The highest Good is the *summum bonum* (however defined). Also relevant here is the epistemic perspective of Jürgen Habermas, who described three 'ways of knowing' (Habermas, 1972). These are empirical-analytic knowing

(which focuses on collecting empirical ‘facts’), historical-hermeneutic knowing (which focuses on understanding the meanings of the facts), and self-reflective or ‘critical’ knowing—the essence of which is searching out the truth via reflection, as the basis for *praxis* or practical action (Walker & Lovat, 2015a).

Dialogic Consensus

In order to explore with our patients just what the benefits and the burdens of potential treatment options are for them, in their unique context, we need to have a conversation or dialogue; or several of those. These dialogues provide a firm foundation for the framework of benefit versus burden analysis from a moral philosophical perspective if they are grounded in the twin conceptions of personhood and autonomy as being based upon relationships, and also upon the actual clinical reality of the patient on life supporting technology. The dialogue should be inclusive, non-coercive and reflective. It involves mutual understanding of the values held by the patient and their family and others whom they see as significant, set against the actual reality of their situation of critically illness.

Participants in the dialogues may include the patient (if able to), their family and significant others, as well as the clinical team who are caring for the patient. The ideal dialogue explains the facts of the condition, including uncertainties around the diagnosis and prognosis, uses both verbal and non-verbal language in a non-coercive way, and explains meanings in a way which all the participants understand. Participants have equal opportunities to speak and to question, participants are willing and able to empathize with each other, and power differences aim to be neutralized so they have no detrimental impact upon consensus. Sufficient time must be made available.

The dialogue seeks to reach consensual agreement about which treatment or no-further-active-treatment option maximises the good of the patient. *Consensus* connotes general agreement, following argumentation, in reaching a decision about what is best for the group which is making the decision. As such, consensus is necessarily tolerant of value pluralism. Consensus is not unanimity—which denotes agreement by all participants, both publicly and privately. Nor does it denote acquiescence – which is agreement out of a sense of benevolence, of altruism, of coercion, or another reason that denies true argumentation. It does not imply a voting procedure or a simple majority decision, or ‘ethics-by-committee’.

Habermas’ twin theories of his discourse theory of morality (Habermas, 1993), and his principles of communicative action (Habermas, 1990), underlie consensus following dialogue. Habermas’ discourse theory of morality generalises the Kantian categorical imperative determined by ethical monologue, to a wider consensus-seeking dialogue. In communicative action, speech acts are orientated to understanding, and aim towards truth-seeking. The use of language (linguistic or non-verbal communication) aims to reach a consensual decision in a dialogue in which all participants are “free to contribute and have equal opportunities to do so”

(Scambler, 2001). Dialogic consensus (Walker & Lovat, 2016), in which each of the words ‘inclusive’, ‘non-coercive’ and ‘reflective’ are important, is fundamental to Petra Gelhaus’ ‘right moral attitude’ for clinicians—summarized by her as empathic compassionate care (Gelhaus, 2012).

Thus, decision-making about rightness or wrongness in the situation at hand is relocated away from being merely a monological reflection upon imperatives, utility, or an *agapeic* calculus, into a social space cognizant of the other, where these ethical values are brought into the light through dialogue. Such a process is more likely than not to achieve the morally correct decision in the particular situation under consideration, can withstand moral scrutiny and be action-guiding, without however laying claim to absolute moral authority in all circumstances. Put another way, both the process of dialogue, properly constituted, and the consensual outcome itself, have moral authority vested within them. If this process of dialogic consensus is understood and reflected upon, the family are also less likely to have lingering doubts about whether the normatively best-in-the-actual-circumstances decision was made.

Pragmatically, in order to achieve consensus, participants in the dialogue may need to step away from their preferred position, having reflected upon the perspectives of other participants in the dialogue (Walker & Lovat, 2016). One way to avoid the ethical distress which may follow, is to be aware that conflicting values are not unexpected, and will become more commonplace as we become an increasingly multi-faith, multicultural society. Participants must also be aware of the difficulties with the epistemology of ‘knowing’; an awareness that the dialogue is a moral encounter amongst persons means that our moral integrity requires that we be tolerant of conflicting values. In critical care situations this is also a route to keeping the relationship between doctor and patient on-going, despite potentially conflicting values.

Conclusion

In our post-modern epoch, personhood is properly based upon relationships. Autonomy is also properly based upon relationships. A consensual dialogue about ‘where does the good for this patient lie?’ is one philosophical precept which provides a moral philosophical underpinning to fortify the foundations of the benefit versus burden approach. This in turn allows the autonomous human person to die in settings of life-supporting biotechnology.

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Chapter 18

From Pacifism to Tyrannicide: Considering Bonhoeffer's Ethics for the Anthropocene



Dianne Rayson 

Abstract Dietrich Bonhoeffer's (1906–1945) engagement in conspiracies to assassinate Hitler appears to some as a distinct movement from his earlier position on pacifism. This paper examines the contributing factors to this apparent contradiction and addresses Bonhoeffer's ethical rationale for religious violence in the particular context of the Third Reich. The paper recognises the currency of Bonhoeffer's decision-making in contemporary political scenarios and in relation to philosophical positions on ethics. Bonhoeffer's ethical frames of Christonomy, *Stellvertretung*, and *Sachgemäßheit* (vicarious representative action and contextuality) are discussed in the context of his engagement with the underground Confessing Church and in opposition to the *Deutsche Christen* (German Christian) church's complicity with the Reich. The article then turns towards the seminal issues of the Anthropocene, climate change, mass migration, and biodiversity loss, asking whether religious violence might be justified in the face of this existential crisis.

Keywords Ecoethics · Ecojustice · Climate change · Violence · Proportionism · *Sachgemäßheit* · *Stellvertretung* · Pacifism · Christonomy

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Introduction

How did the Lutheran pastor and theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945), justify his involvement in the conspiracies to remove Hitler—or did he? Is there an ethical and theological rationale for endorsing tyrannicide? What lessons can be learnt from the Confessing Church and the conspirators of Germany in the Second World War that provide direction for ethical agency in the Anthropocene? This chapter considers the situation of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the circumstances of Germany under National Socialism for clues to the ethical considerations Bonhoeffer made. It references Bonhoeffer's positions on peace and violence within the changing political context, drawing on the key ethical moves that appear to have driven Bonhoeffer's willing participation in the resistance and conspiracy movements. It then looks for an application of these considerations to the contemporary problem of climate crisis, asking what this might mean for religiously motivated protest and action in the Anthropocene and under what conditions religious violence might be justified. If the Anthropocene itself is already characterised by the violence of humans over against other species, ecosystems, and planetary systems, then a discussion of whether violence can be legitimately utilised in combatting the problem is a timely and necessary one.

Bonhoeffer continues to capture portions of public imagination perhaps less for his Christological theology than for the compelling biography of the Lutheran priest who opposed Hitler and was executed by one of the tyrant's final acts in the closing days of the war. As I will describe, Bonhoeffer's story is more complex, and his actions deeply embedded in his theological and ethical reasoning. This approach led Bonhoeffer to create the neologism, *Christonomy*, to characterise the ethical framework guiding his behaviour, an approach I will explicate below. However, the circumstances causing what appears to be the drastic step of an apparent 'pacifist' to turn 'assassin' has led to the term 'Bonhoeffer Moment' in contemporary discourse, one that seems to ask, 'when is the circumstance so dire as to warrant resistance, conspiracy, and even tyrannicide?' 'When is it "right" to become unlawful?' 'How "bad" must circumstances become to permit "righteous" opposition to the state in peaceful and nonpeaceful actions?' 'When is violence justifiable and good achievable through acts of evil?'

Such questions have recently been asked in the United States (US) in the face of President Trump's acts against immigrants and refugees, for example, and, if not endorsing, then at least acquiescing to the use of violence on city streets (Hale & Williams, 2018). Media reports attest to a presidency characterised by racial injustice and vilification, scapegoating of various 'others' (e.g., Mexicans, Muslims, transgender people, people with disabilities), and the privileging of white evangelical Christians. Has the US reached a position of state 'evil' that only an outrageous act of violence could curb the ongoing conditions that are such an affront to human dignity in that country?

A similar argument had previously been used to justify the murder of a doctor with a long history of performing abortions on post-viable foetuses. In May 2009,

Scott Roeder demonstrated his opposition to abortion, and in his terms, 'shutting down the concentration camp', by killing Dr. George Tiller at church in Kansas. Roeder's interpretation of Bonhoeffer (that violence is justified if the situation demands it) provided the imprimatur to commit murder for just such a higher cause. This situation was more complex than a rational, ethical analysis, given that Roeder apparently had a history of mental illness and was associated with radical religious organisations (Altum, 2003) but it demonstrates how Bonhoeffer can enter contemporary thinking.

In a different type of example, The Bonhoeffer Four, a group of Christian anti-war protesters, were inspired by Bonhoeffer to undertake an act of civil disobedience in July 2009. Following Bonhoeffer's injunction to 'jam a spoke in the wheel' (Bonhoeffer, 2009, p. 365), in this case, of the military/industrial complex, they walked into a Queensland military base and disrupted a major US/Australia joint live-fire exercise (Moyle, 2013). Whilst maintaining a distinctly pacifist approach, their actions demonstrate the tension between breaking the law to achieve a 'more just' outcome: the greater good for the community by limiting military violence. Again, playwright Elizabeth Avery Scott opens her Bonhoeffer drama, *Lies, Love and Hitler*, with the theology lecturer asking his 'students' (the audience) if, given hindsight and the opportunity, they would kill the tyrant (Scott, 2009).

The 'Bonhoeffer Moment' might seem to posit the question whether the time has come to legitimately undertake an extreme, unlawful, and even violent act. Ironically, the 'Bonhoeffer Moment' idiom was popularised by Eric Metaxas, the evangelical biographer of Bonhoeffer, to critique the presidential candidacy of Hillary Clinton (Belz, 2012; Metaxas, 2010). In the hands of more liberal Christians, it was then directed *against* Trump who, covertly at least, was compared to Hitler (Haynes, 2018). Some highly regarded Bonhoeffer scholars (Haynes, 2018; Hale & Williams, 2018) have announced the 'Bonhoeffer Moment' but stopped short of indicating on what basis they make this claim, let alone what actions it might provoke. Importantly, they have not advocated violence.

Bonhoeffer's name has been co-opted to justify a range of political ideologies and ends in a veritable Rorschach test for ethical justification (Mauldin, 2019; Lindsay, 2014). A key difference between these examples and Bonhoeffer's own ethical reasoning is in the lack of ecclesial context, a crucial oversight. An examination of Bonhoeffer's views on violence and their relationship to his ethics of responsible action speak into the extraordinary circumstances of his age. The key question now is how they might legitimately and authentically speak into our own age, namely, the Anthropocene.

Theological and Social Context

While Bonhoeffer was never directly implicated in the many assassination attempts on Hitler, according to Eberhard Bethge (2000), he was definitely involved in the resistance to Hitler from the start. As the war developed, he was clearly implicated

in the Canaris conspiracy, utilising his role in the *Abwehr* Military Intelligence to provide information to the allies, especially through his friend, the Bishop of Chichester, George Bell.

Bonhoeffer's actions can be seen to grow progressively more concerted commensurate with the actions of the Third Reich. One perceives a 'scaling up', for example, from his initial radio broadcast condemning the Führer in the days after Hitler's accession to power (1 February 1933) through to the response to the Aryan paragraph (August 1933). Bonhoeffer responded almost immediately to certain laws: the Malicious Practices Act, the Enabling Act, and the Law for the Reconstitution of the Civil Service (containing the Aryan paragraph), which served to undermine society in several ways. The first (21 March 1933), permitted prosecution for disloyalty to the state, the second (23 March), suspended the Weimar constitution and gave Hitler dictatorial powers. The third (7 April) 'wrote racial/ethnic discrimination and ideological conformity into the law of the land' (Rasmussen, 2009, p. 12).

