

Marian de Souza · Jane Bone
Jacqueline Watson *Editors*

Spirituality across Disciplines: Research and Practice

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Preface

This volume, with its interdisciplinary focus, is a welcome addition to the burgeoning literature in the field of spirituality, which is now a legitimate concern in many disciplines. Spirituality has only made its mark in academic circles comparatively recently. It was previously considered to be largely the legitimate concern of the religious domain. So how has this change come about? Below we give a number of reasons for its new legitimacy. All are to some extent interconnected.

Academic Publication

The first reason is that, until relatively recently, there was no place to publish material on children's spirituality or even spirituality generally; there was no academic outlet. Spirituality, or the spiritual life, was subsumed under the genre of religion, often with its own dogmatics.

The *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* started its life in September 1996. Its purpose was to stimulate debate over how spirituality could be addressed in education and associated disciplines. The journal originated in the UK where the importance of spirituality in schooling had been re-emphasised in the 1988 Education Reform Act. This was a development that was not interrogated with any great seriousness initially; indeed, it could be understood as something of an embarrassment since the main point of the Education Reform Act's educational initiatives was to show how educational practice resulted in the delivery of specific outcomes based on empirical measurement. Initially, education policy and practice attempted to sublimate spirituality to the context of religion in order to both confine its purpose and enhance the aims of religious education – even, perhaps, to re-theologise it for Christian purposes – but, to coin a phrase, the cat was out of the bag, spirituality now had to be identified across the curriculum, along with moral, social and cultural education. However, this created more confusion than it did liberation. What on earth, many wondered, did spirituality have to do with the broader curriculum? What was its connection with other subjects and disciplines?

Revisiting the first issue of IJCS in September of 1996 we find that most of the articles published, in one form or another, addressed religion or the transcendent in education. Two were more concerned with moral education. Only two out of eight contributions came from beyond the United Kingdom. This was to change as the journal developed and as the accompanying International Conferences were created. As an example, by 2006, when the journal published three issues a year, contributions came from Australia, New Zealand, Finland, the United States, Hong Kong, Canada, South Africa, Belgium and Israel, as well as the UK, and the interdisciplinary aspect had also broadened considerably. Here it is worth mentioning the later introduction of the Journal for the Study of Spirituality as this demonstrates the growth of the wider, interdisciplinary discussion even more – and this book is about that wider debate.

Narrative

The second reason spirituality was legitimated was that there was an academic turn towards the legitimacy of narrative. The most well-known example is in ethics with the writings of Carol Gilligan, for example, *In A Different Voice* (Gilligan 1993) following those of Lawrence Kohlberg, for example, in, *The Psychology of Moral Development* (Kohlberg 1984) and the tensions created in the academic community by this turn. Narrative should be linked, also, to the influence of feminism, including a demand for academic and moral space for subjectivity and the suggestion that women's moral judgements stem from the self, immersed in a network of relationships sustained by narrative.

The above argument for the importance of narrative in the formation and projection of identity suggests that its significance should also not be overlooked in children's and young people's development. Our Children and Worldviews Project's research into this field of enquiry was presented in *The Education of the Whole Child* (Erricker et al. 1997). In the introduction, we quoted Kathleen Casey's reference to the importance of Mikhail Bakhtin's linguistic theories for her research and the analysis of her data. She wrote:

The most important contribution of Bakhtin's theories, from my point of view, is the way in which they make possible the combination of a serious intellectual analysis of women teachers' narratives with a profound respect for their authors. (Casey 1993, p. 21; Erricker et al. 1997, p. xi)

In our research, we set out to replicate Casey's concern for respect for the authors' narratives and serious intellectual analysis when presenting children and young peoples' spiritual lives. We accessed children's narratives, allowing them to speak freely and at length about their experiences. We considered that as they spoke, or narrated, they were not only telling us what had happened but they were also making meaning. This was particularly clear when we allowed children to speak together, with us merely facilitating the conversation. This led to a different

understanding of children's spirituality as meaning making, of establishing what was important to them, and understanding how they wished to and should react to events in their lives. The children used narrative to construct and define their relationships. It also meant that children's spirituality, as we saw it, could include a religious belief or not, depending on whether the children used religion in their narrative constructs.

One of the difficulties people can have with children "speaking their mind" or recounting their experiences is that this often reveals their own ignorance and inability to respond with answers to the issues their narratives and questions raise. To ask questions about the world and human experience is a mature and confident thing for a young person to do. Thus, perhaps, one of the reasons we are reticent to listen to what they have to say, on their own terms, is because it reveals our own ignorance and inadequacy: we don't have any simple answers. This is itself a spiritual issue because if we ignore children's voices, concerns and narratives, we belittle them and their importance. Also, it leads to adults constructing children's supposed identities rather than children's self-construction of their identities. As well, it is a political issue because if narrative is not heard it is effectively silenced by omission. For us, the political nature of our work became clear through the realisation that some schools would not work with us in such a sensitive area and, that, when giving talks on our research and its results, including presenting children's narratives, responses tended to be either very enthusiastic or negative and hostile.

The majority of research and publication on children's and young people's spirituality, and spirituality across the board, has favoured qualitative methodologies, with their focus on narrative. This is not to ignore quantitative research that has also contributed to this field, but rather to show how narrative approaches have enhanced the possibilities of legitimating spirituality as an area of study.

Constructions of Spirituality

The third reason for the legitimacy of spirituality is that researchers and authors began to see how it could be addressed beyond, as well as within, the religious domain, as this volume testifies. Initially, relieved of its religious framework, no one really knew what spirituality amounted to. But to dismiss spirituality as a concept that can only be understood in the context and language of religion misses the point. We speak of many other things that we value using the figurative language of simile and metaphor and poetic devices without recourse to religion and these things are meaningful to us because they relate to our experience. We also describe things in such a way that they express our feelings and affective awareness; for example in relation to love, taste, music and cultural difference. So, it might be better to understand spirituality or the spiritual as an attempt at translation from experience to language, rather than a definition of a tangible thing. If, instead, we attempt to register the usefulness, or use-value, of spirituality we can ask if it does make a positive contribution and, if so, in what ways?

Helpful to us here is an observation of the French philosopher Derrida. Derrida, refers to the pharmakon (Derrida 1981), found in a passage of Plato's Phaedrus (Plato 1973, pp. 274b–75b). Here the inventor god, Theuth, exhibits his inventions to the Great God-King Thamus to consider their merits. When he presents him with writing, Theuth proclaims it as “a pharmakon (recipe or remedy) for memory and wisdom”. But, as Derrida makes clear, pharmakon can have two opposite meanings in Greek: a remedy or cure, or a poison. Thamus perceives it as a poison because it will detract from memory. Derrida argues that what we have is a case of undecidability or undecidables because of the pharmakonic quality entailed. This is necessarily the case because we have no idea of the results that would follow its use.

So, we suggest that we have something of the same situation with spirituality? We have to test it to know of its benefits or otherwise. We have to know its use value. Some spiritualities coming from “alien” (non-western) traditions have certainly been treated in this way and, in some cases, perhaps quite rightly. But the question is, as with Derrida's undecidables, how would we know? When Swami Prabhupada, the founder or reviver of the Krishna Consciousness movement, was in New York, he was interviewed and asked whether his teaching and practice amounted to brainwashing. His answer was that maybe Westerners needed their brains washed. Similarly, the Dalai Lama has remarked on our desire to explore outer space but observed that there is a great deal of exploration of inner space yet to be done.

What we are arguing for here is an openness to possibilities. Something like the convivencia experienced in Cordoba in the ninth century and the society of Sicily under the Norman ruler Roger 11 in the first half of the tenth century. It was openness to and sharing of ideas from different perspectives and a broad love of learning from one another (see Brotton 2012, pp. 54–81). That sits well with a book on spirituality incorporating different disciplinary perspectives.

The Value of the Study of Spirituality in the Future

In this volume, different authors link spirituality to wellbeing, lifeview, a quest for unity (with others and the land), connectedness, mindfulness, aesthetics and creativity, the communication of meaning and development: in the sense of self, the emotions and morals. The plurality of understanding of spirituality does not indicate a lack of definition but rather an exploration of its diverse facets and expressions as it is approached in a number of inter-disciplinary ways.

What is our future? What sort of world do we hope we are capable of constructing? What qualities do we hope we will possess and be able to use? Writing this in 2015, when our societies, especially western ones, are so obsessed with economic growth, what other sorts of growth do we expect we can develop in order to participate in and shape the world of the future? Perhaps tolerance, compassion and the capacity to speak out against injustice and deprivation might be three. Might we not regard these as spiritual qualities? And if these are neglected, in education,

in our pursuit of knowledge, and in society generally, then what sort of future do we expect will be constructed in the future? This all begs the question as to what sort of society we wish to construct and what place spiritual qualities will have in it. As was remarked, earlier in reflecting on our own research, addressing spirituality is a highly political endeavour because it has much to do with what we value, how we understand ourselves and others, and to what use we wish to put our energies and our capital (whether economic, social, cultural or educational). We need to talk about the notion of spiritual capital to raise the profile of its value.

If we wanted to identify at least one aspect of spiritual capital we might start with the term wellbeing. On a small scale, we could refer to Clive's experience of working in a foodbank in the UK. When "clients" come to the foodbank they are often sent by jobcentres at which their benefits have been sanctioned and the experience they have received has often been highly impersonal. Arriving at the foodbank their sense of wellbeing, due to their economic impoverishment, can be very low indeed. After all, if you don't have money to buy your next meal or pay your electricity bill then confidence is low and you are reliant on charity. Part of the job of a foodbank is to reassure "clients" as well as give them food, but their resources are limited, relying on donations and the time-availability of volunteer staff. It is first-aid. This is hardly a recipe for re-establishing wellbeing or fostering a renewed sense of self-esteem. Therefore, we can observe the connection between what we might call spiritual capital and economic capital. To cast the net further and on a larger scale, we might take the situation in Greece. In Greece the economic situation has led to suicides, at worst, and for many, impoverishment, at least. If we try to understand what has led to this we have to take account of a political model of neo-liberalism informed by an economic theory of neo-classicalism. Thus, to speak of spiritual capital, or its lack, is necessarily to investigate what connections that has with political and economic capital.

Taking this analysis further we might observe the discourse of the military. Following a recent United States attack, under NATO auspices, which resulted in a hospital being bombed in Kunduz in Afghanistan, George Monbiot reported: "The strike may have resulted in collateral damage to a nearby medical facility". This is how an anonymous NATO spokesperson described Saturday's disaster in Afghanistan. Let's translate it into English. "We bombed a hospital, killing 22 people." But "people", "hospital" and "bomb", let alone "we": all such words are banned from NATO's lexicon. Its press officers are trained to speak no recognisable human language. The effort is to create distance: distance from responsibility, distance from consequences and distance above all from the humanity of those who were killed. They do not merit even a concrete noun. Whatever you do, do not create pictures in the mind (Monbiot 2015).

Monbiot's critique reminds us that if spirituality and the idea that human beings are in some sense spiritual beings is to be affirmed then we must tackle the sort of discourse that this official language presents.

It would be good to see more interdisciplinary research from the perspective of spirituality that analyses the discourses and worth of these political, economic and military perspectives. This volume is welcome because its contributions take it in

the right direction, even though our nascent discipline requires still more to be done to challenge what is a distinctly “unspiritual” overarching global discourse.

In a globalised and, yet, still plural world, with differing ethnicities, traditions and beliefs (and yet ever closer proximity), the idea that we neglect to foster a form of spiritual communication and connectedness would be worse than careless; perhaps it could be classed as criminal but, we acknowledge, that would require a change in the law.

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Jane Erricker
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Chapter 1

Contemporary Spirituality: An Introduction to Understandings in Research and Practice

Marian de Souza

Abstract The role of spirituality in human life has continued to receive much attention as attested to by the number of disciplines represented in this book. However, more consideration needs to be given to the impact of the dark side of spirituality in the lives of individuals and communities especially in a world characterized by issues related to globalization, materialism and religious and cultural diversity. Nurturing spirituality may be one way of promoting individual and communal wellbeing and social cohesion through self-knowledge and awareness of others. This chapter, then, serves as the introduction to the topic upon which this book is based: spirituality across disciplines. It examines the notion of spirituality as it is being used in today's world across a variety of disciplines. It notes that, in general, researchers tend to avoid offering a definition of the term so that some levels of ambiguity surround the concept. This, in turn, has the potential to reduce the impact of research and application and creates problems of authenticity for the discipline. Therefore, this chapter offers a rationale for investigating the concept of spirituality as it is being understood and applied across a range of disciplines to bring some clarity to various understandings so that current research studies will be better able to inform future research and practice.

In the mid-1990s, when I first began to research perceptions and experiences of religious education programs for senior secondary students in Catholic schools in the State of Victoria, Australia, I came across a frequent response 'I'm spiritual not religious'. It was this response that stimulated my research in the field of young people's spirituality (de Souza 2003; de Souza et al. 2004) and it has spurred my subsequent research over the past 20 years into the spiritual dimension in education (for instance, de Souza 2004, 2005, 2006). The response also made me focus on a few additional aspects. To begin with, students were making a distinction between

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religion and spirituality, and they actually expected me to understand what they were saying. I soon accepted that, despite being reared in a Catholic world where religiosity and spirituality had been used interchangeably, and where spirituality was seen as something that flowed from religion, I now needed to recognize a distinct difference between the two. In addition, I came to realize that spirituality was being perceived as an innate human sensibility and capability which generated the religious impulse in humans as they reached out to something beyond themselves, and often, beyond their physical world. Today, in October 2015, a Google search shows that there are about 79,900,000 hits for the expression 'I'm spiritual but not religious', including an identification of the initials SBNR. These figures are a clear indication of the enormous interest and growth in spirituality, both religious and non-religious in the twenty-first century.

I was born with a foot in two cultures, that is an Anglo-Indian culture, which, when translated into everyday life, meant that one's world view and behaviour was heavily influenced by British culture and values but one's setting was distinctively Indian. This meant that my childhood during the early years of Independent India, like many others who lived in colonized countries, became that of a displaced person.¹ I had inherited a Christian, western culture which rapidly became marginalized in North India following Independence. I also experienced the shrinking of my community of anglicized Indians as families packed up and left to settle in Britain, Australia and elsewhere, where they expected to experience a sense of belonging because of their religion and British-influenced culture including having English as their mother-tongue. As a new graduate, I also left India to settle in Australia in 1969, when Australia was predominantly a white country which was only just dismantling the White Australia Policy. At a personal level, I discovered a nation of friendly, inclusive people who, paradoxically, were closely connected to the rest of the world because of their migrant origins but were also removed and isolated because of the physical location of Australia as a distant, island country. Further, I found, at one level, I had much in common with Anglo-Australians because we shared some trappings of a colonial history and culture which had influenced our way of being in the world and, therefore, our spirituality.

My particular heritage, then, drawn as it is from both Western and Eastern perspectives, has put me in an interesting place to observe, study and try to understand contemporary perspectives and expressions of spirituality in the global context of Australia and other western societies where Eastern and Western peoples, cultures and philosophies live side by side. For instance, as the dominance of organized Christian religions in western countries began to lose its hold on people over the latter half of the twentieth century, their search for meaning was no longer restricted to a Christian framework. Instead, many individuals began to express their

¹I have discussed this in more detail elsewhere, for instance, de Souza, M. (2012). Inside Out: Exploring an Interspiritual Approach to Learning about Different Religious and Spiritual Beliefs and Practices. In Pluralist Communities. In J. L. Hochheimer & J. Fernandes (Eds). *Spirituality: Conversations for the 21st Century*, 67-83. Oxfordshire, UK: Interdisciplinary Press; and in my recent book, de Souza 2016. *Spirituality and education in a global, pluralized world*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

spirituality in ways that were perceived to be both secular and New Age, the latter of which was heavily influenced by, both, spiritual expressions from the East as well as from different indigenous cultures.

While, today, spirituality is increasingly recognized as an essential human trait, which suggests that it should have relevance for and application to all areas that pertain to human life and living, there has been a distinct reluctance to define the concept or pin it down to something manageable and workable. This problem, I believe, applies particularly to western perspectives of spirituality. In a western culture which has derived its character from Western Christianity, many have had difficulty in finding non-religious language to describe spirituality, given the multiple practices that exist. In fact, discovering secular or non-religious language to describe this innate human characteristic has provided a significant challenge to both philosophers and researchers alike. Studies of Eastern and/or indigenous perspectives do not appear to have the same issue. Spirituality appears to be an everyday affair for people who come from these latter cultures.

Another of my observations has been that, generally, research and discussions on spirituality highlight the positive, beneficial elements for humans and the world in which they live. This made me question whether there were negative aspects and experiences of spirituality and it led me to examine the dark side – the shadow (de Souza 2012, 2016). This is an area that has been mostly neglected in education but a few disciplines, mostly those concerned with health and care, do focus on how the darkness in human life affects wellbeing. Certainly, then, more research into the effects of the human shadow is needed to inform the practice of professionals in other related disciplines.

The notion that spirituality pertains to the relational dimension of being, which is expressed and experienced in the connectedness an individual has with Other,² and which provides the person with a sense of identity and belonging (de Souza 2003, 2006, 2009, 2014a, b), implies that when disconnectedness occurs, it can impact on a person's self-esteem and reduce the ties that bind her/him to their families and communities. This can lead to dislocation, alienation and, ultimately, mental, emotional and spiritual distress (de Souza 2009, 2016). These factors are significant when addressing the wellbeing of individuals and their communities and, therefore, clearly need attention.

Many societal problems today, affecting children and young people in particular, relate to radicalization, racism and violence. It is possible, if we explore understandings of spirituality in terms of connectedness, belonging and identity, to determine the causes of some of these problems. For instance, in response to the incident known as 9/11 and the subsequent rise of terrorist attacks in many countries, there has been the development of hostile attitudes towards Muslims reflected in the spread of Islamophobia. As a result, many young people, from their earliest years, were exposed to attacks on their identity as Muslims so that they have been made to feel unwelcome and insecure in the wider communities in which they live. Much

²Other is used to personify the collective Other in the human and non-human world.

of the associated fear, tension, alienation and resentment that these children may have felt through their most vulnerable years may have resulted in simmering and submerged anger which, then, resided in the depths of their non-conscious minds (de Souza 2009). It is possibly the non-conscious mind, or what Wilson (2002) calls the adaptive unconscious, which has generated the kind of responsive actions resulting in radicalization that we have been witnessing as these young children have grown into teenagers and young adults. It is not surprising, therefore, that in their search for a community to which they can experience a sense of belonging, they have become susceptible to the promotional material of ISIS and a globalized form of Islam (Roy 2004) that scorns the values of a western society which, these young people feel, has consistently rejected them (de Souza 2016).

As well, given the pluralist nature of many societies today, there is ever more opportunity for those who fear the otherness of Other to develop racist attitudes. Instances of racism may not be restricted to differences based on region and race which is linked to physical differences and skin colour, but also on culture – cultural racism (Helms 1993) – and religion – religious racism (de Souza 2014a, b, 2016). Indeed, we are conditioned to connect with Other, especially those others like ourselves who provide us with a sense of identity and belonging which, in turn, helps us to feel more secure and comfortable in our own skins. Equally, we appear to be conditioned to retreat from the Other who is different. This could be a response from the dark side of our spiritual nature which fears and, therefore, rejects the stranger and the unknown. These are all aspects of human spirituality that require further study and research and which may illuminate the causes and solutions to existing problems linked to diversity and plurality which feature prominently in many societies today.

Over the years, I have been involved in a number of networks and, as I have attended numerous gatherings, seminars and conferences across a wide range of disciplines in many countries, it has become a regular occurrence to hear delegates begin their presentations with a disclaimer that they are not defining spirituality. Nevertheless, within the framework of their particular research, they do offer a definition of spirituality. Invariably, the words that follow reflect the relational dimension of being human – the individual's response to something outside his or herself or, indeed, a response to something deep within the Self. Accordingly, we hear words like – awe, wonder, compassion, freedom, liberation, joy, suffering and empathy. As well, the words associated with spiritual practices are rituals, sacred readings, prayer, contemplation, meditation, dreams, solitude, silence and reflection. These words are not only indicative of the connectedness that the individual experiences and expresses to Other but they also suggest changes in the level of consciousness, that is, the awareness and response of the individual self in relation to Other.

My own thoughts on this situation is that, in fact, there appears to be much consistency in what people are talking about and it is these thoughts that provided the idea for this book. The aim was to bring multiple voices together, each reflecting a particular discipline, or an aspect of that discipline, to discuss how spirituality is understood and how it may be expressed or applied in the practice of that discipline.

To achieve this I approached my colleague and friend, Dr Jacqueline Watson, with whom I have shared many discussions over the years. We were often surprised to find our conversations revealed similar views about many aspects of spirituality and spiritual learning, precisely because we had arrived at our respective vantage points by travelling widely divergent paths. Jackie's voice, which is distinctly from the non-religious and secular perspective, provides an interesting textural counterpoint to mine, thereby opening our minds to other possibilities. Later, another colleague, Dr. Jane Bone heard about my proposal and expressed an interest in being part of the team. Jane's involvement in the field of children's spirituality began in New Zealand in 2004 through the focus of her PhD study on spirituality and the education of young children. Through her research in early childhood education as well as her interest in indigenous cultures and her passion for care of the environment, Jane adds yet another dimension to the discourse on spirituality. Together, Jackie and Jane have brought a depth of wisdom and vision to our planning and discussions which has further enhanced this collection.

Our specific intention was to include authors who are well respected and established in their respective fields as well as the voices of newer academics and we asked them the structure their chapters around the following questions:

How is spirituality understood in your area/discipline? (Perhaps a description or definition of the concept?)

How does current research inform the understanding and practice of spirituality in your discipline?

How has spirituality informed your knowledge and practice?

What professional development, if any, is offered in this discipline?

And what are possible future directions for spirituality in this discipline/area.

In the end, we have brought together a range of voices in this collection to represent a number of disciplines where there is evidence that the role of spirituality is gaining attention. In structuring the book, we assembled the chapters into four broad sections beginning with the more traditional forms and understandings of spirituality and moving forward to more recent expressions:

Mysticism and Secularism

Education

Health, Social Care and Wellbeing

Business, Social and Cultural Studies

We also felt that there needed to be a final analytical chapter that examined and identified what different voices were saying about the perceptions and understandings of spirituality across the disciplines. Accordingly, Jackie Watson and I worked on the final chapter which has become a significant part of the book since it identifies aspects of spirituality that are commonly understood and applied across disciplines. As well, it indicates future directions for the discipline.

Finally, we invited Drs Jane and Clive Erricker to write the preface to this book in acknowledgement of their original and innovative work in introducing the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* in the late 1990s which was

followed by the annual conferences. I attended the first conference at Chichester, UK in 2000, and through the network of scholars that grew from that conference, the International Association for Children's Spirituality was established. Therefore, it was through Jane and Clive's initiatives that both Jackie Watson and I became aware of and involved with an international network of scholars and the corresponding discourse on children and young people's spirituality which has continued to inform and deepen our own research.

We believe that the collection of voices in this book provide a diverse and exciting range of perspectives on and expressions in contemporary spirituality in the twenty-first century. Some of the voices are likely to challenge, question and disrupt certainties while also supporting our existing ideas and, we hope, they will generate further reading, reflection and an expansion of thinking and scholarship in our readers. It is our further hope that this collection will inform and extend current research and debate in the field to enrich thinking and professional practice in disciplines that are concerned with enhancing the life and wellbeing of the human world and planet.

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Part I
Mysticism and Secularism

Chapter 2

Christian Spirituality and Religious Mysticism: Adjunct, Parallel or Embedded Concepts?

Bernadette Flanagan

Abstract This essay seeks to explore the evolving discourses of spirituality and mysticism. It reviews how theories of the essence of mysticism have differed depending on whether mysticism is regarded as the perennial and intimate transformation of consciousness in the encounter with holy mystery, or the articulation of that encounter in time-bound expressions or the embodied knowing of transcendence. In a similar manner the evolving understanding of spirituality as the cultivation of awakened personal presence is discussed. In practice settings it is noted that an encounter which is suffused with presence may lead to those involved experiencing a physical, emotional and spiritual surge of energy, even in spite of whatever challenging circumstances may surround the encounter – poverty, hunger, grief, homelessness, etc. It is proposed that in the future mysticism and spirituality, will neither be adjunct, parallel or embedded concepts. Instead they are in the process of mutating into a new field of academic studies, which is already making its presence felt on some campuses – contemplative studies. Contemplative Studies is distinguished by its capacity to recognize the importance of both third-person and critical first-person approaches in the study of religious experience; in particular its capacity to make space for direct personal experience with specific forms of practice – both from mysticism and spirituality.

Reflections on Christian spirituality today are profoundly shaped by the fact that there has been a move away from perceiving a dualistic split between the inner and outer journey, the natural and supernatural, matter and spirit, self and other, humanity and nature. At the heart of contemporary Christian spirituality, then, is an awareness and experience of relationality. This is not to deny the fact that writers who have recorded their personal spiritual experience throughout the ages consistently do so in relational terms. Instead this statement of the current situation simply seeks to draw attention to the fact that the awareness and interpretation of relational experiences will differ substantially when one lives within a worldview of oppositional dualism rather than one informed by a vision of inter-dependence.

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Philip Newell (2014) in his book, *The Rebirthing of God: Christianity's Struggle for New Beginnings* eloquently presents the emerging relational consciousness that characterises Christian spirituality today.

Relationship of Spirituality and Mysticism Concepts

Those, like Newell, who have reflected on this theme of relationality in contemporary Christian spirituality have used a variety of frameworks to present their insights. Wilkie Au (1989) described a holistic Christian spirituality as consisting in the integration of five loves, that of self, neighbour, friends, God and community. Using the injunction of the prophet Micah ‘that you act justly, that you love tenderly, that you walk humbly with your God’ (Micah 6:8) as his starting point Donal Dorr (1990) depicts an integral spirituality as having a concern for relationality in the transcendent, interpersonal and public realms. Since Dorr’s structure has the capacity to incorporate the categories of relationship used by many other authors, it will be employed as the foundational paradigm for the discussion below. In particular, Dorr’s paradigm suggests that religious mysticism (the transcendent realm) is embedded in the wider concept, spirituality.

The Realm of Religious Mysticism

‘No word in our language – not even Socialism – has been employed more loosely than “Mysticism”’, wrote Dean Inge in 1899.¹ With this warning in mind it will be the aim of this section to clarify how the mystical dimension of the wider spirituality concept is understood. The specific resonances which the term assumes will be indicated and more recent frameworks of analysis will be introduced. Finally a perspective on the connection between prayer and the mystical dimension of spirituality will be outlined.

There have been many different approaches to defining and describing the essence of mysticism through the years. Some have dealt with mysticism chiefly as an aspect of religion, tracing the importance of mysticism in religion’s development. Others have asserted that since mysticism is simply a distinctive form of non-dual consciousness, then the science of mysticism is not dependent on the use of a religious or spiritual vocabulary or context.² Theories of the essence of mysticism have also differed as to whether mysticism may be primarily regarded as the

¹See Inge, W.R. (1921) *Christian Mysticism*. ‘The Bampton Lectures 1899’. 5th ed. London: Methuen & Co., 3.

²For instance, see Rohr, R. (2009). *The Naked Now: Learning to See as the Mystics See*. Spring Valley, NY: Crossroad Publishing.

perennial and intimate transformation of consciousness in the encounter with holy mystery, or the articulation of that encounter is time-bound expressions or the embodied knowing of transcendence.³

Religious mysticism also has many different expressions. Grace Jantzen (1995) in her historical study of the phenomenon of mysticism in Christianity has identified four main types.⁴ Sometimes mystical experience has been equated with knowledge. This *intellectual view* of mysticism derives from the nature of the mystical writings of Pseudo-Denys (late fifth to early sixth century). *Affective mysticism*, which was closely associated with Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), emphasises spiritual experience as a form of friendship with the Divine. *Erotic mysticism* is evident in the writings of the Dutch beguine Hadewijch (thirteenth century) who used the language of sexual encounter, not simply as an allegory but, as an account of the highly charged nature of spiritual experience. Finally there are those whom Jantzen terms “mystics of integration”, like Julian of Norwich (1342–1416) who exhibit a mysticism that is embedded in daily life – health and illness, family and solitude, community and withdrawal (Colledge and Walsh 1978).

While aware of these differing points of view, Bernard Mc Ginn (1991) in the first volume of his monumental multi-volume study of mysticism has defined the mystical element of Christianity as ‘that part of its belief and practices that concerns the preparation for, the consciousness of, and reaction to what can be described as the immediate or direct presence of God’.⁵ It is this understanding of mysticism, as concerned with the sense of God which an individual experiences, which forms the backdrop to this article (Komjathy 2015). It is a view which holds that there is a mystical aspect to all religious experience, insofar as religion means the state of being grasped in some way by ultimate mystery. This human awareness of mystery will however lie along a spectrum ranging from implicit to explicit, from weak to strong, from tentative to certain.

When religious experience is explored with this lens the focus is not *what* the person knows about God, but *how* the individual knows God. The witness of history is that this type of experience can be highly idiosyncratic in its imagery and form. One need only remember such original descriptions as Hildegard of Bingen’s experience of being ‘held by God, just like a feather’⁶ or Julian of Norwich’s sense of being supported by God as ‘a hazelnut lying in the palm of my hand’⁷ to be aware of the unique way this mystery has been articulated by so many down through the ages. Such individualised accounts of mystical experience from the Christian

³See Nelstrop, L. (2009). *Christian Mysticism: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Approaches*. Farnham: Ashgate.

⁴Jantzen, G. (1995). *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*. ‘Cambridge Studies in Ideology and Religion’. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁵McGinn, B. (1991). *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*. London: SCM. 1: xvii.

⁶See Fox, M. ed., (1987) *Hildegard of Bingen’s Book of Divine Works with Letters and Songs*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear and Company. 348.

⁷See <http://www.integralworld.net/brouwer2.html>

tradition point to the necessity to be open to hear categories for describing the sense of the divine from clients in one's realm of professional practice which may not have been commonly employed heretofore.

But does such innovative spiritual consciousness manifest a developing *state* or a developing *stage* of religious consciousness? Ken Wilber (2006) and Allan Combs (2009) have collaborated in developing the Wilber-Combs Lattice⁸ in order to provide a more subtle analysis of the interaction between states and stages of consciousness in the unfolding of mystical development. According to their matrix a person can experience a profound mystical *state* but he/she will interpret that experience with the apparatus of the *stage* of development he/she is at when the experience occurs. A person at a magic *stage* of development will interpret a mystical *state* magically. In Ken Wilber's schema states occur spontaneously, but the structures that are characteristics of various stages emerge through practice; a person has to be dedicated to fostering the wise insightful consciousness which characterised the mystical teaching of persons such as Jesus; many mystical experiences may fade when they are not appropriated by an adult stage of consciousness which recognises their significance and acts on it.

An incident from the spiritual biography of Thomas Berry (1914–2009), the great prophet of ecological concern who died in 2009, illustrates this phenomenon. Nine years before he died, he wrote about a mystical state which he experienced in childhood and how the appropriation of this mystical experience in his adult life was foundational in dedicating his life to forwarding ecological concern. At the age of 11 he discovered a new meadow on the outskirts of the town to which his family had just moved. 'The field was covered with white lilies rising above the thick grass,' he said. 'A magic moment, this experience gave to my life something that seems to explain my thinking at a more profound level than almost any other experience I can remember.' It was not only the lilies, he said. 'It was the singing of the crickets and the woodlands in the distance and the clouds in the clear sky . . . This early experience has remained with me ever since as the basic determinant of my sense of reality and values. Whatever fosters this meadow is good. What does harm to this meadow is not good.' By extension, he said, 'a good economic or political, or educational system is one that would preserve that meadow and a good religion would reveal the deeper experience of that meadow and how it came into being.' Berry reflected, 'It was a wonder world that I have carried in my unconscious and that has evolved all my thinking' (Berry 1999).⁹ His mystical experience in the meadow was incorporated into his adult development and was the foundation for him of the ecological imperative in the twenty-first century.

⁸Berry, T. (1999) *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*. New York: Bell Tower/Random House, 12ff

⁹The limitations of such structuralist models are acknowledged, when they display a rigid linear trajectory, since human development is far more complex. In particular, it is widely recognised that the capacity for relationality is not limited to adulthood; indeed contemporary scholarship argues that this capacity exists even in young children in quite sophisticated ways.

The evolution of a mystical state of consciousness into adult forms of mystical commitments has traditionally been understood to be nourished by the practice of prayer. This is because prayer is mainly an exercise in transparency, a coming to terms with the conditions of our lives; and as such it contains within it the dynamic impulse to acknowledge the ultimate Reality in which we are grounded. In all its forms prayer has a source in desire. It articulates a longing for a fullness-of-being in a greater or lesser way. Since a desire to pray is in fact God's desire moving in the person, prayer is the primary presence of God acting within humanity. As such it forms an essential component of any inquiry into spirituality's mystical dimension.