The immediate impact for Bonhoeffer of these state moves concerned the church's ability to define and govern its own membership, that is, whether the church could baptise people of Jewish heritage (Bonhoeffer, 2009, pp. 361–371). Hence, his 'Response to the Aryan Paragraph' was initially an ecclesiological response and at the same time speaking truth to power, ultimately prefigured his ethical writings on church/state relations. In the follow-up document, 'Memorandum: The Jewish-Christian Question as a *Status Confessionis*' (Bonhoeffer, 2009, pp. 371–373), Bonhoeffer articulated the crucial questions Hitler effectively posed to the church, namely, 'Is the state's intervention in the church's affairs sufficient to compromise the truth of the gospel and Christian freedom?' 'Has a state of confessional protest been reached by the proclamation of the Aryan Paragraph?' 'By prohibiting Jewish Christians from church membership, has a line been crossed between "matters of convenience and doctrinal difference" according to the *Lutheran Book of Concord* (Bonhoeffer, 2009, p. 366n14)?' As theologian and churchman, Bonhoeffer's concern for the impingement of state into church freedom was his initial priority. He states:

Nothing is more dangerous than for us to allow ourselves to be hoodwinked by statements as to its relative harmlessness. The constantly repeated effort to befooled the questions relative to it is intended to keep us from seeing clearly the fact by the very substance of which the Church is endangered, and thus wrest out of our hands the decision for which we are responsible to the Church alone. Do not let us be deceived by all sorts of material considerations about the significance or insignificance of the matter, and lose sight of its spiritual substance, which demands a spiritual decision. (Bonhoeffer, 2009, p. 372)

The formation of the *Bekennende Kirche* (Confessing Church), in which Bonhoeffer was instrumental, a key component of the *Kirchenkampf* (Church Struggle) was in part a critique of the *Deutsche Christen* (German Christian) church's desire for political power and allegiance, and in part a response to Nazi interference in church affairs. It followed the formation of the Pastors' Emergency League between Lutheran and Reformed church leaders and theologians in 1934 and the Barmen and Dahlem Declarations: statements of confession. Bonhoeffer went on to lead the

underground seminary at Finkenwalde (where he wrote *Discipleship*) and at one point to help evacuate a small number of Jews out of Germany ('Indictment Files Against Dietrich Bonhoeffer', Bonhoeffer, 2006, p. 444). Bonhoeffer was progressively banned from speaking in public, and the Finkenwalde seminary was outlawed. Despite this, in the winter of 1940–41, he was recruited to the Office of Military Intelligence by his brother-in-law, Hans Dohnanyi, supposedly using his international ecumenical contacts for the benefit of the Third Reich. In fact, he was undermining Nazism and garnering support for the resistance movement (Bonhoeffer, 2010, p. 566).

Returning to the essay, *The Church and the Jewish Question*, Bonhoeffer (2009) outlines three potential courses of action that the church might take *vis a vis* the actions of the state:

first ... questioning the state as to the legitimate state character of its actions, and holding the state responsible for what it does. *Second* is service to the victims of the state's actions. The church has an unconditional obligation toward the victims of any societal order...the church may under no circumstances neglect either of these duties. The *third* possibility is not just to bind up the wounds of the victims beneath the wheel but to seize the wheel itself. Such an action would be direct political action on the part of the church. (pp. 365–366, italics original)

Seizing the wheel, or idiomatically, jamming a rod into it to disable it, is the thinking behind the conspiracy to remove Hitler and install a caretaker government that would sue for peace with the allies. When Bishop Bell provided this intelligence from Bonhoeffer to Churchill, Churchill saw it as, 'simply a case of the highest personalities in the German Reich murdering one another' (Bethge, 2000, p. 895). Hence, no assistance was forthcoming.

Over time, the violence and excesses of the state violated human rights, challenged the structure and functioning of society, and threatened the future of Germany. Bonhoeffer and his co-conspirators' actions therefore also became more radical, reflecting a move from an ecclesial concern to a more universal one. It is within this circumstance that Bonhoeffer's decision to participate in the conspiracy to remove Hitler occurs, preferably through *coup d'état* but, if necessary, through assassination—a move that is *prima facie* contrary to both the decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount. Such an act would necessarily bring guilt upon their heads. It is this preparedness to accept guilt, or 'actively embracing guilt' (*Schuldübernahme*) that is the corollary of responsible action:

Responsible action takes place in the sphere of relativity, completely shrouded in the twilight that the historical situation casts upon good and evil. It takes place in the midst of the countless perspectives from which every phenomenon is seen. Responsible action must decide not simply between right and wrong, good and evil, but between right and right, wrong and wrong. (Bonhoeffer, 2005, p. 283)

Freedom to choose the responsible action in a given situation, not from an unlimited number of choices, but the freedom to choose the action that best reflects God's own action, specifically *for* others, is the mark of Bonhoeffer's Christian ethic. That is to say, Christian ethics do not rely on principles, and action cannot appeal to principles for exoneration from guilt (Bonhoeffer, 2005, p. 284). Should such an action

necessarily incur guilt then that is an acceptable consequence, and one returns to the mercy of God in repentance: ‘The man who acts out of free responsibility is justified before others by dire necessity; before himself he is acquitted by his conscience, but before God he hopes only for grace’ (Bonhoeffer, 2005, p. 14).

Guilt is not to be sought. What is to be sought is the will of God wherein becoming guilty might be a result of responsible action. As Matthew Puffer (2019) has proffered, willingness to accept guilt for actions that are unlawful, sinful, but necessary, might not be central to Bonhoeffer’s ethics, but it is decidedly a feature. Bonhoeffer was prepared to break the law of the land and accept the consequences—which ultimately resulted in being hanged for treason. That is to say, participating in violence or lawbreaking is not good in itself and one must expect and accept the consequences, legal and soteriological. A tension exists between God’s law and God’s will: being untruthful or plotting tyrannicide for a greater good demonstrates this tension. Rather, one must seek to actualise truth and bear witness to God’s reality of reconciliation with humanity and creation.

Bonhoeffer recognised that taking the life of another, even Hitler, was morally wrong and he and the conspirators would ultimately be guilty before God. However, his decision in its favour rests on what he considers an authentic reclamation of Luther’s exposition of grace and law. Luther formulated his doctrine of justification by grace alone in response to his own struggle with the burden of the law: hence, Bonhoeffer’s (2001) term, ‘costly grace’. Luther’s *costly grace* came to be interpreted as *cheap grace* within German Lutheranism, treating grace as a presupposed principle rather than a result of confrontation with the law (DeJonge, 2017). Theologically, Bonhoeffer attempts to restore the two aspects of Luther’s doctrine of justification: that justification is God’s gracious act *contra* works-righteousness, and that costly grace requires obedience (DeJonge, 2017, p. 233). The outworking of *cheap grace* that Bonhoeffer opposed was both a willingness to sin “so that grace may abound” (Rom. 6:1) and an unwillingness to act in obedience. Bonhoeffer’s deliberate engagement with the ambiguity of ethical action in the Second World War was an expression of his understanding that costly grace requires discipleship of the type that pursues and is obedient to the will of God for the world.

The second factor in Bonhoeffer’s decision making was less theological and more ecclesial. Bonhoeffer’s resistance activity can be understood in three phases, according to Michael DeJonge, whereby the church’s own response to the Third Reich is a key factor. At first, Bonhoeffer operates within the institutional framework to argue for *status confessionis* against the implications of the Aryan Paragraph as a form of church proclamation and confession. Then, as the German Church allies itself with the Third Reich, Bonhoeffer facilitates the creation of the subversive Confessing Church and Finkenwalde underground seminary. In the final phase, Bonhoeffer places a ‘new emphasis on the resistance of the individual who acts in free responsibility’ (DeJonge, 2017, p. 240):

By late 1938 he judged that the Confessing Church was not in a position to offer the necessary witness in reaction to the Nazi abuse of the basic structures of life or their now obvious pursuit of expansive war plans. (Strohm 1989, cited in DeJonge, 2017, p. 239)

Bethge (2000) calls this the 'low point in the church struggle' (p. 596). He also returns to the notion of Bonhoeffer's willingness to accept guilt and at the same time distancing himself from implicating the Confessing Church in that guilt. This would seem to be both before God and the state: Bonhoeffer's decision to resist is a declaration of his own freedom to act and therefore the guilt is his alone and not that of the church. At a practical level, should he be pursued by the state then he has distanced himself from the church and lessened its culpability (Bethge, 2000).

Bonhoeffer's resistance actions indicate a commensurate response to the changing demands of the situation. Upon deeper interrogation, Bonhoeffer's ethic is one in which the disciple participates in the reconciliation of Christ and bears witness to it. I will now explore this ethic further in applying it to our current context.

Pacifism, Peace Ethic, and Proportionism

Despite the Mennonite interpretation of Bonhoeffer as a pacifist offered by authors including Mark Nation and Stanley Hauerwas (Nation et al., 2013; Werntz, 2011), one that interprets Bonhoeffer in the peace church tradition and aligns him with John Howard Yoder, it is more accurate to describe his approach to worldly engagement as a 'peace ethic' (Green, 2015). A peace ethic could be defined as the desire for peace as the precondition for human flourishing that is aided and enabled through positive peacemaking by people of goodwill. Whilst a peace ethic is committed to peace, unlike pacifism it does not necessarily apply a blanket, universal non-violence standard over every situation because to do so would be to rely on philosophical principles, something Bonhoeffer (2005) appears to reject. By this interpretation, we can say that what ostensibly began as outright pacifism in Bonhoeffer's early years soon became established as a peace ethic that endured through his short life and is reflected in his theology. DeJonge (2015) has undertaken careful work demonstrating that Bonhoeffer's peace ethic is grounded in fundamental concepts of Lutheran rather than Anabaptist doctrine, and that Bonhoeffer himself differentiated his position from *Schwärmer* (enthusiasts) who were essentially pacifist. Clifford Green (2005) asserts that a consistent foundational peace ethic runs through Bonhoeffer's discipleship, theology, and resistance and is not compromised by his conspiratorial move.

The influence on Bonhoeffer of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount, in both its simplicity and significance, is well established (Kelly & Godsey, 2001). Taken at face value, Jesus's words indicate the desirable and blessed state of living a non-violent life. In his 1932 lecture, *Christ and Peace*, Bonhoeffer endorses simple obedience to the commandment of Christ. Grace without obedience is no grace at all, it is 'cheap grace', a theme he would develop in *Discipleship*. For Bonhoeffer, the significance of the Sermon on the Mount lies not in its absolutes or principles, but in the particular worldview that it espouses. That view is from below, or from 'the underside', as Dahill (2009) puts it. Such a view contrasted significantly with Bonhoeffer's privileged life experience up until his exposure to the Black church in

Harlem, during his study abroad in 1930–1931. Reggie Williams (2014) has articulated the pivotal event of experiencing the ecclesial depth, social connection, and mutual responsibility of the Black church, as well as seeing firsthand the contrast of poverty, discrimination, and inequality in the US. Williams claims that the gravity of this altered worldview, now from below, cannot be overstated. Bonhoeffer (2006) himself wrote that it ‘has been of the greatest significance for me up to the present day’ (p. 368). Ethical responsibility and social engagement were no longer philosophical exercises or academic pursuits for Bonhoeffer. As the history of Germany, indeed Europe and much of the world, unfolded through the 1930s and into the 1940s, Bonhoeffer was at least attempting to look outside his own position of privilege and bring the vulnerability lens to bear. At Christmas 1942, he wrote a reflection, *After Ten Years*, and drafted a short section, ‘The View from Below’:

It remains an experience of incomparable value that we have for once learned to see the great events of world history from below, from the perspective of the outcasts, the suspects, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed and reviled, in short from the perspective of the suffering. . . . we learn, indeed, that personal suffering is a more useful key, a more fruitful principle than personal happiness for exploring the meaning of the world in contemplation and action. (Bonhoeffer, 2010, p. 52)

Bonhoeffer’s theology is one that recognises full immersion in the world as the place and purpose of the Christian, and it understands the messiness of the world as a penultimate state to the ultimacy of the eschaton. We live in what Bonhoeffer (1997) calls ‘the ambiguous twilight of creation’ (p. 130) where blessing and curse are mixed, like the *Zweilicht* or two lights that cannot be separated. In such a penultimate reality, violence is inherent. The ethical challenge is to negotiate the competing interests and seek the overarching good that represents God’s will for reconciliation.

The state and church are co-agents in the penultimate kingdom of God and act as a check and balance on each other for the benefit of the community. As such, they are, by default, mediators of violence. Where the state has a duty to police and defend the people, the church has a duty to ensure the state does not overstep these limited uses of violence and call it out either when there is not enough law and order, or when there is too much. For Bonhoeffer, that is precisely what happened under the Third Reich and what ultimately provoked his acquiescence to tyrannicide after a long journey of resistance. His essay from June 1933, *The Church and the Jewish Question*, which outlined the theological argument against the Aryan Paragraph, has this to say about the relationship:

As long as the state acts in such a way as to create law and order—even if it means new laws and a new order—the church of the Creator, Reconciler, and Redeemer cannot oppose it through direct political action. Of course it cannot prevent individual Christians, who know that they are called to do so in certain cases, from accusing the state of ‘inhumanity’; but as church it will only ask whether or not the state is creating law and order. (Bonhoeffer, 2009, p. 367)

After supporting the subversive Confessing Church, Bonhoeffer later distanced himself from it so that the church would not be implicated in the conspiracy against Hitler. He was taking those actions not on behalf of the church, but as an individual

willing to take on the guilt that such actions deserved. That he was co-conspirator with family, friends, and colleagues from outside of the church demonstrates his commitment to participating in the reality of Christ for the sake of the greater good. For Bonhoeffer, this apparent paradox of a world that is clearly compromised and yet imbued with the immanence of Christ—a world in which the Kingdom of God has commenced but is not fully manifest—is clarified by the vulnerability of the Suffering God. God's revelation is therefore *ambiguous* and partly hidden, and 'seen' only by those with faith. Christ then, is incognito in the world, according to Bonhoeffer, hiding himself in human weakness (Bonhoeffer, 2009, p. 356).

Bonhoeffer developed his peace ethic on the foundation of such a Christology. A peace ethic, therefore, creates the climate for peace and strives to achieve it, whilst recognising that it is idealistic and utopian to think that it is entirely achievable. It is the pursuit of peace (Heb. 12:14) that characterises the disciple's life as a manifestation of costly grace. This is Bonhoeffer's view of Christian discipleship, that the individual and the church community, in imitation of Christ, must oppose and resist the state where it exceeds its moral duty to protect its people. Insofar as it is possible, this should be by non-violent resistance, echoing Bonhoeffer's interest in Gandhi's work in South Africa and India. When resistance cannot be peaceful, it is not that violence is justified. Rather, choosing violence as a last resort becomes part of the costliness of grace that the Christian has received in Christ. Bonhoeffer considered himself guilty before God and totally reliant on God's mercy.

Bonhoeffer's best friend and biographer, Eberhard Bethge, when confronted in 1977 by a paper attempting to demonstrate Bonhoeffer's pacifism and his 'agonised movement' to resistance and acceptance of just war theory, said the following:

this kind of thinking—the man of *Discipleship* may be pacifist and he becomes a volunteer for assassinating Adolf Hitler—for me this is the wrong way of speaking about the whole problem, as if Dietrich had moved from a conviction of non-violence to a conviction of using violence . . . Another mistaken way of putting it is to make it appear as though he had rejected *Discipleship* when he became a member of the conspiracy. That's not at all the case. To a great extent it's the same theology in *Discipleship* which made this possible . . . Dietrich did not come from pacifism to become a murderer of Adolf Hitler. He encountered the problem that the murderer had to be stopped; the murderer was murdering second-class citizens, the Jews . . . and that had to be stopped. (cited in Green, 2015, p. 203)

Whilst DeJonge (2017) disputes Bethge's view that Bonhoeffer's primary motivation in opposing Hitler was the murder of the Jews, this does not detract from the case that Bonhoeffer does engage in conspiracy that would involve violence and yet remains consistent in his ethics. This he does as responsible action in the historical moment.

So, if it is not pacifism, how does Bonhoeffer's peace ethic compare to other philosophical positions? Philosophical ethics can be broadly grouped since they are more or less derived from either Plato's deontology or absolutist position, championed in church history by Augustine on the one hand, or at the other extreme, the ethics of Protagoras, which can be described as 'anti-mystical scientism'. According to Lovat (2004), this second 'stream of thought denies ethical absolutes' (p. 2) and supports the individual's subjective relation to the world and making their own

assessment of rights and wrongs. Such teleology can be referred to as situationism or consequentialism (Lovat, 2004; Mitchell & Lovat, 1991). Neither of these two ethical schools seems adequate to the task of recognising that moral goodness is not absolute but occurs within the constraints of real-world situations: ‘the ambiguous twilight’, in Bonhoeffer’s terms.

Proportionism can be seen as a third way, over against the two streams of ethical positions dominant in Western philosophy. Proportionism represents the development of thought following Aristotle, which combines ideas of a supreme good, *eudaemonia*, with an application in the real world that requires judgement and empirical assessment. Aquinas, influenced by the Muslim scholars who had preserved Aristotelian thinking, adapted the notion of ‘natural law’ to honour the human, real world aspect of ethical decision-making using all the senses. In the late twentieth century, Habermas’s ‘ways of knowing’ proffered an epistemic schema that moves from technical mastery of empirical and scientific fact to critical self-reflection, claiming that one is able to engage optimally with the world when knowing in a critical, self-aware way. Lovat (2004, 2013) argues that this way of knowing is synergistic with the means required for proportionist ethical decision-making.

Christonomy

Nonetheless, even proportionism fails to encompass the discipleship and theological drivers of Bonhoeffer’s ethics. Instead, Bonhoeffer’s peace ethic might be defined by his searching for Christ in the world which, for him, resulted in a kind of titration of action commensurate to the demands of the circumstance. Bonhoeffer is so committed to the notion of responsible action being motivated by and derived from the will of Christ that he creates the neologism, ‘Christonomy’, to underline its significance. In a brief footnote on Christ’s claim to rule within culture—the mandates—he writes, ‘the antagonism between heteronomy and autonomy is overcome and taken up into a higher unity, which we could call Christonomy’ (Bonhoeffer, 2005, p. 402n3). Despite the solitary use of the term, Christonomy could describe the entire approach of Bonhoeffer’s *Ethics* itself, with roots as far back as his first thesis, *Sanctorum Communio*. Christonomy sets ethical agency apart from autonomy, and beyond philosophical principles, and it differentiates itself from the heteronomy of both messianic fundamentalism of the *Deutsche Christen* and of Nazism itself. Christonomy “exceeds this tension” (Nissen, 2006, p. 91) and in doing so reaffirms a Christological interpretation of a unified reality. For Bonhoeffer, this provides a moral common ground; the separation between secular and sacred is unified in Christ and therefore Christonomic engagement also pervades both fields. Furthermore, Christonomy extends to the entire body of Christ, that is, the church-community, providing both the home for collective action and a form for finding the acceptability of action in a given circumstance (see Lam, 2020). DeJonge’s analysis of Bonhoeffer’s resistance affirms the church, and its unique function of preaching

the word, as paramount in understanding both Bonhoeffer's peace ethic and his resistance:

Again, Bonhoeffer did participate in a conspiracy that intended violence, but to associate him above all with this form of resistance would also reduce his witness. His participation in the conspiracy was the endgame of a long resistance process, the final stop through an elaborate flowchart of resistance activity. The governing component of that flowchart is the church and its word. (DeJonge, 2018, p. 160)

Regardless of the details of DeJonge's flowchart categorisations, his work demonstrates the complexity of Bonhoeffer's ethics in the first place, let alone attempting to apply them or holding Bonhoeffer up as an exemplar. However, just as Bonhoeffer's developing resistance changes over time in response to the situation, the Anthropocene represents a particular moment in which the church's ethics of engagement with the world should be under scrutiny. The violence of inaction-of acquiescing to species extinction, ecosystem degradation, and climate change-all require an accounting within a broader form of what we might refer to as climate justice. Justice, in this sense, turns to the rights and freedoms of all *others*, including, for example, people who are losing their homes and livelihoods, nations being subsumed, plants and animals being lost to land use changes, creatures unable to survive in warming and acidifying oceans, and ultimately, Earth and her landforms, waterways, and atmosphere.

Rather than being seen as either holding pacifist principles, or, as others have claimed, of moving from pacifism to a new position that allowed for violence, Bonhoeffer's commitment to Christonomy better accounts for this apparent discontinuity throughout his life. It offers, instead, the route of the disciple who seeks the will of Christ through history. As circumstances fluctuate, the necessary acts of the disciple might alter from seeking peace through peaceful means to engaging in a violent act in order to restore peace and save the lives of Germans and others. Indeed, the conspirators saw the assassination of Hitler as the only way to save Germany, namely, by removing the murderer and suing for peace.

The work of *Ethics*, Bonhoeffer's final unfinished manuscript that was to have been his *magnum opus*, can be seen as essentially a working out of his Christonomy, an approach consistent with his entire theological corpus, seen in terms of a methodology, albeit allowing for development and maturation. Key to unlocking the tension between God's law and God's will is the notion of freedom, which Bonhoeffer grounds in *imago Dei* in the *Creation and Fall* lectures of 1932–1933. Jesus's violation of the Sabbath, and of honouring parents, Bonhoeffer sees as examples of freedom from the law in order to perform responsible action. What does it mean to follow the will of Christ in the world? How does one make ethical choices when a good choice is not an option, only a choice between bad ones?

In the working out of faith in the life of the disciple, as Christonomy is enacted, Bonhoeffer relies on two ethical constructs for guidance: *Stellvertretung* (translated as vicarious representative action), and *Sachgemäßheit* (the consideration of the appropriateness to the context). *Stellvertretung* is action standing in the place of the other, for the sake of the other. Christ's action can be described this way, and

indeed is the ultimate form of *Stellvertretung*. These two notions are deeply connected to Bonhoeffer's ongoing question, 'who is Christ for us today?' If the church is the body of Christ on Earth, then the church behaves in a way that stands in for the sake of others and attends to the needs before it. For the Christonomic agent, it involves the willingness to be found guilty of the sin or an action undertaken for the benefit of the other. Bonhoeffer did not depart from a peace ethic. Rather, the exceptional circumstances of the day were regarded as *status confessionis*, 'such as it had not known since the Protestant Reformation', according to Wayne Floyd (1998, p. 2). Central truths of the church were at stake, truths concerning the church/state relationship and the accountability of one to another. The acquiescence of the German Church to the regime forced the hand of the Confessing Church to resist, and furthermore, for the conspirators to attempt tyrannicide. Such actions would be appropriate to, or commensurate with, the demands of the exceptional circumstance (*Sachgemäßheit*).

Responding to the Climate Crisis

Finally, where does this leave the church in the Anthropocene? Following Bonhoeffer, how might the church respond to the existential crisis resulting from carbon pollution, land use changes, and biodiversity loss? The discussion of Bonhoeffer's ethics from his own context provides pathways to consider the moral obligation to others and the freedom to act on their behalf in what can only be claimed as a state of emergency for the planet and Earth's creatures (Rayson, 2018a, 2020, 2021). Reviewing the aspects of Bonhoeffer's ethics as they have been discussed here allows us to conclude that at the core of a Christian response to the problems of the Anthropocene and the potential use of violence is the notion of Christonomy. That is to say, in place of philosophical principles, the Christian disciple is moved to engage in the world as an act of obedience to the grace of God bestowed as righteousness, seeking God's good for the world but in preparedness to accept guilt if necessary. Ethical agency responds to the needs of the world via the lenses of freedom to act on behalf of and for the sake of others, in a way commensurate with the historical context. Furthermore, the relationship between church and state, and whether the contemporary conditions constitute enough of an emergency to constrain the church's ability to declare good new to the world, are factors to be weighed in titrating any action.

How do these ethical parameters apply to communities of faith grappling with the overwhelming violence that is represented by the climate crisis? Basing an eco-ethical response on notions of *Stellvertretung* and *Sachgemäßheit* logically directs action in the climate crisis in favour of those at significant risk. The evidence demonstrates that this includes the poorest of the human race (the absolute poor and the relatively poor within countries), vulnerable ecosystems, and critically endangered species. Vicarious representative action in this case would have humans standing in the place of the harm and destruction of other species and ecosystems. Extinction

and the biodiversity loss have moral costs of dehumanising the one species that not only causes the needless deaths of others but stands aloof as extinction continues at a hastening rate, gathering momentum and becoming the sixth mass extinction event in Earth's history (Cafaro & Primack, 2014). This mass extinction is caused by us.