The Interpersonal Realm of Spirituality

The impact of the impulse towards connectedness on spiritual experience can be perhaps best understood in the context of the contemporary discussion of the nature of personal faith at different stages of life. Building on the work of the developmental theorists Eric Erickson (1958), Lawrence Kohlberg (1969), James Fowler (1981), and Felicity Brock Kelcourse (2004) has outlined a cognitive-structural map which situates the specific form that spiritual experience assumes within a developmental framework. When considered in conjunction with other studies her work clearly illustrates that adult spiritual experience has distinctive features which set it apart from the form it assumes at other stages of life. The shape of adult spiritual experience is formed by the distinctive character of the adult self.¹⁰

One of the distinguishing features of the healthy adult self is that it lives, unfolds and has its being in a capacity for intimacy. Though the formation of a firm self-delineation is a task of adulthood the boundaries of this self are, paradoxically, quite penetrable at the same time. It is the very penetrability of these boundaries – evident in such qualities as openness, emotional availability, mutual understanding and compassion – which makes intimacy possible. The capacity for empathy is especially foundational for intimacy. Empathy is the ability to be with another person as that other person actually is in the moment, and not as one needs that person to be. It is the self, which knows in its inner being a capacity for intimacy rooted in empathy, which experiences God. The human person does not experience God as one more experience alongside the adult experience of intimacy, but rather God is co-experienced in the distinctively adult capacity for relationality. While in the past, it was not uncommon for the interpersonal dimension of spirituality to focus on how a person could enter into encounter with God through neighbourly

¹⁰See Eggemeier, M. (2012) "A Mysticism of Open Eyes: Compassion for a Suffering World and the Askesis of Contemplative Prayer." *Spiritus* 12/1: 43–62; Ashley, J.M. (1998) *Interruptions: Mysticism, Politics, and Theology in the Work of Johann Baptist Metz*. Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press; Sölle, D. (2001) *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance*, Minneapolis, MI: Fortress Press

service, because of the Incarnational conviction of God's presence in the other, today the emphasis in spiritual development is moving from universal neighbour love to the particular exigencies of intimate personal love, within which the arts of empathy and compassion may be honed.

The Social Realm of Spirituality

The reflection below on the social dimension of spirituality will proceed at two levels. Firstly, some authors have traced how political theologians like Johann Baptist Metz (1928) and Dorothee Steffensky-Sölle (1929–2003) have united spirituality and social concern through the use of such an evocative phrase as a “Mysticism of Open(or Opened) Eyes”.¹¹ This legacy of Metz (1998), Sölle (2001) and other liberation theologians raises the question whether we live today at a time when a collective, social consciousness is becoming a defining feature of contemporary spiritualities. Secondly, it is becoming more evident that all spiritualities are profoundly shaped by the socio-historical context in which they are rooted. Care providers, such as nurses and social workers, are publishing extensively on the challenges of engaging meaningfully the spirituality and cultural dimensions of care, which are considered to be integral to holistic care.¹²

Within Roman Catholicism, it was the Second Vatican Council which provided the theological framework for the reconstitution of a socially-committed spirituality. Most notable in this regard was *Gaudium et spes* (The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) – one of the four Apostolic Constitutions resulting from the Second Vatican – which linked together human participation in the divine life and the promotion of a more human life on earth.¹³ More recently (2013) the Apostolic Exhortation issued by Pope Francis on the subject of proclaiming the Gospel in today's world, endorsed the necessity of a spirituality which permeates all social engagement and make it pleasurable. Acedia, is not a vague spiritual lethargy but has real social expressions. He observes that acedia “can be caused by a number of things. Some fall into it because they throw themselves into unrealistic projects and are not satisfied simply to do what they reasonably can; Others, because they lack the patience to allow processes to mature; they want everything to fall from heaven; Others, because they are attached to a few projects or vain dreams of success; Others, because they have lost real contact with people and so depersonalize their work that they are more concerned with the road map than with

¹¹See Narayanasamy, A. (2006) ‘The Impact of Empirical Studies of Spirituality and Culture on Nurse Education’. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 15: 840–851; Rothman, J. (2009) ‘Spirituality: What we Can Teach and How We Can Teach It’, *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work*, 28(1–2), 161–184

¹²See ‘Gaudium et spes’ 24, V.C. II : 925.

¹³See ‘Gaudium et spes’ 24, V.C. II : 925.

the journey itself; Others fall into acedia because they are unable to wait; they want to dominate the rhythm of life. Today's obsession with immediate results makes it hard for pastoral workers to tolerate anything that smacks of disagreement, possible failure, criticism, the cross" (Par. 82).

The prolific spiritual writer Thomas Merton (1968) contributed significantly to forming a sense of the shared inwardness of humanity. In an iconic incident in his book of meditations, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, Merton describes how on one occasion he had come into Louisville on a rare visit to supervise the printing of a monastic publication. As he stood outside the roaring plant, watching people coming in and out of shops on the opposite side of the street, he was suddenly overcome by an unaccustomed sense of solidarity with all those strangers:

.....they were mine and I theirs,we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers.....we were in the same world as everybody else, the world of the bomb, the world of race hatred, the world of technology, the world of mass media, big business, revolution and all the rest. (pp. 140–141)

In that moment his monastic, dualist view of human identity as an ensouled isolation was challenged and destroyed and so his reflection continued with the comment: 'It was like waking from a dream of separateness, of spurious self-isolation in a special world, the world of renunciation and supposed holiness'.

In a talk to Cardinal and Bishop-friends of the Focolare movement, Pope John Paul II identified this development of a 'collective spirituality'¹⁴ as one of the significant challenges facing the Christian community in the third millennium. This development echoes a reflection from some years ago by Karl Rahner (1985) who, in speaking of the spirituality of the Church of the future, imagined it as being rooted in a communal experience of the Spirit. He suggested:

In the spirituality of the future..... I suspect.....that the element of fraternal spiritual fellowship, of a communally lived spirituality, can play a greater part and be slowly but courageously acquired and developed¹⁵

An expert commentator on trends in spirituality, Ewert Cousins, was a leader amongst an expanding family of scholars who affirmed the birth of a new social consciousness today. These scholars believe that at the beginning of the twenty-first century we are, in terms of the history of human consciousness, entering the Second Axial Period.¹⁶ Whereas the First Axial Period produced individual consciousness, the second axial period is producing global consciousness. This consciousness has both horizontal and vertical dimensions. At the horizontal level a greater sense

¹⁴This talk, which was delivered on February 14, 1995, has been reprinted under the heading 'A Robust Spirituality of Communion' in *Being One* 4/2(1995) 1–2.

¹⁵Rahner, K. (1985) 'The Spirituality of the Future' in K. Lehmann, A. Raffelt, eds, *The Practice of Faith: A Handbook of Contemporary Spirituality*. London: SCM. 18–26 at 24.

¹⁶The periodisation of spiritual consciousness in 'pre-axial', 'first axial' and 'second axial' eras has been developed by Ewert Cousins. See E. Cousins, 'Teilhard and Global Spirituality', *Anima* 8(1981) 26-31; Streeter, C.M., (2013) *Foundations of Spirituality: The Human and the Holy : a Systematic Approach*. Colleagueville, MN: Liturgical Press.

of connectedness is arising between peoples who, because of modern media of communication, are more aware of the variety of the human situation than ever before. In the vertical realm the consciousness of the human community, because of ecological disasters, is being plunged into the earth, into matter and into the ecological systems which support life.

The second strand of this reflection on the social dimension of spiritual experience invites reflection on the connection between the experience of God and cultural conditions. Culture in this sense, then, is the way a particular group of people lives in and makes sense of the world. The recognition of the impact of culture on the current shape of religious belief was given concrete expression in 1993 when Pope John Paul II merged the Pontifical Council for Culture with the Pontifical Council for Dialogue with Nonbelievers so as to form a new Pontifical Council for Culture. Today it is recognised that new cultural phenomena such as the growing power of sport to inspire and unite across boundaries are not outside the parameters of contemporary spirituality.¹⁷ The worldwide passion for sport is evident in the vast amounts of money even very poor countries are willing to pour into attracting major sporting events. Insightful sports coaches have seen that in their roles as mentors and tutors they often connect with the deepest desires and yearnings of the human spirit and touch transcendence in their teams. The passionate culture of sport and the intensity of the authentic spiritual quest are increasingly being recognised as sharing similar features.¹⁸

Mysticism, Spirituality and the Practice of Leadership

Current research in many disciplines is informed by the above tri-partite relational understanding and practice of spirituality. Leadership theory, particularly everyday leadership practice which is that form of leadership that is situated in the everyday experience of people and finds its expression within the ordinariness of life can act as an illustrative example. Everyday leadership is expressed around the world through diverse initiatives taken by people in roles such as health services provision, education, volunteering, and the founding of non-profit organisations. Jon L. Wergin, who is a professor on the Program in Leadership and Change at Antioch University in Los Angeles, refers to this type of leadership as “Locally Situated Leadership”¹⁹ or “Leadership in Place”. The foundational conviction of “leadership in place” is that leadership is not a position or appointment, but rather

¹⁷See O’Gorman, K. (2009) *Saving Sport: Sport, society and Spirituality*. Dublin: Columba Press; Watson, N.J. and A. Parker, eds. (2013) *Sports and Christianity: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* New York: Routledge.

¹⁸For instance, see Parry, J. et al. (2007) *Sport and Spirituality: An Introduction*. Abingdon: Routledge.

¹⁹See Wergin, J.L. (2007) *Leadership in Place: How Academic Professionals Can Find Their Leadership Voice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

leadership is a capacity which each person can exercise in their own setting. “Leadership in place” is part of a cluster of post-hierarchical notions of leadership. Other leadership styles in this cluster are “transformational leadership”,²⁰ which emphasizes making a connection with others to transform a situation of common concern. “Servant leadership” - a phrase whose contemporary usage can be traced to Robert K. Greenleaf’s book, *The Servant as Leader* – which focuses on leaders who aim to serve their organisations with a view to enabling all in the organisation become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous and more likely to become servants themselves.²¹

In these post-hierarchical models of leadership there is a shift in focus from the normative actions and distinctive traits of leaders to a focus on core of the person who is exercising leadership. The shift in focus towards the core authenticity and inner world landscape of exceptional leaders has led to designating the nature of these new frameworks as “contemplative leadership” paradigms.²² Nancy Eggert (1998), who has led the way in developing these paradigms has identified four key mystical competencies which underpin this type of leadership: Appreciation, Detachment, Creativity and Compassion. Amanda Sinclair (2007) has also offered four angles that come together to frame an interiority-focused picture of leadership. She views the tasks of leadership as (1) moving beyond inherited patterns of leadership, (2) awakening to new, freer, and more meaningful ways of working, (3) cultivating a capacity to be with oneself and others in the vulnerability of the body and (4) deepening presence to self as leader through intentional practices of breathing. There are strong parallels between the Eggerts and Sinclair frameworks and that of Tobin Hart (2014), which is a four-virtue framework for leadership – Presence, Heart, Wisdom and Creation, as is evident in the table below:

Tobin Hart	Nancy Eggert	Amanda Sinclair
Presence	Appreciation	Breath attentiveness
Heart	Compassion	Body awareness
Wisdom	Detachment	Freedom in personal history
Creation	Creativity	Resistance to outdated uses of power

So while historically the arts of being present to mystical awakening, exercising compassionate relationality and nurturing social wisdom have not been closely related to the practice of leadership, there is a growing body of scholarship which

²⁰For instance, Bass, B. and R. Riggio, (2006) *Transformational Leadership*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

²¹See Greenleaf, R. (1977) *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Leadership* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 13).

²²Eggert, N. (1998) *Contemplative Leadership for Entrepreneurial Organizations: Paradigms, Metaphors, and Wicked Problems*. Westport, CT: Quorum Books.

integrates these discourses today.²³ This integration creates an opportunity to explore aspects of spirituality outlined in the first part of this essay as resources for enabling men and women to exercise leadership with a global, longitudinal impact i.e. presence and compassion social concern. This is of course a broad theoretical vision, not to be used as a procrustean bed into which the lived practice of leadership is to be forced, but rather it has the aim of providing a theoretical construction against which the facts of leadership practice may be illuminated.

Amongst the three arts of spiritual leadership practice, Presence is the most complex concept. The word “presence” is derived from Latin *praesen*, which consists of the words *prae*, meaning ‘in front’, and *sens*, meaning ‘being’; i.e. the ability live with awakened sensibilities to the mystery of each unique being who crosses our paths/passes in front of us, in so many ways and places. An experience of the deep reality of the full and total presence of another to our human condition can be profoundly transformative. The Israelites in their Exodus journey were reassured and encouraged by the sense of Divine presence: Exodus 33:14, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest” (NIV). Today nursing scholarship has given great attention to the therapeutic power of authentic nurse-presence when it is made available to patients. This scholarship views therapeutic presence as an inter-subjective encounter between a nurse and a patient in which the nurse encounters the patient as a unique, human being, shrouded in the mystery of vulnerable humanity and in which a nurse chooses to be fully attentive to that person.²⁴ In a context where spiritual care provision by frontline care-providers is receiving increased widespread acceptance internationally²⁵ the interventions which may precipitate mystical awakening and attunement of such care providers is receiving increased attention.

The cultivation of awakened personal presence in care providers can have profound outcomes. When an encounter is underpinned by an active, lived presence, its impact can be of exceptionally long duration; the encounter may even reverberate during the whole of a lifetime. It can result in a sense of connectedness with the person encountered, which is not dependent on any prior knowledge of the person. Becoming present to reality is energizing; when an encounter is suffused with presence, those involved may experience a physical, emotional and spiritual surge of energy, even in spite of whatever challenging circumstances may surround the encounter – poverty, hunger, grief, homelessness, etc. Feelings of isolation or abandonment may be overcome, even after the physical presence ceases. The capacity to communicate the presence of mystery in an encounter can enhance self-

²³See Reave, L., (2005) ‘Spiritual values and practices related to leadership effectiveness’, *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16, 655–687.

²⁴See Chase, S.K. et al. (1997) ‘Nursing Presence: An Existential Exploration of the Concept’, *Scholarly Inquiry for Nursing Practice: An International Journal* 113–14 at 3.

²⁵See Rothman, J. (2009). Spirituality: What we can teach and how we can teach it. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work*, 28(1–2), 161–184

esteem and empower those who are cared for to find their voice.²⁶ Mystical alertness is a powerful resource in those who service and lead humanity.

The second spiritual art of leadership practice is compassion. In recent decades, neurophysiological research related to learning and education tended to focus predominantly on the brain. This emphasis on the brain is a logical extension of the ascendancy of rationalism since the seventeenth century. Until that time, however, logos and mythos, mind and heart, were seen – not as conflicting – but rather as complementary ways of making meaning of the world. Many of the world’s ancient civilizations respected the heart for harbouring an “intelligence” that operated independently of the reasonable mind, yet is in communication with it. A verse of the ancient Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says:

Self-luminous is the being who dwells within the lotus of the heart²⁷

In the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, the word “heart” occurs more than 1000 times. It is a designation for the most authentic self. In Jeremiah 17:9–10 the heart is presented as that dimension of a person which may be a puzzle even to the individual; the inner questing, restless self whose deepest desires are sometimes only known to God. This perspective is often reflected in the customs, writings, art, spiritual practices, and even medical systems of ancient civilizations. Indeed, the view that the heart is a key centre of insight, emotion, intention, discernment, wisdom, and spirit may be one of the strongest common themes across the world’s major spiritual traditions.²⁸

In recent times a “Science of the Heart” has been developed²⁹ to provide a scientific explanation for “how and why the heart affects mental clarity, creativity, emotional balance and personal effectiveness”. Some of the first modern psychophysiological researchers to examine the interactions between the heart and brain took place in the 1960s and 1970s, Evidence was found which suggested that the heart was not simply following the brain’s directions, but rather that there was a “heart brain”. This concept would prove helpful in gaining insight into why one-half of heart disease cases are not explained by the standard risk factors – such as high cholesterol, smoking or sedentary lifestyle. It was also found that the emotional state of patients and the quality of their relationships in the period after myocardial infarction are as important as disease severity in determining how patients recover. The Institute of HeartMath has drawn public attention to this research so as to develop practical interventions that incorporate the understanding that the heart profoundly affects perception, awareness and intelligence.

²⁶See Pettigrew, J. (1990) ‘Intensive Nursing Care: The Ministry of Presence’. *Critical Care Nursing Clinics of North America*, 2(3), 503–508

²⁷Cited in Holmes, C.P. (2010) *The Heart Doctrine: Mystical Views of the Origin and Nature of Human Consciousness*. Kemptville, ON: Zero Point. 11

²⁸See Arguelles, L. et al. (2003) ‘The Heart in Holistic Education’, *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice*. 16/3, 13–21.

²⁹See <http://www.heartmath.org>

Before the findings of contemporary heart science, spiritual teachers always understood the power of the heart in conversion. In a Greek Christian contemplative tradition – *Hesychasm* – reflective practices were developed that centered on different bodily sites and functions with respiration and heart rhythm being the most important. The practices were based on Christ’s injunction in the [Gospel of Matthew](#) to pray in the inner room (the room of the heart³⁰) In one of the most widely known texts from the Eastern Christian Church, a pilgrim describes his practice this way: “Later I began to practice the Jesus prayer in and out through the heart coordinated with the breathing That means when I was inhaling I was looking with the mind’s eye into the heart while I was thinking and saying ‘Lord Jesus Christ’ and when I was exhaling, ‘have mercy on me’”.³¹

The practice of compassion which characterized the endless initiatives taken by so many social visionaries who leader services for the poor today, emerges from the heart space. Their intuitive connection with the heart as the space from which life is empowered and directed captures an ancient wisdom. Such visionaries share this intuition with the Jesuit mystic, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, “It is in the Sacred Heart that the conjunction of the Divine and the cosmic has taken place . . . There lies the power that, from the beginning, has attracted me and conquered me . . . All the later development of my interior life has been nothing other than the evolution of that seed”.³² In emphasizing the heart space such visionaries emphasize the power of love to change the world; more than zeal, courage, perseverance, love is what impels them forward. The energy of the heart, cultivated in love and compassion, will resource a leader with resilience in the face of an array of difficulties.

Into the future it seems that mysticism and spirituality, will neither be adjunct, parallel or embedded. Instead they will mutate into a new field of academic studies, which is already making its presence felt on some campuses – contemplative studies.³³ A key leader in the advancement of this new discipline, Professor Louis Komjathy at the University of San Diego, praises Contemplative Studies for its capacity to recognizes the importance of both third-person and critical first-person approaches in the study of religious experience; in particular it capacity to make space for direct personal experience with specific forms of practice – both from mysticism and spirituality.

³⁰See Consiglio, C. (2009) *Prayer in the Cave of the Heart: The Universal Call to Contemplation*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.

³¹See Author Unknown. (1991) *The Way of a Pilgrim*, translated from Russian by R. M. French. San Francisco: Harper, 11.

³²See Richo, D. (2007) *The Sacred Heart of the World: Restoring Mystical Devotion to Our Spiritual Life*. Mahwah, NY: Pauclist, 88.

³³See Brown University <http://www.brown.edu/academics/contemplative-studies/about/people/faculty/> and the University of San Diego <http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/contemplativestudies/> (Accessed February 2015)

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Chapter 3

Spirituality and Persian Literature: Manifestation of Mysticism in Attar's *The Conference of the Birds*

Haleh Rafi

Abstract This chapter illustrates how spirituality is understood in the discipline of Persian literature. It begins with a general discussion on manifestation of spirituality in literature in the world, and then focuses on mystical texts in Iran that are known as Sufi literature. Since Sufi language is full of mysteries that can be solved only by heart, Persian Sufi literature can be best acquainted with if it is set in its own context. Thus, the chapter introduces one of the most significant Persian Sufi poets, Farid al-Din Attar, whose writings are known and investigated by many Eastern and Western philosophers and scholars in different countries and different languages. To get to know some influential spiritual themes in Attar's poetry (Oneness, selflessness, and Love), one of his most famous works, *The conference of the birds* (*Mantiq al-tayr*) is chosen as an exemplar. At the end of the chapter, the researcher illustrates how mystical themes in Sufi literature can be read universally, by all readers of all time, and be applied in their own spiritual journeys.

Spirituality and World Literature

Spirituality has been manifested in literature through history all around the world; however, the frequency, type, and depth of the manifestation have been varied in different times and different places. One may consider the books written by great philosophers in the East and the West – the ones that are presently known as wisdom literature – as the most ancient of such literature. The most famous examples in the West might be of Plato (fourth to third centuries BC) in Classical Greece who reflected on the teachings of his master, Socrates, and “like other ancient philosophers, . . . maintains a virtue-based eudaemonistic conception of ethics” mainly in his *Republic* (Frede 2013, para. 1), and of Seneca (4 BC–65 AD) in Rome who “keeps hammering home the core claim of Stoic ethics” that is “only virtue is *good*” and “virtue alone is sufficient for happiness” mostly in his *Letters* (Vogt

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2015, part 4.1, para. 1). As some of the most ancient wisdom literature in the east, one may refer to the “figures of Immanence” in *The book of changes*, “that was traditionally thought to have been compiled by Confucius” during the first half of the first millennium BC, and the ethical principles presented in *Daode Jing* by Laozi dating from the fourth to third centuries BC in China (Jarrige 2004, p. 18).

Many books and stories have been written to simplify the “abundant linguistic difficulties and ambiguities” of sacred scriptures, religious texts and the wisdom literature, and to unify the “fragmentary published pieces” (Kramer 1972, p. xi), in order to make them easier to be understood or communicated with. There have also been numerous investigations focused on religious beliefs and mythologies, and on prophets, saints and spiritual figures in various forms and languages. Many people in different cultures have written about their spiritual journeys toward enlightenment, practising different kinds of religion or spirituality. Some interesting examples are Belle’s (1992) autobiography that traces an Australian resident’s inability to find solace or meaning in the philosophies of the Western world and his adoption of Hinduism during his pilgrimage to Malaysia, and Watts’ (1958) investigations on his search for transcendence in Zen Buddhism to “outline some of the ways in which it has been translated into thought and action” (p. 121).¹ Besides, there are scholars all around the world who believe that the notion of “spirituality” can be found in all challenges, conflicts, and dilemmas of life. These researchers read most literary texts with a “spiritual approach”, and thus many articles and books are written to trace “spirituality” in literary masterpieces: in novels, short stories, poems and folk tales.²

Persian Literature

While spirituality is only a small part of Western literature, ancient Persian literature and spirituality are known to be inseparable from one another. It is, in fact, difficult to find a literary text in Persian language, written before the modernist movement happened in Iran, without a spiritual theme. In Persian literature, spirituality is usually synonymous with mysticism and mainly appears in stories related to spiritual journeys of “Sufis” and biographies of saints. Spirituality manifests itself in Persian literature in different forms, from philosophical poems, to historical texts, and to metaphorical stories and anecdotes. According to Nabi (1995), Persian, next to Arabic, are “the two major vehicles of creative expression used by Moslems” (p. x). However, spiritual texts written in Persian, mostly, go beyond the “exoteric” level of a particular religion. At the exoteric level, a religion is restricted to its

¹As Watts (1958) explains, in Zen “there is no study of scriptures” (p. 18). Zen “is knowable only by personal experience”, however, there are records of the dialogues between the masters and their disciples that are written by those who have travelled the path (p. 18) and are read and studied by those who are eager to know more about and practice this Eastern philosophy of life.

²See Palmer (2007) and Waxman (1999) for some examples.

external aspect and “the study of holy books is often limited to superficial inferences that usually serve as the source of contradictions and confusion” (Elahi 2005, p. 135). Representing the “esoteric” level, the goal of many Persian spiritual texts is pure spirituality, which is the search for the Truth, self-knowledge, and divine knowledge. Lewisohn (2006) believes that esotericism makes possible “the crossing of the frontiers of religious universes” (p. 255), and as Elahi (2005) explains, the esoteric level of spirituality “draws all human beings closer together, whatever their religion may be” and true mystics, who are present at the heart of every civilisation and religious culture, “share a common language” (p. 135).

Ecstatic Literature

According to De Bruijn (1997), since the beginning of the eleventh century, a great amount of mystical poems have been written in Persian. The poets who wrote these poems lived not only in present-day Iran, but also in other countries such as Afghanistan, Tajikistan, some parts of India, and Turkey (p. 1). It is important to know that although Persian is the official language spoken in Iran, many Turks, Afghans, Tajiks, Arabs, and Indians also speak Persian (with slight differences in formation of idioms, vocabulary and accent in each country). De Bruijn (1997) describes this ecstatic literature, which is generally known as “Sufi literature”, as the works that “cover the various aspects of mystical experience and ethics, as well as metaphysical theory” (p. 4). The word Sufi in Persian refers to ascetic piety. Arberry (2000) defines Sufis as those who dedicate themselves to the quest after mystical union – or, better to say, reunion – with the Creator (p. VIII), and believes that the central theme of Sufi literature is “the yearning of the lover (the mystic) for the Beloved (God)” (p. XVIII).

Farid al-Din Attar and *The Conference of the Birds*

There are many spiritual poets and writers in classical Persian language who have written on mystical themes. As well, for each great Persian writer and poet, several books and articles have been written by scholars all around the world. This chapter limits itself to introducing only one of these influential poets, Farid al-Din Attar, whose poems have been translated and often quoted, even in other languages, and his ideas have been investigated in different societies and cultures. The chapter concentrates on how the characteristics of Sufi literature appear in one of Attar’s works, *The conference of the birds* (*Mantiq al-tayr*), how Attar develops his mystical themes, how the mysteries in Sufi language are decoded, and how his spiritual ideas are still read and understood by contemporary readers and used in their personal spiritual journeys. The main aim of this chapter is to give the reader an overview to spirituality in Persian literature with some of its best examples.

Farid al-Din Attar is one of the greatest Persian Sufi poets whose deep writings “are still far from completely explored, though welcome progress has been made of late in their publication” (Arberry 2000, p. VII). Most scholars who have written on Attar believe that he is famous, but still unknown. He is famous because, as Este’lami (2006) asserts, “there exists many narratives and legends relating to him, as well as more than a hundred volumes of publications of or about his works” in different languages (p. 57). However, he is unknown because almost nothing is known of his life except that he was a physician and pharmacist, that he lived in the city of Nishapur in northern Iran and that he died during a massacre when the Mongols attacked the city.

Although there is no doubt in Attar’s devotion to Sufism (*tasawwuf*), there are not enough convincing documents to show how he became interested in this way of life. A famous story on the change in his lifestyle, which is often quoted in texts on Attar, is written by Nur al-Din Abd al-Rahman Jami, another great Persian poet who lived about 200 years after Attar. In his biographical work, *Nafahat al-uns*, Jami writes,³ one day Attar was very busy with his patients in his pharmacy, when a beggar asked him for some money in the name of God. Attar did not have the time to pay attention to his request, at which the beggar became angry and said: “Sir! You are too attached to the worldly life. How will you ever pass away?” Attar sarcastically replied: “Just as you will!” To Attar’s utmost surprise, the beggar – in order to show how a man of God dies – immediately lay down, called on the God, and passed away. Shocked by what he saw, Attar then became self-conscious, “allowed his business to be plundered, and became a devotee to Sufism” (Este’lami 2006, p. 58). The scholars are not sure if this story is historically true or not, but almost all of them are in agreement that Attar’s works are entirely devoted to Sufism and “throughout all of his genuine collected works, there does not exist even one single verse without a mystical colouring” (Lewisohn and Shackle 2006, p. xix).

However, despite his evident immersion in Sufism, there is no trace of Attar’s contact with any particular Sufi master or order of the time. Este’lami (2006), in his article on realities in the study of Attar, discusses Attar’s independence from any particular religious sect and asserts that Attar “had a deep interest in the spiritual elevation of human being” in general and that “he loved and respected all spiritual or religious pioneers” (p. 59).

Attar is known to compose six important works of poetry and one major prose work during his life. His most famous book is *Mantiq al-tayr* (usually translated as *The conference of the birds* or *The language of the birds*), which is familiar to English readers through Edward Fitzgerald’s summary, *Bird-Parliament*. The *Mantiq al-tayr* is a literary work “in which the quest for the Truth has been chronicled” (Keshavarz 2006, p. 112). It is the tale of the spiritual quest of a large group of birds to find the Simurgh, or Phoenix, their supreme sovereign, who lives “somewhere at the end of the world, behind cosmic Mount Qaf” (Landolt

³The story is taken from Este’lami (2006) who presents it as an example of stories that are related to Attar with not enough convincing evidence (p. 58).

2006, p. 13). Although the journey is long and painful, the birds decide to take it under the guidance and encouragement of the knowledgeable hoopoe, who “leads them against much hesitation, despair and resistance on their part through seven valleys” (Landolt 2006, p. 13). Most birds find the journey too difficult and gradually depart from the group and only 30 birds make it to the end. They are rejected first as the herald of her Majesty tells them to return to where they have come from:

This king for whom you grieve
Governs in glory you cannot conceive –
And what are you? Grief is your fate – go back;
Retrace your steps along the pilgrims' track. (qtd. in Bürgel 2006, p. 200)

Yet, later they are accepted and allowed to see the Simurgh; however, they see what appears to be the Simurgh only for one instant, and then each of them sees none other than a reflection of their own image and claims that “the Simurgh looks like me”.

Attar is not to be credited for originality in writing the story of the journeying birds. However, according to Keshavarz (2006), Attar *is* responsible “for infusing the tale with new life”: Attar’s new way of retelling the story has earned the book a special place “in a wide and dazzling range of Sufi homiletic tales” (p. 113). According to Nasr (2012), “birds, their flight, and their wings are universal symbols of the spirit and of spiritual journeying” mainly in rich cultures such as the Egyptian, ancient Persian and Greek cultures (p. 1), and Attar cleverly uses this symbol to convey his spiritual messages. Attar, in this narrative poem, uses frame stories: “a single narrative running the length of the work that serves to motivate and organize a heterogeneous array of short tales, anecdotes, and parables” (Losensky 2006, p. 76). These short narratives, that are “very cunningly linked into the larger narrative” (Shackle 2006, p. 165), are mainly the stories which the hoopoe tells the birds in order to encourage them to take the terrifying journey. They not only illustrate an idea but also give “the force of experience to concepts” (Anvar-Chenderoff 2006, p. 253), and all of them have special importance not only in later Persian Sufi writings, but also in world literature. Attar in each story skilfully blends a variety of ideas impregnated with different meanings that, as Shackle (2006) asserts, sets his translators a very difficult task (p. 166).

The *Mantiq al-tayr* “is considered by the most knowledgeable authorities to be one of the supreme masterpieces of Sufi poetry and, in fact, of mystical literature considered globally” (Nasr 2012, p. 1). Shackle (2006) describes the book as “an outstanding exemplar of the Sufi teaching poem” and explains that to its composition, Attar has brought “a combination of very special gifts not only of spiritual insight but also of great literary skill” including simplicity of poetic expressions, the knowledge of history and legend, the narrative art, and the power to combine all these in a highly coherent work (p. 165). Keshavarz (2006) also believes that the book is “indispensable to generations of seekers” because of “Attar’s sincerity and devotion to the path”, the beautiful mixture of his moving simplicity of style and the complexity of ideas, and “the practical nature of the guidance provided by this timeless spiritual guide” (p. 124).

The Mystic Journey

The spiritual themes Attar uses in the *Mantiq al-tayr* are indeed the most important ones in Sufi literature and are repeated in numerous spiritual texts that are written after Attar. Perhaps, the most important of them is the notion of “the seven valleys” which symbolize the seven “inner states or stages of the soul” (Bürgele 2006, p. 200) that a mystic should go through in order to reach the Truth. Theoretically speaking, the seven valleys can be defined as below (Elahi 2007, pp. 127–128):

1. Seeking (*talab*), in which one needs to ask and bravely follow, no matter how much he/she is discouraged,
2. Love (*ishq*), in which one needs to truly be devoted to what he/she is seeking for and to have ardent desire for union with the Beloved,
3. Recognition or Intuitive Knowledge (*marifat*), in which one “knows” the way he/she is going in,
4. Independence or Detachment (*istighna'*), in which one does not need anything and does not want anything anymore, either all sorts of comforts in this world or the promised paradise in the other world,
5. Unity or Experiencing Union with the Divine (*tawhid*), in which one sees God in everything that exists and anything that happens,
6. Stupor or Perplexity (*hayrat*), in which one is appalled, in a state of shock, and has no thought of his/her own anymore, and
7. Poverty, Annihilation and Subsistence in God (*faqr, fana* and *baqa*), in which the ego fades away and, at the end, the drop of water reaches the ocean.

As one of the most important aspects of traditional mysticism in Iran, each of these valleys have been under investigation in numerous articles on Sufi literature. Having written an essay on the stage of “perplexity”, Stone (2006) explains that although traditionally the ultimate aim of a mystic is union with the divine (*tawhid*), Attar situates this state as just his fifth, followed by two more stations (p. 95). Stone (2006) argues that the mystic, after having experienced union with the divine (or Oneness), is “thrust back into the phenomenal world of multiplicity” (p. 98); then, in the mutual perception of both the One and the many, “all previously ‘known’ logical distinctions and categories are thrown into chaos and absolute confusion swells within the wayfarer” (Stone 2006, p. 99). Discussing the last two stages, Feuillebois-Pierunek (2006) considers that “the confusion is due to the intermediate state of the pilgrim” in which “he finds himself in a kind of non-place”, “is neither conscious nor unconscious of himself (*na ba-khabaram zi khish wa na bi-khabaram*)” and hesitates “between the pleasures of this world and the quest for the Beloved Beyond” (p. 318). Feuillebois-Pierunek (2006) further explains that the perplexity increases in proportion to the intensity of the quest for certainty (*yaqin*) (p. 318); however, in the last stage (annihilation and subsistence), the pilgrim ceases to exist by means of his own being, “lives through another” (Feuillebois-Pierunek 2006, p. 324) and “unity is revisited in its deepest and unending sense” (Stone 2006, p. 101).

The last stage of a mystic's journey is very much related to the notion of "selflessness". Annihilation is the stage in which the seeker renounces any kind of personal desire and tries to "rid himself of himself" (Anvar-Chenderoff 2006, p. 241) and empty the place for the Beloved to enter. A Sufi's journey is in fact a journey "from self to selflessness" (Anvar-Chenderoff 2006, p. 251); as Attar expresses, it is necessary for the mystic "to die before actually dying" (Feuillebois-Pierunek 2006, p. 323).⁴ However, at the end of the mystic's journey and after the experience of self-annihilation, self-dispossession, or nothingness (*fana*), the seeker always sees "eternal survival in God" (*baqa*) which is rarely described in Sufi poems since "it is beyond description" (Anvar-Chenderoff 2006, p. 251); and thus the classical paradoxes of "finding being in non-being" and finding "self in selflessness" take shape (Anvar-Chenderoff 2006, p. 242).

These paradoxes, according to Anvar-Chenderoff (2006), only make sense in relation to another famous theme of Attar's poetry, which is the theme of "the all-encompassing love" (p. 242). As Lewisohn (2006) asserts, the philosophy of love in Attar's poetry "expresses simultaneously an ascetic theology, and aesthetic, and – what is the favourite theme and promise of Romanticism – the soteriological belief that salvation can be found only through love" (p. 292). Anvar-Chenderoff (2006), at the end of her article on "self and selflessness" in Attar's poetry, retells the story of a moth and a candle in which the moth complains to the candle for always burning him in his flame, but the candle answers that he is himself burnt from within by a "hidden candle" (p. 252). Anvar-Chenderoff (2006) argues that in this story the moth is "the reader, both tantalized and burnt by the reading of Attar's poetry", the visible candle is Attar himself, and the hidden candle is "the Beloved dwelling within the soul (*jan*)⁵" (p. 252).

In Persian Sufi literature written after Farid al-Din Attar, he is always considered as the one who has actually gone through the seven stages.⁶ Attar, in his *Tadhkirat al-awliya* describes the lives and spiritual experiences of some Sufis/saints who have all reached, at various degrees, the station of *fana*; yet he himself claims that "no one has ever annihilated his ego as successfully as he"⁷ (Ernst 2006, p. 330). Sufism is generally considered to be based on "silence" since "what is seen and heard by the heart cannot be uttered (by) in language" and if Sufis start talking, "it is only as (a) reminder to others" (Pazouki 2006, 70). Waley (2006) strongly believes that Attar "saw himself as a poet with a mission, with urgent messages to convey" (p. 219). Attar calls for his readers to be preoccupied with "disdain for this world;

⁴This sentence is Feuillebois-Pierunek's translation of Attar's poetry in his *Mukhtar-nama*.

⁵The word *jan* has various meanings in Persian and is translated differently in different texts. As Feuillebois-Pierunek (2006) writes, it can mean "the soul, the spirit, the vital principle, and even 'life'" depending on the context (p. 312).

⁶"Farid al-Din" literally means "the unique One of the Faith" (Waley 2006, p. 233), meaning there is nobody like him in passing the soul's stages.

⁷Many articles are written on the paradox of "self-praise and self-denial (or self-criticism)" at the same time in Sufism: how does the saint know that he is a saint if sainthood means the extinction of the ego? See Ernst (2006), Anvar-Chenderoff (2006), and Waley (2006) for some examples.

humble awareness of (his/her) own faults; earnestness in preparing for death; and the passionate love of God for which all else must be sacrificed” (Waley 2006, p. 238). Amongst these, perhaps, is the essence of Attar’s message – “the primacy of spiritual love”: to know that “divine compassion will bring the faithful a light that will compensate for everything” (Waley 2006, p. 238). In fact, Attar ascertains that if the path is followed sincerely, the achievement is so rewarding that it definitely compensates all the sufferings one tolerates during the journey, and more.

The Mysterious Language

The *Mantiq al-tayr* is also celebrated for its special use of language. It is replete with symbols, allegories, far-fetched metaphors, paradoxes and puns. Many scholars believe that “the most celebrated pun in classical Persian literature” is presented in the *Mantiq al-tayr* (Keshavarz 2006, p. 112). This is the pun Attar uses between the Simurgh and *si murgh* (or the 30 birds) who reach the Mount Qaf (if we separate the word “Simurgh” into two parts as “si” and “murgh”, then it literally means 30 birds in Persian). Some have interpreted the pun as if the birds who reached their destination were/became the Simurgh themselves. However, many scholars believe that the pun only adds to the complexity of the text. Keshavarz (2006) discusses that “Attar himself cautions against investing too much into the cleverness of the pun by subverting it immediately after it has been created” (p. 112). Therefore, he writes:

You came as thirty birds and therefore saw
 These selfsame thirty birds, not less or more;
 If you had come as forty or fifty – here
 An answering forty, fifty, would appear (qtd. in Keshavarz 2006, p. 113).

According to Barry (2006), Attar in the *Mantiq al-tayr* paradoxically plays upon the iconic image of the Simurgh, “as the visible manifestation of the Divine” (p. 140).⁸ As Arberry (2000) states, the *Mantiq al-tayr* is a “subtle and charming allegory of the soul’s progress toward God” (p. VII); however, the reader cannot be certain that the birds could complete the last stage and reach the desired destination. Ostad Elahi (2007) believes that the birds could not find the Truth because they were seeking the imaginary or conceptual truth, while it is the genuine truth that one should go after (p. 125).

Attar’s language is mysterious and symbolic, but the *Mantiq al-tayr* is not considered as a difficult book and is read widely by all sorts of people. According to Pazouki (2006), the mysteries in the *Mantiq al-tayr* “are not obscure” and the words “are not incomprehensible”, because “those to whom [Attar’s] work is addressed

⁸Barry (2006) believes that a famous example of paradoxes in Sufi literature is the paradox that is played upon the invisibility of the Divine. As he explains, to true mystics “with spiritual eyes” the Divine is not only the invisible Transcendent (as is known in orthodox religions), but is also the Immanent who “lies revealed in the mirror of all created things” (p. 140).

include the illiterate among the people of heart” (p. 71). Nasr (2012) also believes that Attar’s writings, like many other Sufi poetry, “has the power to speak to both the advanced pilgrim upon the spiritual path and the simple believer”: although the poems are discussed “assiduously by accomplished scholars”, they are also “cited from memory by simple bakers and cobblers who may even be illiterate” (p. 1). Therefore, it is not difficult to see why Attar’s poems are known by heart and “are read as maxims” throughout Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and wherever Persian is spoken or understood, as in the lands of the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent (Lewisohn 2006, p. 255). Keshavarz (2006) describes this facet of Attar’s work as “the successful construction of transformable capsulated meta-signs” and explains that Attar, by using the mysterious language, gives his readers the poetic space in which they, as seekers, must perceive, envision and even construct their “personal truth”: the truth that is related to the capacity of the seeker and is shaped according to their understanding (p. 125). Retrieving meaning in Attar’s poetry cannot be finished. It depends on the progress of the seeker. Years after Attar’s death, the symbolic meanings of his poetry “became the subject of controversy”: it evoked intense scrutiny and debate amongst scholars and other Persian Sufis, “provoking them to pen commentaries” on the poems (Lewisohn 2006, p. 268). However, almost all investigators on Attar are in agreement that many of the mysteries in Attar’s poems, and in other Sufi literature, can be understood only through the heart, “not by reasoning” (Pazouki 2006, p. 71).⁹

The Impact of Attar’s Poetry

According to Nasr (2012), Attar’s works have been “a source of inspiration and emulation by many a later writer” not only in Iran but also in different countries in the world (p. 1). As Lewisohn and Shackle (2006) write, “Attar’s works had such an impact on both the Sufi community and the literate public at large that his fame soared soon after his death” and “he became rapidly imitated” (p. xix). Lewisohn (2006) in his article on “Sufi symbolism” asserts that “the symbolic poetics of medieval Persian Sufism was to a large degree set down on the foundations of Attar’s bold ‘religion-of-love’ poetry” (p. 255). Attar’s poetry has also been used in arts like music and painting. The *Mantiq al-tayr* has been the source of inspiration for many painters and, as Nasr (2012) states, “its scenes have been depicted in numerous masterly miniatures, especially Persian ones” (p. 1). Barry (2006), in his

⁹Different (sometimes opposing) interpretations on Sufi literature always remind me of Holan’s (1982) poem, *Vision*, in which Socrates reflects upon Plato’s writing:

“I’ve never thought like that or felt like that;
I’ve never said this!”
Socrates, reading Plato ... (p. 46)

article “Illustrating Attar”, explains how the figurative paintings inspired from the *Mantiq al-tayr* are among the best in “Persianate painting” and how they “constitute visual meditations on Attar’s devotional poetry” (pp. 135–136). Perhaps that is why Keshavarz (2006) describes the *Mantiq al-tayr* as “Attar’s master-painting” (p. 125).

One of the most significant followers and admirers of Attar is Jalal al-Din Rumi.¹⁰ Being the most famous Persian Sufi poet, Rumi, like Attar, uses the rhyming couplet (mathnavi) for his poetry, and works on Attar’s spiritual themes to provide different stories. There are numerous allusions to Attar and his spiritual experience in Rumi’s works, especially in his greatest book, *Mathnawi*. Este’lami (2006, p. 58) brings an example of Rumi’s reference to Attar on the theme of “detachment” (the fourth stage of the soul):

Every druggist whose reason became acquainted with God,
Dropped the trays of drugs and perfumes into the river.

Spiritual Themes of Attar’s Poetry in World Literature

Many spiritual themes in Attar’s poetry are not exclusive to Persian Sufi literature. For instance, Lewisohn (2006) sees Attar’s notion of love very similar to “the exoteric manifestation of ‘the progenitive source of love’ revealed by the Christians’ love for Christ” (p. 280), and believes that one can trace some of Attar’s doctrines in Western spiritual ideas, like “Emersonian Transcendentalism”¹¹ (pp. 277, 278, 302). One may also find the notion of the soul’s search for the truth/the beloved in the poetry of St. John of the Cross, for example, especially in his *Spiritual canticle of the soul and the bridegroom Christ*:

In search of my Love
I will go over mountains and strands;
I will gather no flowers,
I will fear no wild beasts;
And pass by the mighty and the frontiers. (St. John of the Cross, 1995, third stanza)

Another example is set by Keshavarz (2006), when he discusses the Simurgh in the *Mantiq al-tayr* as both “a simple bird” and an existence with “the disontological ability to transmute into a higher level of existence the moment it is supposed to have been captured, grasped, or named” (p. 125). The metaphor reminds Keshavarz (2006) of the great German mystic, Meister Eckhart, who states that “the transcendent truth manifests itself in most common ways to most people” (p. 125).

¹⁰For explanations on the influence of Attar on Rumi see Waley (2006), p. 238, Nasr (2012), p. 1; Keshavarz (2006), p. 113, and Este’lami (2006), p. 61.

¹¹Lewisohn (2006) brings an example of Emily Dickinson’s poetry on the doctrine of “Oneness of Divine Action”: *The only shows I see/Tomorrow and today/Perchance Eternity/The only one I meet/Is God.* (p. 302)

A Literature for All Spiritual Pathways

It would seem that, although the spiritual paths mystics travel in different times and places are not identical, when they reach certain levels, they have a lot in common. Attar's poetry, in spite of being written with the background of the Sufi tradition, can be used by anyone who is "thirsty for the Truth" (Elahi 2005, p. 217), with any cultural, religious, or ideological background. For those who have travelled the path, it is surprising that many cannot see the Light that resides within. As Rumi posits in his "The Jar with the Dry Rim":

The spirit is so near that you can't see it!
But reach for it . . . Don't be a jar
Full of water, whose rim is always dry.
Don't be the rider who gallops all night
And never sees the horse that is beneath him (qtd. in Bly 1995, p. 236)

The spiritual journey to the Truth is described in Persian Sufi literature as a difficult and painful journey, but as Attar shows in his writings, if the seeker sincerely follows the path, what is gained at the end is so rewarding that it compensates for all the suffering. Attar in his poetry gives the spiritual student invaluable clues to enlighten the way, and keys to open the apparently closed doors. As Ostad Elahi (2007) mentions, there are thousands of useful pieces of advice in the *Mantiq al-tayr* that never get outdated and one can always follow them in the path of perfection (p. 500). Perhaps no one can describe the value of Attar's poetry more than himself. Knowing what he has actually been through, Attar makes the following declaration in the concluding lines of the *Mantiq al-tayr*:

This book is the adornment of time, offering a portion to both elite and common.
My poetry has a marvellous property, since it gives more results every time.
If it's easy for you to read a lot, it will certainly be sweeter for you every time.
This veiled bride in a teasing mood only gradually lets the veil fall open.
I am casting forth pearls from the ocean of reality.
[and] the expert himself knows my value, because the light of my moon is not hidden. (qtd. in Ernst 2006, p. 330)

To sum up, spirituality, most usually, appears in Persian literature as Sufi's experiences in their journeys toward the Truth. The Persian spiritual texts act as treasure maps and the Truth seekers can use them everywhere and at all times to pass the seven stages of the soul, empty him or herself for the Beloved to enter, and experience the eternal never ending Love.

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Chapter 4

Contemporary Sociological Approaches to Spirituality

Andrew Singleton

Abstract This chapter examines contemporary sociological definitions and approaches to the study of spirituality. It begins by examining how and when spirituality found its place in sociology, and then considers how sociologists have defined and studied spirituality in recent decades. A review of various definitions reveals that most sociologists understand that spirituality involves experiences of ‘transcendence’ or ‘sacredness’. This can be religious or otherwise. Next, the chapter discusses sociological explanations for popularisation of the notion that people are increasingly ‘spiritual, but not religious’. It is argued that post-1960s social changes have led to the expansion of spiritual options outside the bounds of organised religion and that a reasonable proportion of people in the west might aptly be termed ‘spiritual seekers’. The chapter concludes with a discussion of further prospects for the sociological study of spirituality, and examines the view that there can be a ‘secular spirituality’. It is argued that there has been a paucity of study of the actions, activities and motivations of non-religious people and how this aligns with current understandings of spirituality.

This chapter examines contemporary sociological approaches to spirituality. To set the scene, I start with a retrospective illustration of some of the issues that might arise when conducting an empirical, sociological study of something as complex as spirituality. I interviewed ‘Stephanie’ (not her real name) several years ago as part of a national, sociological study of Australian youth spirituality, the *Spirit of Generation Y* project (see Mason et al. 2007). At the time of the interview, she was 24 years old and in the workforce (for the full account of Stephanie’s story, see Mason et al. 2007, pp. 197–200). During the interview Stephanie told me she participated avidly in yoga, astrology, Tarot and Eastern meditation. She had also done a course on spirit channelling and had ‘mucked around’ with a Ouija board as a teenager. Tarot was particularly important to her. Stephanie owned her own set of

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Tarot cards and during the interview told me she did readings: ‘Mainly for myself, I mean it’s not something I feel comfortable enough to show off to other people and stuff like that. I’ve done them for my boyfriend and for my mum and stuff like that, but mainly just self-help sort of stuff.’¹ I also asked about her beliefs. Stephanie said she believed in reincarnation:

It is definitely something that I firmly believe in and it’s something that plays a part in . . . how I see other people as well, where they’re at on their soul journey . . . and I just think it’s something that’s definitely very strong with me, yeah.

As the interview progressed, and having heard about her beliefs, practices and experiences, I felt confident to ask her: ‘Obviously you’re [a] very . . . spiritual person . . . would you agree with that?’ She replied simply: ‘Yeah.’ For her, spirituality – as manifested in a recognisable set of practices and beliefs – was central to her life. Stephanie said:

It is pretty much incorporated into my everyday life, the way I think, the way I see other people and all that sort of stuff . . . I suppose when something feels that right, it’s like any religion, when it feels that right it’s something that you look into and you read about and you sort of try to incorporate into your life as much as you can.

While she emphasised that her spiritual approach to life was ‘like any religion’, Stephanie did not identify herself with a religion or attend services of worship regularly, nor had she been ‘raised religious’. Rather, to use a popular phrase, she was ‘spiritual, but not religious’.

Context

The *Spirit of Generation Y* (SGY) project consisted of a nationally representative survey of 1,219 teens and young adults and 117 in-depth interviews (age range 13–24). Stephanie was a survey respondent who had agreed to do a less structured, qualitatively richer follow-up interview. Her survey responses suggested she was a genuine ‘spiritual seeker’, someone who had engaged seriously with things that are *popularly* understood to be ‘spiritual’: Tarot, astrology and belief in reincarnation and the like. In the interview, I was interested to ask her what all of this meant in the context of her everyday life.

I had waited until almost the end of the interview before asking her directly about the ‘s’ word. In the *SGY* project, my fellow researchers and I usually avoided asking the young people we were researching to either define spirituality or if they thought of themselves as spiritual. We had good reasons for this. In the pilot phase

¹Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from research participants are taken from transcripts of personal interviews conducted as part of the *Spirit of Generation Y* research project (see Mason et al. 2007).

of the project (20 in-depth interviews) we had asked our interviewees, ‘What is your idea of spirituality?’ and encountered much uncertainty and equivocation. Typical responses included the following from 13-year-old ‘Jason’: ‘the term spirituality, what does that mean? It must be aims or something, I don’t know, aim for the top or something?’ (Singleton et al. 2004, p. 252). Others in the pilot phase of the project were unfamiliar with the term or were not able to readily say what they thought it meant, or even describe popular understandings.

If Jason wasn’t really sure what spirituality was, or did not do spiritual activities like Stephanie, does this mean he is not spiritual, or is not animated by a spiritual outlook in life? Are the only ‘spiritual’ people the ones who see themselves that way? In the *Spirit of Generation Y* project we decided that people didn’t have to *know* anything about spirituality in order to be described as having a spiritual dimension to their lives. To that end, we were largely indirect in our approach to asking about spirituality.

I began with this example to illustrate the challenges of studying spirituality from the perspective of the social sciences. Few social scientists are content to simply define spirituality: we have investigated it via surveys, interviews and participant observation. In the applied research on this vast topic, various methodological and conceptual issues have had to be negotiated. Researchers have had to resolve questions such as: should study participants be asked directly about spirituality or should it be discussed less obtrusively, with no direct mention of the word itself? In addition, if we are being unobtrusive, what is the best way to frame questions so as to encourage informants to talk about the spiritual in their lives? Finally, what do we as sociologists *mean* by spirituality, and how does this relate to contemporary, popular usage of the term?

In recent decades, sociologists – like those working in related disciplines such as education, nursing and psychology – have increasingly turned their attention to the empirical and applied study of spirituality. Sociologists, unlike health professionals, educators or chaplains, do not have a designated constituency in whose spirituality we are interested. Rather, our ambit is making sense of broader societal patterns. To that end, sociologists have considered the magnitude of spirituality in (mainly Western) societies (see Mason et al. 2007; Roof 1999; Wuthnow 1998), explored the different meanings spirituality has for people in these cultures (see Ammerman 2013a, b), and considered why certain forms of spirituality (such as ‘non-church’ spirituality) are apparently prospering while others are seemingly in decline (church-based spirituality) (see Heelas 2008; Heelas and Woodhead 2005). This enterprise has involved innovative and thoughtful approaches to the empirical research on the topic.

This chapter presents an overview of the emerging sociology of spirituality. I begin by examining how and when spirituality found its place in sociology, and then consider how sociologists have defined and studied spirituality in society. I then discuss sociological explanations for the rise of ‘spirituality, not religion’ and conclude with a discussion of further prospects for the sociological study of spirituality.

The Rise of Spirituality Within Sociology

It is predominantly sociologists of religion who have shown an interest in researching spirituality, and several of the most important and influential scholars in the field have conducted major studies on the topic. American sociologist Nancy Ammerman (2013a, p. 260) observes: ‘spirituality ... is increasingly important to any sociology of contemporary religion.’ As I demonstrate in this section, the sociological approach to spirituality has moved from implicitly treating it as a dimension of religion to a phenomenon in its own right. In this way, sociology has ‘moved with the times’ and most sociological conceptualizations align with the ways in which spirituality is now popularly understood in Western societies (see Ammerman 2013b; Flanagan and Jupp 2007; Giordan 2007).

To understand how sociologists have treated spirituality then and now, it is first necessary to consider the place of spirituality in religious life. For much of the past two centuries, and when higher proportions of the population actively participated in Christian institutions, spirituality was *implicitly* understood in scholarly, theological and even public usage to be the personal, interior and affective dimensions of religious faith (Mason et al. 2007, p. 35. See also Giordan 2007; Singleton et al. 2004). ‘Spiritual’ experiences, like conversion or a sense of awe and wonder, were thus usually understood to be primarily religious in character, or interpreted via religious language.

This is how sociologists of religion evidently first understood spirituality. Important nineteenth century thinkers like Max Weber (1963), Georg Simmel (1906/1959), and Emile Durkheim (1912/1985) wrote extensively about religion and popularised the sociological study of the sacred. Some of their most significant works focused on things that are now called ‘spiritual’ – the ritual, experiential, and mystical dimensions of religion (e.g. mysticism) – but spiritual was not an adjective or noun of choice, nor did they discuss spiritualities outside the bounds of religious life. This is also true of later, field-defining sociological works such as *The Sacred Canopy* by Peter Berger (1967) and *The Invisible Religion* by Thomas Luckmann (1967).

It was not until 1980s that sociologists of religion began to consider spirituality as more than the affective dimension of religious faith. In his 1989 Presidential Address to the Association for the Sociology of Religion, James Beckford described the emergence in society of a ‘new spirituality’, a ‘nondoctrinal and unconventional spirituality which borrows only selectively from formal theologies’ (1990, p. 8). In the next decade and a half, works by some of the most important contemporary sociologists of religion appeared, offering sociological treatments of the ‘new spirituality’. Examples include American studies *After Heaven: Spirituality in America since the 1950s* by Robert Wuthnow (1998), *Spiritual marketplace: Baby boomers and the Remaking of American Religion* by Wade Clark Roof (1999) and *Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes: Finding Religion in Everyday Life* (2013b) by Nancy Ammerman. European and Australian examples include Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead’s (2005) *The Spiritual Revolution: Why religion is Giving*

Way to Spirituality, Heelas' *Spiritualities of Life* (2008), and Gary Bouma's (2006) *Australian Soul: Religion and Spirituality in the Twenty-First Century*.

To that end, the contemporary sociological study of spirituality now extends its ambit far beyond spirituality found in organised religion. This is evident in an examination of recent definitions of spirituality proposed by various sociologists. These definitions are unified by the idea that spirituality involves an encounter or awareness of *transcendence* (not always God or the gods) and that spirituality incorporates practices, feelings, experiences and beliefs centred on this 'higher' or 'transcendent' dimension of life. Australian sociologist Gary Bouma (2003, p. 627), for example, argues:

The spiritual refers to an experiential journey of encounter and relationship with otherness – powers, forces and beings beyond the scope of everyday life – whether located beyond, beside or within ... At the most basic, to be spiritual is to allow the self to be open to experiences and realities outside the ordinary frame of life.

In like manner, American Robert Wuthnow (2001, p. 307) suggests that 'spirituality can be defined as a state of being related to a divine, supernatural or transcendent order of reality or, alternatively, as a sense or awareness of a supraréality that goes beyond life as ordinarily experienced'. David Yamane (1998, p. 492) declares that spirituality is 'most generally understood as a quality of an individual whose inner life is oriented toward God, the supernatural, or the sacred'. While it is axiomatic to declare that spirituality has multiple meanings and usages both within different academic fields and the general public (see Bender and McRoberts 2012; Watson 2003), as these examples demonstrate, sociological definitions very often cohere around the idea that spirituality is centred on experiences of transcendence or sacredness – religious or otherwise.

From the sociological perspective, the 'transcendent' might be some transcendent being, place or gods, or it might be something more nebulous, like a sense of universal consciousness or oneness among all living things (Singleton 2014, p. 11). In the *Spirit of Generation Y* study, my colleagues and I defined transcendence broadly, arguing:

'Transcendent' means [...] a reality that is beyond the individual, either something supernatural, or an ethical ideal towards which a person strives to shape their conduct. Thus, in this sense, spirituality may be based on a traditional world religion, an alternative spiritual path, an ethical principle, or an entirely secular outlook. (Mason et al. 2007, pp. 68–69)

Indeed, some scholars argue that the 'sacred' might originate from 'inner sources of significance and authority', 'subjective life forms' that are treated by the individual as sacred (Heelas and Woodhead 2005, p. 6. See also Heelas 2008). In allowing for spiritualities to be manifested outside of organised religion, sociologists acknowledge that a person can be 'spiritual not religious' (See Zinnbauer et al. 1997). It is also safe to suggest that sociologists understand spirituality to involve not just a way of being in the world, but some *conscious awareness* of this way of being, an element of choice and commitment, even if this way of being is not described or thought of as 'spirituality' (see Singleton et al. 2004, p. 252; Mason et al. 2007 p. 40. See also Heelas 2008).

While sociologists might be adept at defining spirituality, conducting empirical studies of spirituality is more difficult. How should people be asked about the spiritual in their lives? Some studies take a *lexical* approach (see Singleton et al. 2004), in which study participants are asked about what *they* think spirituality involves and are then called on to describe how, if at all, this is manifested in their everyday lives. An excellent recent example of this approach is Ammerman's (2013a, b) qualitative study of 95 American adults living in Boston and Atlanta. Using multiple methods (participant observation, diaries, photo elicitation interviews, in-depth interviews), Ammerman discovered 11 different understandings of the term spiritual in her diverse sample, encompassing things such as ethics, practices, beliefs, and feelings of awe and connectedness. These understandings were distilled into 'two domains of cultural discourse' about spirituality, *Theistic* and *Extra-theistic* discourses (Ammerman 2013b, p. 29). The former is spirituality found within traditional religion, the latter centred in 'a world of experiences that do not depend on the Christian (or any other) God but that nevertheless signal transcendence, a reaching beyond the ordinary' (Ammerman 2013b, p. 34). Her study then considered how these kinds of spirituality are manifested and experienced in everyday life.

The advantage of this methodological approach is that it allows the researcher to document the range of everyday understandings of spirituality extant in the culture and how people act on these meanings. The main disadvantage is that it overlooks experiences, beliefs and values that are seemingly spiritual but are not thought of as such. A person might, for example, walk regularly in a forest so as to cultivate a sense of awe and wonder about the natural world, and carry this experience into other parts of their lives. Nevertheless, if this is not personally counted as spiritual it will be overlooked in a lexical type of study.

An alternative way of researching spirituality is to take a stipulative approach. In a stipulative study the researchers formulate a definition of spirituality and then use a range of methodological tools to determine the incidence of such spiritual approaches to life in the population under consideration. This was the method of the *Spirit of Generation Y* study (Mason et al. 2007), which sought to map and understand the spirituality of Australian teens and young adults. Mindful of popular usage, we defined spirituality as a 'conscious way of life based on a transcendent referent', and then investigated the extent to which young Australians embodied and enacted this kind of spirituality. We conducted an initial round of 91 interviews, a national survey and then a further 26 interviews. We identified three major spirituality types. First is a 'traditional' spirituality, grounded in the tradition of a major world-religion; second is a 'New Age' or alternative spirituality, denoting those who follow non-traditional religions or spiritual paths (like Stephanie in the introduction); and third is 'a secular' orientation, derived from a commitment to humanist principles (Mason et al. 2007, pp. 68–9). Each of these types denotes a person's broader spiritual orientation, but there was considerable variation in the extent to which young Australians *lived out* this orientation and the centrality it had in their lives, so we proposed that people were either 'engaged' or 'unengaged' with one of these three major types (Mason et al. 2007, pp. 68–9). The large majority of

young Australians (just under two-thirds) were spiritually disengaged, and simply oriented in a particular direction because of what they believed. The remainder actively followed one of these paths: about 23 % of Generation Y followed a traditional world-religion, 4 % a New Age spirituality, and 14 % a secular worldview (Mason et al. 2007, p. 69). The strength of this stipulative approach was that it allowed us to map spirituality more broadly than is possible in a lexical study. From our perspective, we were open to the idea that *every* person is in some way spiritual, some more seriously than others (according to *our* definition and assessment). Arguably a weakness of this approach is the fact that those who might be classified as being spiritual would object strenuously to this designation. Nonetheless, these and other studies demonstrate the innovative, rigorous ways in which sociologists have attempted to study spirituality in society.

Both the studies described in detail above focused on spirituality precisely because there has been considerable recent public and scholarly interest in the topic. The next section explores the sociological explanation of this interest, what some have called the ‘spiritual revolution’ (Tacey 2003; Heelas and Woodhead 2005).

‘Seekers in the Spiritual Marketplace’: The Rise of Popular Spiritualities

Almost every contemporary discussion of spirituality, whether it is scholarly or popular, emphasises the recent proliferation of spiritualities and spiritual resources *outside* the bounds of organised religion. By way of illustration, in his recent book, *Spirituality: What it is and Why it Matters* (2012) Roger Gottlieb suggests the contemporary situation is one in which ‘spiritual insights, values, and practices [have detached] from traditional religious beliefs about the literal truth of belief in God or particular scriptures’ (2012, p. 71). Similarly, in the book *The Re-Enchantment of the West* Christopher Partridge (2005) notes ‘increasing numbers of Westerners are discovering and articulating spiritual meaning in their lives; [the re-enchantment] . . . is about the new ways of believing and the transmission of those beliefs in societies in which the old ways are inhibited and declining’ (2005, p. 1).

Sociologists have been particularly interested in examining this rise of these ‘new spiritualities’ (Beckford 1990) or ‘popular spiritualities’ (Hume and Phillips 2006; Knoblauch 2010): the spiritual forms that are found beyond the religious domain and now saturate public discourse. Most scholars agree that the interest in spirituality increased in the 1960s (see in particular Elwood 1994; Putnam and Campbell 2010). Yamane (1998, p. 492) notes:

The return to or recovery of spirituality was central to the cultural ferment of the 1960s in America, and the term *spirituality* is therefore often modified by adjectives associated with some of the major cultural movements of the 1960s and post-1960s era, including *New Age spirituality*, *postmodern spirituality*, and most notably, *feminist spirituality*.

Driven by the unprecedented rise of the ‘counter-culture’ movement of the 1960s and early 1970s, there was a major ‘spiritual awakening’, and new and unprecedented alternatives to mainstream religion appeared. Alternative spiritual movements, like the Krishna Consciousness Society (the Hare Krishnas), the Church of Satan, 3HO, Eckankar, and the Sri Chinmoy movement all founded communities or centres at this time (Singleton 2014, p. 116).

In the decades after this, the New Age and Neo-Pagan movements also grew exponentially (see Pike 2004; Sutcliffe 2003). This movement encompasses practices such as yoga, tai chi, past-life therapy, channelling, divination and Tarot, among many others. There has also been an increasing Western interest in Buddhism, and the sacredness of the environment (e.g. green and deep blue spiritualities) (see Shaw and Francis 2008). This plethora of spiritual alternatives has been dubbed the ‘spiritual marketplace’ (Roof 1999), and multiple spiritual options are now a fixture of cultural life throughout the West.

Most scholars agree that profound social shifts precipitated the 1960s ‘cultural revolution’ and the subsequent interest in spirituality. Mason et al. (2010, p. 110) describe these social changes:

From the mid-sixties till the late seventies, the ‘Baby-Boomer’ generation born in the post-World War II years were coming of age. They constituted an unusually high proportion of their populations, giving them greater social influence than young people usually possess . . . The student revolts of the period, and youthful opposition to the Vietnam War, shaped the Boomers self-consciousness as a generation who rejected the failed solutions of the past, and would create a new future. The ‘cultural revolution’ which ensued across the West entailed a wholesale rejection of past traditions and the authority derived from them [including religious traditions].

These, and other post-1960s social, technological and cultural changes, rising individualism and growing consumerism, have irrevocably reshaped social life and created the particular conditions for this ‘new spiritual freedom’ (Wuthnow 1998, p. 52. See also Carrette and King 2005). (The same conditions are considered to have contributed to decreasing Christian affiliation and attendance across the same period of time. See Brown 2012; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Singleton 2014).