The finality of species extinction is echoed in ecosystem breakdown and tipping points being crossed, releasing a cascade of effects throughout Earth systems that will not be amended (IPCC, 2018). These include rapid-onset natural hazards that in turn impact on humans, creatures and ecosystems alike (Afifi & Jäger, 2010). Such violence being unleashed against Earth and all our fellow creatures again speaks to our dehumanisation. Even our response to the vulnerable human populations—each other—lacks a commitment to the most basic ethical notions of compassion, sanctity of life, freedom of movement, and safety. Human populations, especially the poor, are the least culpable for the problem, yet the first and most harmed by the effects of sea level rise, and food and civil insecurity. In situations of forced migration, war, and famine, it is women and children who suffer disproportionately, including suffering significantly more sexual violence under unstable conditions (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002). The intersections here of colonialism, sexism, racism, and capitalism will become increasingly apparent in the face of the climate crisis but they are all too familiar to liberation theologies and social ethics of preferential treatment of the poor.

Freedom to act, that is, Christonomy to act for the sake of the other, in accordance with the demands of the age, place significant responsibilities on those of us with any agency. It seems difficult to argue against taking responsible action where one can, in personal and political realms, and to collectivise and network community organisations. This type of action not only reduces one's complicity with the drivers of the climate crisis but offers hope and social support when people work together. These things are hardly disputed. However, the urgency of the crisis, and the apparent inability of the United Nations to direct and monitor substantial action to reduce carbon pollution, provide the exceptional circumstances that might constitute *status confessionis* for the church, a crisis in which central truths are under threat and act as 'the litmus test of the church's very nature' (Rasmussen, 2009, p. 31). Indeed, if the climate crisis does not constitute the state of emergency that the church must address in the strongest terms, then one wonders what would. The ability of the church to proclaim the sanctity of life (other species, ecosystems, future generations) teeters when the entire globalised economic system is based on a falsehood of potential, never-ending growth and does not account for ecological costs, including carbon pollution. The core doctrines of the kingdom of God and the reconciliation of the world, both of which demand a devotion to the ecological world in which humans are situated, is also under threat. Furthermore, the Christian *imprimatur* to serve others (humans, creatures, Earth) as an outworking of justification is sorely tested in this era.

Bonhoeffer's application of vicarious representative action and contextuality provoke a close interrogation of whether we are now in a situation that forces us to consider the use of violence after all. Nonetheless, caution is necessary here. A

peace ethic might provide a blueprint for regular conduct under stable conditions but when new coal mines continue to pierce the ground, and economic models insist on rapacious growth without pricing pollution, loss of amenity, or the sanctity of the biosphere, then ethical questions must be asked. Actions of resistance should escalate accordingly, but any act of violence must only be seen as an absolute last resort under extreme circumstances. Runaway capitalism is already a violence in itself. Pushing back at such violence might be a first step. A peace ethic engaged across the spectrum, one that challenges norms of economic growth and industrial farming of animals, for example, is as important as active protest against coal mining and gas lines on Indigenous country.

The exceptional circumstance of the climate crisis requires that the ethical demands that are now before the church be taken seriously. It might be that actions that individuals and communities of people of faith take do breach the law: blockading earth moving equipment, chaining to trees, sabotaging mines. I do not advocate violence, just as Bonhoeffer did not, but rather advocate for an authentic consideration of the current crisis and how we might wrestle with the structural barriers to preserve life and health. The political unrest we are witnessing in these years of pandemic is not unrelated to the ethics of the climate crisis, the fundamental questions of how we treat each other and the planet that is our home. There is, I think, a reaction to the violence inherent in many unjust systems: the outworking of the domination of nature, Indigenous peoples, women, the poor (Rayson, 2016, 2018b) is a conflagration of injustice that is demonstrably unsustainable.

Actions to limit carbon emissions are vital. They must be guided by a process of resistance that carefully considers how the church might enact its participation in Christ and work selflessly for the sake of the planet and her creatures. However, these actions would not be adequate according to Bonhoeffer's resistance theology. As DeJonge has highlighted, simply *acting* diminishes the church to just another humanitarian organisation implementing programs. The point of distinction for the resistance of the church is in its unique capacity and obligation to preach the word. In prison, Bonhoeffer (2010) expected that the way the word is preached would have to look and sound different in a new age: 'perhaps quite nonreligious language, but liberating and redeeming like Jesus's language, . . . the language of a new righteousness and truth, a language proclaiming that God makes peace with humankind and that God's kingdom is drawing near' (p. 390). Rebecca Huntley (2020) has described the significance of communities of faith and religious institutions lending weight to the fight for the planet, particularly through effective communication that engages emotions and utilises narrative. Storytelling and engagement of the whole person within their community setting seems something the church has done for a very long time and must now do with the urgency of ameliorating and preventing the violence and harm of the climate crisis.

I suggest that ecological care might actually form a large part of what it means to proclaim the gospel in the Anthropocene. It comes from a theological source that recognises *imago Dei* as intrinsically relational and grounded in the soil beneath us, something Indigenous spiritualities have long recognised. There are a great many actions that individuals and church communities can undertake that fall well short of

engaging in violence, particularly those communities that enjoy the luxuries of wealth, privilege, and safety from the immediate effects of the crisis. Proclaiming these truths involves acting in direct and symbolic ways on behalf of and for the benefit of other species and ecosystems. The universality of the 'good news' of the gospel is such that it should indeed be good news for the entire biosphere. Bonhoeffer (2005) reminds us that "What is at stake are the times and places that pose concrete questions to us, set us tasks, and lay responsibilities on us" (p. 101). The challenge for religious institutions, communities, and individuals in the Anthropocene is in answering those questions by participating in the world, accepting responsibility and perhaps even guilt.

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Chapter 19

From the Golden Rule to the Platinum Rule: An Auto-ethnographic Account



Thomas Jones

Abstract The unfinished doctoral thesis, *From the Golden Rule to the Platinum Rule: An Autoethnographic Account*, was built around an autoethnographic narrative of the author's personal journey over 76 years, from age seven to age 83. The journey began with experiences in a highly sectarian and war-weary Australia where the author came to realise for the first time the importance of the Golden Rule (*do unto others as you would have them do unto you*) to the betterment of his post-war, embittered country. His journey continued through high school and into the world of work where the conviction grew to the point that he adopted a personal faith in the religion of Baha'i, one he came to see as possessing a doctrine and mission most aligned to the Golden Rule. In his later research career, the author developed the notion of a complementarity and completeness of the Golden Rule intersecting with the Platinum Rule (*do unto others as they would have you do unto them*). The conviction about this complementarity developed further through exploring the works of "Heroes of the Golden (and Platinum) Rules", those who had taken the essence of the doctrine and the mission into practical settings where they made a difference. The autoethnographic narrative combined the author's theological and educational credentials.

Keywords Golden rule · Platinum rule · Autoethnography · Human rights · Values education

Thomas Jones died before the publication of this work was completed.

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Foreword from the Supervisors

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We were in the process of supervising Tom Jones's doctoral thesis when ill health and eventually death overtook him. Tom was an institution at the university, having initially trained there in the 1950s, then beginning a career there and working on the administration side for many years from the 1970s. Finally, he took up a position in the chaplaincy office in the 1990s where he went on to influence and support countless staff and students. His approach to chaplaincy reflected his work with the United Nations Inter-religious associations. While his own faith was in Baha'i, Tom was never interested in using his role to convert or proselytise, even mildly. He saw his role as one of respecting and endorsing the spiritual lives of others, as well as ministering to their practical needs. Much of this humanitarian perspective is to be found in his unfinished thesis that we summarise here, using mainly his own words.

Introduction

The thesis focusses on the empathetic-oriented "Golden Rule" (*do unto others as you would have them do unto you*) and its converse but complementary "Platinum Rule" (*do unto others as they would have you do unto them*). It is built around an autoethnographic narrative of my personal journey over a transformative seventy-six-year period from 1943, at age seven, to 2020, at age eighty-three. The journey is linked to its cultural, social, educational and spiritual environments, predominantly in the city of Newcastle, Australia. The autoethnographic method is explained in the early part of the thesis, followed by my perspectives on the Golden and Platinum rules, the key scholars I studied as "Heroes of the Golden and Platinum Rules" and finally the research narrative wherein I place myself in what I came to see as three distinct personal and societal milieux that had affected my own development as a person, scholar and citizen of the world. I conclude with a personal reflection.

The Autoethnographic Methodology

Michael Dyson (2007) defined autoethnography in the following way:

[It] is a presentation of one person's view, or map, of reality, constructed around and through other people. It is a good story, which does not establish truth, like an argument, but presents verisimilitude, that is lifelikeness. The autoethnographer, like other qualitative researchers, uses metaphor to order thoughts, experiences and to construct a reality about lived experiences. (p. 46)

Sarah Wall (2006) defined the research methodology more succinctly as ‘...an emerging qualitative research method that allows the author to write in a highly personalised style, drawing on his or her experience to extend understanding about a social phenomenon’ (p. 1). Meanwhile, Heewon Chang (2008) states that it ‘is becoming a useful and powerful tool for researchers and practitioners who deal with human relations in a multicultural setting, e.g., educators, social workers, medical practitioners, clergy, and counsellors’ (p. 11).

The source of the data in my narrative was, first and foremost, ‘the subjective self’ that Wall (2006 p. 8) speaks of as central and essential to the methodology. I acknowledged the standard and oft-warned danger that this methodology has potential to turn into a kind of autobiographic self-indulgence. I believe I was careful to avoid that at every turn. I followed stringently the scholarly advice that ensured the narrative remained what I referred to as an “analytical allegory” of three crucial developmental stages of both my own individual awareness and of a collective awareness I sensed happening over those almost 80 years. The awareness concerned the importance to individual and global harmony of the traditional Golden Rule, the derivative Multifaith Golden Rule and the innovative and emergent Platinum Rule. It is important at this point to explore my conception of these various rules of human behaviour.

The Golden and Platinum Rules

My awareness of the Golden Rule began in 1943, at age seven. As my narrative recounts, I experienced Australia then as fearful, misogynistic, sectarian, embittered and weary of war. As I recall it, the door that first opened my mind to a possible better future for this country was James Leigh Hunt’s poem, *Abou Ben Adhem* (Leigh Hunt, 2020). Its penultimate verse finishes with the words, ‘...I pray thee, then, write me as one that loves his fellow men.’ The poem was taught to me as a child as an illustration of the importance of the Golden Rule. It initiated my lifelong interest in the attainment of a more just, harmonious and peaceful world.

The journey continued in my high school years, 1949 to 1952, through a teacher who introduced me to the works of F.A.M. Webster, a self-declared “world citizen” at a time of extreme partisanship who stood against all opposition in inspiring a lasting legacy in athletics (Webster, 2016). When I left school in 1952, at age sixteen, I was introduced to the “consilience of induction” insights of William Whewell (Laudan, 1981; Yeo, 1993). For reasons explained in my narrative, these insights not only inspired my thinking but, moreover, had a profound personal effect in helping me to cope better with the educational difficulties I experienced through my severe deafness.

Through more intensive research in my mid-twenties, I came to see Whewell as a polymath who subscribed to the “big picture” view of history, religion and science in a way similar to the religious perspective that I would eventually adopt as my own in the Baha’i Faith (Hatcher & Martin, 1998; Smith, 2000, 2008). Indeed, I came to

learn that Whewell was a contemporary of Mirza Husayn-Ali, known as Baha'u'llah (1817–1892), the founder of the Baha'i faith (Taherzadeh, 1987). At the heart of this faith, lies an acknowledgement and valuing of the contribution of all religions from time immemorial (Lundberg, 1996). It also holds to a mission of a continuous, transformative advancement of humanity and the establishment of a united, peaceful world which has been the goal of so many human civilisations (Smith & Momen, 1989). There was, to me, an uncanny synergy between the ideas of these two contemporaries. I went on to study Whewell's ideas more fully.