Several important sociological studies have been conducted to better understand those who have embraced the ‘spiritual turn’ of recent decades. Central to these works is the idea that many Westerners no longer feel loyal to the traditional religious communities of their upbringing or family heritage, and instead are actively engaged in a search or ‘quest’ for *authentic* spiritual meaning and purpose. Wade Clarke Roof’s masterful book *The Spiritual Marketplace* (1999) is based on extensive surveys and interviews with American Baby Boomers. He discovered a reasonably large cohort of Americans he dubbed ‘seekers’. This group engages in a range of practices typical of the ‘spiritual marketplace’, and eschewing religion, imagine the spiritual to be ‘more impersonal than personal, as immanent more than transcendent’ (Roof 1999, p. 211).

Another American sociologist, Robert Wuthnow, made similar findings in his research, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America since the 1950s* (1998). Before the 1960s, Wuthnow argues that spirituality was about ‘dwelling’; a recognisable form

of spirituality embedded in organized religion, and the experiences of transcendence found within tradition. Now, spirituality is primarily about seeking – a self-directed search for authentic meaning and purpose. According to Wuthnow (1998, p. 2) ‘Spirituality has become a vastly complex quest in which each person seeks his or her own way’. This might occur within the confines of organised religion (finding a church or temple that resonates with what one is searching for) or in the plethora of spiritual possibilities noted in this section, or something more diffuse and self-defined.

A major British study of these trends is Heelas and Woodhead’s *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality* (2005). Focused on the English town of Kendal, this project examined participation in the ‘holistic milieu’, that assemblage of New Age and associated activities that focus on mind-body connections (Bender 2010, p. 25). Heelas and Woodhead (2005, p. 27) found that participants in this milieu ‘are enabled to “live their own truth”, “heal themselves” or, as we might say, are provided with the opportunity to *be-come* themselves’ (italics in original).

These studies reveal that present-day personal spirituality need not be indebted to conventional religious themes, and these non-religious forms are largely centred on individual experience and authentication. People can happily conceive of a spiritual life-world outside the bounds of organised religion and have an ever-expanding array of resources on which to draw, whether that is New Age themes, or Buddhist ideas. Spirituality is now part of the language – and experience – of the everyday.

To be sure, the popular interest in alternative forms of spirituality is not unprecedented. Westerners have long, if discretely, cultivated an interest in non-Christian spirituality, and some scholars have cautioned against seeing the present situation as novel (see Bender 2010). In particular, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was a time when dalliances with non-Christian religious and spiritual views were widespread, as evidenced by the enormous popularity of the Spiritualist and Theosophical movements (Singleton 2014, p. 22). Nonetheless, this earlier interest in alternative spirituality was the preserve of the middle classes and conditioned by societies that were irreducibly defined by Christianity (see McLeod 2000). To that end, the current spiritual interest *is* new.

The notion that spirituality can be detached from religion has led to the recent popularisation of the phrase ‘spiritual but not religious’ (see Fuller 2001). To illustrate: the *International Social Survey Programme* (ISSP 2008), which includes countries in Europe, North America, South America, Asia and Oceania asked respondents if they were ‘spiritual but not religious’ in the 2008 iteration of the survey. Eighteen per cent of Britons, 22 % of Americans, 10 % of Germans, 16 % of the French and 23 % of Australians agreed with the statement: ‘I don’t follow a religion, but consider myself to be a spiritual person interested in the sacred or the supernatural’ (my calculations using the survey data). Notwithstanding, scholars have also emphasised that many religious people also see themselves as spiritual and thus the terms should not always be independent (see Ammerman 2013b).

As sociologists have demonstrated empirically, the contemporary situation in the West is one in which people have many ways and opportunities to experience

‘transcendence’ or the sacred in their everyday lives, and many couch this in the language of or understand it as spirituality. There exists space for many different kinds of people to imagine a place for the spiritual in their lives.

Can There be a ‘Secular Spirituality’?

To conclude, it is valuable to consider how far definitions of spirituality can extend. Can resolutely secular people – including self-described atheists – be thought of as spiritual? This is a pertinent question given the increasing numbers of atheists and secular people in the West (see Singleton 2014). Are any of these secular people ‘spiritual’? Certainly, many non-religious people are interested in living ethical, altruistic and purposeful lives and encouraging others to do the same. Blogger Rebecca Savastio (2013, para. 1), for example, writes: ‘Atheists say that by letting go of belief in God, their fellow human beings become much more important . . . that includes embracing philanthropy to help humankind, extending goodwill to others and working toward the betterment of society’ (emphasis in original). Atheist philosopher Alain de Botton recently published the book *Religion for Atheists: A Non-believer’s Guide to the Uses of Religion* in which he discusses ways atheists can ‘promote morality, engender a spirit of community . . . train minds and encourage gratitude’ among non-believers (de Botton 2012, p. 2). A group of atheists have established a ‘godless congregation’, the Sunday Assembly, in many cities offering a community ‘for anyone who wants to live better, help often and wonder more’ (Sundayassembly.com).

The ethical ideals that motivate such strategies and commitments ‘may . . . derive from sources beyond the individual: e.g. from “community standards” (Mason et al. 2007, p. 39), or a humanist philosophy. Is this a commitment to a ‘higher’ ethical ideal that animates a person’s everyday life a secular spirituality? Some scholars argue this the case (e.g. Jespers 2013; Watson 2008). In the *Spirit of Generation Y* study, my colleagues and I suggested:

It does seem possible to describe such a secular outlook as spirituality. While it stretches the term to its limit, and would be rejected by some of those to whom it is applied, there is an element of transcendence in their outlook. (Mason et al. 2007, p. 39)

To date, however, there has been a paucity of study of the actions, activities and motivations of non-religious people and how this aligns with current understandings of spirituality. Most research has focused on those who are obviously ‘religious and spiritual’ or ‘spiritual not religious’ (i.e. those involved in holistic spiritual movements) and overlooked the less discernible and conspicuous forms of spirituality in society. As academic and public interest in spirituality continues, expanding the field of study and developing appropriate definitions and tools represents one of the future challenges for sociologists.

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Chapter 5

The Spiritual Care and Nurture of the Non-religious in the Caring Professions

Jacqueline Watson

Abstract An increasing number of people in the West are self-identifying as non-religious – whether as atheists, agnostics, Humanists, or simply as having no religion – and this non-religious demographic is recognised in research related to spiritual care and nurture. This chapter examines the extent to which the spirituality of non-religious people is acknowledged and represented within the discourse and practice of the caring and nurturing professions, that is, in the fields of health and social care, and in education. The chapter reviews the literature on this subject and discusses some of the key issues raised, one of which is that very little has been published about spirituality, atheism and humanism. The review concludes that, while discourse and practice around spiritual care and nurture demonstrates increased sensitivity to non-religious people, further change is needed, both in research and practice, to ensure non-religious people are fully represented and their spiritual needs addressed. In particular, survey design and instrumentation aimed at measuring spirituality and beliefs needs to be better adapted for the purpose of capturing and understanding non-religious belief; and further research is needed to better understand the broad spectrum of non-belief.

Introduction

This chapter examines the extent to which the spirituality of *non*-religious people is acknowledged and represented within the discourse and practice of the caring and nurturing professions, that is, in the fields of health and social care, and in education. The chapter reviews the literature on this subject and discusses some of the key issues raised.

The growing non-religious demographic is recognised in research related to spiritual care and nurture. In the academic literature on spirituality, for instance in the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* (IJCS), the *Journal for the Study of Spirituality* (JSS), and in professional journals and many policy documents addressing spirituality in professional practice, it is generally understood that

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everyone is spiritual whether they are religious or not. In the United Kingdom (UK), where I am based, and in many other countries (see Watson et al. 2014), this is also recognised in professional practice. This is historically novel, however, since spirituality in western cultures had usually been associated with Christianity and only recently opened up to a wider range of faiths. The inclusion of *non*-religious people in the discussion of spiritual care and nurture is new. The use of the word ‘spirituality’ has played an important part in this transition because its inclusivity has opened up the possibility, not just to the diversity of *religious* expressions of spirituality, but also to the idea that people can be spiritual without being religious at all.

In western countries, the numbers of people self-identifying as non-religious is growing. In the UK the most recent, 2011 National Census showed that a quarter of the population of England and Wales have no religion (Office for National Statistics 2012), an increase from 15 % in 2001. A 2004 UK government report on attitudes of young people in Britain stated that religious affiliation among young people is rapidly declining and “two thirds did not regard themselves as belonging to any religion” (Department for Education and Skills 2004, p. 10). In the United States (US), the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life shows a growing non-religious grouping in the population (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2009). While there are far fewer self-identifying atheists in the US than in the UK – the American Religious Identification Survey (Kosmin and Keysar 2009) estimated 2.3 % of American adults are atheists compared with 31–44 % in Britain, with an additional 10 % of Americans self-identifying as agnostic – those “self-identifying as ‘nonreligious’ is growing faster than any other religious demographic . . . and now totals more than 15 % of the US population, which is a larger segment of the population than every other group except Catholics and Baptists” (Hwang et al. 2011, p. 617).

While the number of non-religious people is increasing it is not entirely clear what their beliefs actually are and to what extent this group is, for instance, atheist, agnostic, or objecting to religious authority, or to what extent they would self-identify as spiritual. This is one of the issues discussed in more detail below, and one of the conclusions drawn in this chapter is that research needs to better understand this diverse group.¹

My professional and academic background is education. I was a religious education (RE) teacher in the UK and I have researched and written about RE and spirituality in schools. I am also an atheist and a member of the *British Humanist Association* (BHA) and much of my academic work has focused on non-religious people in spiritual discourse and practice in education. For this chapter however I reviewed academic writing across education and health. I gathered existing literature

¹One of the problems here is that terms are not always used accurately, or are used differently in different contexts. As a guide to definitions of terms related to non-religious beliefs, a helpful list of definitions can be found at <https://humanism.org.uk/humanism/humanism-today/non-religious-beliefs/>.

by making a search of the *Web of Science*, the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* and the *Journal of the Study of Spirituality* using the words 'spirituality', 'spiritual', 'atheism' and 'humanism'.² A key initial finding was that very little has been published about spirituality, atheism and humanism.

Spirituality and the Non-religious in Education

Since my own field is education, I start here. In the UK, for complex historic reasons – and unlike, for instance, France or the US – RE is a compulsory subject in publicly funded schools, and schools are also responsible for the spiritual development of each pupil. Over 15 years ago, Linda Rudge wrote an article about RE in which she brought attention to “those who might . . . describe themselves as ‘nothing’” (Rudge 1998, p. 155), by reporting the self-description of a boy who, differently to his Muslim and Sikh classmates, wrote: ‘I am John; I am 11 years old; I am nothing.’” Rudge’s article is not about atheists but it is about non-religious people’s difficulty in placing themselves in a recognised spiritual box.

In my own writing I have argued for the inclusion of non-religious children and young people in the discourse of spirituality in UK schools, and for the inclusion of Humanism in RE as one way of achieving this (Watson 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013). In 2004, *The National Framework for RE* (QCA and DfES 2004) strongly recommended that secular or non-religious beliefs should be included in RE syllabuses. This has led to the inclusion of Humanism in RE in many schools in England and Wales, and to the increased use of the phrase ‘religion and belief’ to demonstrate the inclusion of the beliefs and values of the non-religious.

While most academics who write about spirituality in education are clear that *all* children and young people are spiritual whether religious or not, very few have written specifically about spirituality and atheism, although Freathy and Parker’s (2013) history of secularism and humanism in RE demonstrates that this discussion is not entirely new. Apart from articles written by myself, my literature search found only two additional articles, one by the American feminist, Nel Noddings, and the other by the British educational philosopher, Michael Hand. They express very different views.

Hand, an atheist, is not enthusiastic about spirituality in schools and his article (2003) critiques the notion of ‘spiritual education’. Hand speaks from the view that religion and, therefore in his view, spirituality have no place in secular or publicly funded schools. Hand understands ‘spirituality’ “as a synonym of ‘religious’” (p. 397). Across the literature more generally, ‘spirituality’ is intended to include

²I narrowed the search to these words and did not search using the term ‘non-religious’ as much of the literature accepts that non-religious people are spiritual but, as this literature search demonstrated, rarely addresses issues specifically related to non-religious people such as atheists and humanists.

non-religious beliefs and experiences: *all* human beings want to make meaning of their lives and to feel a connection to something greater than themselves. Therefore, in education, and especially through RE, it is essential that non-religious children and young people have an equal opportunity to explore and express their spiritual meanings and sense of connectedness.

Although RE is not permitted in public schools in the US, Nel Noddings (2008) argues that US public schools are “constitutionally permitted to teach about religion” (p. 369) and therefore should address religion and spirituality, including atheist beliefs. Noddings is particularly concerned that children and young people are largely ignorant of atheist beliefs, and she sees this as a major social and cultural problem in the US.

[Students] remain largely ignorant about the varieties of unbelief and have little or no tolerance for atheism or agnosticism. Christians, Jews, and Muslims learn to ‘tolerate’ one another, but unbelievers remain beyond the pale. (p. 370)

Noddings’ description of prejudice towards atheists in the US is shocking. For instance, she reports President George H.W. Bush as saying: “I don’t know that atheists should be considered as citizens, nor should they be considered patriots. This is one nation under God” (p. 371). Noddings also criticises atheist writers such as Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens and Sam Harris for their insensitivity to religious experience, and she calls for “more temperate language” (p. 383) from all sides.

Somehow we have to give teenagers an opportunity to hear various, reasonable, and temperate views on belief and its place in spiritual life. . . . The critical study of religion and spirituality should encourage students to embrace a life that is spiritually satisfying Understanding that unbelievers as well as believers may be moved by awe, wonder, and concern for humanity may help reduce students’ fear that they have lost something irreplaceable if they give up belief in the supernatural. (pp. 375 and 386)

In summary, then, Hand argues that spirituality has little place in schools while Noddings, like myself, argues that spirituality is crucial to humanity and therefore to education. Academics who write about spirituality generally accept that *all* children and young people are spiritual whether religious or not, but Noddings emphasises that spiritual, or religious, discourse must explicitly include non-religious perspectives and beliefs, particularly to combat prejudice.

Strong and Subtle Forms of Prejudice Toward the Non-religious

A number of authors refer to deep prejudice towards atheists, especially in the US, but prejudice does not necessarily express itself in the strong form shown by George W. Bush. It can be more subtle. I found two articles in the *BJSS* which aim to support atheism and atheists but which, in my view, nonetheless demonstrated various forms of more subtle prejudice towards atheism and the non-religious.

In a philosophical article about spiritualities without the supernatural, Jacob Waschenfelder (2012) gives support to atheism but nonetheless begins his article by disparagingly dismissing “so-called New Atheists” and their shortcomings (p. 171). Like Noddings, I would agree with Waschenfelder that the characterisation of religion presented by New Atheists such as Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens can be unhelpful. However, I would describe *myself* as a New Atheist and part of that new, confident Humanist voice, demanding to be heard and fully represented in the democratic public sphere.

But, further, while I agree with Waschenfelder that it is absurd of Dawkins and others to dismiss twentieth century liberal theology – such as that of Paul Tillich or John Robinson – Waschenfelder makes false assumptions too. First, while liberal Christians may find Tillich and Robinson helpful, many religious believers are not familiar with such theologies and tend towards the more traditional religious beliefs Dawkins derides. And second, as an atheist myself, and after years of consideration, in the end I am no more persuaded by Tillich and Robinson than I am by traditional supernaturalist theology. In my own experience, I have frequently met with these same assumptions from religious people, but it is a mistake to suppose that all religious people now share a liberal theology or that atheists are non-believers simply because they have not yet discovered liberal theology.

Unfortunately, Waschenfelder’s prejudice towards atheism goes still deeper than this. His article focuses on two post-traditional approaches to thinking about the sacred, that of the Christian eco-theologian Sallie McFague and that of the atheist French philosopher Andre Comte-Sponville. He compares and contrasts these two contemporary approaches to spirituality and offers them both as more complex approaches to metaphysics than Dawkins and Hitchens will allow. He largely recommends the atheist approach of Comte-Sponville which, he says, acknowledges mystical experience through encounters with “an *impersonal* universe” of which we are a part and which Comte-Sponville refers to as “the All” (p. 178). However, by the end of the article it is clear that Waschenfelder finds McFague’s new eco-theology far more satisfying than Comte-Sponville’s atheism, and his final summation of the atheist philosopher is offensive in a number of ways.

Although Comte-Sponville asserts that his atheist spirituality is non-religious, I disagree, at least from the perspective of comparative religions. If religions coalesce around culturally interpreted experiences arising out of encounters with the immeasurable totality of which we are a part, encounters that engender feelings of awe and fascination, then Comte-Sponville’s experiences of awe-filled wonder in the face ‘of something limitless’, of being ‘at one with the All’ and of feeling a sense of ‘total security’ come very close to a religious experience. I would also contend that he interprets these as non-religious because of his French atheist, cultural, interpretative filters. These modernist filters assume, stereotypically, that religion is primary about belief in a supreme being, an assumption shared by the New Atheists and reified in global consciousness since September 11. (p. 178)

No doubt religions do coalesce around the kinds of encounters described by Comte-Sponville, but Waschenfelder bypasses Comte-Sponville’s essential point here, that a person does not have to be religious to have such spiritual experiences. These are *human* experiences in which we all have the potential to share but

which, as Waschenfelder himself says, are culturally interpreted. Waschenfelder then suggests that a *religious* cultural interpretation is unbiased and acceptable, but that Comte-Sponville's *non-religious* interpretation is inherently biased by French atheist interpretative filters (whatever these are) and by the events of September 11; and, anyway, Waschenfelder claims, Comte-Sponville's experience of awe-filled wonder *comes close* to a religious experience. I would argue that this *closeness* comes from shared human experience but that it is the differences in interpretation which make these *distinctly different* spiritual encounters; one religious and the other not. Personally, I share the author's hope for new spiritual imaginaries, and particularly ones which embed humans in the cosmos and environment. However, I do not accept that *all* religious people do or *should* share this vision, and I do not accept that atheists are being religious, or being close to religious, when they share such visions.

A different problem is illustrated in a BJSS article by Steve Nolan (2011). Writing from the perspective of hospice chaplaincy, Nolan wants to ensure that non-religious people are included in spiritual care through a new paradigm which he calls psychospiritual care. Nolan is sensitive to the need for professional practitioners to recognise that a person's lack of religious identity does not equate with an absence of spirituality. Today, he says, many people are constructing spiritual identity independent of traditional religion. However, a key part of Nolan's thesis is that spirituality is not about meaning making, even though, as he says, this is usually the way in which spirituality is understood in professional contexts. He puts forward an alternative, humanistic-phenomenological definition of spirituality, which is about *being* rather than meaning-making.

Spirituality ... is a way of being and experiencing that comes through awareness of a transcendent dimension and that is characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life, and whatever one considers to be theist Ultimate ... (Elkins et al. 1988, p. 10, quoted in Nolan 2011, p. 56)

While I am in agreement with much that Nolan says, particularly that spiritual care should attend to the whole person, I disagree with his claim that spirituality is not about meaning making, or that the construction of a meaningful personal narrative should not be determined by a belief system. My research suggests that for some people a personal narrative *will* be determined by a belief system – religious or non-religious – although for others (presumably Nolan) it may not. The practitioner's role, in my view, is to listen carefully to help the person develop that personal meaning, *wherever* it is contextually embedded.

In my view Nolan's approach to spiritual care and nurture is particularly problematic for non-religious people. In order to try to explain why, I want to turn to a philosophical article from the field of nursing (discovered through the *Web of Science*) which identifies three distinct conceptualisations of spirituality within nursing literature (Pesut 2008). Barbara Pesut closely examined the literature on spirituality in nursing and identified three conceptual approaches to spirituality:

theistic, monistic, and humanistic. Pesut presents her analysis as a conversation between a hypothetical narrator and three hypothetical participants – a theist, a monist, and a humanist – demonstrating their distinctive understandings of spirituality and the implications for “nursing ontology, epistemology and spiritual care” (p. 98).

I recognised my own approach to spirituality in the words of the Pesut’s hypothetical humanist:

We take the position that all individuals have a spiritual dimension – regardless of religious beliefs. There is something fundamental about human nature that is spiritual. People may choose to adopt a religion as an aid to their spirituality, but not having a religion does not negate being spiritual. Atheists and agnostics are spiritual beings. (p. 101)

I recognised Nolan’s approach to spirituality and psychospiritual care in the words of the hypothetical monist: “We focus much more on the patient’s soul or consciousness. Indeed, we envision a new role for nurses – as true healers” (p. 103).

In Pesut’s analysis, theist and humanist share worries about the monist approach agreeing that, “it is so important to keep the whole area of spirituality a bit more open, and subjectively driven by the patient” (p. 104), and the hypothetical narrator also has concerns:

I am not sure that I would look to a nurse to help expand my consciousness or to intervene in my spiritual being. Those intimate areas of my life are best dealt with by those who are closest to me, or who have some expertise within my spiritual tradition. (p. 105)

I am very uncomfortable with the premise of Nolan’s psychospiritual care, therefore, because it seeks to intervene in an individual’s spiritual being. Assuming that anyone, and especially a non-religious person, has a ‘spiritual being’, is a subtle form of pre-judgement and it would be crucial, in my view, that the practitioner did *not* see themselves as a spiritual healer but instead listened and supported the individual in developing their own meanings. As the humanist in Pesut’s article says, “I am sure that this will not come as a surprise, but we believe that people themselves are the best source of information about spirituality” (p. 105).

In summary, then, while the numbers of atheists and agnostics are increasing in western countries today, there continues to be prejudice towards the non-religious. Some of this prejudice is overt and some is more subtle. Atheists are not necessarily non-believers simply because they have not yet discovered more liberal approaches to theology. Atheists and agnostics are capable of developing personal meaning through a materialist understanding of the universe and a social ethic. Atheists and agnostics are spiritual beings, in the sense that they share, amongst other things, many of the same awe-filled human experiences as those who are religious, they just interpret them differently. An approach to spiritual care and nurture which saw practitioners as spiritual healers would alienate many atheists and agnostics, as well as many theists. The practitioner’s role must be to try to understand and work with the unique spirituality of the individual.

Religion, Spirituality, Health and Wellbeing

A number of the articles I found through *Web of Science* were from the health sector. There has been a great deal of research in the health sector about *religion* and wellbeing, and my search, using ‘atheism’, ‘spiritual’ and ‘spirituality’, identified a small proportion of the articles related to this work. Six of the seven articles I found – Pesut’s was the exception – reviewed surveys about the relationship between spirituality (or religion) and coping, especially coping in ageing and with pain. This body of research emerges from a growing interest in the potential benefits of religious belief and practice to coping, and to health and wellbeing more generally. However some authors, and the US media in particular, have used this research to claim that people’s wellbeing is necessarily improved by religious belief and practice. Four of the articles I found set out to critique and criticise this research. Before I discuss the findings of these four critical articles, I turn first to the other two articles, which represent the kinds of problems these four articles identify.

Ekedahl and Wengstrom’s (2010) article, concerning spirituality and religiosity in nurses’ coping, reports empirical research carried out by researchers from Sweden and the UK. The research found that nurses coped better in challenging roles when they were more religious. The article was identified by my search because it used the words ‘atheist’ – as well as ‘agnostic’ – however it turned out that this was because the random sample of nurses used in the study happened to include one atheist and no agnostics. The authors’ understanding of both atheism and agnosticism is weak. The following is their one, highly simplistic, description of the atheist: “One informant was an atheist with a mechanistic view of life: When you die it is the end” (p. 533). I am unclear why this atheistic view of death is described, negatively, as ‘mechanistic’, and there is no sense of this person having any other, or more positive, beliefs. The authors also define ‘agnostic’ in the following, inaccurate and peculiar fashion: “an Agnostic does not know what to believe and seldom takes part in church services” (p. 535). Despite making no intentional effort to include non-religious nurses, and therefore having nothing to say about the coping strategies of non-religious nurses, the study’s researchers found that “religiosity can have a protective function that facilitates coping” (p. 530). Having perhaps been surprised by an atheist turning up in their sample, the authors do, to their credit, recommend that atheism should be an area for further study, and that further research should use more inclusive definitions of spirituality; they also acknowledge that research about coping rarely takes account of non-believers.

In my search with the *Web of Science*, I drew out an article by Dunn and Horgas (2004), which reported a study from the US about religious and nonreligious coping in older adults experiencing chronic pain. The article was identified because it included the word ‘spiritual’ and initially I thought it looked hopeful because the title included the word ‘nonreligious’. However, the article did not include the word ‘atheism’ and it turned out that the term ‘non-religious’ did not refer to atheism or agnosticism. Instead, the authors used ‘nonreligious’ to refer to coping strategies

such as diversion or exercise, as opposed to coping strategies which involve religious beliefs or practices, such as “praying or hoping” (p. 20). The research investigates how far religious practices and beliefs can be a helpful addition to coping with pain, but there is no consideration of whether *non*-religious beliefs have a value in coping with chronic pain. The non-religious person is just not seen. Another problem with the study, common to such studies, is that the sample of 200 participants was limited to Judeo-Christians, with 94.5 % being Christians. Most studies of religion and wellbeing do not only exclude the non-religious, they routinely fail to represent a wide range of religions or even of Christian denominations.

If the point of such research is *solely* to demonstrate that religion might help with coping then these methodological limitations are acceptable. However, the findings of this kind of research are routinely used to make claims about the inherent value of religious belief and practice and, by extension, that those who are not religious are less healthy, less happy, or less well able to cope with pain, loss, or work pressures. Methodological problems with this body of research are identified and discussed by four further articles from the health sector which critique and criticise research which purports to demonstrate the positive effects of religious belief without including participants who are not religious. The four articles are by Hwang et al. (2011), Weber et al. (2012), Wilkinson and Coleman (2010), and Horning et al. (2011). Two of the articles are specifically about coping in aging and all four about coping and distress.

Hwang et al. (2011), writing in the US in the field of medicine, carried out a review of the literature on religion and health specifically to consider the problematics of extending the findings to secular minorities. They discuss this in the context of an increased interest in “religiosity and/or spirituality” (p. 608). These authors make strong statements about the weakness of popular claims about religions’ beneficial effects on health. Like the other articles in this group of four, the authors state that this research systematically fails to address basic methodological issues, especially “the near universal lack of atheist control samples” (*ibid*) as well as an over concentration on mainstream Jewish and Christian faiths with little attention to other faiths. Again like the other articles in this group, they argue there must always be an atheist control group in such research. They also point out that, even when non-religious people are included in research, little attention is given to degrees of non-religiosity or secularity:

As a result, these measures are unable to reliably distinguish between individuals with affirmatively secular worldviews and those believers whose belief systems are vague, transitory or conflicted. (p. 612)

Importantly, they found a number of studies show that American atheists feel stigmatized and often keep quiet about their beliefs, and atheists suffer from discrimination because “many Americans continue to see atheists as poorly parented, immoral, unhappy, antisocial hedonists” (p. 613). Around half of Americans would not want their child to marry an atheist and would not vote for an atheist (p. 614). They conclude that “some extrinsically religious individuals may in fact

be closet atheists, and might develop into affirmatively secular individuals given more supportive social circumstances” (pp. 613–4):

Practitioners treating atheistic clients may need to be especially sensitive to patient confidentiality, as closeted secular individuals may have concerns about being ‘outed’ to family, friends, or the public. (p. 617)

They also point to the fact that atheists may not want to use the word ‘spirituality’ in reference to themselves although this does not mean they do not share this kind of human experience. Care is needed to ensure practitioners do not assume atheists shun these human experiences.

Wilkinson and Coleman (2010), who come from a medical background, carried out a mixed methods study in the UK about strong beliefs and coping in old age. They start by recognising the increased interest in religion and spirituality in health care research but, again, are sceptical about its methodology and claims.

[T]his emerging field already boasts some impressive claims: that being religious is associated with various aspects of psychological wellbeing and meaning-making ... that religion is a coping resource of great importance for the chronically and terminally ill ... that in both the USA and Europe religion is inversely correlated with depression ... and that following a religion might even positively influence physical health Despite all this, however there are major weaknesses in the literature, even on fundamental issues of the definition of terms and the appropriate methodologies (pp. 338 and 339)

They point out that most of this research has been carried out in the US, where religion remains strong, while in the UK formal religious practice has been in decline for some time, such that many people “have vague individualised spiritual beliefs that are unattached to religious doctrines and that may be a relatively poor and untested resource for coping with ageing” (p. 340). But their key point, which they share with the other authors in this group, is that:

A noteworthy omission from the psychosocial literature on religion and age has been the absence of comparisons of religious and atheistic belief – the more usual focus has been on comparing strong versus weak religious belief. (p. 340)

Their research involved a qualitative study with 19 people, 11 with strong atheistic convictions and 8 with strong religious and theistic beliefs, either Christian or Jewish, and they supported this with two quantitative survey instruments. The research demonstrated the resilience of both religious and non-religious participants in coping with loss, death and suffering:

The presented case evidence suggests that atheistic belief-based coping can be as effective as religious belief-based coping in helping individuals adapt to various issues that accompany ageing and old age. ... These findings support the hypothesis that strong atheistic beliefs are comparable to strong religious beliefs in helping people cope with the rigours of old age. (p. 356)

Horning et al. (2011) also carried out research in the field of psychology and ageing studies. Using participants from the US and UK, their study examined atheistic, agnostic and religious older adults’ well-being and coping. Using a large survey instrument – the common approach to religion and wellbeing research – they deliberately set out to address the failure of such survey instruments to

consider the non-religious when studying coping, since “little research has been done comparing atheists and agnostics to religious individuals on measures of well-being” (p. 177). Like Wilkinson and Coleman, they find that it is *strength* of belief that is psychologically beneficial, with highly religious and highly nonreligious people having similarly low levels of psychological distress. They also found that religious people, whether strongly religious or weakly religious, had higher levels of social support than atheists and agnostics.

Why this all matters is made particularly clear in the final article in this group, a systematic review of 14 articles by Weber et al. writing from the US in the field of psychiatry about psychological distress among religious non-believers (2012). Again, they are motivated by the rising number of non-believers in the US and the fact that studies usually overlook them. One of their key findings is that *strength* of belief is what counts, with “findings connecting greater existential certainty with decreased depressive symptoms” (p. 86). They also found that atheists are routinely socially excluded – in the US, atheists are top of the list of problematic groups with levels of rejection higher even than Muslims since 9/11 (p. 85) – and atheists are distressed by negative perceptions. They also emphasise that non-belief comes in many forms.

In summary, then, as Hwang and her colleagues conclude:

As numerous published surveys indicate, Americans are becoming less religious. Our research indicates a need to move beyond outdated pathological stereotypes of atheists as psychologically maladjusted or existentially bereft. The shifting population trends in our society indicate that such investigation is timely. As such, our aim is not to invalidate the existing canon of R/S-related³ research but to complement it by extending the findings of the current body of R/S into the domain of the affirmatively secular. It is only through further research that we can gain a greater understanding of what it means to be secular – and by extension, what it means to be spiritual. (Hwang et al 2011, p. 618)

Conclusions

Surveys, including from the Pew Forum and the UK census, demonstrate that an increasing number of people in the West are self-identifying as non-religious – whether as atheists, agnostics, Humanists, or simply as having no religion. Partly because of the work of the American and British Humanist Associations, there is now a greater confidence among non-religious people to demand equal representation and, in the discourse and practice around spiritual care and nurture, there is a growing sensitivity to non-religious people. However, further change is needed in research and practice so that non-religious people are fully represented and their spiritual needs addressed.

In the UK in the past decade, significant changes have been made to address the spiritual needs of non-religious people, in health and social care and in schools,

³Religion/spirituality-related research.

but non-religious people are not yet treated equally with people of religious faith. For instance, in hospitals, nurses have a responsibility to address the spiritual needs of patients but remain uncertain of what this means; spiritual needs are too often equated with religious needs, and seen as the responsibility of the hospital chaplaincy service.⁴ While the chaplaincy service recognises that patients are people of all faiths and none (Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt 2011),⁵ and a small proportion of salaried chaplains in the health service are now from faiths other than Christianity, there are no salaried Humanist or non-religious chaplains, and only a handful of Humanist volunteers. The National Health Service in England recently revised policy for chaplaincies emphasising that the spiritual needs of non-religious people *must* be addressed⁶ but this will require major institutional and attitudinal change.⁷ In schools in England and Wales, changes made since 2004 to the curriculum subject of Religious Education has made Humanism a recommended part of many syllabuses, however government decisions in 2015 are reversing this trend.⁸ Publicly funded schools in the UK are legally required to provide a daily, compulsory Act of Collective Worship⁹ which must be *mainly Christian* and yet, at the same time, contribute to *all* children and young people's spiritual development. Practice makes progress but non-religious people continue to be marginalised and, in the US, atheists are *stigmatised* as un-American. Since research suggests it is *strength* of belief that is good for us, then non-religious people need equal space and attention to develop personal meanings and strengthen spiritual resilience in all areas of care and nurture.

Research in the caring and nurturing professions needs to include the non-religious, and non-religious groups must be included in survey instruments measuring beliefs, and survey design adapted for this purpose. Further research is also needed to better understand the broad spectrum of non-belief. In a recent article in the field of mental health, Michael King (2014) called for greater clarity of terms, but also reported findings from a survey he made of 7,403 people which showed

⁴See for instance the *Royal College of Nursing's Spirituality Survey* (2010) http://www.rcn.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/393155/survey_003861.pdf (accessed 14.04.15).

⁵This book is recommended reading for prospective BHA 'chaplains' – or pastoral volunteers - even though it comes from a Christian perspective. The chaplaincy service, as the book demonstrates, is acutely aware of the large number of non-religious people in the UK today; as a result they now promote 'generic chaplaincy' which is an open approach to the unknown variety of spiritualities they meet in their work in hospitals and hospices.

⁶*NHS Chaplaincy Guidelines 2015: Promoting Excellence in Pastoral, Spiritual & Religious Care* <http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/nhs-chaplaincy-guidelines-2015.pdf> (accessed 14.04.15). This states, for instance, "The term 'chaplain' is intended to also refer to non-religious pastoral and spiritual care providers who provide care to patients, family and staff" (p. 5).

⁷For instance, I recently attended a chaplaincy conference at which a bishop was clear that atheists could not be chaplains, despite the NHS guidance in the footnote above.

⁸See for instance, <https://humanism.org.uk/2015/02/12/government-rejects-consensus-subject-experts-public-religious-leaders-marginalises-humanism-gcse-levels/> (accessed 14.04.15).

⁹See for instance, <http://collectiveschoolworship.com/index.html> (accessed 14.04.15).

that “35 % had a religious and/or spiritual view of life, 19 % were spiritual but not religious and 46 % were secular” (p. 108). While I was delighted that King found religious and secular participants had “equal prevalences of mental health” (ibid), I was left puzzled about who these groups of people were and which group I would fit into. I consider myself to be spiritual *and* an atheist Humanist but I would not describe myself as ‘secular’. The way I use the word ‘spirituality’ would be more akin to that of Margaret Holloway (2014), writing in the field of social work, who deploys ‘humanistic spirituality’ and argues against defining “‘spirituality’ as a somewhat rootless phenomenon and with little regard to religion” (p. 129). I think I am agreeing with her in saying that spirituality should be understood as a phenomenon which is expressed through both religious and non-religious beliefs (as well as actions and experiences), and is about meaning and purpose, relationships, and the promotion of certain behaviours and practices (p. 122). Research needs to be more inclusive of the non-religious but also needs to better understand the non-religious terrain.

Hwang et al. (2011) suggest that the current, more open, discussion of atheism may be helping non-religious people to ‘come out of the closet’, contributing to the growing increase in those self-identifying as atheist, agnostic and Humanist. So, while I share the disquiet of Nell Noddings and many others about the tone of the criticism of religion by New Atheists such as Richard Dawkins, I nonetheless thank them for taking the debate into the open and raising consciousness and confidence. The spiritual care and nurture of non-religious people is now taken more seriously, but further research and changes in practice are required to properly address the spiritual needs of this growing group.

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Part II

Education

Chapter 6

Spirituality and Early Childhood Education and Care

Gill Goodliff

Abstract Although articulated differently, the early childhood curriculum frameworks of the four UK nations generally include a spiritual dimension to a holistic understanding of children's development. Spirituality is variously linked to young children's personal, social and emotional development, their health and wellbeing, play and learning. However whilst acknowledged in policy, there is a distinct lack of discussion about spirituality in early childhood education, and only a few research studies in the UK have focused on how pre-school children experience or express spirituality. Training, and texts, supporting the professional development of early childhood practitioners tend not to explore definitions of the spiritual dimension of children's development, and practitioners are offered little, or no, explanation of how young children's spirituality might be recognized. Arguably, traditional connections in British education policy of spirituality to religion, has led to understandings of the word *spirituality* being synonymous with religious belief and thus problematic for many practitioners. Increasing concerns about the 'school readiness' agenda and the institutionalisation of early childhood offers opportunities for dialogue that includes the fostering of children's skills and dispositions associated with expressions of spirituality.

Introduction

Beginning with a United Kingdom (UK) perspective, this chapter explores spirituality in the context of early childhood education and care (ECEC). Framed within an overview of policy and research, the chapter focuses on young children's play and learning. A holistic understanding of young children's development generally includes recognition of a spiritual dimension and internationally, ECEC policy variously links spirituality to children's health and wellbeing, personal social and emotional development, creativity, play and learning. Whilst fostering children's spiritual development is not necessarily a contentious goal for practitioners, in

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secularised and post-Christian societies, such as Britain, the meaning of words such as ‘spiritual’ or ‘spirituality,’ seen in policy, has become problematic because they are often viewed as synonymous with religion. Likewise, the dominant developmental discourses influencing principles of play and learning have been critiqued (for example, Hedegaard and Fler 2008), and socio-cultural, poststructural perspectives are now influencing contemporary approaches within ECEC (Anning et al. 2009; Wood 2010).

ECEC is generally understood as encompassing all provision for children in the years before they reach compulsory school age. In the UK, where compulsory schooling commences at age 5, this pre-school phase covers the first 5 years and is traditionally organised into childcare services for children from birth to 3 years, and education facilities for 3–5 year olds. In other affluent countries compulsory school age is 6 or 7 years but, as is the case in Nordic countries, the early childhood system is wholly located within education and provision is integrated (see, Moss 2013).

Policy Overview in Britain

Historically the fostering of children’s spiritual development has been embedded in British care and education legislation (see for instance The Children Act (HMSO 1989) and The Education Reform Act (HMSO 1988). The Education Reform Act, for example, states that schools are required to provide for the spiritual development of children alongside moral, cultural, mental and physical development. The 1992 Education (Schools) Act (HMSO 1992) additionally places children’s ‘spiritual, moral, social and cultural’ development in the regulatory framework used by inspectors for judging the quality of provision. Whilst the above Acts apply to the four nations within the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), the political devolution of government powers since 1998 has led to differentiation in how both compulsory and ECEC policy has developed across the nations; this is particularly evident in the way each nation refers to spirituality in its ECEC policy.

In the following sections I explore how spirituality is defined in early childhood curricula, consider the reasons for the problematizing of spirituality in ECEC, discuss findings from research in ECE contexts and signpost possible future directions for spirituality and ECE policy and practice.

Tracing Spirituality in Early Childhood Education Policy

At the beginning of the new millennium the UK was in a period of transition in its statutory curriculum guidance for practitioners working with children between birth and age 5 years. In 2000, in England and Wales, the foundation stage for children aged between 3 and 5 years (the end of the reception year in primary school)

was established. The *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage* (QCA 2000) was based on six areas of learning – personal social and emotional development; communication language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development – but emphasised the holistic nature of young children’s learning and the key role of play. The *Birth to Three Matters* framework (DfES 2002) similarly explicitly underpinned by the principle that young children’s development and learning is holistic, provided guidance for practitioners (although non-statutory), for the first time, on effective practice for working with babies and toddlers (birth to three). Central to the then government’s 10 year childcare strategy (HM Treasury 2004) to give all children the best start in life, and enforced in the Childcare Act 2006 (OPSI 2006), the underpinning principles of both these frameworks informed the single statutory *Early Years Foundation Stage* (EYFS) framework (DCSF 2008) introduced in September 2008 in all registered care and education settings for children between birth and 5 years. The *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage* (QCA 2000) required that alongside other related goals, practitioners explicitly attend ‘... to: planning activities that promote emotional, moral, spiritual and social development alongside intellectual development’ (p. 28) yet the detailed guidance to practitioners failed to exemplify ‘spiritual development’. A child’s spirituality was not explicitly mentioned in the components of the four Aspects of the *Birth to Three Matters* framework (DfES 2002) – A Strong Child, A Skilful Communicator, A Competent Learner and A Healthy Child. However the approach adopted in this framework acknowledged the influence of new understandings of the child and the multidimensional ways children learn and communicate from birth (Abbott and Langston 2005) that implicitly reflected definitions of spirituality. The EYFS framework (DCSF 2008) arguably added more explicit acknowledgement of a spiritual element to holistic development than the *Curriculum Guidance* (QCA 2000) had, recognising within one of the four EYFS underpinning guiding principles – ‘a Unique Child’ (DCSF 2008, p. 8) – a spiritual dimension to children’s development, health and well-being. Regardless of explicit references to the importance of the ‘spiritual’, there remained in the EYFS framework, in common with the earlier curricula (QCA 2000; DfES 2002), no rationale for the inclusion of ‘spiritual’ as an aspect of babies’ and children’s development, nor exemplification of the notion or meaning of ‘spiritual well-being’ within the EYFS (DCSF 2008) guidance to practitioners. By contrast spirituality is explicitly included, and defined, in the ECE curricula of Aotearoa New Zealand (Ministry of Education 1996) and Australia (DEEWR 2009).

A change of government in England in 2010 led to a review of the EYFS (Tickell 2011) with publication of a revised Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2012) becoming mandatory for all early years providers from September 2012. The four guiding principles for shaping practice within the previous EYFS (DCSF 2008), the unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments and learning and development (in different ways and at different rates), are retained (DfE 2012, p. 3), but the articulation in the non-statutory guidance material to practitioners (Early Education 2012) no longer explicitly acknowledges a spiritual dimension within children’s holistic development.

As I mentioned above and have discussed elsewhere (Goodliff 2013a), devolution of government powers within the UK since 1998 has meant that policy for early education and care in the other three nations – Scotland, Wales and N.Ireland – has developed more distinctly. In England, as has already been seen, the revised statutory EYFS curriculum framework (DfE 2012, 2014), for children from birth to 5 years, signifies a holistic understanding of children’s uniqueness but no longer explicitly refers to a spiritual potential in terms of their personal, social and emotional (PSE) development, health and wellbeing.

For Scotland, the Pre-birth to Three guidance, (LTS 2010) and Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) (LTS 2009) for children aged 3–19 years, is underpinned by the values of the Scottish parliament – wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity. Practitioners working with the statutory CfE framework (LTS 2009) find reference to the spiritual within a holistic framework of rights to health and wellbeing for all children. In Northern Ireland the draft Early Years (0–6) Strategy (CCEA 2006) specifies the spiritual domain as one of its six identified domains of child development within which young children’s learning takes place. Meanwhile in Wales, the Foundation Phase Framework, for children 3–7 years (DCELLS 2008) reflects the international influence on the development of its cross-curricula approach to learning across this age phase. Engagement with the socio-cultural pedagogical principles of the Reggio Emilia approach through the *Hundred Languages of Children* Reggio Emilia Exhibition, (Malaguzzi 2004) led to research with teachers in Wales using Reggio principles as a lens through which to understand and reflect on their own practice (Maynard and Chicken 2010). Located within the area of ‘Moral and Spiritual development’, the Welsh framework signals to practitioners the potential for a spiritual dimension to children’s thinking, reflecting and expression of feelings and ideas in creative and imaginative ways. I return later in the chapter to consider the implications of this broader acknowledgement of how young children may mediate aspects of their spirituality through creative and imaginative play.

Problematizing of Spirituality in ECEC

So, why the distinct lack of discussion or exemplification of spirituality in early childhood policy? It is impossible in a short chapter, such as this, to fully explore all perspectives on spirituality that arguably have led to the acknowledged paucity of discussion in understanding the spirituality of very young children (David et al. 2005), nor the lack of dialogue with practitioners of how children’s spirituality might be recognized (Dowling 2005). Before moving to discuss findings from research and to consider how new understandings of spirituality might influence professional dialogue in early childhood education policy and practice, I first briefly explore possible reasons for this absence of discussion.

Whilst there is an acknowledged interest in spirituality in the western world (Wright 2000) that involves a search for meaning and self-understanding, there is also a concurrent decline in the expression of organized religion. Sociologists

of religion generally attribute this phenomenon to the processes of secularisation (Hay 2006). The particular expression of secularisation is, however, contested. The primary viewpoint understands secularization as a linear, one-way process whereby an increasing number of individuals who understand the world and their own lives without reference to religion, eventually results in the disappearance of religion (Bruce 2002). A variation on this is the de-intensification theory, where religion remains, albeit privatised and reduced to a product to be consumed amongst many other 'goods.' Bryan Wilson (1982) reflects this variant, 'secularization relates to the diminution in the social significance of religion.' (p. 149). Here religion's significance as a controlling influence in the public square is replaced by an influence upon personal and private beliefs and behaviours alone, to be adopted by the few and largely ignored by the majority. In this way, religion, and its associated phenomenon, 'spirituality', becomes a source of embarrassment, borne of ignorance, to the majority.

This linear trajectory has been challenged, however, both in its global context, where Europe, and Britain in particular, is an exceptional case: elsewhere, religious affiliation and influence is, if anything, increasing, (see for example, Berger 1992; Martin 2005). Brown (2006) comments on the change in religious certainty during the years between the beginning of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century. In 1900 Christianity was viewed by the British government and other major institutions 'as the only legitimate religion', whereas in 2000, Brown (2006) asserts, such universal certainty was replaced by 'two different dimensions on religion' (p. 2). The first emerged from a multi-cultural society that now adhered to a diversity of religious traditions e.g. Judaism, Islam and the New Age, and second indicated that 'religion had diminished as an element in everyday identity and culture' (Brown 2006, p. 2). The secularisation theory is of interest and significance not only because it now goes largely unchallenged, but also because an essentially secular society provides the cultural context in which young children's spirituality might be explored divorced from religious practice.

Researching Spirituality in Early Childhood

Contemporary understandings of spirituality connect it to all human experiences (King 2009). It may be linked to religion or religious belief – and for some (for instance, Wright 2000), it should only be located within religious traditions. However, many today adopt a more inclusive definition, asserting that spirituality is not synonymous with religion (Goodliff 2013b), but rather is ubiquitous.

Empirical research has seen more focused attention paid to investigating different aspects of children's spirituality (for example, Erricker et al. 1997; Hay and Nye 1998; McCreery 1996; Champagne 2003; Hyde 2005; Bone 2007, 2008; Goodliff 2013a), albeit largely with children over 4 years and, excepting Bone (2007, 2008) and Goodliff (2013b), linked to a religious discourse, if only implicitly. Only a few studies have focused on how pre-school children experience or express spirituality,

and gathered data in daycare settings. For example, the seminal studies in the UK by Erricker et al. (1997) – the Children’s Worldview Project – and Hay and Nye (1998) were both undertaken in primary schools, and the researchers worked with children of compulsory school age – 6–11 years. Through extensive conversations, Rebecca Nye sought to ‘identify the areas of children’s language and behaviour where the ‘sparks of spirituality’ may be found’ (Nye 1996, p. 9). Premised on a belief in the innate spirituality of children, five identified categories of spiritual sensitivity ‘Awareness sensing, Mystery sensing, Value sensing, Relationship and Meaning (c/f Hay and Nye 1998, p. 57)’, were used, as a starting point, through which to relate children’s spiritual experiences to those traditionally expressed within a religious discourse. Emerging from their conversations with the children they identified a core expression of spirituality they called ‘relational consciousness’. This they argue was a distinctive awareness of relatedness ‘to things, other people, him/herself, and God’ (Hay and Nye 1998 p. 109). The categories of spiritual sensitivity they identified have been influential for many other studies since 1996 and the core category of ‘relational consciousness’ is widely recognised in the literature (Trevarthen 2011). I turn now to discuss four research studies that have attended to the spirituality of younger children.

One of the earliest researchers to study the spiritual awareness of younger children, Elaine McCreery, talked to 4 and 5 year old children in reception classes in England in order to gain an understanding of their conception of the spiritual. Defining spirituality as ‘[a]n awareness that there is something Other, something greater than the course of everyday events’ (McCreery 1996 p. 197), McCreery, proposed that the children’s homes, school and watching television were significant environments with potential for spiritual experience or reflection.

Like McCreery, Elaine Champagne (2001), a hospital chaplain in Canada, wanted to find out about the spiritual awareness of younger children. Reflecting on her observations of young children engaged in ordinary activities, such as shopping in a supermarket, and talking with a parent in the hospital elevator, Champagne argues that within their daily experiences young children hold open ‘... a door to spirituality’ (ibid, p. 80). In a later study Champagne (2003) observed 60 pre-school children (aged 3–6 years old) from 3 day-care centres and recorded their day-to-day lives. Focusing on the children’s different expressions of being, ‘attention was given to words, facial expressions, attitudes and gestures, as well as the *inner dynamics* they expressed in a way objectively observable’ (ibid, p. 45). From her phenomenological study Champagne (2003) identified three spiritual modes of being: sensitive, relational and existential. Each mode, she argued, demonstrates essential facets of the being of the child; every situation occurring in their ‘daily life can be an occasion both for a sensitive, relational and existential perception and response of the child’ (Champagne 2003, p. 45). Champagne used a hermeneutic approach and a theological framework, linked to Christian faith and values, to interpret and bring meaning to her data. For each of the modes of being she therefore discusses both the spiritual dimension and its possible theological meaning.

In New Zealand, Jane Bone used a case study approach (Yin 2003) to explore how pre-school children’s (3–6 years) spiritual experiences were supported in three

early childhood settings: a private Christian preschool, a Montessori *casa* (pre-school) and a Rudolf Steiner kindergarten (Bone 2010). Reflecting the indigenous perspectives of Aotearoa New Zealand, Bone's starting definition of spirituality is not linked to religion but values connectedness:

Spirituality connects people to each other, to all living things, to nature and the universe. Spirituality is a way of appreciating the wonder and mystery of everyday life. It alerts me to the possibility for love, happiness, goodness, peace and compassion in the world (Bone 2007, p. 9).

As mentioned earlier, in contrast to the UK, the New Zealand early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education 1996), is bi-cultural, influenced by the indigenous worldview of Maori culture and recognises the importance of spirituality in children's holistic development distinct from religion. Bone extends Champagne's (2001) understanding that young children's spiritual awareness is accessed within their daily experiences, to introduce the concept of 'everyday spirituality that recognises the extraordinary in the ordinary' (Bone et al. 2007, p. 344). Within this concept is an understanding of spirituality as a means of connection. Everyday spirituality can be understood in more depth through the interpretation of episodes in relation to 'spiritual witness, spiritual in-betweenness, and the spiritual elsewhere' (Bone 2007, p. 309). Bone et al. (2007) suggest that situated within the everyday narratives of young children's lives, such as preparing or sharing food, there are spaces with potential for interpreting activity and reflection as mediating spirituality.

In my own research I explored 2 and 3 year old's language(s) of spiritual expression through an ethnographic case study in a day nursery in England (Goodliff 2013b). Framed within a socio-cultural theoretical perspective which recognises children's agency (their capacity to participate and contribute to meaning making), I drew on the Reggio Emilia philosophy and pedagogical approach (Rinaldi 2005) based on the construct of the 'rich child, an active subject with rights and extraordinary potential and born with a hundred languages' (Malaguzzi 1993; Rinaldi 2005, p. 17). Expressions of spirituality may not be solely mediated by spoken language but 'voiced' through other languages. The socio-cultural pedagogical principles that underpin practice in the municipal nurseries and pre-schools of Reggio Emilia – a city in northern Italy – have been influential in the UK and internationally over the last two decades in challenging and changing views of children and childhood (Dahlberg et al. 1999; Clark and Moss 2001; Clark et al. 2005). A distinguishing metaphor of the pedagogy of Reggio Emilia, based on a view of the child as a social being – connected to other children and adults -, is the 'pedagogy of relationships and listening' (Rinaldi 2005, p. 19) that not only emphasises the influence of reciprocal relationships and communication between peers and adults in the co-construction of knowledge and meaning making, but also collaboration and negotiation:

children learn by interacting with their environments and actively transforming their relationships with the world of adults, things events, and, in original ways, their peers. In a sense children participate in constructing their identity and others. (Malaguzzi 1993, cited in Dahlberg et al. 1999, pp. 58–59)

My working definition was that spirituality ‘is an aspect of humanity common to all persons throughout every stage of their life and is located in the potential of every child to relate to and make sense of questions of ultimate significance’ (Goodliff 2013a, p 28). Whereas the pre-school settings selected by Bone (2007) were each premised on underpinning philosophies that acknowledged aspects of spirituality, my study was undertaken in a secular (Brown 2001) setting without a religious affiliation or commitment to a particular educational philosophy. An earlier survey of early childhood practitioners’ understandings of spirituality (Goodliff 2006) had revealed that the majority (27 out of 30) of the practitioners surveyed thought that spirituality/spiritual development is *not* ‘only for children growing up in families with a religious belief’. However, when probed in interview, a more confused position emerged suggesting that for most of these practitioners spirituality was indeed linked to religion or religious belief: a position compounded, it appeared, by wording in the curriculum guidance (QCA 2000), discussed above, requiring practitioners to plan activities that promoted spiritual development; and a lack of clear articulation by OFSTED inspectors of how they judged whether children’s spiritual development was being fostered appropriately.

The Reggio Emilia philosophy contends that children are born ‘with all the languages of life’ (Malaguzzi 2004) and they voice their meaning making, being and feelings through different languages (Goodliff 2013b). In order to listen to the multiple ways the 2 and 3 year olds might ‘voice’ expression of spirituality, a multi-modal approach (Clark 2005) to data collection was used (see Goodliff 2013a). Through hermeneutic text analysis (Goodliff 2013b), where ‘texts’ are closely documented narratives of the children’s play and experiences in the nursery, I found that for these young children the expression of spirituality is multi-dimensional (see Fig. 6.1). Three spaces (meta-environments) were identified where dimensions of spirituality are mediated: friendship/relational, solitary imaginative, and imaginative narrative spaces. I drew on Moss and Petrie’s (2002) proposal that:

‘children’s spaces should be seen as environments of many possibilities. Spaces that go beyond the physical, they are social and cultural and allow for, and foster, relationships and the creation of values and rights; these spaces of everyday democracy are also ‘discursive’ accommodating different types of expression, dialogue and reflection . . . where children’s voices can be listened to and heard (p 9).

Within the three meta-environments then, three major, inter-related languages of their spirituality are situated where dimensions of spirituality are mediated: **relationships** (*connectedness to others, kindness and compassion, expressed through physical gesture*); **creativity** (*exploring possibilities, fantasy and embodied expression*) and **reflection** (*meaning making of identity ‘being aware of ourselves in a new way’* (Silin 2005, p. 84); *chuffedness* (Trevarthen 2005) *and moments of remembering and stillness*).

These three are shot through with two arcs of **transcendence** to represent its occasional, fleeting occurrence (*awe and wonder, mystery*) evident in my findings, although the everyday experience of transcendence, (living at the edge/pushing at the boundaries of experience) is commonplace. The wavy lines between each ‘space’ indicate how the boundaries of these environments are porous, intersecting

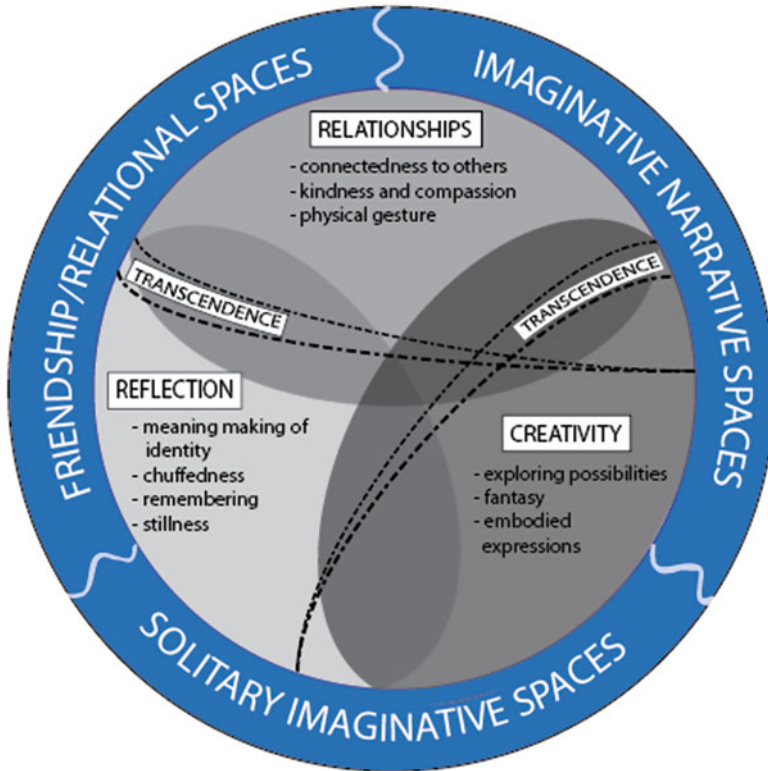


Fig. 6.1 Multi-dimensional language of spirituality

as the children mediate meaning. In an age of globalization spaces of everyday democracy can create opportunities for contesting dominant discourses in ECEC (Moss 2011). It's argued dimensions of spirituality are not bounded by, for example, expected norms of development; but reflect the reciprocal experiences of the children's other social and cultural contexts and are embodied in agentive, everyday expressions of connectedness through imaginative and creative play that allows for new moments of reflection from within (Goodliff 2013a).

Spirituality and Early Childhood Education: Possible Future Directions for Policy and Practice

There has been a significant shift in the understanding of the primary purpose of ECEC in government policies: one that has increasingly narrowed the focus to preparing children for compulsory school education. It reflects a broader obsession with developing a workforce that can compete in a global market and enable a

society, such as Britain's, to find its place as a high-skills economy instead of a low-cost labour economy in the new global economic market. The dominance of this economic argument is reflected in the emphasis in ECEC policy on what the child will become in the future, rather than who the child is now (Moss 2011; Woodrow and Press 2007). A discourse of 'school-readiness' privileges the acquisition of numeracy and literacy skills over children's participation, agency and identity and the importance of fostering imagination, creativity, spirituality and well-being.

The English Early Childhood Action (ECA) campaign group (a non-political alliance of early years individuals and organisations formed in 2012) places an emphasis on allowing children to express their uniqueness in an unhurried way (ECA 2012) rather than viewing them as prospective successful school children (and thus potentially economically valuable). The principles underpinning the ECA alternative framework that call for an unhurried early childhood (Moyley 2012, p. 5) acknowledge the value of the everyday lived lives of young children, it emphasises the uniqueness of each child and the role of imaginative play in young children's experience and learning. Arguably the pressure of the current standards agenda seems to leave little room for the fostering of the difficult to measure dispositions and skills inherent in multi-dimensional languages of spirituality (Goodliff 2013a) that contribute to learning democracy, and 'in the longer term to the growth of well-being and the culture of the community at large' (Carr and Lee 2012). The removal of explicit reference to a spiritual dimension to young children's uniqueness and importance in supporting their health and well-being, from the revised EYFS (DfE 2012, 2014), when the new English National Curriculum (DfE 2014) explicitly foregrounds the promotion of 'the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society' (p 2) for the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum seems to illustrate a misalignment in the policy and pedagogy of ECE and compulsory schooling. The absence of wellbeing in itself might demonstrate a further step towards a reductionist and materialistic worldview that marginalizes both spirituality and religion, and fosters in education a market-driven creativity, largely devoid of the humanising focus of empathy, collaboration (Chappell 2008) and wisdom (Craft 2008). These previously mentioned difficult to measure dispositions that promote the greater good of communities, highlight the value of the social and democratic context of ECEC rather than the neoliberal thinking reflected in the individualised pursuit of personal goals.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered spirituality in early childhood education and care through exploration of policy and research. Issues have been reviewed that relate to the paucity of discussion in understanding young children's spirituality and possible reasons for the lack of dialogue with practitioners of how it might be supported or recognised. Findings from researching spirituality in early childhood highlight the significance of the everyday narratives of young children's lives for interpreting

contexts where dimensions of spirituality are mediated. Dominant economic arguments – drawn from human capital theory (Penn 2010) – underpinning policy for ECEC reflect an emphasis on investing for the future child. Learning that is valued in ECEC privileges the acquisition of cognitive skills – more easily measured and audited – over ‘the non-cognitive’ dispositions and skills associated with fostering well-being and the culture of the wider community (Carr and Lee 2012). It is argued there is a need to pay closer attention to young children’s spirituality in ECEC; to acknowledge its value in expression of their thinking, creating and imagining that are central to meaning making and negotiating identity. To recognise the spiritual possibilities within children’s environments it is necessary for researchers and practitioners to open up spaces for dialogue and reflection; spaces where pedagogical questions can be raised that challenge dominant perspectives, and where there is a willingness to listen to, and hear, the many languages of young children.

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Chapter 7

Adolescent Spirituality and Education

Karen Marie Yust

Abstract Conceptions of adolescent spirituality are often coupled with frameworks and programs for the cultivation of moral reasoning, ethical decision-making, virtuous character, and/or religious confirmation. Researchers and practitioners typically focus on what constitutes movement toward psychological well-being and socially approved relational behavior, with some attention also given to philosophical or religious questions of meaning and purpose. Perspectives in the field are diverse, both because training comes from a variety of feeder disciplines (e.g. education, human development, theology, counseling) and spiritual nurture takes place in diverse settings (e.g. schools, religious congregations, community centers, treatment programs). To better serve the needs of young people, the field of adolescent spirituality and education needs to embrace and carefully explore the benefits and challenges of its interdisciplinary nature and work at integrating research data and disciplinary frameworks in more creative and coherent ways.

A discussion of adolescent spirituality and education is complicated by the multitude of ways in which key stakeholders in the conversation define spirituality and understand the goals and purposes of education, as well as cultural perceptions of the relationship between spirituality, religious faith, good citizenship, and psychosocial well-being. In a country such as the United States, where spirituality and religion operate in an intertwined and contested relationship and religion and state are separated by law, explicit conversation about adolescent spirituality is virtually absent from public school consideration, relegated instead to private institutions with religious charters. In other countries, such as Great Britain and Australia, where conceptions of spirituality derive more often from social science research than civil religious discourses, educational programs for adolescent spirituality are often framed in terms of the cultivation of moral reasoning, ethical decision-making, and virtuous character. There are also some countries, such as Ghana and South Korea, where religious organizations are responsible for building and staffing many public schools and spiritual development among adolescents is largely

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equated with religious confirmation programs. Hence, to understand how scholars within the field of education conceptualize adolescent spirituality and engage in its development in educational contexts requires a multi-faceted approach that includes attention to definitional questions, contextual influences, and recent research related to adolescent spiritual nurture in diverse educational settings.

Definitional Questions and Contextual Influences

Defining spirituality is an ongoing conceptual task in the field of education. Rebecca Nye, whose work on relational consciousness has been influential in the educational arena, cautions against trying to assign a single definition to a reality that is richly complex and multidimensional. She writes, “Attempts to define [spirituality] closely, and derive an adequate ‘operational definition’ can be sure of one thing: misrepresenting spirituality’s complexity, depth and fluidity. Spirituality is like the wind – though it might be experienced, observed and described, it cannot be ‘captured’ – we delude ourselves to think otherwise, either in the design of research or in analytical conclusions” (Nye 1999, p. 58). Keeping this caution in mind, Peter Benson and Eugene Roehlkepartain of the Search Institute constructed a working definition in 2003 that subsequently shaped social science research in the United States throughout the next decade:

Spiritual development is the process of growing the intrinsic human capacity for self-transcendence, in which the self is embedded in something greater than the self, including the sacred. It is the developmental “engine” that propels the search for connectedness, meaning, purpose and contribution. It is shaped both within and outside of religious traditions, belief and practices. (Benson et al. 2003, pp. 205–206)

This definition drew from the Benson’s and Roehlkepartain’s work on asset-building in childhood and adolescence with North American schools, congregations, community groups, and families. It explicitly utilized psychosocial language while remaining hospitable to religious interpretations, a move that permitted both public schools and religious communities to adopt the asset-building resources being generated by the Search Institute.

Not content to settle for a definition derived solely from research based in the United States, Roehlkepartain and Benson later convened an international panel of 120 experts on adolescent spirituality from a wide range of academic disciplines and cultural contexts who spent several months in 2007 working to identify potential elements of a universal definition and concluded that the best they could accomplish was to articulate a “guiding framework” for such a definition that includes three core dimensions of spirituality and identifies other influential factors (Roehlkepartain et al. 2006, p. 40). The three broadly construed core dimensions are (1) “connecting and belonging”, which points to the interdependent and relational aspects of spirituality; (2) “becoming aware of or awakened to self and life”, which reflects concerns with meaning and identity making and life purpose; and (3) “developing a way of living”, which is concerned with embodying and expressing values and

beliefs (Roehlkepartain et al. 2006, p. 40). The expert panel further concluded that these three core dimensions of spirituality interact with and are expressed through particular cultures, meta-narratives, social systems, and developmental processes that vary significantly and are valued differently in different times and places (Roehlkepartain et al. 2006, p. 41).