Whewell's "Big History" perspective enabled me to understand the rise of humanitarianism in the eighteenth-century, the dawn of nineteenth-century enlightenment, the societal advances and reverses of the twentieth century and the politico/religious uncertainties and turbulent changes of the twenty-first century. I came to see his work as one of a number that had inspired contemporary movements in the area of Big History (Christian, 2004).

His "Big Religion" perspective enabled me to view the Golden Rule through the prism of a Multifaith Golden Rule, one with potential to overcome the many tensions and conflicts caused in the name of religion. My conception of the Multifaith Golden Rule stands at the centre of what I conceive to be an urgent need for reform, tolerance, unity and collective activities amongst the various world's religions, with special reference to the Abrahamic religions' quagmire in the Middle East (Lewis, 2004).

Whewell's ideas around "Big Science" offered insights into the newly discovered immensities of the universe and the exponential acceleration of scientific and technological change (Galison, 1994; Kaiser, 2015). The combination of all three big ideas enabled me to deal with rapid advances in the likes of archaeology and anthropology and see the increasing need for harmony rather than opposition between science and religion.

These big ideas became more and more important to my personal faith and ultimately the kind of scholarship I wished to pursue, one not so concerned with data and description as with an activism aimed at conceptions that could work to bind humanity together in a way true to the very word, religion. For me, these ideas were in perfect accord with the goals of Baha'i built around the values of harmony, justice and sustainability required for a truly globalised world (Adamson, 2006). I also came to see progressively that much of my own life's history and development spoke into a growing realisation about the importance of these big ideas to humanity. Hence, the confluence of these big ideas, my own journey and autoethnography as a methodology that could capture the experiences and insights pertaining to that journey in a systematic and more rigorous way than I had undertaken before.

Allied to the methodology was the ideal first realised in *Abou ben Adhem*, that of a Golden Rule, its derivative Multifaith Golden Rule and their concomitant Platinum Rule, one that draws in and completes the circular phenomenon of mutual caring. In a word, doing to others as we would wish done to us and as they would wish us to do to them becomes the one phenomenon in the life of a caring individual and/or society. The idea of a Multifaith Platinum Rule is a further extension of the notion

but one with particular pertinence to my Baha'i faith and to a world that sees religion so often at the other end of the binding together force that it should be.

As part of bringing the highly personalised methodology and the conceptual underpinnings represented by the Rules together, I researched for "heroes", key figures whose work could guide and inspire my thinking and, in turn, fortify and sharpen my methodology. I list some of these key figures below.

"Heroes" of the Golden and Platinum Rules

In my early twenties, I first studied the works of Alan Coates Bouquet, Church of England priest and notable Cambridge University Lecturer in the History and Comparative Study of Religions and President of the Cambridge University Theological Society. I recalled that Bouquet (1958) had classified religions into three types, namely, those that seek to affirm the world, those that seek to escape from the world and those that seek to transform the world (p. 306).

Bouquet himself wrote partially with an autoethnographic style where he inserted himself into the discourse as well as commenting on perceptions of external reality. I came to understand many years later, as I was studying up on autoethnography, what an effective way it was to deal with discourse about religion and religious insights. I came to see in his work an implicit endorsement of the big ideas of Whewell as well as the central notions of my own Baha'i faith. Unsurprisingly, he was one of the first prominent scholars of comparative religion to position the Baha'i faith, hitherto largely ignored in Western scholarship, in its proper theological context:

A modern development of (Islam) is Bahaimism (sic), which is a development from Shi'a Islam, combining the idea of successive incarnations of God in Imams with a liberal Unitarianism. (Bouquet, 1958, p. 283)

While Bouquet did not explicitly mention the Golden Rule, he was clear in his extolling of the spirit behind it in his endorsement of the third category of religion (ie. those that seek to transform the world) as the only ones with any potential to 'set up any effective opposition to Marxism' (p. 306). I read into his estimation of Baha'i an effective confirming of its claims to have taken the spirit of Islam and globalised it.

Another Golden and Platinum Rule hero was Bernard Lewis (2004). I saw in his work also an autoethnographic disposition, inserting himself into the world of the Middle East which had become for him much more than an object of study but one in which he had found many of his own values and come to understand himself and his most foundational beliefs. As often as offering objective discourse on the Middle East, one senses in him a grieving for its many crossroads and lost opportunities. For the major religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, he saw the problem summed up in the issue of successionism:

In relations between the three religions, the sequence is crucial. Universal religions can tolerate a predecessor, but not a successor. Both Christians and Muslims were firmly convinced they possessed God's complete and final word to mankind. For Christians, the Jews had last year's model – not as good as their own, but passable. For Muslims, Christians and Jews were in the same position. For Christians of course, Islam, being post Christian, was not acceptable, just as for the Muslims post-Islamic religions like Baha'ism (*sic*) are not acceptable. (Lewis, 2004, p. 54)

In this regard, Lewis wrote positively about some of the development of thought to be found in the Catholic Church's document from the Second Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate: On Relations with Non-Christian Religions* (Ellis, 2020). He saw in this document something of a break on the part of a major Christian denomination with the problem of successionism in the acknowledgement of progressive, not necessarily chronological, revelation through time. Furthermore, it is a notion I found to be completely in keeping with the central doctrine of Baha'i. I was therefore led to do more work on this central faith, adhered to but not necessarily fully understood by me at that stage.

Again, to be found at Cambridge University was the notable Baha'i scholar, the Iranian, Moojan Momen. Momen (2007) is one of the most authoritative scholars about Baha'i, especially about the development of thought from its emergence from Shiism over the hundred years to the mid-1940s. He writes not only about those doctrines that conform so well with the Golden and Platinum Rules but about their importance to world religions. While he notes that Baha'i is very much an Iranian entity, only fully explicable in the context of Persian and Islamic history, it has come to be influential as a global religion, not only intersecting in the West with Judaism and Christianity but also in the East with Hinduism and Buddhism. The combination of the Baha'i central doctrine of progressive revelation and its practical penetration into everyday life rendered it, for me, as an ideal religion for a globalised world.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali is a former Somalian refugee and Islamic atheist. She is a Fellow at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, the author of several largely autoethnographically styled books on her journey from Islam, namely *Infidel* (Hirsi Ali, 2008), *Nomad* (Hirsi Ali, 2011) and *Heretic: Why Islam Needs a Reformation Now* (Hirsi Ali, 2015). The latter is a best-selling account of her life and accomplishments as an apostate Muslim refugee who promotes the urgent need for an Islamic Reformation which she sees as relevant to the causes of the world refugee and terrorism crises. It is especially relevant to my thesis because versions of the Golden and Platinum Rules are easily found in Islamic sacred sources, while Islam has become notable in our times for very different dispositions and actions. It seems to me therefore that Hirsi Ali's problem is not so much with the spirit of Islam *per se* as the way it has been interpreted and developed, and as she experienced it in practice, including especially around its disposition and behaviours towards women. I found Hirsi Ali's work especially enlightening both around its content but also for endorsing my own autoethnographic approach to collecting and recounting my narrative. Much of her own work is written in the same way, combining reflections on world events with her own personal experiences.

Hirsi Ali's books led me to another Cambridge University scholar, the Orientalist, Edward Granville Browne. Browne (Balyuzi, 1970) was one of a small number of nineteenth-century scholars to specialise in Persian Studies. He spent much time in Iran. Visitors to modern-day Iran can still find a statue erected in his honour and a street named after him in Tehran. This is paradoxical in an Islamic theocracy particularly because Browne's interest in the country was originally aroused by the birth of Baha'i. He is one of an extremely small number of Western scholars who can boast meeting Baha'ullah himself. Again, I found endorsement of the importance of the Rules in his reflections about Persia, including about Baha'i and the Bab (Abdu'l-Bahá, 1891), but also in the autoethnographic methodology that he clearly applied to his writing.

Three Distinct Personal and Societal Milieus

Studying these heroes of the Golden and Platinum Rules helped in understanding better the experiences I wished to recount in my own autoethnographic narrative, those things that had come to form me as the person I was and the objectives I wished to pursue in my thesis. My narrative became an allegorical account of my journey from the 1943 revelation through *Abou ben Adam* to the present day. I came to see that three distinct societal milieus had come to influence my journey. I found it helpful to speak of this journey in terms of these three distinct, personal development stages, aligning with three periods of history. I outline them briefly below before turning to my reflection:

- Stage one: (1943–1963) the “post 1940 Human Rights period” where my own early awareness of the “Golden Rule” aligned with the birth of the United Nations Organisation and its impact on unifying a world recently torn apart. It was also a period that saw the growth of some of the most powerful ecumenical, interfaith and multifaith movements ever known in the history of humanity. My sense of the importance of the Golden Rule was gradually being applied to the notion of the Multifaith Golden Rule.
- Stage two: (1963–2013) the “post 1960 Civil Rights period” where my growing sense of the power of the “Multifaith Golden Rule” aligned with the above United Nations' movements penetrating my own life's commitments through its interfaith projects and associations. It was during this period that I became more personally involved, faith-wise and through my chosen career and life's work.
- Stage three: (2013–2020) the “post 2000 Education Rights period” where my growing sense of unease about big picture views of the world being reversed into small pictures of religious denominationalism, partisan politics, eco-ethical denialism and instrumentalist education impelled me to undertake a Research Higher Degree in order to strengthen the research foundations of the Golden Rule, now seen as one side of the coin along with the Platinum Rule.

Among other things, this latter stage led me to appreciate the wisdom to be found in a values-based form of education capable of challenging small picture views, including of the central purpose of education. I made much reference to this form of education, especially as it had been manifested in the Australian Values Education Program (2003–2010) (DEST, 2006; DEEWR, 2008). I came to see that such an approach to education represented a practical way in which the spirit of the Golden and Platinum Rules could be incorporated into mainstream education and thereby influence positively future generations.

A Personal Reflection

As I began writing what I hoped would be my final chapter in 2020, I reflected on how my personal circumstances and the conditions of the world in general had changed dramatically since I began the thesis in 2013. At the time of writing, I am still recovering from a succession of serious illnesses and am isolated from my esteemed university for the first time since the 1950s because our world is gripped by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I realise on reflection that some of the focus of my thesis has changed over time. My original aim was to uncover and highlight the value of the Golden Rule, founded on care of the other, as a means of addressing the tribulations of the global community, with a particular emphasis on the Multifaith Golden Rule as a means of improving and strengthening relations between the world's religions. This seemed enough and, of course, was close to the heart of my Baha'i faith. I had initially tended to regard the Platinum Rule as being closer to the concerns of marketing, big business and communications, perhaps even being oppositional to the spirit of the Golden Rule in that it seemed to be founded on care of the self.

After completing the work noted above, especially focussed on the perspectives of Whewell, I came to see the two Rules as essential to each other. Care of other is presupposed by care of self and, in turn, care of self implies and impels care of the other. As Emmanuel Levinas (1985) described it, self and other is an "irreducible relationship"; the encounter with the other is a phenomenon by which one senses both proximity and distance (see also Waldenfels, 2002; Nooteboom, 2012). In that sense, "I am other". Individual persons, along with humanity as a whole, are torn apart when this irreducible relationship is broken. Hence, the power of the two Rules is beyond the mere altruistic sentiment I detected at age seven. The Golden Rule of care for others as you would have them care for you is only one half of the binding truth of the relationship. Moreover, it can be interpreted cynically as selfish at the end of the day. It is the complementary power of the Platinum Rule that completes the relationship. Do unto others as they would have you do unto them can actually be seen as the more altruistic and, therefore, the one that more fully incorporates the irreducible relationship of which Levinas spoke.

Conclusion

As I bow out, I feel in a position to commend this dual Rule for human behaviour to coming generations, seemingly more relevant now than at any time in my life. The past year of devastating, climate change impelled bushfires, floods and cyclones, along with the unprecedented disruption to normal global business of the pandemic, has surely brought this message home in as dramatic a fashion as ever before. I take some heart in having given my life's energies to these rules as best I understood them at the time, through my educational and interfaith work, both at the university and through those important United Nations associations that have fuelled my need to be of service. I take some heart also in having been able to pen at least some of my reflections through this as yet incomplete doctoral work. I hope I have left the world just a little better for my having been here.