The relevance of this dimensional systems approach to adolescent spiritual development within the field of education can be demonstrated by a critical analysis of national standards of learning mandates in the United States and the implementation of those standards in state public school curricula. Public Law 107–110, better known as the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001, is the primary document governing educational frameworks and practices countrywide. In a short section devoted to character education, the law provides a list of seven specific character traits recommended for inclusion in all state curricula and mandates that character education programs connect with “state academic content standards” (NCLB, pp. 1818–1819). These traits, which are explicitly designated “secular” as opposed to “based on religious values,” are “caring, civic virtue and citizenship, justice and fairness, respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, [and] giving” (Hayes 2008, p. 106). An informational brochure developed by the Department of Education states that character education is intended to help youth “understand, care about and act on core ethical values” so that they “form the attitudes and actions that are the hallmark of safe, healthy and informed communities that serve as the foundation of our society” (U.S. Department of Education 2005). The brochure further claims that “[c]haracter education teaches the habits of thought and deed that help people live and work together as families, friends, neighbors, communities and nations” (U.S. Department of Education 2005). Contained within these statements are implicit assumptions about character education as a means of facilitating connection and belonging among youth, as well as an explicit expectation that education will cultivate a way of life that expresses a particular set of values. The claim that character education shapes attitudes and thought falls under the second core dimension of spirituality, the aspect of becoming aware of self and others. Furthermore, *No Child Left Behind* gives at least minimal attention to the interaction of core dimensions of spiritual development with cultural context, broader human development theories and adolescent social systems by encouraging schools to “include the emotional, intellectual and moral qualities of a person or group” and to “form a vital partnership with parents and the community so that students hear a consistent message about character traits essential for success in school and life” (U.S. Department of Education 2005).

The conversion of adolescent spirituality into character development within the public school systems of the United States does not mean that the language of spirituality as defined by Benson and Roehlkepartain is absent from the general curriculum. In the learning standards mandated by the Commonwealth of Virginia, the goals of science education include not only the development of scientific reasoning and skills, but also engagement in moral reasoning. Children and youth are expected to develop “scientific dispositions and habits of mind” (which includes “respect for logic and rational thinking” and “demand for verification”) and to

“make informed decisions regarding contemporary issues” on the basis of such values as “respect for living things” and “personal responsibility” (VDOE, “Science SOL”, p. 2). A similar combination of scientific and moral reasoning occurs under the “Economics and Personal Finance Standards of Learning” approved in November 2009, in which students explore both “basic economic principles” (VDOE, “Civics and Economics”, p. 4) and how to capitalize on “their own human capital” and “practice weighing costs and benefits of options when making choices about such things as careers” and other life decisions (VDOE, “Economics”, p. 1). Under these standards, then, teachers are expected to guide students’ minds gradually toward commonly held ideas of truth presumed by society to be universal and unassailable, which is one way of interpreting the transcendent or sacred.

Recent Research and Reflection

Current research in and scholarly reflection on adolescent spirituality tends to fall into four categories: qualitative studies that attempt to measure spirituality or spiritual qualities; assessments that measure the effectiveness of spirituality education programs; projects that explore specific epistemological, psychosocial, and theological concerns; and studies that address popular culture as a significant factor shaping the spiritual lives of youth in the twenty-first century. Each of these categories of research has value for understanding adolescent spirituality and shaping practices of spiritual development within the field of education.

Qualitative Studies

German researchers (Büssing et al. 2010) conducted an anonymous survey of 254 eleventh graders in four schools to measure the interplay between spirituality, centeredness, and life satisfaction. The study found that adolescents scored high in the spiritual aspect categories of “conscious interactions” and “aspiring beauty/wisdom” (Büssing et al. 2010, p. 34), and that a spiritual sense of conscious interactions correlated with higher satisfaction with school, particularly among male adolescents (Büssing et al. 2010, p. 36). Young men also demonstrated a correlation between their spiritual sense of aspiring beauty/wisdom and their satisfaction with their future life prospects (Büssing et al. 2010, p. 36). The adolescents surveyed, particularly females, also scored well on the spiritual aspect sub-category of “compassion/generosity” (Büssing et al. 2010, p. 39). However, this study also indicated that “most adolescents (cognitively) regarded themselves as neither religious nor spiritual” (Büssing et al. 2010, p. 40), more comfortable with the principles of a kind of secular humanism than traditional religious ideals. The researchers concluded, “[I]t is obvious that the non-formal aspects of spirituality in terms of relational consciousness are vital [to adolescent development], particularly secular humanism

(i.e. *Conscious interactions, Compassion/Generosity*) and existentialistic awareness (i.e. *Aspiring beauty/Wisdom*)” and recommended “a caring and wise education with a healthy evolution of consciousness as a central focus” (Büssing et al. 2010, p. 41).

A qualitative attempt to provide a thick description of adolescent spirituality in Australia (Singleton et al. 2004) has generated a list of ten spirituality dimensions that educators might explore and nurture. The researchers began with a humanistic definition of spirituality as “a conscious way of life based on a transcendent referent” (Singleton et al. 2004, p. 250) and used a method with three features: “no direct mention of the term spirituality; an emphasis on personal narration; [and] the use of evocative techniques” (Singleton et al. 2004, p. 252). Particularly relevant to the field of education are the study’s suggestion that spirituality can be expressed diversely, in terms of beliefs, values, practices, and participation in supportive communities (Singleton et al. 2004, pp. 256–57) and the discovery that adolescent spirituality tends to be eclectic and only becomes more coherent and integrated in young adulthood (Singleton et al. 2004, p. 257). Thus, educational approaches to spiritual development may be more effective if they use diverse techniques and leave room for spiritual exploration, especially among young adolescents.

Program Assessments

Mindfulness-based programs are one way that schools attend to adolescent spirituality. Researchers in Hong Kong have been exploring the efficacy of such programs for adolescent spiritual development. A controlled pilot study (Lau and Hue 2011) with 24 fourteen- to 16-year-olds in two secondary schools found that a 6-week mindfulness training program decreased symptoms of depression and increased well-being (as measured through a sense of personal growth) among the students studied. The training focused on four mindfulness activities: stretching exercises to increase body awareness, purposeful movement exercises (e.g. walking and eating attentively), mental body scan exercises, and practices of loving-kindness (Lau and Hue 2011, p. 319). The researchers concluded that “a mindfulness-based programme is feasible for adolescents in schools” (Lau and Hue 2011, p. 324), but also suggested that 6 weeks may be an insufficient length of time to develop sustainable mindfulness practices among teenagers (Lau and Hue 2011, p. 326). They pointed to research in Western school settings that identified more significant increases in both mindfulness and adolescent well-being with longer programs (Shapiro et al. 2008) or ventures that actively recruited home involvement alongside school practice (Carmody and Baer 2008). They also speculated that “a classroom-based programme which is offered by school teachers at classrooms within the school schedule” (Lau and Hue 2011, p. 326) would be more effective than an extracurricular offering led by a visitor (as in this study).

Another Asian study (Taplin 2014) considers how an Australian model for spiritual development through religious education could be transposed into secular education in the mathematics curriculum of Mainland China. The Sathya Sai

Education in Human Values (SSEHV) programme has more than a 10 year history of providing resources and support for the integration of humanistic forms of spirituality within educational systems committed to secularity. Its goal has been to provide training and support for holistic teaching that incorporates attention to affective and spiritual aspects of learning into an educational system primarily concerned with maximizing cognitive performance. Taplin describes how the SSEHV programme uses a scaffolding model to help teachers identify opportunities in the regular curriculum where they might “intertwine the cognitive, affective and spiritual dimensions of the values message underpinning [a] topic both overtly and through the careful creation of a supportive classroom environment” (Taplin 2014, pp. 8–9). Teachers then use two techniques – a silent visualization exercise and reflective questioning – to encourage young people to use creativity and self-awareness to explore the topic alongside their cognitive analysis of the subject. Taplin studied 104 mathematics lesson plans to determine how the SSEHV programme has been working in that subject area. In particular, she noted that silent visualization was effective in helping children reflect on their personal power to effectively resolve problems in daily life, improve their concentration, and desire success for others as well as themselves (Taplin 2014, pp. 10–11). She also described ways in which teachers re-worded or structured mathematical problems to set them in a value-laden context or used mathematical constructions to ask value-laden questions. Finally, Taplin reviewed comments from the young people in the study collected by the teachers and noted that affective and spiritual changes occurred in both the young people’s perceptions of themselves and their learning and the teachers’ assessment of the educational environment.

A Finnish study (Ikonen and Ubani 2014) explored the effectiveness of experiential spiritual education among older adolescents in state schools. Teachers invited students to engage in times of silent reflection on meditation prompts and then encouraged to join in a voluntary dialogue about those materials. Youth were asked to focus specifically on their feelings in relation to their reflections and surveyed anonymously to determine whether and how the students’ experiences conformed to the spiritual sensitivity categories of awareness, value, and mystery (Ikonen and Ubani 2014, p. 75). Researchers also conducted interviews with some study participants. They found that silent reflection exercises generated clear instances of awareness sensing and value sensing, but did not produce occasions of mystery sensing (Ikonen and Ubani 2014, p. 79). They also discovered that meditation tasks with a more general spiritual content (i.e. nature) were more successful than tasks links to specific religious materials (Ikonen and Ubani 2014, p. 80), which suggests that educators can effectively use non-religious means to cultivate adolescent spirituality in schools.

A common theme evident in these three studies is that adolescents may respond better to spirituality education when it is integrated into the primary schedule and subjects of school study. When treated as an extracurricular activity or independent subject, spirituality becomes a voluntary focus of study and remains isolated from the central focus of a student’s work. This approach does not model the more holistic understanding of what it means to be a human being who is an integrated (biological, intellectual, psychological, social, and spiritual) Subject.

Epistemological, Psychosocial and Theological Concerns

Educators are particularly concerned with conceptions of epistemology (i.e. ways of knowing) and the implications of various epistemologies for methods of spiritual nurture. In an earlier essay (Yust 2011), I have argued that the dominant epistemologies underlying federal and state-based learning standards in the United States and market-driven standardized testing companies that drive college admissions and course credit for most North American universities have created significant difficulties for the cultivation of spiritual knowledge and wisdom. These epistemologies heavily preference cognitive comprehension over creativity and encourage a “standardization of knowledge content and skill sets as a means of facilitating objective assessment” (Yust 2011, p. 13). They promote “research-based cognitive and perceptual” forms of instruction (NCLB, p. 1782) and the dominant use of empirical methods in classrooms (NCLB, p. 1551). Scientific reasoning thus takes precedence over affective engagement, and teachers are urged to focus on helping youth identify “empirical evidence of objective ideals” (Yust 2011, p. 16) in order to demonstrate subject mastery. State education associations, eager to obtain and retain government funding tied to high standardized test results, usurp the power of local school boards and classroom teachers by developing scope and sequence documents that often provide detailed descriptions of what students should learn and how the prescribed concepts should be taught. In this way, youth are supposed to be taught the “essential” knowledge and skills necessary for good test performance, but without explicit concern for how these understandings and abilities nurture the spirit of adolescents and cultivate well-being as human beings. The operative epistemology, then, is that knowledge “is information generated via investigation, and understanding is therefore the application of this information to a task or problem” (Yust 2011, p. 19). Or, put another way, “knowledge is a product of human reasoning toward rational concepts confirmed as true by scientific investigation and best approached via uniform methods of inquiry. Order and structure incline the mind to grasp objective truths and reinforce standardized skills necessary for efficient knowing. Variation in teaching methods, curricular pacing, and subject content undermine the timely acquisition of knowledge” (Yust 2011, p. 22).

Another study Boynton (2011) has explored the effects of positivist, post-positivist, and constructivist epistemologies on theories of children’s spirituality and spirituality research. Boynton notes that positivism, which assumes that “knowledge is derived from natural physical sense experience” (Boynton 2011, p. 113), had some historical power as an educational epistemology but is no longer a primary focus of instruction or research among conventional educators. Post-positivist epistemologies include an emphasis on natural, sensory experience and also allow for existential (super-natural) knowledge gained via intuition, self-transcendence, and spiritual experience. Boynton identifies several theories of child and adolescent spirituality that employ a post-positivist epistemology as a means of integrating more intuitive and contemplative ways of knowing with cognitive and sensorial approaches, yet she questions whether retaining a conception of knowledge as primarily objective but with some subjective aspects or categories is sufficient

to shape holistic educational methods. She prefers constructivist epistemologies, which frame knowledge in terms of understandings that develop through subjective social transactions (Boynton 2011, p. 115), and points to de Souza's work (2003) as an example of how a constructivist approach can help educators explore the transpersonal development of youth.

While epistemological concerns dominate educational approaches to adolescent development, educators also recognize the importance of emotional well-being and good mental health to adolescent academic achievement and personal growth. Eade (2009), however, argues that overly individualistic conceptions of happiness can undercut adolescent spiritual flourishing by detaching meaning-making from relational consciousness and the power of human connectedness to help adolescents make sense of the world and their place in it (Eade 2009, p. 191). He agrees with Hyde (2008) that "material pursuit and trivialization" inhibit spiritual development and adds three other factors to Hyde's list: "the lack of space in a busy world, the pursuit of status and power and the belief in individual autonomy" (Eade 2009, p. 193). Calling into question the adequacy of emotional intelligence programs as responses to the deleterious effects of postmodern culture on adolescent mental health, he stresses that adolescents need to learn how to handle complex emotions, which requires spaces within educational systems where youth can honestly express how they feel, wrestle with their emotional vulnerability, and acquire skills for meaning-making (Eade 2009, p. 193). He calls for adults to employ "emotional attunement" (Eade 2009, p. 194), which means that teachers must learn to identify how their students process their feelings, recognize diverse emotional states, and respond to a variety of student emotional states with compassion and appropriate skill-building exercises as needed to help children not only cope with emotional overwhelming but also achieve authentic emotional well-being. Flexibility of approach is almost as significant as emotional attunement. Eade states that youth need teachers to provide "individual, as well as social; adult-initiated, as well as self-initiated; intellectually and emotionally challenging, as well as reinforcing" activities to nurture adolescent spirituality (Eade 2009, p. 195).

Theological concepts are not primary concerns of public school educators, but there are aspects of theological perspectives that can offer useful ideas for secular educational settings. Dillen (2012), who explores resilience as a theological force, acknowledges that resilience need not be read only as a religious concept. At its base, resilience is about coping with difficulties and can be used to describe adolescents who "thrive even after experiencing bad conditions" (Dillen 2012, p. 61). Long neglected in psychological and educational theories, resilience has been an important topic in theological discourse, frequently couched in terms of perseverance, grace-filled living, faithfulness, and resurrection hope. Dillen's goal is to offer a nuanced theological understanding of the spiritual asset of resilience and, in doing so, she teases out several ways of talking about resilience that can stand apart from theological rhetoric. For instance, she presents an educational model from the Netherlands that characterizes the acquisition of resilience as a process of dwelling in a three-story house containing five rooms dedicated to relational connections (first floor), making meaning through the senses (second floor), and

developing capabilities, self-value and humour (all on the third floor) (Dillen 2012, p. 63). She also notes that resiliency can be viewed as part of a positive anthropology, in which adults and youth interact with one another in terms of their “positive capacities” (Dillen 2012, p. 71). She cautions against theologically impoverished notions that equate resilience with a lack of psychological scarring, a personal virtue to embrace as a shield against suffering, an form of easy optimism, or permission to act without concern for others because they have the option to be resilient despite how they are treated (Dillen 2012, p. 64). One need not be religious to recognize the need to imbue the concept of resilience with substance in creating educational spaces that nurture resiliency and teach skills for coping with and interpreting difficulties in adolescence.

While some might not label the works cited in this section “research”, the philosophical and theological reflections of these scholars provide the kinds of theoretical frameworks that help educators understand and structure their own philosophies of spiritual education. They are, in a sense, attempts at constructing an *apologia*, or critical explanation, for encouraging teaching and learning that is attentive to spirituality as an aspect of holistic well-being. Exploring the implications of educational epistemologies for the degree to which they affirm attention to spiritual concerns encourages teachers to examine their methodological assumptions. Dissecting various definitions of happiness for their value as spiritual goals calls cultural and social norms into question as reliable guides for classroom practice. Mining theological discourses for more broadly humanistic conceptions consistent with character education objectives multiples the theoretical resources available for teacher training, even in public school settings.

Popular Culture Effects

Educators recognize that popular culture plays a significant role in the lives of young people and seek out research that helps explain the effects of popular books, music, films, and celebrities on the adolescent spirituality. This research can be perplexing, as different concepts of spirituality and widely divergent contexts and analytic perspectives can result in seemingly contradictory analyses and advice. de Souza (2014) and Yust (2014), for instance, offer quite different commentaries on how digital technologies are shaping the spirituality of children and youth. de Souza focuses on the development of empathy and posits that heavy use of technology by adolescents is contributing to an erosion of empathy that educators need to address in their classrooms. She raises concerns about the ways that technology appears to isolate youth from one another physically and psychologically, creates new forms of adolescent competition for status and popularity, and permits anonymity and potentially unhealthy withdrawal into a pseudo-reality (de Souza 2014, p. 49). Yust draws data from several international surveys of adolescent technology usage and theoretical frameworks developed by media studies scholars to suggest that digital culture can exert positive influences on young people’s spirituality, particularly

in the ways online activities cultivate awareness of social identity construction and support offline relationships. She points to how young people's immersion in fantasy quest games can cultivate imagination and narrative reflection experiences that support the achievement of personal social and moral goals offline (Yust 2014, p. 139).

Trousdale (2011) explores some of the spiritual questions that books for young people pose as part of their narratives. In analyzing the teen novel, *A Fine White Dust* (Rylant 1986) she reveals how a young teen wrestles with the relationship between religious faith and broader notions of spirituality and virtuous living. Her discussion of *Ordinary Miracles* (Tolan 1999) tackles the issue of intellectual doubt and the mysteries of the universe. Young people's spiritual struggle with parental divorce and the dissolution of a family unit is the focus of analysis of *Dark Sons* (Grimes 2005). What Trousdale models in her research is a critical engagement with texts that can generate adolescent reflection on longstanding spiritual questions. For educators who rely on texts as part of their curricula, Trousdale's work can also serve as a reminder to attend to the spiritual discourses and debates embedded in good literature as a way of encouraging spiritual development alongside other educational goals.

Revealing something useful about adolescent forms of spiritual expression is the goal of Gellel's recent research on Lady Gaga (2013). He argues that youth find resources in popular music that they use to cope with the world around them, identify with other youth, experience emotional highs, and construct a personal identity (Gellel 2013, p. 216). Within the music of Lady Gaga, he particularly observes how the singer pays significant attention to the creation of symbols "that empower individuals to construction identity and to overcome hurdles that limit the self or one's freedom" (Gellel 2013, p. 224). He also identifies a sense of awe for the unique giftedness of every person, although this reverence for the self is not balanced by a strong sense of relational connectedness (Gellel 2013, pp. 224–225). Based on his work, educators can imagine ways of using popular lyrics to learn about what matters to young people as well as to create spaces for exploring contemporary memes and assessing the spiritual value of particular perspectives and character traits for healthy identity formation.

Adolescent Perceptions of Spirituality and Schools

Just because the field of education can learn from and is taking advantage of contemporary research does not mean that adolescents experience schools as spiritually nurturing environments. In 2007–2008, the Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence conducted a multi-pronged international qualitative study designed to tease out context-specific and transnational aspects of spirituality and spiritual development in young people aged 12–25 (Roehlkepartain et al. 2008). Over 7000 youth participated as subjects and the study examined a range of personal and social dynamics shaping young people's lives, including educational structures.

This research indicated that 93 % of youth surveyed believed that life has a spiritual dimension, and overall, young people defined spirituality as “believing in God” (36 %), “believing there is a purpose in life” (32 %), and “being true to one’s inner self” (26 %) (Roehlkepartain et al. 2008, p. 13). Over half of the youth surveyed stated that they had become more spiritual in the 2 or 3 years prior to the study and researchers linked this perception of change particularly to older study participants (Roehlkepartain et al. 2008, p. 21). Those surveyed identified nature, music, community service, and quiet spaces as primary catalysts for spiritual development; only 59 % thought that schools might have a positive effect on their spirituality (Roehlkepartain et al. 2008, p. 31). When asked explicitly about people or organizations that helped support their spirituality, only 6 % of youth overall named school as a place where they felt spiritual development occurred, and this number was even smaller in the United States (2 %), United Kingdom (2 %) and Australia (5 %) (Roehlkepartain et al. 2008, p. 35).

In the United States, it might be possible to attribute this finding to the explicit separation of church and state and the educational assumption that spiritual development falls within the purview of religious organizations. But countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia include religious education (which incorporates spiritual development) as a part of their standard curricular requirements, yet adolescents do not experience schools as significant places of spiritual support in those countries either. Perhaps the underlying problem is that colleges and universities training teachers give little attention to spiritual development as part of their teacher education programmes, and thus most teachers have little understanding of the importance of spiritual nurture and even less training in methods and techniques of adolescent spiritual development. To better serve the needs of young people, university departments of education and teacher colleges need to give greater attention to adolescent spirituality research and its relevance to educational goals, as well as develop courses and continuing education that trains teachers in effective methods of adolescent spiritual development.

One approach to increasing teacher preparation for spiritual education might be the integration of mindfulness training with core courses in university education programmes along the lines of the mindfulness-based programmes for adolescents described earlier in this chapter. Education students might also be required to explore and articulate their personal understandings of the meaning and purpose of human existence and the nature of human knowledge as part of their study of the history and cultural goals of secondary education. To do so might involve engagement in models of inquiry that value critical assessment of psychosocial and culture assumptions and ongoing practices of self-awareness and reflection that unmask potential dissonance between a student’s conceptions and embodied methods. Experiences in social analysis might focus particularly on the effects of popular culture on young people’s sense of self and participation in relationships, as well as cultural assumptions about the role of education in conserving societal norms and preparing young people for productive participation in that society. Finally, education programs might do well to encourage student teachers to listen to their pupils as well as instruct them, so that gaps between what teachers intend to occur in

the classroom and what students experience are exposed, analyzed, and diminished. This approach suggests that the very act of teaching can become more spiritual through a shift toward viewing adolescents as persons with whom teachers are in a symbiotic relationship of meaning-making, purpose and mutual valuation.

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Chapter 8

Spirituality and Education: A Framework

Robert (Bob) London

Abstract This chapter concerns two questions, “What does it mean to teach in a way consistent with a spiritual perspective? Are there principles and guidelines for teaching consistent with a variety of spiritual traditions and perspectives as well as with some current educational psychologies?” This chapter summarizes efforts to address these questions begun in 1998, and describes a tentative framework for better understanding what it means to integrate a spiritual perspective in the process of secular education. The framework consists primarily of two components: (1) Eight assumptions underlying a spiritual perspective in education, and (2) thirty-eight statements judged through a research process to be consistent with a spiritual perspective in education, as well as an attempt to integrate the two components by describing how the 38 statements clarify the eight assumptions by suggesting a comprehensive framework to explore how to integrate a spiritual perspective in the process of education. Specifically, the chapter attempts to provide guidance to educators attempting to integrate a spiritual perspective in their teaching in a significant and meaningful way, including curriculum development, teacher/student relationships, and nourishing the inner life of the student and the teacher.

What does it mean to teach in a way consistent with a spiritual perspective? Are there principles and guidelines for teaching consistent with a variety of spiritual traditions and perspectives as well as with some current educational psychologies? This chapter summarizes efforts to address these questions begun in 1998, and describes a tentative framework for better understanding what it means to integrate a spiritual perspective in the process of secular education. The framework consists primarily of two components: (1) Eight assumptions underlying a spiritual perspective in education, and (2) thirty-eight statements judged to be consistent with a spiritual perspective in education, as well as an attempt to integrate the two components by describing how the 38 statements clarify the eight assumptions by suggesting a comprehensive framework to explore how to integrate a spiritual perspective in the process of education. Specifically, in this chapter I will: (1) describe the context

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of the efforts and the methodology to develop the framework; (2) define some terminology necessary to understand the framework; (3) outline the framework; and (4) identify some of the limitations of the framework and discuss future steps to further develop the framework.

Context

Briefly, the efforts to develop the framework can be divided into three steps: (1) initial work of the Spirituality and Education Network to identify statements judged consistent with a spiritual perspective in education; (2) parallel efforts to identify basic assumptions underlying a spiritual perspective in education; and (3) an attempt to develop of a framework integrating these two lines of work.

Statements Judged Consistent with a Spiritual Perspective

In 1998 the steering committee of the Spirituality and Education Network implemented a collaborative research project to identify statements judged to be essential to integrating a spiritual perspective in education. The network consists of an international network of people from diverse professions and spiritual traditions interested in systematically studying what it means to integrate a spiritual perspective into preK – 12 education. This network represents diverse spiritual traditions and backgrounds and includes university professors, preK – 12 educators, as well as psychologists, spiritual teachers, community activists and artists. Among its activities, the network sponsored six working retreats, each lasting 4 days with 15–25 participants. The relevant research was conducted by the original steering committee and grew out of work completed during the first working retreat sponsored by the network. The purpose of the research study was to identify a core of statements that the seven members of the original steering committee could agree were consistent with a spiritual perspective in education in the sense that it would be difficult for us to imagine an effective school with a spiritual perspective not consistent with these statements. The original steering committee consisted of seven members: Sam Crowell and I from California State University, San Bernardino; Jack Miller from OISE, University of Toronto; Richard Brown from Naropa University; Aostre Johnson from St. Michael University in Vermont; Lourdes Arguelles from Claremont Graduate University; and John Donnelly, a special education teacher in Anaheim, California.

The first working retreat of the network in June 1998 focused on identifying basic assumptions and principles for education consistent with a spiritual perspective, and provided the data that became the basis for the study. In preparation for the retreat, 22 interviews were conducted by one of the steering committee members

(the author) with individuals representing a number of professions and spiritual perspectives. The interviews began with a general question asking the interviewee to imagine and describe what an ideal school might look like. Then questions were asked to clarify the interviewee's opinions. The methodology for the interviews was a qualitative one, consistent with a spiritual perspective (see London 2002), which encourages openness to questions that seem appropriate as the research unfolds. Therefore, although there was a similar format to each interview, each was "allowed" to unfold in its own unique manner. Based on the interviews, 159 statements were generated concerning education potentially consistent with a spiritual perspective.

Next, retreat participants and a few leaders in the field of spirituality and education who could not attend the retreat were asked to rate the statements as to their consistency with a spiritual perspective in education. The results of the returned forms were tabulated and the statements were sorted into categories based on the total number of points for each statement. Those with the most points were presented for more in-depth discussion at the retreat. Briefly, through a five-step process over a few years we reduced the original group of 159 statements to 38 statements agreed upon by the seven members of the network's steering committee at a January 2000 four-day meeting of the steering committee (see London et al. 2004).

It seems relevant to comment that we found that most of the statements do not contain terminology that is limited or particularly connected to a spiritual perspective; that is, representatives from many effective schools without a conscious spiritual perspective might agree that most of the statements are important, if not essential, to an effective approach to education. In addition, we felt that although we understood the limitations of our methodology, the 38 statements provided an excellent basis for a discussion, but should not be considered a "model" or "checklist." Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we recognized the mystery associated with the way spirit manifests in our world, and realized that none of the statements represents a way to definitively verify either the presence or lack of presence of a spiritual perspective. Specifically, we recognized that there can be an effective school consistent with an authentic spiritual perspective that is inconsistent with one or more of the statements. In fact, we briefly discussed our biases, noting that one major bias is that our statements are basically consistent with a holistic approach to education and that it was certainly possible to have a school with an approach consistent with a spiritual perspective, but not consistent with a holistic philosophy.

Assumptions

Parallel to the above research, we attempted to develop basic assumptions and terminology that underlie integrating a spiritual perspective in education. Prior to 1998 I had identified four assumptions that I believed underlie what I labeled

as Spiritual Ecology. Those four assumptions became the focus of a structured discussion during the first retreat, as well as some other events sponsored by the network. On the basis of that input, the original four assumptions were expanded to eight assumptions and significant changes were made in terminology. However, at the January 2000 four-day meeting of the steering committee, after discussion, we decided that it was not feasible for us as a group to reach a final consensus on the assumptions in our limited time. I will discuss one example of the difficulty we expected in the section on terminology. The eight assumptions identified in this chapter represent my wording based on the significant input from members of the network, but does not represent a consensus of the network as do the 38 statements.

Framework

Recently, I returned to these two lines of work and examined the question of whether these two lines of work formed the basis for a tentative framework for further research. Specifically, I explored whether the 38 statements were consistent with the 8 assumptions in the sense that each of the statements could reasonably follow from at least one of the assumptions and help clarify the meaning of the assumptions, especially in practice. This exploration resulted in the framework outlined later in this chapter, and identified four groups of assumptions that made sense (two groups of two assumptions, one of three assumptions, and one with one assumption), with a general label for each group as well as a few subheadings within each group. Further, each of the 38 statements was “assigned” to a group and subheading, with the understanding that some of the statements could easily be assigned to more than one subheading.

Terminology

When we discuss spirituality, many times we are discussing experiences that are either incomprehensible to us or not easily discussed given the subjective nature of the experiences. Even when we see commonalities in the “what and how” of our experiences, there may be fundamental differences in our explanations of the why of the experiences. Therefore, I will limit the terminology involving spirituality to the concepts necessary to understand the framework described, and omit a discussion of certain philosophical issues. Also, I will capitalize the defined terminology in the text to denote the usage implied by the definitions. It needs to be noted that the definitions used are primarily my interpretation of terminology based on the work of J. G. Bennett presented elsewhere (London 2002) with input from a few colleagues including members of the network.

For this chapter, three distinct yet interdependent components of our experience as humans will be defined, Spirit, Soul or Being, and Function. I am not denying the possibility that at some level of development the three can be experienced as one. In fact, Bennett (1961) is clear that we are capable of experiencing a basic unity of the three components. However, for understanding our ordinary experience the division into three components seems useful.

The first component of our experience, the world of Function, is associated with the functioning of the material or conditioned world; that is, the processes that are predictable, observable and objective. Function includes the ordinary workings of thinking, feeling and bodily movements – not what a person is, but rather what we do.

Second, we need to recognize that there is a component of our experience that cannot be reduced to the functioning of the conditioned material world that is a nonmaterial source of meaning and value for our lives. We will label this source as Spirit. Spirit, as defined, does not do things; it is that which impels or is the impetus for the action. The action itself is a functional process. It needs to be clear that we understand that Spirit is not something that can be observed in the same way as the functional world. We see thoughts like, ‘I will do this thing’ but that is just a function, something happening, and more often than not the thought fails to be actualized.

The fact that Spirit is connected with the unconditioned world makes it difficult, if not impossible, to clearly define Spirit. Bennett (1983) states this difficulty well:

With ... [Spirit] there is the great difficulty which we are always up against that makes it so hard to know what to say. Whether there is [Spirit] or not [Spirit] is impossible to say. Even such simple questions as ‘Does [Spirit] exist or does it not exist?’ or ‘Does it change or remain the same?’ or ‘Is it one or many?’ turn out to be meaningless because we are looking at a thing to which that type of distinction is not applicable ... Unity and multiplicity are only in our being, not in [Spirit]. (p. 14)

Earlier I noted that we could not reach a consensus on the wording of the assumptions. One brief example of that difficulty is the definition of Spirit as a “nonmaterial source of meaning and value for our lives.” One objection was that the word “source” implied something external versus, for example, one interpretation of this “source” as being internal (e.g., our essence, or True Self). I would add that in my opinion the use of the word “nonmaterial” may not be appropriate; that is, perhaps theoretically there is a material explanation for what I am labeling as Spirit. The given definition just represents the view that presently there is not a material explanation that is convincing. It seems relevant to make the point that the terminology and the wording of the assumptions is an attempt to approximate what only can be described as the incomprehensible nature of Spirit and the unconditioned world,

The tao that can be told
is not the eternal Tao.
The name that can be named
is not the eternal Name. (Mitchell 1988, p. 1)

That is, the definitions and wording in this chapter are not meant to represent a definitive wording that will be acceptable to all, but rather, the purpose is to present as neutral as possible definitions to provide a framework for discussion.

For the third component of our experience, we recognize the need for an instrument or a process to reconcile two otherwise incompatible worlds, the world of Function and the world of Spirit. We will label this component of our experience as Being or Soul. Being is connected to both worlds; Being can be understood as the instrument that allows our material body to receive and cooperate with impulses whose source is the world of Spirit. One interpretation of Being is that Spirit requires an instrument to be able to manifest (at least in certain ways) in the material world and that Being is that instrument.

Being is the component of our experiences that enables or undergoes transformation, awakening or unfolding; therefore, Level of Being will be defined as a measure of our general ability to reconcile the world of Function and the world of Spirit. Level of Being can be seen as a measure of our level of consciousness as reflected by the state of concentration, or the state of availability, of energy. But energies are of different qualities (Bennett 1964) and there are different Levels of Being corresponding to the quality of the energies that are concentrated (Bennett 1961). In many traditions, the highest Level of Being would indicate a way of being in which there is no duality between the world of Function and the world of Spirit, a world in which we consistently cooperate with Spirit. Similarly, many traditions would define a lower Level of Being as a way of being in which we are driven mostly by impulses from the world of Function (e.g., our desires, personality).