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Thomas Jones spent most of his career at The University of Newcastle, Australia, firstly as an administrative officer and for several decades as the Baha'i chaplain. He was active in several United Nations organizations, principally in its interfaith associations and ventures. He was in the process of completing his doctoral thesis under the supervision of Terence Lovat and Allyson Holbrook when he died in October 2020.

Chapter 20

Ethics or Etiquette in Academic Research: *Honorandi Causa LXX Diem Natalem* *Terentii Lovat*



Robert Crotty

Abstract The chapter explores the synergies and tensions between the ethics and etiquette of academic research, in a sense between the law and the spirit of the protocol. The chapter is taken from papers presented by the author at the Third *Asia-Pacific Conference on Academic Integrity*, University of South Australia, and at the *Festschrift* held in honour of Terence Lovat's work in Newcastle, Australia.

Keywords Ethics · Research ethics · Academic research · Universal ethics · Human ethics

Introduction

My own thinking on the universal elements of human ethics requires the platform of the following elements. Humans can be categorised as a walking brain (with deference to the contributions made by the digestive system and the blood circulation system). However, individual human brains are structured differently, as neuroscience is discovering (Churchland, 2011, 2013). All human brains have been programmed by evolution to contain certain propensities towards constructing order in life after birth (Vannelli, 2012).¹ Innate propensities include a direction towards sexual activity, a disposition to speak a language, a mood disposition. The propensities all need, however, more specific direction and a meaningful pathway to plan their way forward in human experience. For some propensities, this means complete directedness, for others a partial directedness. *Homo sapiens* at birth is directed to speak a language, but not any specific language (the propensity can only be

¹ 'Propensity' has been taken into scientific literature as defining a genetic tendency to act in a certain way. For an anthropological treatment using this term see Vannelli (2012).

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completely activated by contact with a specific dialect) (see Pinker, 1994, 1998); at birth *homo sapiens* is directed towards sexual activity, but the propensity towards sexual activity has already been refined as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, transgender and so on.

The more different a particular individual's brain structure diverges from the numerical majority of other humans' brain structures, the greater differences there will be in the individual's propensities, and accordingly the greater the difficulty that person will experience in living harmoniously in society. The major point is that human propensities are, for the most part, not directed, whereas other animals are born with much more defined instincts. Children are born, and immediately their consciousness finds itself in a cultural quagmire that requires navigation. But, in this situation, no ethical responsibility can pertain to the child itself. It is incapable of ethical decisions; it simply absorbs cultural information (Kenneally, 2014).

Included in the direction towards order is an innate intuitive ethic which is a phase of the other propensities (Haidt & Joseph, 2004; Audi, 2004; Huemer, 2005; Kitcher, 2012). This intuitive ethic directs *homo sapiens* towards virtues such as self-care, self-maintenance, and altruism within the confines of the surrounding natural and social environment.

Human Culture

So, we humans are born with propensities including an intuitive ethic. From this point, any path forward towards acculturation and ethical behaviour is provided immediately by human culture. Culture is simply the acquired and transmittable ways of thinking, ways of behaviour and values that a group of humans develop and share as they live together. A culture provides an ordered direction and meaning to the propensities. But not all cultures are the same; they may not even be similar. The language propensity, the sexual propensity, the propensity to use food and drink as sustenance will all find different directions proposed by past and present cultures. Certainly, there will be similarities, since the propensity is the same, but importantly there will be differences.

Actuation

At this point, only, do we come to ethics. That is, at the point where the individual is faced with Actuation. Arguably, ethics describes the way it should happen but how does culture, in either its group or its religious phase, link with the developing person to inform it as to meaning and direction? The answer is firstly by cultural group actuation. This cultural group actuation has been fashioned at a certain point in the past by the accumulation of a critical mass of individual actuations. The

community states: this is how we generally rationalise the linking of the person's propensities to the social and natural environments. However, necessarily the cultural group actuation is always under revision because the social and natural environments themselves are under change. At first, the human child has no other exposure but to a cultural group actuation as presented by parents, siblings, or carers.

Broadly speaking, the everyday culture, activating the innate propensities by cultural group actuation leads over time to general societal harmony and wellbeing. Otherwise, the population would make immediate changes in the group culture. However, there will always be exceptions among individual members when the culture does not suit particular individuals and they, in turn, challenge the everyday culture by means of an individual actuation. Sometimes, these individual actuations will be badly directed or even ill-founded rages but, at other times, they will be well-reasoned actuations that demonstrate the shortcomings of the established culture. If the individual actuations make up a critical mass with others, then it is possible that there will be sufficient weight to change the cultural norm.

Over time, ethicists have been able to recognise some of the proposed methodologies by which the actuations' mechanism can be explained. The methodologies can be denominated as consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics. Hence, individual humans can simply accept the cultural norms for direction and meaning common in their culture, or they can take hold of the driver and seek an actuation for themselves. Humans obviously cannot revoke the the culture into which they have been thrust; they can only personally accept the cultural group actuation or evoke a new actuation. This is exactly the point where ethics comes into play.

In short, ethics carefully maintains and balances the possibility of a human 'well-lived Life' (as Aristotle described it) within an existing community. The human's 'well-lived Life' within an existing community is the paramount virtue. The balance is established by actuation: cultural group actuation and individual actuation. The ethical quality of a person's life is to use their own actuation to balance the 'well-lived Life'.

It follows that ethics is something fluid and relative; it should never be relegated to a fixed code of regulations that allegedly suits all. Ethics are not absolute because ethical action describes a particular cultural group actuation in a particular social and natural environment and an individual actuation that either affirms or challenges the cultural group actuation.

Human Academic Research

We come to the ethics of academic research. Just as so much of human living has become disengaged and regarded separately from related elements of culture, so too has academic research. Religions, languages, sexual orientations can live a life quite separate from the social entities in which they first developed (Crotty, 2018). This is true too of academic research.

Research is another word for advanced education; education is simply the human aspect of searching for meaning, the most basic propensity, using accepted methodologies and presuppositions. Younger students are counselled in what has been achieved and what has been uncovered as regards meaning. They do not need to start at the beginning. They learn accepted ‘facts’ and they learn methodologies. Then, at a certain point in their discretionary development they are allowed to push the boundaries of established paradigms of common meaning and to find new ‘facts’, demolish old ‘facts’, apply methodologies to new aspects of human experience, even construct new methodologies. This more developed occupation is called academic research.

What follows from this historical analysis of academic research are two principles for ‘research ethics’ that can be still justified in the modern university setting.

1. Research must protect its human participants, the environment and property from any unnecessary damage or risk.
2. Research must serve the interests of individuals, the university or society as a whole as far as its investigation goes.

However, in fact we find that modern codes of ethical conduct ask much more than these bare principles for researchers. For example, we find included under ‘research ethics’ the following requirements: sound fiscal management of research projects, confidentiality, informed consent, protection of intellectual property, the avoidance of plagiarism and even self-plagiarism, the avoidance of conflict of interest, insurance of data security, care for animals involved in the research, refusal of substantial reward to research subjects.

Are these mandates really dealing with ‘ethics’? Contrary evidence can be found in many areas of the professions. ‘It is not ethical for doctors to advertise’: this should not be included under the term, ‘medical ethics’. Strict surveillance of ‘teamwork’ and its rejection, in certain cases, as ‘plagiarism’ has nothing to do with ethics. Furthermore, why should academic researchers, rather than the mass of the current population, be forbidden to treat their fellow citizens with absolute confidentiality? Can carpenters pass on what they have learned from books or conversations to others in the carpentering guild, without naming their sources at every turn?

The ‘ethics’ in the title of, for example, ‘Human Research Ethic Committees’ (which Terry Lovat and I have spent inordinate time making happy) refers to proper ways of maintaining group behaviour as required by a particular research community, not ethics (Crotty, 1996). The matter before HRECs consists of professional etiquette with duly produced protocols and human conventions. This academic research etiquette outlines the kind of behaviours that the particular research community wants to promote or forbid for its own ends. The reason is not the good of the ‘well-lived Life’ in the wider community but, for example, to ensure that a medical or law research group is far beyond public criticism and not tainted with public scandal. The etiquette has, as its purpose, the preclusion of embarrassing misjudgements by the public and the avoidance of undesirable consequences for the particular research community generally.

So, from a scrutiny of the earlier list, it is difficult to argue that any ‘ethical’ requirements other than the two broad principles mentioned above, have any relevance to research ethics. However, it must be said that these very principles are important. Academic researchers must be ethically mindful of what they are doing and how they are affecting their fellows. It is unethical to do research which might harm the participants; it is unethical to waste public time and money on research that will not benefit individuals and the community. For the rest, academic researchers are part of a guild, a consortium of scholars. This sub-group of society has an etiquette and private protocols that it needs to maintain.

Conclusion

Research ethics must therefore distinguish between ethics and etiquette. Researchers must, as directed by the intuitive ethic, be mindful of their responsibility for the consequences of their research on any participants and upon society as it stands. This ethical responsibility bears all the hallmarks of relativism (as shown earlier) and is no different from ethical responsibilities generally. It may be lacking in research etiquette to plagiarise, to self-plagiarise, to breach confidentiality, to offer rewards to subjects, to maintain data in a certain way and to maintain research fund accounts in a certain way, but it is not necessarily or strictly unethical.

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Correction to: From Pacifism to Tyrannicide: Considering Bonhoeffer's Ethics for the Anthropocene



Dianne Rayson 

Correction to:
Chapter 18 in: D. Rayson (ed.), *Education, Religion, and Ethics – A Scholarly Collection*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-24719-4_18

In the author bio of Dr Rayson on page 252, the college name was incorrectly listed as 'Uniting College of Theology', which has now been changed to 'United Theological College'.

The updated original version for this chapter can be found at
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-24719-4_18

Tributary Address

Several of the authors, and others, offered tributes associated with Terence Lovat's 70th birthday *Festschrift*. These are included below. First is a paper presented by Dr Daniel Fleming, a colleague and co-author, at the *Festschrift* celebration. This is followed by several shorter tributes.

Trust, Emancipation, Anchoring, and *Telos*: Reflections on the Academic and Personal Legacy of Professor Terry Lovat

Daniel J. Fleming

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I attempt to synthesise the remarkable academic and professional legacy of Professor Terry Lovat. This is no small task to embark on, as anyone who has introduced Lovat using a “brief biography”, or simply glanced at his publication and grant record, let alone knows something of his life history, would know. His contributions are immense, both in their volume but also their scope. His unique set of skills has enabled him to gain a mastery over many disciplines, often through close collaboration across what, for others, seem insurmountable academic divides. This has given Lovat the opportunity to produce a rich and comprehensive body of work, both in the academic and public spheres. This is combined with a personal and professional style which builds bridges between people, and so sees Lovat's contribution made not only in the world of thought but also in the flourishing of those who have the great privilege of working alongside him.

All of this said, it is not easy to pin down what Lovat's specific legacy is. In this paper, I have attempted to do this by drawing on a number of Lovat's contributions to scholarship, alongside his personal dispositions. I have organised them into four headings: trust, emancipation, anchoring, and *telos*.

Trust

I begin with one of Lovat's most significant academic and public contributions in Australia, and internationally, which is his work in what is called "values education". Not to be confused with various movements related to values clarification or with a deductive form of moral education, Lovat's work in this space related to a large government research grant which was provided to discover what truly works in education. Lovat and a large team of researchers undertook an enormous study in Australian schools to determine this, and their qualitative and quantitative findings were truly revolutionary for the education system (Lovat, 2010; Lovat et al., 2009).

What Lovat and his colleagues were able to demonstrate was that the deductive model of education—which sees the teacher as expert and the student as vessel to be filled with knowledge—significantly undermine both student performance and wellbeing (Lovat & Clement, 2008). Aligned with this was the discovery that teacher content knowledge and even pedagogical skills are poor predictors of student performance: counter-intuitively, a student whose teacher is a master of a particular discipline has little relationship with her or his student's learning. Instead, this study found that what mattered most was the cultivation of particular dispositions in teachers and in classrooms, ones related not merely to mastery of subject matter but, rather, the quality of the relationship. Put in simple terms: if a teacher can cultivate trust and care in the classroom, the learning outcomes of her or his students improve dramatically, even over and above those of classrooms where a teacher has a higher level of expertise.