To clarify the difference between Function and Spirit, Bennett (1961) discriminated between two types of impulses: an impulse that has its source in Spirit and an impulse that has its source in existence (i.e., all that can be conceived as material, and is therefore fact). The use of the term impulse can be limiting in that it can suggest the injection of force into a system versus an awakening to what is already there. However, it seems to be the most appropriate term for this chapter with the understanding that the actual “impulse” to act may be a reaction (or interpretation) of our functional self to an awakening of our essence, rather than a characteristic of what we actually experience in the moment of awakening. In other words, sometimes we experience an awakening in a moment (impulse from Spirit) and then “interpret” that impulse (a functional activity) to imply a certain action – the actual moment of awakening is from the world of Spirit, but the interpretation and action taken (or not taken) is typically in the world of Function.

The term “cooperating with Spirit” is meant to imply sensitivity and cooperation with impulses whose source is Spirit, and to be consistent with terminology from a variety of spiritual traditions, for example, “cooperating with the Tao,” “consenting to the Dharma,” “being sensitive to the reconciling force,” “listening to higher intuition,” and “being an instrument of God’s Will” (see London 1998). It should be noted that our actions many times are motivated by a combination of the two types of impulses. Finally, when the term Help is used, it will indicate an impulse from Spirit that is experienced as providing what is needed in a particular situation, typically experienced as an unexpected source of help.

Framework

This section combines two lines of work identified earlier; one that identified 8 basic assumptions that underlie a spiritual perspective in education, and a second that identified 38 statements judged consistent with a spiritual perspective in education. To facilitate that blending, the eight assumptions are divided into four groups, each with a few subheadings followed by a summary of the statements that roughly follow from the assumptions. For readability, the four groups are given a general heading and the assumptions are in bold print, followed by a short description of the grouping for the summary of the statements that follow. For purposes of clarity and length, the statements are only briefly summarized (see London et al. 2004 for more detail). It needs to be noted that there is much overlap among the assumptions and the assignment of statements to one group in some cases is difficult and does not imply that the statement could not be equally appropriate in another group. As will be discussed in the next section, this framework represents an attempt to define an initial framework that will necessitate much collaborative work to revise and deepen to provide more definitive guidance in the field.

Group 1: Nourishing the inner life of the student and teacher: General approaches. Basic assumptions from a spiritual perspective:

1. *There exists a nonmaterial source participating in the emergence or evolution of the Universe that can connect us with meaning, value and purpose. We call this source Spirit. We are capable of cooperating with Spirit and “seeing” more directly what is needed. Indeed, spiritual transformation, awakening or unfolding can be thought of as the movement from a way of perceiving the world in which we do not consciously cooperate with Spirit to a way in which we do.*
2. *A spiritual perspective in education includes an emphasis on transforming our Level of Being; that is, there is an emphasis on developing or awakening the ability to cooperate with Spirit.*

The statements in this category identify general methods of nourishing the inner life that are deemed effective for many students and teachers, including developing a strong connection with nature; providing accessibility to quiet spaces and places; integrating aesthetics and imagination, such as storytelling, drama, visual art, music and movement into the curriculum; integrating ritual, ceremonies and celebration into the school day; emphasizing the development of creativity and intuition; and encouraging reverence, care and deep appreciation for all experiences.

Group 2: The balance between efforts and receptivity, especially in the process of transformation. Basic assumptions from a spiritual perspective:

3. *One component of the process of transformation, awakening or unfolding of Being or Soul is the successful resolution of a sequence of “problems” or “encounters” that naturally present themselves and require a change in the person’s understanding (Level of Being). This type of unfolding includes vertical change, referring to a basic reorganization of one’s way of seeing the world, and horizontal change referring to applications of the new understanding to a variety of contexts. These changes incorporate a variety of ways of knowing and being (e.g., emotional, social, ethical, logical, intuitive and spiritual).*

4. *As adults, we need to realize our present situation; that includes the fact that we are not typically fully present and that we do not, in general, consciously cooperate with Spirit.*
5. *The emphasis on cooperating with Spirit does not imply that there is no need to make “human” efforts at understanding; rather, it is implied that right human efforts can create the conditions that open us to Help and allow us to cooperate with Spirit.*

The statements in this category emphasize the need for inner work and addressing naturally occurring dissonance in the process of growth, and are divided into three subsections: (1) The need for inner work on the part of the teacher, including the school providing time for the teachers to work together on their personal and spiritual growth, as well as the educator developing an experiential understanding of what it means to be present in the “now,” discriminating between a state of being present and a state of not being present, and the sense of being “open to what is needed” that accompanies this. Also this subsection includes the need for educators to recognize and address the fact that they may have unintentional tendencies that block students’ development. The first step in this process is a personal awareness of this issue and a shared commitment by the faculty to address it. (2) The need for a vision for the school and the development of community, including the need for the school to develop a shared vision and provide time to deepen and implement the shared vision. (3) The need to stimulate developmental growth in the curriculum, both through naturally occurring dissonance and appropriate planned curricular units.

Group 3: Our connection with all beings. Basic assumption from a spiritual perspective:

6. *A natural outcome of a connection with Spirit is that we experience a deep connection with all beings, which can manifest in a variety of ways, including as a sense that we are all interconnected and interdependent, a feeling of acceptance, compassion and respect for all beings, or a natural inclination to address and relieve suffering.*

The statements in this category emphasize our connection with all beings and the basis for deepening that connection in our interactions with others, and are divided into three subsections: (1) The teacher – student relationship, including the need for educators to listen closely to what students are communicating; experience and demonstrate a genuine respect for the students; and be compassionate people who communicate their caring to students. (2) The school community, including the need for the school community to establish an atmosphere that demonstrates sensitivity to nonverbal aspects of communication, and is implicitly accepting and supportive of students. (3) The relationship to the larger community, including helping the students develop a strong, grounded responsibility to self, others and the earth, as well as helping students understand that each person is part of an interconnected whole.

Group 4: The mystery of the universe and the uniqueness of each being’s journey. Basic assumptions from a spiritual perspective:

7. *At our Level of Being, there is a mystery associated with Spirit. The Universe contains the one and the many, unity and diversity, the whole and the parts, the collective (or communal) and the individual. Spirit manifests in a variety of ways, including the diversity of nature and cultures.*

8. *From a spiritual perspective, there is a need for an approach in education in which the student's bodily, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs are balanced. The needs of students generally change with age and development, and the needs of any specific student (or teacher) are unique and difficult for the student or others to see clearly.*

The statements in this category address the mystery of the universe and the need to be sensitive to the uniqueness and mystery of each being's journey and purpose, and are divided into two subsections: (1) The need for an integrative/holistic curriculum that, for example, nourishes the child's sense of purpose and meaningfulness; develops an appreciation of diversity; aims for a balance between physical, emotional, spiritual and mental aspects of education; and allows for a physical, aesthetic, emotional and intellectual connection to the content. (2) The need for sensitivity to the uniqueness/mystery associated with: (a) each individual student and each class or group of students, (b) each teacher and each group of staff/faculty, and (c) each school. This subsection includes a recognition that each school will be different, designed for a particular place, time and context, meaning that there is not one model appropriate for all schools, as well as a recognition that there is no "correct" method or technique for nourishing students' unfolding that works for all or even most students; that is, there is a need to be sensitive to what is needed to nourish the unique unfolding of each student.

Discussion and Limitations

As implied earlier, there are many obstacles to defining a comprehensive framework for studying the implications of a spiritual perspective for education, including the fact that Spirit as defined is connected to the unconditioned world and is mysterious. This is reflected in the very different interpretations of Spirit and spirituality one comes across in the literature. This framework intentionally does not attempt to resolve the difference in interpretations among the various spiritual traditions, rather, I tried to limit terminology and define terms in as neutral a way as possible in order to hopefully provide a comprehensive basis for studying the implications of a spiritual perspective for education. In addition, this framework at best is only a draft to provide a basis for more in-depth study. For example, personally, I see the next step in this process is to assemble 5–12 colleagues in the field to commit to further developing the framework, with additional colleagues that might provide input on specific sections. I suspect that our final product would be more in the format of a dialogue than a definitive "white paper." For example, if we define Spirit as "a nonmaterial source of meaning and value for our lives," someone might write a comment that would become part of the text explaining their difficulty with that definition and suggesting an alternative.

To support this process I believe it would be wise to periodically schedule working retreats that assemble an appropriate group to focus on a specific component of the framework that in our opinion needs additional work. For example, the network sponsored a number of working retreats, one of which focused on strengthening students' connection to Nature consistent with a spiritual perspective.

That retreat resulted in specific guidelines including a developmental perspective that discriminated between the needs of different eras of the child's development (see London 2011). For example, we found that generally students ages 6–12 needed time to spend in Nature more or less alone; e.g., a spot in Nature; a creek; a tree. From a spiritual perspective, this need seemed more essential than understanding the principles of ecology – of course, the principles of ecology are an important component of the curriculum but without the experience of actual contact with Nature such a curriculum seems unlikely to result in a strong connection to Nature from a spiritual perspective.

Most of the 38 statements need more clarification to provide useful guidance to the practitioner. In addition, there are other gaps. For example, two that seem important are, first, there is a need for some guidance concerning the actual content of the curriculum beyond the very general principles in the statements. For example, we considered the appropriateness of the Earth Charter (see www.earthcharterinaction.org), which includes an emphasis on social justice and sustainability, as an ethical framework for the curriculum that can provide guidance to educators for increasing the likelihood that students when adults would live in a way consistent with the principles of the Earth Charter. Second, we see a need to define eras of growth from a spiritual perspective that might give guidance to what is appropriate to meet the needs of students at different ages. As mentioned, this was an important component of our work on deepening students' connection to Nature consistent with a spiritual perspective. The work of Marshak (1997) provides a tentative approach to describing the eras based on the work of Steiner, Aurobindo, Montessori and Ghose.

Finally, even with all these limitations, I already have found the framework to be useful to me in my research and teaching. In addition, my students in the MA in Holistic and Integrative Education at California State University, San Bernardino have reported that the framework has been useful to them in their professional contexts. Even though this work is in its initial stages, I see much potential!

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Chapter 9

Spirituality and Contemplative Education

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Abstract I will begin with an overview of spirituality and its relationship to contemplative spirituality. I will then detail an array of “contemplative capacities,” including reflective, emotional, imaginative/creative, ethical, intuitive/mystical, and religious. Next, I will discuss these capacities in relationship to education, with a particular emphasis on “mindfulness education.” Finally, I will critically examine implications of current approaches to contemplative education and possible directions for future research.

The interiority of contemplative spirituality is particularly salient now, in this exterior-oriented technologically saturated era. Beginning in infancy, youth across the world, especially in more economically developed countries, are spending increasing amounts of time interacting with screens and decreasing amounts in “real” face-to-face social interactions and physically active exploration, especially in nature. In addition, they are experiencing many stresses, including increasing academic pressure in the form of accelerating high stakes testing; fast-paced living and “overscheduling;” deteriorating economic conditions for the majority; and less social support from extended families, neighborhoods and religious institutions. While some corrective trends towards more ecological, physical and mindful education are emerging, these seem limited to some economically advantaged youth. Overall, many educators, physicians and psychologists warn that they are seeing more and more stressed youth with symptoms that include media addiction, scattered attention spans, ADHD symptoms, impaired cognition, social and emotional disorders, obesity and physical symptoms of stress. As one educator in my (unpublished) research stated: “This kind of soul is not easily stilled.” Many others attested to the desires of youth for contemplative experience: “Students are crying out for it.” “Young people want direct spiritual experience and someone to accompany them.” I believe that current cultural conditions call for prioritization of the education of contemplative spiritual capacities.

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In this chapter, I will offer ways of understanding *spiritual* and *contemplative* and discuss an array of contemplative capacities that can be developed in educational settings. I will highlight “mindfulness education,” a current version of contemplative education, defining it, briefly reviewing the burgeoning research on its impact, and reflecting on its cultural significance. Finally, I will suggest possible directions for further research in the field of contemplative education.

Spirituality: Definitions and Capacities

Based on dictionary definitions spiritual is “the vital principle or animating force within living beings . . . that which constitutes one’s unseen, intangible being.” (Kovel 1991, p. 17) In the academic literature on spirituality, most definitions emphasize the search for connectedness, meaning and purpose, and participation in something greater than self. I have interviewed and surveyed over a thousand educators in the United States and Ireland about their understandings of spiritual and contemplative education and how these translate into their curricula, teaching practices and learning environments, and I’ve also conducted a world-wide literature review. This research (Johnson 1999, 2011) resulted in categories of definitions and approaches to spirituality and education. The central theme common to all of these is “connections,” with each emphasizing differing connections with self, others, world and/or spirit, soul, or ultimate being, and all referring to a “more ideal” aspect of human possibility. The categories are: reflective/meaning-making, emotional, creative/imaginative, ethical, ecological, intuitive/mystical, religious and contemplative. Spirituality means different things to people, including educators, and those categories reflect the various meanings. Although an individual’s responses might be limited to one category, most encompass several, and the categories are intertwining and overlapping.

While contemplative is one perspectives on spirituality, my own analysis and understanding leads me to the conclusion that it is a dimension that underlies the others. In other words, I understand contemplative as the depth of spiritual capacities, and each way of understanding spirituality contains a number of contemplative capacities that form the core of a meaningful spiritual education.

The above ways of thinking about spirituality can be seen in relationship to a secular/religious continuum. While some definitions assume a belief in a deity, a “higher power,” or a non-material essence, others are grounded in the assumption of a material universe, but most can be interpreted through either lens. This is significant because a growing number of people label themselves as “spiritual but not religious.” Spiritual education can take place inside or outside of formal religious structures.

Contemplative Spirituality

The word contemplative derives from the Latin *contemplari*, to gaze attentively or observe, and *attention* is key to many definitions. Its meanings include thinking deeply, reflecting, observing thoughtfully and meditating spiritually. In defining contemplative, the relationship between inner and outer is significant—while attention may be directed outward, it never excludes inner experience. Contemplative capacities are rooted in interior dimensions of being and result in an integration of inner and outer. In general, as The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society states, “Contemplative practices are practical, radical, and transformative, developing capacities for deep concentration and quieting the mind in the midst of the action and distraction that fills everyday life” (<http://www.contemplativemind.org/>). Historically, the development of contemplative spirituality took place in religious institutions. To a large degree, it was the basis of all education and intellectual study from the Greek philosophers in the second or third century until the twelfth or thirteenth centuries when “objective” rational methods became dominant in schools, but it has been frequently neglected in modernity.

Reflective Contemplative Capacities

Reflective relates to ways of thinking when making meaning from the sensory experiences of life. Capacities include sustained attention, deep consideration or examination, and self-reflection. The desire to understand the meaning and purpose of life is a human tendency common to all cultures and stages of life. The brain is structured to make meaning, and the need to make sense of the world and our place in it is at the core of analytical thinking and knowledge generation in every academic discipline, as well as grappling with existential questions typically posed by religion and philosophy. Self-reflection focuses reflective capacities inward, allowing human beings to examine their thoughts, emotions and motives; assess their strengths and weaknesses, gifts and talents; set and monitor their life goals; and develop a sense of personal identity and integrity.

Children come into the world primed to explore the world around them and equipped with the cognitive mechanisms to gradually discover how it works. In addition, even young children are interested in perennial questions, as Robert Coles, an early researcher of children’s spirituality noted: “how young we are when we start wondering about it all, the nature of the journey and the final destination.” (Coles 1990, p. 335). In his seminal work on this topic, Gareth Mathews wrote: “...for many young members of the human race, philosophical reasoning—including, on occasion, subtle and ingenious reasoning—is as natural as making music and playing games, and quite as much a part of being human (Mathews 1980, p. 36). However, achieving the most complex levels of reflective thinking is a long term developmental process requiring the kind of sustained concentration that

increasingly seems out of beat with the rapid pace of contemporary life. A consensus seems to be emerging among many educators that young people's capacity for focused attention and in-depth reflection, reading and writing is diminishing due to prevailing cultural trends, especially constant technology fueled multi-tasking. And, according to current neuroscience research, growing stress and anxiety in youth of all ages is impeding neuronal connections in their pre-frontal cortexes, the seat of reflective thinking (Arnsten and Shansky 2004; Hanson et al. 2012).

Emotional Contemplative Capacities

A contemplative way of knowing is grounded not only in deep thinking but in feeling. At its most profound level, emotion is the life force that fuels reflective meaning-making. One recent neuroscience research discovery suggests that emotions are the affective aspects of cognition at the basis of all knowing (Davidson and Begley 2013; Aamodt and Wang 2011). The lack of understanding of this leads to dry, dispirited teaching and bored students. As educator Parker Palmer says: "The failure of modern knowledge is . . . the failure of our knowing itself to recognize and reach for its deeper source and passion, to allow love to inform the relations that our knowledge creates—with ourselves, with each other, and with the whole animate and inanimate world" (Palmer 1998, p. 9).

Emotional areas of the brain develop more rapidly than cognitive areas; thus emotions such as wonder, awe, love, and joy and curiosity are generally more evident in young children than in adults. Children's intense interest in their surroundings is fueled by emotion; they often seem to live in an "enchanted world," that calls them to exploration. In addition, researchers are finding that empathy, the ability to feel what others are feeling, once understood as only possible in maturity, may be an inborn capacity. "Mirror neurons" in the brain respond in the same way when we see others do something as when we do it ourselves. Thus, the basis for emotional connection with the world and others is in place from the start of life (Iocoboni 2009). The core of contemplative emotional capacities is openness to the entire range of emotions, both the "positive," and the "negative." Young children are able to let their emotions flow through them, moving from joy to tears and back very quickly. Life experiences complicate but also potentially deepen emotional understanding. With the support of committed, loving, emotionally secure and present adults, children can develop capacities for emotional regulation, and a sense of empowerment and resilience in the face of challenging circumstances. However, this opportunity seems to be diminishing as many adults in the current cultural climate are "addicted to distraction," overworked, stressed, and less available to youth (Soojung-Kim Pang 2013; Charlton 2014).

Imaginative/Creative Contemplative Capacities

Like emotional knowing, imaginative and creative knowing also contrasts with logical or analytical knowing, and includes capacities for playfulness, seeing the world in fresh ways, imagination, and the ability to express ideas in varied symbolic forms. From a contemplative spiritual perspective, not only is the universe inherently creative, but imagination and creativity are “godlike” abilities, allowing humans to envision and fashion novel ideas and objects. When young children begin to express their explorations of the world symbolically, they enter a stage in which everything around them becomes raw material for the imagination to transform in creative play, and this becomes the basis for later more disciplined forms of creative expression. Developmental psychologist Alison Gopnik believes that the evolutionary reason that babies’ and young children’s brains are more flexible than older children’s and adults is so that they can freely and creatively explore all possibilities, before specializing in and actualizing a few of them as adults. She further suggests that the most creative, imaginative children often become the most inventive adults (Gopnik 2009).

Unfortunately, in many places contemporary culture seems to be inhibiting or even prohibiting play in childhood, due to early academic pressure, substitution of organized sports for free play, stressed caregivers, and more time spent on screens at younger and younger ages. Kindergartens and even pre-schools are becoming academic “pressure cookers” instead of “gardens” that encourage imaginative exploration. For people of all ages, contemporary culture may be leading to more passive absorption of experience rather than active, creative participation in it (e.g. Crawford 2015).

Ecological Contemplative Capacities

The core of ecological capacities is a holistic way of understanding the interdependent nature of the earth and its life forms, that every action taken has a ripple effect. The contemplative basis of this is a felt sense of physical, embodied connection with the earth. This is nourished by engagement with the natural world with sensory openness, and by experiencing a sense of place: a personal connection to a specific geographical area. Young children are curious about the outdoors in the same way that they are curious about everything in their world; until very recently in human history, it was their main playground and exploratory laboratory. Outdoor play and exploration facilitates bonding with nature that becomes fertile ground for later cognitive understandings of sustainability principles, practices, and values, potentially leading to taking responsibility for and productive action toward attaining ecological balance.

However, many recent studies suggest that children are spending progressively less time in nature. In his 2005 book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature Deficit Disorder*, Richard Louv speculated about the costs of this loss, which include rising rates of obesity and associated physical illnesses, increased depression, loss of self-confidence, and decreased ability to focus attention. Since then a number of organizations have formed to encourage and facilitate young people spending time playing, exploring and relaxing in the out of doors, whether in their own rural or suburban neighborhoods, on field trips from cities, or in “green spaces” created in urban areas. The pressing problems of climate change bring a sense of urgency to the restoration of contemplative time in nature.

Ethical Contemplative Capacities

Ethics has many definitions, but focuses on the principles, ideas, rules and emotions governing how human beings should relate to each other and the world. Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (1984) both contrast “masculine” and “feminine” approaches to morality, in terms of those primarily concerned with justice based on intellectual principles and rules versus those primarily concerned with emotionally motivated caring in personal, concrete situations. If this distinction is “degendered,” caring can be seen as the contemplative side of ethics, with an emphasis on empathic engagement in relationships and service to others—or a “relational consciousness,” (Hay and Nye 1998).

According to the psychological research, the “apparatus” for this consciousness seems to be in place from birth. Infants arrive in the world primed to relate and respond to others, beginning with immediate caregivers but quickly expanding to others they come in contact with. This is the foundation of ethics, which develops as they learn more about the world and themselves. Even 1 year olds are able to feel the feelings of others and behave altruistically and by 3 years, most children demonstrate compassion in their interactions with others (Toddlers Have Sense of Justice 2015). However, to sustain and develop strong ethical principles and practices, students need adult role models and facilitated opportunities to engage in caring relationships and to discuss ethical issues. Overexposure to under-regulated media and decreasing time and/or “quality” time spent with caregivers may be endangering these opportunities.

Intuitive/Mystical Contemplative Capacities

Intuition, as the ability to apprehend something immediately without conscious understanding of its origins, also contrasts with logical, analytical thought. An intuition can be a feeling, an image, a thought, or all of these. Mysticism is a particular type of intuition related to the “meditating spiritually” definition of

contemplation. The derivation of the word is associated with the Greek root meaning, “to close,” referring to closing the senses to intake and the lips to speech; historically, the mystic closed to the external world in order to be more open to inner experience. Mystical knowing is often described as simultaneously intuitive, emotional and cognitive, and seems to surround ordinary rational knowing, contrasting with it but not invalidating it. William James, the founder of Harvard’s psychology department and an early scholar of the psychology of mysticism, describes mystical experiences as personal encounters with a state of consciousness that, although usually not consciously experienced, is actually part of the structure of human consciousness that connects us with a non-material reality underlying and animating the material world, in which all things seem connected, rather than separate (James 1902/1985).

A number of developmental theorists have suggested that young children are highly intuitive from birth, and some claim that they exhibit an early type of mystical consciousness. William Wordsworth invoked this in his poem *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*, recalling childhood as a time when all of nature seemed light-filled and dream-like, with children “trailing clouds of glory” of heavenly consciousness. In an early Oxford University study of children’s religious experience in the UK, around 500 adults who felt that their lives had been affected by what they considered to be a power beyond themselves wrote about unitive or mystical visions experienced in early childhood that had a strong positive influences on their lives (Robinson 1983). Childhood researchers Hay and Nye suggest that typical characteristics of young children’s thinking include awareness-sensing; living in the present; feeling at one with flow or effortless absorption; focusing—a bodily-based sense of tuning deeply into the world; mystery sensing, including wonder and awe; and value sensing of the ultimate goodness of the world (Hay and Nye 1998), all qualities that have been ascribed to mystical consciousness. Tobin Hart interviewed over 100 children and adults and found that many children experience some form of unitive consciousness, have profound visions, or have intuitions of great wisdom. However, in Western culture, these experiences are likely to be ignored, minimized or dismissed by adults, so that many children stop speaking of them, and ultimately, lose touch with their intuitive abilities (Hart 2003).

Religious Contemplative Capacities

Although religion and spirituality both relate to questions of human origin, purpose and meaning, *religious* implies a specific established belief system in some form of community context. Religions have emerged to come to terms with the same questions of meaning-making at the core of the spiritual search. Another way of saying this is that all of the world’s religious traditions have rich and diverse histories of spiritual experience at their core. Religious contemplative capacities are similar to mystical capacities, but carry the “stamp” of the particular religion.

Those who define spirituality in the context of religion often insist it is most valid inside of religious structures and traditions (e.g. Yust et al. 2006). Major religious traditions potentially offer a vision and contemplative experiences of the transforming power of their deity or belief system, and also provide a community context in which to ground these in ethical conduct. Contemplative religious practices include prayers, liturgies and ceremonies, meditations, reflections on holy books or stories and music. However, the experiential root of religions often becomes muted as social structures form with their hierarchies and power struggles, and in many instances, individual spiritual experiences that challenge the dominant ideology and status quo are suppressed. The more conservative institutions of each religious tradition put less emphasis on contemplative experience and more on learning about and following tradition as dictated by leaders. Thus, there is a great deal of variation in religious capacities valued and developed. Contemplative religious capacities include: a sense of connection with the presence of, and/or communication a deity or “ultimate being; and deep engagement with and embodiment, including ethical embodiment, of a particular religious world view. Identification with and membership in traditional religions is declining in Western and some economically developed countries, but it is increasing in more fundamentalist religious traditions. While some religious institutions are recognizing young people’s hunger for contemplative experience and utilizing more of it in their formation processes, overall, fewer children seem to be growing up with exposure to contemplative religious experiences.

Contemplative Capacities and Education

Based on the above overview of contemplative spirituality, the main contemplative capacities are: sustained attention, deep concentration, reflection, self-reflection, emotional openness and fluidity, caring emotional connections (relational consciousness), feelings of wonder and awe, emotional self-regulation, playfulness, imagination and creativity, sensory openness and awareness, engagement with the natural world, intuition, sense of interconnectedness; effortless absorption with experience, ability to engage in practices that increase inner stillness, sense of the ultimate goodness, and connection with various deities of religions (in religious contexts.) A contemplative spiritual education places the development of these capacities at the center of curriculum and teaching. While the forms this takes would vary, depending on developmental level and other considerations, some broad guidelines for a contemplative curriculum can be suggested. Overall, it is holistic, emphasizing all areas of development, including cognitive, physical, social, emotional, ethical and spiritual. To the extent possible, the physical environment is aesthetically pleasing, and includes spaces that encourage concentration, quiet and solitude as well as social interaction. The use of technology is balanced with “hands on” learning and education about regulating attention. Students practice

contemplative methods such as working with the breath, visualizations, concentration on objects, sensory awareness, observing thought processes, and relaxation techniques.

Rather than superficial fact-based coverage of many topics, a contemplative education encourages time and space for in-depth reflection, reading and writing. It includes enduring existential questions, those asked by religions, philosophers and most peoples throughout history, as well as core questions of all disciplines of knowledge, and it celebrates the unique creative processes and individuals underlying discoveries and advances. Students are encouraged to explore their own questions about themselves, the world, and the nature and meaning of life. They make significant choices about learning topics, goals, outcomes, approaches and products, as well as assist in assessing their progress. Their interests, enthusiasms and creative talents are supported and also deepened by teachers. They are encouraged to “play” with materials and ideas and to create products that demonstrate their knowledge and mastery in the forms appropriate to the various disciplines and their stages of development. Artistic expression including music, visual arts, creative dramatics, storytelling and creative writing is encouraged, and literature that expresses varied aspects of contemplative knowing is integrated into the curriculum.

Contemplative education honors both the physical, “embodied” nature of the spirit and the connected, interdependent nature of the earth. It includes nature-based experiences, and an understanding of humans’ place in nature as well as a sense of place. It also emphasizes sensory awareness and the health of the physical body. Students learn about current ecological issues and are encouraged to contribute to solutions for attaining ecological balance. Contemplative education is also anchored in the social world, concerned with ethical issues that address social injustices, including income inequality, poverty, racism, and sexism. Students study underlying economic and cultural structures that perpetuate injustices and also work on projects that address them. Teachers offer role models of contemporary and historical individuals dedicated to overcoming these injustices. They emphasize values such as justice, community, caring, respect, and honesty, and they create a strong classroom community in which students learn to demonstrate these, including participating democratically in decision making and engaging in discussions that exercise their ethical reasoning. Successful ethical education also depends on a positive emotional climate emphasizing caring behaviors and conflict resolution skills that allow peaceful resolution of issues that arise. This, in turn, depends on students learning specific emotional and social skills such as deep listening, stress reduction, and emotional regulation.

Perhaps most importantly, contemplative education is anchored in the development of the inner lives and contemplative capacities of educators themselves, which allows them to develop greater “presence,” become calmer and clearer, relate to students with intuition, wisdom, and compassion, and become contemplative role models for their students. However, becoming more mindful is an ongoing process, so acceptance of a gradual pace and setbacks is part of the journey.

Mindfulness and Contemplative Education

“Mindfulness” is a current contemplative approach and a rapidly expanding worldwide movement. It has been much described and studied, particularly since around 1990, with publications in both popular press and scientific press databases increasing exponentially each year. It is impacting nearly every academic discipline and profession, including medicine, psychology, neuroscience, law, business, and education. The “science of mindfulness” has become an interdisciplinary academic area that is accumulating thousands of research studies; one reason that the mindfulness movement is gaining acceptance is the “documented” scientific evidence behind it. A growing body of impressive, although sometimes contested, research suggests potential physical, cognitive and emotional benefits for people of all ages (e.g. Gotink et al. 2015; Mertz et al. 2013).

Mindfulness is difficult to define because the word is used in varying ways, but it can be understood either as one category of contemplative or another word for contemplative. Smalley and Winston (2010) suggest that it can be called a cognitive ability, a cognitive style, a capacity to think in a certain way or a disposition to respond to the world in a certain way. There are many accepted definitions but all include “attention to present experience.” Jon Kabat Zinn, one of the earliest and best known leaders defines it this way: “Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally. This kind of attention nurtures greater awareness, clarity, and acceptance of present-moment reality.” (Kabat Zinn 1994, p. 4). Amy Saltzman, one of the best known mindfulness educators, suggests: “Mindness is paying attention here and now, with kindness and curiosity and then choosing your behavior.” (Saltzman 2014, p. 9). Harvard psychologist Ellen Langer defines it in terms of these characteristics: continuous creation of new categories, openness to new information, awareness of more than one perspective, and attention to present experience (Langer 1997). My own comprehensive definition of mindfulness, combining aspects of those referenced above is: a combination of thinking, attitudes, emotions, and specific practices that support living with focused attention and presence, non-judgmental and acute sensory awareness, deep reflection, openness to new experiences and perspectives, emotional regulation, and kindness and caring for self, others and the world.

Mindfulness has historical roots in the contemplative traditions of many religions. Kabat-Zinn (1994) and many others say that it is most directly based on an ancient Buddhist meditation practice but that versions of it are found in other religions. However, some Buddhists believe that current popular versions don’t correspond to a true Buddhist understanding, and some religious leaders from other traditions are troubled by the prevalent association of mindfulness with Buddhism, when similar but differently named contemplative practices are easily located in their religious histories. Those who currently promote mindfulness generally suggest that it can be removed from its original religious context and secularized because it doesn’t conflict with any religious beliefs, but some religious practitioners

disagree with this, and others believe that denying its religious roots is leading to shallow interpretations and practices. Nonetheless, the secularized versions of mindfulness practice are certainly taking hold in many contexts, including medicine, counseling and education.

Mindfulness education programs began primarily as adult focused, but over time, as information about its benefits has been publicized, more are centering on youth. A mindfulness education movement is expanding exponentially, with hundreds of books and articles about teaching mindfulness in educational settings to students from pre-school through university levels published. There are many types of programs which, while not identical, include the same basic elements. The central practice is some form of “watching the breath” meditation with instructions to notice thoughts and feelings that arise without judging them, and to continually return attention to the breathe. Kabat Zinn characterizes this as “simply a practical way to be more in touch with the fullness of your being through a systematic process of self-observation, self-inquiry, and mindful action.” (Kabat Zinn 1994, p. 6). This practices emphasizes strengthening attentional capacities, the core of all mindfulness approaches.

I have examined several dozen published mindfulness education curriculums intended for use by educators in schools and other youth organizations. These introductory mindfulness programs vary in length and intensity but often include at least eight weekly sessions of an hour or more, plus assigned daily home practice sessions. I also found that other typical components besides the basic technique described above include walking meditations, movement exercises such as yoga or tai chi, body scans and other relaxation exercises, deep listening to music and/or sounds in the environment, mindful eating, creative visualizations, gratitude and compassion exercises, artistic experiences, nature based experience, teaching/discussion sessions about understanding and regulating emotions, exercises involving slow and in-depth reading and writing; journaling and free-writing; and learning about the impact of mindfulness experiences on the body and brain.

While it is challenging to track the numbers of programs, my informal research, based on mindfulness education group communications, suggests that there are thousands across the U.S. Canada, Europe, and many other countries, in public and private schools, after school programs, religious institutions and other settings. Additionally there seem to be many educators incorporating mindfulness techniques into their teaching, without naming them. Concurrently hundreds of academic studies have been carried out and published, with various claims about their effectiveness.

While mindfulness can be applied to education in a myriad of ways, nearly all of its proponents emphasize that the most significant step educators can take is to become mindfulness practitioners themselves so that they are interacting with students with focused, accepting and caring attention and presence. In working with students, teachers can do something as basic as beginning their classes with a few minutes of mindfulness breathing practice so that students can calm down and feel present as they transition into academic content.