This insight carries through into assessment and other instruments for measuring learning. Those which are values-based, meaning underpinned by a concern with the relational dimensions of the classroom, produce much better results than those which are concerned with content-knowledge alone. The latter is, of course, a cornerstone of government education policy, revealed in regimes such as NAPLAN. It is an irony never lost on Lovat and his colleagues that governments that poured millions of dollars into this remarkable study have persistently ignored its findings. That said, the findings were never wasted: they have had an impact far beyond Australian borders, and many education systems around the world have benefitted from taking on this work.

This foundational work has underpinned more of Lovat's contributions. In later work, some of which I have been involved in, Lovat drew on new insights provided by moral and developmental psychology, as well as the neurosciences, to offer deeper explanations for the findings of the values education project. In the work in which I was involved, we were able to draw links between Lovat's findings and the neuropsychology of the Notre Dame (USA) scholar, Darcia Narvaez (2014), who

proposes that the brain is at its best—both in terms of capacities for learning *and* morality—when compassion, sociality, and engagement, are optimised. These are the very systems that are activated in relationships of trust and care (and, correlatively, are undermined in relationships of fear and domination) (Fleming & Lovat, 2014). This enabled us to propose an approach to both theological and moral education which held that it was more important for a teacher to build relationships with students, acknowledge and respond to their fears, and cultivate a trusting classroom, than to get students working hard on the theoretical aspects of their study. This, of course, has its place, but it is a secondary place. Needless to say, for some in the academy this approach is controversial.

The findings of the values education work obviously have implications outside of the classroom, and it is clear from any who encounter Lovat that he takes these seriously. All who engage with him on a professional and personal level know that he is a person who builds trust quickly, and cares deeply. This enables him to bring out the best in those around him, including in difficult circumstances. It is these capacities, I have no doubt, which have underpinned his deeply collaborative work, and which will mean that his contributions long outlast those of others which—whilst good in theory—were never conveyed with the relationality required to ensure that deep learning and transformation can take place.

Emancipation

Closely aligned with his work in values education is Lovat's broader, and more theoretical, work regarding the fundamental purpose and set of goals of education itself. In this, Lovat's perspectives are uniquely formed by the German philosopher, Jürgen Habermas (Lovat, 2013).

Habermas observed that knowledge has three possible functions for the human person. First, an instrumental function, which enables a person to *do* certain activities, normally confined to the socio-political context in which such knowledge is conveyed. For example, my knowledge about the housing market and the way money functions enables me to save money and purchase a home. Instrumental knowledge would also enable me to perform tasks, such as responding to comprehension questions, solving mathematical problems, recounting facts, and so on. The knowledge is instrumental because it can be put to a certain use *within a specific framework of meaning*.

The second level of knowledge is historical-hermeneutic, by which Habermas means it is focused on the capacity to understand and interpret—in light of history—the very frameworks which give rise to instrumental knowledge. As it pertains to the example of home ownership, historical-hermeneutic knowledge would enable me to understand the history of property ownership, interpret this history, and consider how my current deployment of instrumental knowledge is related to it. In this, I have the tools for understanding how and why a specific framework of meaning exists and can understand my place within it. This latter point is

significant. I am still within that framework of meaning, even though now with a more critical approach to it.

The third level of knowledge is emancipatory. Drawing on Marx and others, Habermas notes that this level of human knowing can deploy knowledge for the purposes of advancing—or even overcoming—the dominant framework of meaning. This acknowledges that certain power relationships exist within a specific framework of meaning, and that in part the responsibility of the knower is to overcome these, especially when they are oppressive. Knowledge, on this view, is not simply about knowing how and what, or even why, but about the question of ‘what next’? This is where emancipation begins.

This is a constant focus of Lovat’s academic work, and it is borne out both in his writing and the writing of those he has supervised, taught and co-authored. Across many disciplines, Lovat has shepherded movement in understanding, and has also challenged those around him to consider that the search for understanding has an essentially ethical and teleological drive towards overcoming systems of injustice and oppression. Knowledge is never neutral, according to this view. It is always knowledge for a purpose.

Anchoring

The reflections I have shared to now lead to an important point. I note it by recalling a conversation I once had with Lovat, in which I shared a distressing situation I encountered during a public lecture I was delivering as a junior academic. The situation was as follows: I was speaking in a denominational context and mentioned the name of a scholar who had been controversial within that denomination. I was shouted at and told something along the lines of: “You shouldn’t be quoting such a heretic!” As a young academic, I did not know how to respond, so I didn’t. Lovat was a great support and anchor to me at this time, and I confided in him. His response corresponded to all I have reflected on so far: deeply caring and with concern, mixed also with his *famous* laconic laugh, and the following quote: “They yelled at you about *him*? He’s a methodologist!”

Setting aside the great relief I felt from Lovat’s support, his comment was apt. Method, in any discipline, appears neutral. But it’s not. It’s radical. Our methods always contain within them a vision of the good life, of what counts in reasoning, and what its outcome should be. It is one thing to challenge someone on the basis of their idea, but a method is *truly* revolutionary. Note the connection above with Habermas.

Lovat’s method is not neutral: it cannot be deployed to any end. Rather, it invites a deep and considered analysis of the worldview that informs it. And this is where his great academic love enters into my reflections on his work: theology. Lovat is profoundly counter-cultural in his ongoing emphasis on the importance of theology (Fleming & Lovat, 2015). In an era in which the “secular god” has taken over our public and political spaces, Lovat has continued to advocate for the importance of the study of theology as *the* crucial discipline for understanding the world today. His

argument rests not only on the observation that religion has an enduring influence on the major issues that we face in the world today, not least of which is the fact that the majority of the world's population understand their existence in the context of religious convictions, but also because the supposed "removal" of religion only leads to the adoption of other quasi-religious perspectives (whether they fit with the "new religions" of capitalism or scientism, or are of some other form).

For similar reasons, Lovat has been a long-standing advocate for high quality religious education in schools, and his work in this regard has had an enduring impact on several generations of Australians. He has also opened up opportunities for the study of theology and religion in places hitherto absent of these opportunities, including in the establishment of theology in an Australian secular university for the first time in history (Fleming et al., 2015). His specific focus on Islam in more recent years has led to a substantive contribution in scholarship in this area and solidified his enduring argument that it is only by understanding a religion "from the inside" that one can advance it, and critique it (Lovat & Moghadam, 2018). In the wake of the Royal Commission into Institutional Abuse, one can see how his methodology is so important for those religious communities that have abused so gravely and caused so much damage to so many. On Lovat's view, this problem will not be solved unless the theologies that these traditions hold to are *also* critiqued for their part in this behaviour.

All of this said, Lovat's work in religion and theology is not confined to critiquing the problems of religion. He is able to show how beauty, truth and goodness can arise out of *some* theologies, and give a methodology for determining which, and how to advance them (Lovat, 2017). And this last point leads to my final reflection.

Telos

A couple of years ago I had the opportunity to sit down and read Dietrich Bonhoeffer's remarkable work, *The Cost of Discipleship*, from cover to cover for the first time (Bonhoeffer, 2001). I had dabbled in Bonhoeffer many times before and had always been deeply moved and impressed. A young man, living in Nazi Germany, so committed to his theological worldview, a form of Protestant Christianity, that he wound up executed by the governmental regime for acts which sought to undermine its authority. A theology expressing itself courageously in the face of a domineering power, itself a kind of theology: precisely the context that Lovat claims requires our critical attention today.

Lovat studied Bonhoeffer in his Master of Theology thesis (Lovat, 1979), and Bonhoeffer never left him. Great prophets never do. What Bonhoeffer gave to Lovat's worldview, and therefore his scholarship, is a *telos*, a vision of the good after which great thinkers *and* moral agents seek: an uncompromising commitment to truth and justice, and a vision of courage which is always contextualised, and is not afraid of whatever power exists in its context (Fleming & Lovat, 2013). Bonhoeffer's vision leaves no space for fence-sitting or neutrality. It calls on those who claim to follow in Bonhoeffer's path to direct all their energies to this noble

vision of the good life, never faltering in their commitment to achieving our ultimate aim (Rayson & Lovat, 2014). No student of theology can avoid this call, and nor can any teacher. It is worth remembering, of course, that even ignoring the call is a response to it!

That Bonhoeffer so deeply underscores Lovat's work explains his commitment to pushing boundaries in thought and action, genuinely seeking to understand and respond to the plight of those who are oppressed and, wherever possible and prudent, challenging power. In part, this explains his seeking to better understand and then advocate for the Islamic community in Australia, beginning at a time when their experience was primarily one of oppression and prejudice, and also his commitment to the betterment of all with and for whom he works—students and colleagues alike.

The haunting challenge of Bonhoeffer to avoid any form of “cheap grace” and, instead, to strive after that which is costly, holds out an almost impossible goal of goodness. On the other hand, when one seeks after that goal, one's life and one's work takes on a direction that is unmistakable. Those who know Terry Lovat see this arc in his life and his work, and I have no doubt that the *telos* to which he is committed will see him continuing to extend his striving for these goals for many years to come. And, in the current context of completing this writing (the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020), it is abundantly clear that Lovat's contribution has an enduring relevance to the issues the world needs to face and for which it requires adequate responses.

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Short Tributes

Robert Crotty

A *Festschrift* honouring an academic usually canvasses the work of students who have imbibed the academic's thought world. It is not unknown for others to contribute, but unusual for the academic's teacher to do so. For one thing, the teacher is usually long dead. It has been suggested that I contribute to the *Festschrift* acknowledging the achievement of Terry Lovat on his seventieth birthday. Terry was my outstanding student who went on to work at the highest level. I acknowledge that he surpassed me in his depth and breadth of academic research. On quite a few memorable occasions, Terry and I have collaborated in research and writing. They were great moments in my own academic career, and I would hope they were the same for him. In the chapter within, I have reflected on an issue that has interested both of us, an issue that has been our responsibility to manage in our respective universities, and one on which both of us have written—the Ethics of Academic Research. So often, both of us, individually and jointly, have managed as well as had to submit to Human Ethics Research Committees (HRECs) which scrutinised the research we hoped to undertake and adjudicated as to whether what we intended to do was ethical. May I conclude by saying that, in my experience, Terry was always an exemplar of academic research ethics.

Brian Douglas

I first met Terry Lovat as a student at St John's College, Morpeth where I was in training for the priesthood. Terry was a member of the College Council and a lecturer in Ethics in the Bachelor of Divinity Degree I was completing. From my first meeting with him I knew that he was concerned about people. He wanted the best for them and we soon became friends. His lectures in Ethics were eye-opening for

me as he presented ethical theory and its practical application in a way that was engaging and relevant. It was clear to me that he was a born teacher and someone who knew the power of education. We had many meetings of a professional and social nature and I grew closer to him as an academic mentor and friend. After a period as a school chaplain in another city I returned to Newcastle in 2001 and soon became reacquainted with Terry. He was the same friendly and encouraging person. It was at this time that he became my supervisor for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Newcastle. Over the next 6 years we shared together in my topic, Anglican eucharistic theology and ramifications for theological education. Over the course of the degree he encouraged and supported me in ways that enabled me to grow and develop. His method was to provide the freedom to think and develop with a minimum of criticism. When he did make a critical comment it was clearly very important and incisive and it was something of which I took great notice. It was as if the two of us were engaged in friendly discussion and dialogue on the topic and my opinions were valued. He led me to see the relevance of Habermas and dialogue to my project. This was a life-changing realisation which has very much affected my academic development approach to life and faith ever since. When I gave him the final draft of the thesis he went through it with a professionalism and thoroughness that was a gift. His knowledge of the process and how to write a thesis is second to none and his ability to engage the topic brought it to a new place. Since completing the degree Terry and I have written several articles together. He uses the same approach as thesis supervision: allowing freedom but bringing an incisive approach to the final product. Each time I read his comments or talk with him about the product I grow. He has the same approach to life: he wants to see people grow and he does this carefully and tenderly. This has been a great gift of life and learning for me for which I will be always very grateful. Terry Lovat practises what he preaches and engages with people in ways that encourage dialogue and growth with respect for the other person and a desire to learn together in ways that are powerful and life-giving. Terry is a friend whose contribution to my life and academic work is greatly valued. I am quite simply in his debt.

Edmund Parker

I have a great deal of respect for Terry Lovat. Not only is he a first-class scholar but he is also a wonderful example of a gracious, caring and decent person. It was in 1994 that Terry became one of my PhD supervisors. There began a journey that has continued into an education that both enabled and satisfied me. Lovat became in effect one that opened my mind and life into a journey that was both very satisfying and freedom producing. One thing that I respected was his encouragement and guidance. There was always a very rapid response from any submission and a very careful critique of what one presented. Combined with that were many helpful suggestions of what yet needed to be done. Terry Lovat has had a profound effect on my education as well as my life's journey. Thank you, Terry.

Mohammad Al-Jararwah

I had the greatest privilege and honour during my journey at the University of Newcastle, Australia, to be supervised by a world-leading expert in my field of study, Emeritus Professor Terry Lovat. Emeritus Professor Lovat has been a tremendous mentor, role model and an endless source of energy for me. I express my sincere admiration of, and eternal gratitude to him for encouraging my research, influencing my socio-political and educational perspectives and supporting me to develop as a critical socio-political researcher, whilst providing sound advice on my PhD dissertation and my career during my time at the University. I wish Terry very well in all his future endeavours.

Omar Salim

As the contributions of this book have acknowledged, Prof. Lovat is a brilliant scholar whose academic and public service has made a profound and lasting impact on the lives of many people and communities around the world. I have profited a great deal from Prof. Lovat's sincere, integral and emancipatory approach to inquiry, writing and teaching. Prof. Lovat is a rare polymathic scholar whose work transcends ontological/epistemological boundaries in which he masterfully draws upon and synthesises a comprehensive and complex range of subjects, disciplines, and traditions in order to express sound reasoning and offer a light of understanding. All of this said, it is perhaps Prof. Lovat's moral conviction and concern for the entire human community, accompanied by his uncompromising commitment to truth and justice, that resonates most in his unifying and illuminating work. In other words, when most people go along with the prevailing conventional social norms, comply with a reductive and dogmatic view of science, religion or tradition, and sheepishly follow unjust and even iniquitous legal standards of the society in which they belong, Prof. Lovat endeavours to challenge and awaken people's consciousness and imagination so that they may inhabit a more critically reflective, morally sound and interdependent way of making meaning and peacefully coexisting.

Prof. Lovat's humanitarian and polymathic approach and ability to "paint the big picture" is especially prescient today, since every challenge we face as a society, whether social, economic, cultural, religious, technological or environmental, calls for an integrative educational response, one that calls for a multi-ontological and multi-discipline/systems consonance, and draws on our most comprehensive understanding of human nature and moral sensibilities. Here, in the midst of this century's ominous problems and creative possibilities, only an integrative conceptual and pedagogical understanding of knowledge, learning and teaching, as advanced by Prof. Lovat's elucidating scholarship, has the potential to inspire and equip today's generation of students and teachers to overcome the unnecessary and self-fulfilling clash of realities, to resolve our crisis in knowledge and wisdom, and to develop our

much needed capacity for seeking truth, justice and peace within and beyond the realm of education.

The 10th century Arab poet, al-Mutanabbi once observed, humanity ‘though separate, need one another; Without knowing, each serves the other’ (Yusuf 2010, p. 2). Prof. Lovat, thank you for your gracious and sincere guidance over these many years and for reminding us, we are here to “serve the other”.

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Bernie Curran AM¹

Thank you so much for the invitation to Terry’s surprise celebration. I was delighted that this much anticipated event had come into being and that I had been invited. One of the great memories of my time at Uni was of this incredibly gifted and very humane University man who simply kept appearing wherever I went. And always, after he left, there was something to read, a lecture, a paper, a book. So much so that I have my own “Terry Lovat collection”.

Mark Hillis

Terry Lovat is an inspirational figure in education. His voice is worth hearing on trends in public education, and curriculum. Yet Terry is also an authority in the worlds of religious education and interfaith dialogue, where he has modelled approaches that eschew a clinical, descriptive style. Instead, Terry is a supervisor who also acted as a mentor and friend. He encouraged engagement and passion in the field of religious education. My own fascination with scriptural narratives was strengthened by Terry in a way that enhanced connection with other practitioners and scholars. Working with Terry guarantees the expansion of horizons and deepens understanding.

Amir Moghadam

It is very difficult to summarise Professor Lovat’s work or his influence on my work. Although I sense that he had some questions about my views on my chosen PhD topic, he did not reject me. He gave me the chance to grow in my academic pursuit and I am thankful for that. On that note, I would like to share my sincere opinion

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that universities need people like Terry who encourage free thinking in students even if in some cases they do not share the same viewpoints with them. Not only universities but also the world needs people like Terry who teach free thinking and questioning standard truth claims. We are lucky in knowing Terry because, above and beyond anything, he is a teacher of Free Thinking.

Sakineh Tashakori

I am fortunate to be one of Professor Lovat's PhD students in Education at The University of Newcastle, Australia. Although the start of my study was with the outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic, needless to say he never withheld his precise guidance and support from me even during the time the meetings were held online. His presence is really the start of change not only in my life but also in the way I look at the world, people and myself as a human being. He has always been by my side without any prejudice and without any racist view about my religion and my beliefs. I really appreciate him for being the most honest and responsible supervisor I've ever had. I am grateful to him for never forcing me to consider his views as obligatory in writing an article and dissertation and always encouraging me to remember that writing is re-writing, re-writing and re-writing again. Thank you Professor Lovat for taking time to listen, to care and to believe in me. Thank you for contributing to make me who I am.

Paul Walker OAM²

Terry has been a singular influence over me for the past 13 years. Not only in terms of my understandings of philosophy, but also, for several of those years, consuming most of my waking hours; indeed, capturing much of my life. Such is your enthusiasm for intellectual challenge and for the sharing of knowledge.

I first heard Terry Lovat giving the address at my wife's graduation in Political Science in 2007. He said that while it may be a medical scientist who discovers the cure for cancer, it will be a social scientist who decides its distribution. He then took a leap of faith that someone with no undergraduate qualifications, other than an MBBS, could complete a PhD in the humanities.

Along the way, I learned a great deal of philosophy, theology, spirituality, the nuances of the English language, the necessity to have a dictionary of English grammar and usage at hand while preparing a draft for him, and a great deal about humility. I have no doubt that Terry Lovat is the best supervisor a PhD candidate could have; turning around chapters and papers overnight, with insightful and detailed

²Medal of the Order of Australia.

comments paragraph-by-paragraph, line-by-line, word-by-word, argued, justified, and sub-referenced. Subsequently preparing and submitting papers and then responding to comments from reviewers, was a process during which he was the steady hand on the wheel, always the voice of calm reassurance. As a giant of an intellectual, Terry's humility and generosity in sharing the knowledge he has, have been profoundly meaningful for me. Thank you.

*Ashley Moyses*³

I am so very grateful to Di Rayson for the invitation to join you all on this special occasion. I am particularly thrilled to have the opportunity to say something to you Terry and to join with your family, friends, colleagues, former students, among others, in celebration of your birthday.

I want to share some brief reflections on the way Terry has demonstrated a principal characteristic of being human. I want to highlight his efforts to encourage his friends and fellows, students and scholars, alike, to do the same. That it is say, I want to take a moment to reflect on the very human way that Terry has engaged his work as a scholar and educator.

Of course, as someone nurtured by the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, it makes sense that Terry recognizes this principal characteristic: that we are human beings-with-and-for-other-human being. 'I am by the fact that you are' is a formula one can read in Bonhoeffer's anthropology—it can be read in several other theologians and philosophers too. According to such philosophical and theological anthropologies, to be a human being, then, requires that each of us realizes that we are indissolubly correlated with the lives of others who stand alongside us. In this, we learn that humanity is not made for a solitary and isolated existence. Rather, we are social beings.

Put differently, with a formula in mind, that being 'I am by the fact that you are', we are introduced to a way of thinking about human being that does not describe the relationship between two static and self-determining atoms. Instead, the formula describes two dynamic beings who move out from themselves for existence, encountering each other for an understanding of the shape and limit of their individuality and interdependence. This is to suggest that the "I am" and the "You are" encounter each other as two histories interrupting a particular solitude and inculcating a new experience, the real experience, of being. In such an encounter, we come to learn to whom, with whom, and for whom we are responsible: we are claimed by the very reality of the other to move out from ourselves, and to discover our near and distant neighbors.

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The indissoluble correlation between persons is a veritable actuality as I have observed and engaged with Terry. For him, this ‘I am by the fact that you are’ formula is not merely an intellectual exercise in philosophical or theological anthropology. Rather, it seems to me that Terry practices such an anthropology.

And it is the engagement with his students, his colleagues, and his friends that I want to explore a bit further: Let me explain. Terry recognizes that academic scholarship can become a solitary exercise and academic life can become woefully lonely. As such, academic life can become quite inhuman. But such inhumanity is what Terry seems to resist.

It seems to me that Terry has refused to let the inhumanity of the scholarly life to define and to delimit not only his own being, but also the being of those he works alongside. That is to say, recognizing this potentiality for inhuman solitude, Terry has labored diligently to work together with people and for people throughout his career. Collaborations and conciliar engagement could be described as a hallmark of his academic vocation.

Being human, together, seems to capture who Terry is and how he navigates the academic seas; not only in Australia, but also here in the UK, and around the world. That is to say, as a supervisor and mentor, as a colleague and friend, Terry has so often labored to ensure that we don’t fall prey to the trappings of academic seclusion and self-sufficiency. As it has been my experience with Terry, he is consistently introducing me to people; actual people whose work may or may not be related to my own, but people he has come to know, to work alongside, to learn from, and to converse with.

Whether it was an introduction to a reading group with both faculty and post-graduate students at Newcastle shortly after I began my doctoral studies or continued hospitality to introduce me to people here at Oxford shortly after I relocated, Terry demonstrates time and again that he cares the place where I am becomes a place for human flourishing—and such flourishing can only be realized in correlation with others.

Terry has shown me, and I can imagine so many of you, not only what it looks like to be a human being, but how to be a human being—and specifically, how to be a human being in the academy where the opportunity for cultivating inhumanity comes far too easy. And so, I am very grateful for you, Terry. I am grateful for your example, and for your enduring commitment to connect people with people. Terry, your example and your edification are things I so cherish. Happy birthday. Might you have many, many more!

Dianne Rayson

The Prof’s generous contribution to his post-graduate students was acknowledged when he was awarded the coveted prize of the University of Newcastle’s “Supervisor of the Year” as I completed my PhD. This recognised not only my own supervision, but decades of relational mentorship of undergraduate, masters, and doctoral

students—a role that continues as he nurtures scholars around the world. I suspect that each of his PhD's consider themselves Lovat's 'favourite', such is his devoted attention and care for his charges.

Just as Aquinas's brilliant mind wove together reason and experience, Bonhoeffer's life demonstrated a genuine intertwining of theology and ethics. In Lovat's scholarship, there are threads of Aristotle and Aquinas, of Bonhoeffer and Gandhi. There we witness a paradigm shift to transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary thinking and *praxis*. In fact, Lovat's corpus might be seen as *metadisciplinary*, the place where the very largest wicked problems of the world might be addressed, and where the highest form of knowledge is dependent on the self-reflexive criticism that only humility and grace can accommodate. Like Aquinas and Bonhoeffer, Lovat might also be recognised as a practical mystic in the ways that his students and colleagues will recognise, namely, devotion to mentoring pupils—not simply into scholars but into *thinkers*—that makes him such a sought-after supervisor; humble leadership of people as valuable team members; and standing alongside outcasts and “the other” in our society. It is in this living out of Bonhoeffer's notion of sociality, of knowing the self and knowing the other, that we recognise true scholarship.

Lovat's commitment to the highest form of knowing and meaning-making has driven me to places I would not have otherwise ventured. I am so thankful to have been his disciple and now colleague and friend, and I remain convinced that I am the Prof's favourite student. Long may the polyphony of Lovat's academic, and especially theological, endeavours continue.

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