Many mindfulness programs aimed at educators have formed, and some research on their benefits has been published. For example, a comprehensive 2014 meta-review of the literature on the impacts of mindfulness on the wellbeing and performance of educator examined 13 peer reviewed studies and found significant evidence of reduced feelings of stress, anxiety and depression; improved feelings of well-being, including self-confidence, self-efficacy and self-compassion; increased kindness and compassion to others; better physical health, including reduced blood pressure and few health problems; increased cognitive performance, including ability to pay attention, make decisions and respond flexibly to challenges, and enhanced job performance, including better classroom management, greater attunement to students' needs and improved relationships with them (Weare 2014).

Much current research focusses on benefits of mindfulness programs to youth. A meta-analysis of 20 "high quality" studies on this concluded that mindfulness education programs show significant potential to improve sleep, calmness, relaxation, self-regulation, awareness and aspects of cognitive function and physical health; to reduce worries, anxiety, distress, reactivity and bad behavior; and to increase well-being, self-esteem, positive emotion, popularity and friendships (Weare 2013). A 2014 meta-analysis of all identifiable systematic quantitative studies on school based mindfulness programs was carried out, with 24 that met rigorous standards selected for inclusion. The researchers found the most significant effects on cognitive performance, especially attentional ability. Smaller positive effects were found on stress reduction, coping and emotional resilience (Zenner et al. 2014). While research on the impacts of mindfulness is in an early stage, and the quality of the studies varies, preliminary results seem promising.

Implications for the Future of Contemplative Education

The current mindfulness education movement is an attempt to restore contemplative consciousness in an increasingly fragmented world. Given its rapid growth, the results of early research in the field, and the needs of contemporary youth, it seems likely that it will continue to spread. This is a hopeful development at a time when young people are experiencing increasing levels of stress, and, by many accounts, decreasing ability to focus and sustain attention. However, several issues need critical examination.

My theoretical research suggests that contemplative capacities are optimally developed in a long-term context that includes an emphasis on educators' contemplative development, and holistic curriculum and teaching methods (Johnson 2011). Historically, contemplative education was undertaken in religious institutions that provided a community-based ethical, emotional and mystical context. Most current mindfulness programs are secular and relatively short-term, and even when educators are committed to longer-term integration, they are usually taught in the context of a fact and skills based curricula created to "deliver" high test scores on mandated curricula. In fact, one common motivation for the implementation of mindfulness education may be the achievement of better test results. Given the

shallow roots of many mindfulness programs, and the current cultural context that works against contemplative consciousness, it seems questionable that the results will be long-lasting. So far there has been little relevant research.

Some serious critiques of the overall mindfulness movement are emerging. As Purser and Cooper (2014) recently stated, “The rapid mainstreaming of mindfulness has provided a domesticated and tame set of meditative techniques for mainly upper-middle class and corporate elites so that they may become more “self-accepting” of their anxieties, helping them to “thrive,” to have it all—money, power and well-being, continuing business-as-usual more efficiently and, of course, more “mindfully” while conveniently side-stepping any serious soul searching into the causes of widespread social suffering.” In addition, entrepreneurs are moving rapidly into the field, creating, marketing and selling mindfulness products, many of which seem of questionable value. The same critiques can be applied to mindfulness education of youth. When inserted as a skills training program into a context that doesn’t provide support for contemplative development in a more holistic sense, mindfulness does, indeed, seem to be a tame set of techniques for helping children to get ahead in the life without in-depth questioning of cultural values that maintain or intensify an increasingly socially and economically stratified society. And while some mindfulness programs are being offered in schools with low-income populations, it seems that the majority are reaching upper middle and upper-class youth. In addition, many profit oriented companies and consultants are moving into the “mindfulness education business,” developing curricula of varying quality.

In the context of these limitations, it’s important to investigate how contemplative attitudes, emotions, and cognitive capacities can be deepened and sustained in the current culture. Further research on the following questions would allow insight into long range prospects for the success of the current mindfulness education movement: Are early claims for the effectiveness of mindfulness education justified? What are the longer term effects of typical 8 week school based programs? Are students continuing to practice at home? Do positive student outcomes disappear if the practices are not continued? How often and in what forms are mindfulness programs continued? What elements of these programs are emphasized? Is the ultimate goal primarily on individual success or is it equally focused on caring behaviors towards others and social justice? Are these programs reaching students from lower socio-economic homes and neighborhoods? Do teacher mindfulness programs have a lasting impact? Do teachers continue with their own mindfulness practice? Do the programs change the ways teachers relate to students and their views on current school curricula? Who is profiting and to what degree from the mindfulness education movement?

Contemplative education has the potential to transform individual lives, and, on a greater scale, to make a substantial contribution to creating a more balanced and just society. To achieve this, those who educate children, both parents and teachers, must learn to stop reacting mindlessly to the many intense and intrusive forms of stimulation of contemporary life, and instead, turn inwards to take mindful control of their attention, reflective powers, emotional well-being and ethical life choices—and teach children to do the same.

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Chapter 10

A Unity of Peoples, Spirits, and Lands

Linita Manu'atu, M. Kēpa, M. Pepe, and M.I. Taione

Abstract The ambiguous histories of colonization and decolonization continue to vex groups of indigenous and indigenous migrant peoples as we critique the loss of our people, spirits, and lands, to address the crimes against us, and seek to contribute to humanity, especially, indigenous humanity. Our languages, cultural traditions, values, and histories can be instructive in matters of the spirit in the prevailing English-speaking societies in which we live. With increasing numbers of students from different languages, cultures, and societies enrolling in the university in Aotearoa, New Zealand, the questions for indigenous and migrant Pasifika academics and researchers in the broad area of education are: is there the possibility for an education that affirms the spirit of a diverse student population? Furthermore, can academics create an education that draws from our people, our spirits, and our lands in an English-speaking, Eurocentric, free-market institution? The resounding response to both questions from the authors, an indigenous Māori, a New Zealand born-Cook Islands Māori-Scots teacher, and two migrant Tongan scholars, is “Yes, we should resurrect the unity of people, spirits, and lands in education and, we know how”.

In this chapter, the authors discuss their contribution to a new degree in the university. Working through the conception of HauFolau the authors will discuss the spirit of aro'a/love drawn from the language of Cook Islands Māori; and the cultural practices kanohi ki te kanohi/face-to-face relations, and talanoamālie/peaceful dialogue drawn from the languages and cultures of indigenous Māori, and Tongan people.

Introduction

In this chapter, a small group of indigenous and migrant academics, teachers, and researchers based in Aotearoa New Zealand, introduce and explain the concepts underpinning the design of an important university educational programme

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appropriate for a linguistic and culturally diverse student population. We, the group, came together in this process in a society that we do not organize ourselves.

In this chapter, we, the authors, will set the scene theoretically and will then offer a clarification of the term Pasifika. Following this, the demographics of the focus population will be described and this makes clear that Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, is the context for our work. Our aim in this chapter is to propose that indigenous and migrant academics and researchers must advocate for the creation of an education that is wise, divine and desirable (Kēpa and Manu'atu 2008a, 2012; Bedford 2011; Finau 2008; Kēpa 2008; Abu-Saad and Champagne 2006; AUT University 2003; Ministry of Education 1996). We will discuss the concept of HauFolau, the spirit of aro'a (love), the practice of kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face relations), and talanoamālie (peaceful dialogue). These concepts were used to embed the degree of Bachelor of Indigenous and Migrant Education (Manu'atu et al. 2015) designed for Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. We will end the chapter with a review of the ideals that contribute to an education that has the potential to make the spirit and people soar.

Decolonisation

By way of theory, Frantz Fanon (West 1993) has described the ferocious and immoral spirit of decolonisation as follows:

Decolonisation, which sets out to change the order of the world, is obviously a program of complete disorder. Decolonisation is the meeting of two forces, opposed to each other by their very nature, which in fact owe their originality to that sort of substantification which results from and is nourished by the situation in the colonies. Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together – that is the exploitation of the native by the settler was carried on by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons. (Fanon 1993 cited in West 1993, p. 207)

Fanon's incensed words describe the emotions and thoughts that come to the fore between the following groups affected by decolonising processes: the colonised Irish and the occupying British army; the occupying Israeli army and oppressed Palestinians; the Black South Africans in townships and the South African army; the Japanese police and Koreans living in Japan; the Russian army and subordinated Armenians. These groups are just some among many groups of oppressed and sidelined peoples.

Fanon's words also invoke the spirit of resistance that groups of indigenous peoples, such as Māori (a collective term for the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa), experience towards the coloniser (Abels 2011; Armstrong 2009; Kēpa and Manu'atu 2008c, 2011; Doerr 2009; Southwick 2005). Simply put, Fanon is articulating the centuries long spiritual responses felt by indigenous peoples to indignity and inhumanity.

Pasifika Peoples

The use of the term Pasifika Peoples is consistent with the purposes of the Ministry of Education in New Zealand (Ministry of Education 1996). The term Pasifika Peoples does not refer to a single ethnicity, nationality, gender or culture. The term is one of convenience used to encompass a diverse range of peoples from the South Pacific region and people residing in New Zealand or Australia who have strong family and cultural connections to Pacific Island countries. Hence, the use of the term *peoples* rather than *people*. The collective term *peoples* is used to refer to men, women and children of Cook Islands Māori, Fijian, Niuean, Tokelauan, Samoan, Tongan and other Pasifika or mixed heritages. Pasifika peoples include a variety of combinations of ethnicities, recent migrants and third, fourth or fifth generation New Zealand-born descendants of the original migrants. As with many collective names, the convenience of this term *peoples* disguises the very real conflicts and diversity that are included in generic labels such as New Zealanders, Māori, Pacific peoples, and Pasifika. The term Pasifika is used strategically, here, to refer to the indigenous peoples of the realm of Niue, Tokelau and Cook Islands Māori, the migrants, and their descendants from Samoa and Tonga.

Demographic Information

In the 2006 census, the New Zealand Pasifika population (both New Zealand born and Island born) totalled 266,000 of whom 49 % identified as Samoan, 22 % Cook Island Māori, and 19 % Tongan (Doerr 2009). The number born in the Pacific but residing in New Zealand totalled 138,400. The information from Pacific source regions revealed that around 70 % were from Polynesia, 30 % from Melanesia and under 1 % from Micronesia. Bedford (2011) notes that the numbers of migrants from Micronesia (and particularly from Fiji since the 1987 coups) increased by 18 % while those from Polynesia fell by 19 %. He predicts a continuing increase of immigrants from Melanesian countries (Fiji, Solomons and Vanuatu in particular) as part of the predicted increase in Pasifika population. Statistics NZ (MoE 2011) predict that the total population will grow to 480,000 in 2026, of which 67 % will live in the Auckland region. In addition to the increased numbers through migration, demographically the Pasifika populations have high rates of natural increase (2.4 % pa) and thus have youthful populations. Statistics from Comet (2011) notes that 37 % of Pasifika Aucklanders are less than 15 years old, compared to 22 % of the total Auckland population. Such youthful populations will require schooling and employment provisions.

Context

Auckland is the largest Polynesian city in the world with 177,936 people making up 67 % of the total Pasifika population. Of these, 49 % live in Manukau, 28 % in central Auckland and 15 % in Waitakere. Of the Pasifika Aucklanders, 50 % are Samoan, 23 % Tongan, 20 % Cook Island Māori, 10 % Niuean and 5 % Fijians, Tuvaluan and Tokelauan. Bilingualism is common in the Pasifika population with 60 % of Samoans and Tongans speaking their heritage language. Of particular note is that almost 2000 Pasifika school students are learning a Pasifika language in 33 Auckland schools (Comet 2011).

In the Early Childhood Education (ECE) sector, as far as the 22,719 Pasifika children aged 0–4 years in Auckland are concerned, 7749 were enrolled in ECE centres in 2010 and of these 3016 attended 83 Pasifika early childhood centres (mainly Samoan) with about 45 % in immersion settings. Notably, acknowledgement of language and cultural values, cost, proximity, and access to public transport, influences whether Pasifika families can participate in early years education. Some families want their children to be educated in early childhood centres where they can remain in class with them (MoE 2011). Exacerbating the situation is the shortage of Pasifika teachers particularly those who are qualified (only 919 in total). According to Comet (2011) only 62 % of Auckland Pasifika ECE teachers were registered at July 2010. This demographic information clarifies the reason why indigenous and migrant academics and researchers will be required to take up the challenge to create education to support a linguistically and culturally diverse student population. We introduce three major concepts that when included in education would reflect a unity of people, spirits and lands.

HauFolau: Embracing the Unity of Peoples, Spirits and Lands

Through a concept called HauFolau in the Tongan language, the authors clarify how the ideals of aro'a/love, the customs of kanohi ki te kanohi/face-to-face relations and talanoamālie/peaceful dialogue embed the idea of the unity of spirit, people and lands. The authors have been able to reflect critically upon their cultural conceptions and relationships as they worked together to create a new degree wherein possibilities for transformation exist for marginalised and dispossessed people. They find it essential, in the university, to rethink, renew, retrieve, reconnect, reengage, and relate to their own words and wisdoms.

There is an ancient, a visionary, and transformative quality about traditional customs and values that promote an ideal or spirit of what a compassionate education by wise educators, directors, and managers ought to be like. Thus, through embracing antiquity as a spirit, all practice carried out in the name of education and research will be historical, creative, visionary, and transformative. Through the concept of HauFolau the spirit of love ought not only to be an inspiration to

indigenous Māori but to the indigenous migrant peoples from the tropical islands to the north of New Zealand; to people of an empirical bent in the broad area of education, and to people with their finger firmly on the pulse of governance and management.

Importantly, indigenous Māori and migrant Tongan and Cook Islands Māori peoples' words and wisdoms are not discoverable or awaiting discovery in nature. Our wisdoms already exist with the dignity, integrity, and love of the unity of people, spirits and lands. Hence, people involved in education, such as the authors, seek to affirm Māori, Cook Islands Māori, and Tongan people's words for the purpose of conceptualising education that is wise, divine, and desirable since our own languages and cultures are included in the academic work we do, including in the coursework we teach. In education, we ought to articulate what is called *aro'a* meaning love (Cook Islands Māori), the indigenous Māori tradition of *kanohi ki te kanohi* meaning face-to-face relations, and the Tongan custom of *talanoamālie* meaning peaceful dialogue. Together, these concepts have the spiritual potential to enhance what is, on the surface, an ordinary vocational education.

Aro'a/love

The writers point out that to love [somebody] is impossible unless love is returned; maybe not as love, but as positive liking, or through interest, notice, encouragement, praise, admiration, loyalty, and devotion. Any love is exquisite and lies within people's spirit or humanity. Love is not a mundane byte of information, such as, I love you. Love is affection, kindness, compassion, wisdom but not, pity; happiness in love is not focussing all of your feelings in another person. People always have possibilities to love good people such as relations and friends, through impressive conversations, and reminiscences; and good things, such as summer, the seasons, and the land (Kēpa 2013).

Long years of teaching, critical reflection, and passion, enables indigenous and migrant educationalists and teachers, at intervals of intense excitement, to confirm that a spirit of love can prevail in education. At the university, the most profound aspects of erudition or scholarship must confirm that the majesty and fullness of the spirit of all gods, indeed the triumph of all things divine, must radiate through the education project. Love is knowing that all through the relationship of people and the spirit is a balance between maturity of spirit and youthful vitality reflecting the qualities of aesthetics and spirits that can be attributed to, for example, a relationship of harmony, poise, elegance, and steadiness, for example, the relationship of tuakana/teina. In the tribe, tuakana/teina is a buddy system where an older or more knowledgeable tuakana/a brother/a sister/a cousin guides a younger or less knowledgeable teina/a younger sibling/cousin of the same gender. These roles and responsibilities may also be reversed, through the decision of the partners, during the relationship (Pepe 2013). The relationship of teina/tuakana ought to be integral to the unity of spirit, people and lands.

Tongan, Māori, and Cook Islands Māori people believe that children are treasures from our gods (and through colonisation the Christian God) of love and consider that parents, aunts and uncles, grandparents and siblings are guardians of the gods' gift of love (Manu'atu 2013; Irwin et al. 2013). In collective living, the birth of a baby is a spirit relating us to ancestors and the whenua, 'enua, fonua/land/placenta. Concomitantly, the birth of a baby is a spirit of love embracing the lives of the parents and the extended family. The spirit and collective relationship, in Cook Islands Māori language and culture, is aro'a. In Māori language and culture the principle aspect of relationship is aroha; in Tongan culture the embracing relationship is 'ofa. In the English language, love is an emotion detached from the body (again, an influence from the Christian god). The powerful spirit of aro'a shows how indigenous educationalists and teachers [and researchers] have been dispossessed of our words and wisdoms by the artificial separation of spirits, people, and lands in education, and in research and its application. Aro'a, importantly, positions people at the heart of education and embraces cultural methodologies, especially, for application in wise, moral, and ethical education. Arguably, a new qualification that embraces love in relation with indigenous people is critical to a humanising skills-based education.

The spirit, or the value of merit and excellence, lies in the resurrection and restoration to life of our indigenous and migrants' words and wisdoms. Academics ought to consider thoughtfully aro'a/love, kanohi ki te kanohi/face-to-face relations and talanoamālie/peaceful exchange between people. Education has to enhance the spirit of our language, culture, and education. In educational research we ought to keep indigenous and migrant researchers at the forefront, nationally, regionally, and internationally.

Kanohi ki te kanohi/Face-to-Face Relationship

In Māori language and culture, kanohi ki te kanohi is an important relationship that prolongs the spirit between ancestors and the contemporary values and wisdoms of indigenous peoples; hence, the English translation, 'face-to-face' is not the meaning shared by Cook Islands Māori, Tongan and Māori people. The relationship and spirit embraces the courteous, sincere, generous, courageous, honest, trustworthy, respectful, and decent conduct within our own communities; not taking for granted the history of love between people-and-spirits, people-and-people, and people-and-land. As a traditional way of passing on knowledge through generations, kanohi ki te kanohi is a valued relationship that influences and strengthens indigenous Māori people's thinking and conduct in research and practice. Since co-operation between people, teacher-students, researcher-researched, is crucial to the success of the educational project, then kanohi ki te kanohi is a most important tribal custom. It contributes to the following:

- To educate in a spirit of love;
- To conduct research in a spirit of love;

- To protect the spirit in words and wisdoms;
- To uphold the spirit of unity and peace in education.

TalanoaMālie/Peaceful Dialogue

Through a conception known in Tongan language as TalanoaMālie/peaceful dialogue, spirits, people, and lands are valued and reconnected (Manu'atu 2013; Taione 2013; Helu Thaman 2003, 2010; Taufe'ulungaki 2004). Critical dialogue that enables indigenous peoples to interrogate research, practice, theory, and text, through peaceful dialogue creates an education that is not only radical but also becomes an aesthetic project in the technocratic twenty-first century. TalanoaMālie supports Cook Islands Māori, Tongan, and Māori people to question education and not simply accept rote learning and prescribed lists of skills for qualification and application in the workplace. The people *are* the 'words' and they have the wisdom to pass on virtuous knowledge in a new qualification (Manu'atu 2013; Taione 2013). Importantly, academics and teachers ought not to exclude marginalised groups of people from possibilities for bold changes in thinking through education.

In researching and creating a Bachelor of Indigenous and Migrant education, a starting point for Cook Islands Māori, Tongan and Māori people involved in the process was to question the wisdom and beliefs about what constitutes a desirable and worthy education. Through such an inclusive degree then Cook Islands Māori, Tongan and Māori people ought to come to understand that to probe beliefs and wisdoms is complex, demanding, disturbing, transforming, and exciting. The spirit of dialogical research and practice will create more Cook Islands Māori, Tongan and Māori academics and scholars. Through TalanoaMālie, the teachers and the students can share words and wisdoms of the past together with ideas and innovations of the present. Therefore, course work ought to include study in the languages of participating communities, as well as being carried out through the medium of English language and culture. It is important to understand that education alone cannot transform unequal power relations, decision-making processes, and maldistribution of resources. However, education that privileges TalanoaMālie as a desirable dialogue that can contribute words and wisdoms to society will contribute to this transformation.

TalanoaMālie means teachers and students attending to issues of discrimination in order to transform political and economic relationships. Eventually Cook Islands Māori, Tongan and Māori people's words and wisdom may be repositioned for the better in research and practice. TalanoaMālie means clarifying and establishing collaborations through governance and management structures that include Cook Islands Māori, Tongan and Māori academics and researchers. TalanoaMālie also requires that researchers question the provision of place and resources, including finance, for Cook Islands Māori, Tongan and Māori academics to study and teach in the context of their own people. Through talanoaMālie researchers will understand

that inclusive education will not be established without a bold change of spirit in cultural, political, pedagogical, and economic beliefs and practices, as well as through possible conflict.

The creation of education for Cook Islands Māori, Tongan and Māori scholars aims to create relationships of *mālie/peace* at the interface of indigenous and migrant cultural contexts, including political structures, economic resources and social commitments. The insights of peace to be gained from positive relationships will receive a major contribution from indigenous and migrant academics and researchers who work towards a wise, compassionate education.

Making the Spirit Soar: Possible Future Directions

In this chapter, Tongan and Māori academics and a Cook Islands Māori-Scots teacher have described how they created new educational possibilities for a diverse linguistic and cultural student population when they do not organize society. The authors have articulated that education must be capable of resurrecting and restoring the unity of spirits, peoples, and lands. We have reminded researchers and academics that our words and wisdoms are not discoverable or awaiting discovery in nature; rather, our wisdoms exist with spirits, and within people and lands. We have clarified that Māori, Cook Islands Māori, and Tongan people live lives historically, and so the ancestors and the spirit of love are interwoven into our daily lives. We have emphasized that the tribal custom of *kanohi ki te kanohi* should not be confused with the English ethic of face value. In connection with this, we are attentive to the lived experiences of peoples in each unique context, rather than in studying people within a fragmented and linear progression (Te Puni Kōkiri 2010; Smith 1999; Kēpa 2010; Irwin et al. 2013).

We are in no doubt that indigenous and Pasifika academics, teachers and researchers, are motivated by love and by their relationships with spirits, people and lands. Simply put, in education and research, we know our participants and our participants know us. In the epistemological sense, our lived experience, the wisdom that has been passed on by our ancestors, their dreams, visions, and prophecies, and any knowledge learned from birds, animals and plants - collective knowledge – rivals the information and knowledge obtained by dispassionate western science or knowledge. The dialectic or tension between the scholar and the group, the scholar and love, the scholar and gods, then, becomes the most significant problematic for thinking about national and regional cooperation in education.

Unity of Spirits, Peoples and Lands

Returning to the title of the chapter, co-operation in education ought to be conceptualized as the connection of spirit and body, words and wisdoms, along with innovation, dignity, and security. As well, collaborations ought to make a major

contribution to enhancing and transforming national and regional co-operation in educational research. In closing, the authors have argued that indigenous and migrant academics and researchers can support an education that is wise, in order to ensure that the increasing number of students from different languages and cultures are *educated*, rather than trained. The idea is to include spirits, ancestors, rivers, mountains, flora and fauna in education and research; as well as including diverse words and wisdoms, and encouraging international co-operation in the education of indigenous and migrant peoples. Through complex, wise, decent, dignified, and desirable relations and innovations, we may all contribute to this co-operation.

The authors have conveyed here that the unity of spirits, people, and lands in education loosens the grip of western intellectual thought upon Cook Islands Māori, Māori, and Tongan peoples. In the complex relationship that brings together diverse groups of people with the English language and western institutions, a critical spirit is essential to promote change for a better education for those in New Zealand and the Pacific region. By funding research that can be undertaken by Cook Islands Māori, Māori, and Tongan peoples in the discipline of education, funding bodies may be encouraged to embrace our spirit, people and lands, in a way that mirrors the complex contextual, and intricate relationship between ourselves and established society. Attempting to bring together the unity of spirits, people and lands with prevailing values is a risky enterprise: the dangers of decolonisation are ever-present. Nevertheless, our hope is that the unity of spirits, people and lands in education and research will be strategic and, above all, contribute to a new perspective on education and that this will be exemplified in the new degree.

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Chapter 11

Towards a Holistic Teacher Education: Spirituality and Special Education Teacher Training

Kaili Zhang and Deirdra I-Hwey Wu

Abstract Spirituality is recognized as one of the ways people construct knowledge and meaning in life; it deals with the sphere of values and beliefs, and informs the choices and actions of many individuals. However, spirituality is frequently underused in practice in teacher education. When it comes to the area of special education teacher training, the lack of literature is even more acute. This paper explores issues related to teachers' inner life development and its relationship to special education teacher training. Specifically, this chapter examines an approach to education that seeks to balance an acquired intellectual knowledge with consideration of the importance of spirituality. In this context, the author addresses the following aspects: (a) spirituality as an essential component of teacher education, (b) the importance of spirituality in special education teacher training, and (c) implications of spirituality in special education teacher training.

Spirituality is recognized as one of the ways people construct knowledge and meaning in life; it deals with the sphere of values and beliefs, and informs the choices and actions of many individuals (Seymour 2004; Tisdell 2003; Zhang and Yu 2012). However, spirituality is frequently underused in practice in teacher education (Shahjahan 2005; Zhang 2012). When it comes to the area of special education teacher training, the lack of literature is even more acute Ault 2010). The main purpose of this chapter is to explore issues related to teachers' inner life development and its relationship to special education teacher training. Specifically, this chapter examines an approach to education that seeks to balance an acquired intellectual knowledge with consideration of the importance of spirituality. Drawing on the authors' teaching experience in higher education and research on holistic

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education, we address the following aspects: (a) spirituality as an essential component of teacher education, (b) the importance of spirituality in special education teacher training, and (c) implications of spirituality in special education teacher training.

Introduction

Before discussing education and how it can provide support for special education teachers' spiritual lives, it is important to discuss the challenges of present day teaching and learning. Maxine Greene (1978) once said that often in education "facts have been easily separated off from values; decisions have been made on grounds independent of moral propriety." (p. 60). Too many professional development providers demoralize and frustrate teachers when they just lecture, focus only on theory, and do not apply the best learning and teaching strategies that we advocate using with children (e.g., Brantmeier et al. 2010; Shahjahan 2005). Further, although there is no doubt that a teacher's inner life has a direct impact on his or her pedagogical orientation and skills, trends in education, such as higher education standards and teacher certification, often heavily focus on intellectual knowledge and academic skills rather than teachers' personality, emotional riches, development of identity and integrity, and spirituality (Conti 2002).

Clearly, good teaching requires a mix of influences including passion, mastery of content, and knowledge of and skill with teaching (Conti 2002; Palmer 1998/1999). On the other hand, from the holism perspective, if effective teaching is going to take place, a developed identity and integrity rooted in one's own spiritual journey is also very important, if not more important, than the elements mentioned above. In a recent article, Lorraine Cella (2013), a school district superintendent in New Jersey, recalls how one of her high school literature teachers changed her life and many other lives in that particular class. She comments:

Mr. Pepperling used the course content as a vehicle for us to learn about who we were and who we were becoming. As I think back to his class and about him, the lessons learned were greater than the literature; they were about the great and not-so-great world and our positions within it as active participants. He knew content, had the courage to be controversial, challenged us in ways that no one else had done, cared immensely, demonstrated creativity, and stayed connected to each student. Most important, he gave us confidence and a sense of our own efficacy. (p. 26).

There is no doubt that all teacher training programmes would like to "produce" more teachers like "Mr. Pepperling". But if our programmes spend most of our time and energy on transmitting intellectual knowledge and academic skills, how can these teachers appreciate the importance of making school a positive experience for their students and all the nuances of teaching? Cella (2013) further commented that instead of empowering teachers to teach with their heart and soul, today's education system may make teachers fade into "deadly, robotic, fit-the-rubric nonentities and receive high scores, but offer nothing of substance to students—nothing to carry with them for a lifetime." (p. 26).

This observation further challenges the conventional mode of training for teacher development that may have disregarded the significance of inner life, the deep meaning of support needed, and teachers' spirituality which is an important aspect of inner life.

Holistic Education, Spirituality, and Teacher Education

At this point it is useful to make a digression to briefly explain the key terms used in this chapter: "holistic education", "spirituality", and "special education teachers". First of all, *holistic education* refers to an education that attends to all developmental domains: social, aesthetic, language, affective, physical, and cognitive, including the spiritual dimension. The main aim of holistic education is to call forth from people an intrinsic reverence for life and a passionate love of learning.

We define *spirituality* as the human quest for "meaning, purpose, self-transcending knowledge, meaningful relationships, love and commitment, as well as the sense of the Holy amongst us" (Boswell et al. 2001). More specifically, spirituality is about the connections with self, others, the world, and with the Divine (de Souza 2009; Fisher 2010, 2012; Hay and Nye 2006). Further, spirituality is not necessarily associated with any institutionalized doctrines or religious affiliations (e.g., Hay and Nye 2006; Zhang and Tan 2010). Rather, it is essentially about things pertaining to one's spirit or soul, and is often reflected in an individual's the search for personal meaning, purpose, and identity in life. In contrast, *religion* is an organized and shared system of beliefs and practices related to a transcendent entity such as God, and is closely linked to a particular faith institution.

Along the same vein, teachers' *spiritual development* refers to an internal process of identity development involving a greater connectedness to self, others and nature, leading to meaning, purpose, and direction in one's life. The term *special education teachers* refers to teaching professionals who are specialized in providing support (e.g., instruction, services) for children with special needs so that they can achieve the outcomes expected of all students in both special and mainstream education settings. The term *teachers* refers to both pre- and in-service teachers, and it is used interchangeably with educator.

Spirituality as an Essential Aspect of Teacher Education

Holistic education supports teachers bringing their learning from their spiritual life into the classroom. Many others have maintained that students' holistic development in classrooms is directly related to the teachers' inner life and their capacity to conduct their practice from the basis of connected humanity (e.g., Palmer 2003; Rolph 1991). In a similar vein, Belousa (2005) argues that education is a journey

that invites learners to cross a threshold of certitude to be open to the ongoing possibilities of growth and change. Belousa further suggests that although this journey might be physical, cognitive, or emotional, in essence it symbolizes and represents the spiritual realm, and embodies the cultivation of teachers' wisdom, the power to go beyond "information transmission" to transforming activities into the art of teaching. Indeed, when teachers are supported spiritually and being renewed internally, they are moving towards more significant, more understanding lives, hence are more likely to make a more positive impact in their students' lives. However, in schools, holistic education which includes an element of spirituality is still a neglected topic.

As observed by many educators and philosophers, rarely is attention given to an education that includes an emphasis on spiritual dimension (e.g., Miller 2002; Palmer 2003). Foxworth (1998) explains that "there is no way to educate without including the whole person. Yet there is no 'whole person' without the spirituality." (p. 51). An education for the whole child requires that teachers attend to all developmental domains including the social, emotional, physical, and *spiritual* (Dowling 2009; Mata 2006); an education that neglects the spiritual aspect is neither complete nor holistic.

In her research on spirituality education, Belousa (2005) maintains that university professors who are teacher trainers and educators bear responsibility in the public domain. She further recommends that spirituality can be incorporated into university curricula as an inter-disciplinary issue and that higher education institutes should provide opportunities for teachers to foster their own spiritual development. These opportunities and activities would likewise encourage teachers to be attentive to the inner life development and spiritual well-being of their own students.

The Importance of Spirituality in Special Education Teacher Training

First of all, spirituality and religion play a significant role in special education and rehabilitation for individuals with disabilities. Historically, faith-based efforts have been connected to education and to care for individuals with disabilities for centuries. Many hospitals, rehabilitation centres, special education schools, and universities originally were based on religious tenants and grounded by religious temples or societies (Koenig 2000). In addition to the testimony of history, numerous studies have reported that religion has been a source of emotional support for individuals with special needs as well their parents (e.g., Bailey et al. 2006; Dunst et al. 2000; Fox et al. 2002). Families of children with disabilities have reported benefits as a result of their children's participation in religious institutions, which include receiving support from faith communities and gaining social experiences for their children in community settings (Ault 2010).

Second, spirituality provides a valuable source of psychological and social support for special education teachers. According to literature, special education

teachers serving different grades, in different countries and over different time periods have all reported moderate to high levels of job stress (Chan 1998; Geving 2007; Kokkinos and Davazoglou 2009). In addition, studies have also shown that teachers who are excessively stressed may be angry, depressed, burnt out, and leaving the profession (e.g., Friedman and Farber 1992; Kokkinos and Davazoglou 2009).

On the other hand, research has also shown that individuals who hold strong spiritual values experience less stress, suggesting that individuals who feel supported by God incur a host of positive mental health attributes, such as less depression, lower levels of psychological stress, less loneliness, and higher levels of self-esteem (Koenig and Cohen 2002; Thoresen 1999). Palmer (1998, 2003) explains that spirituality is a longing that animates love and work and the heart's longing to be connected with the largeness of life. This is certainly good news for special education teachers who are overwhelmed or burnt out. Some researchers (Astin et al. 2011; Shahjahan 2005) have proposed that spirituality should be incorporated in higher education, allowing for teacher preparation programmes to include spirituality and to provide for a safe space where teachers can not only be educated in the matter, but also share their spiritual journeys, nurturing their own growth and development.

Thirdly, as a significant dimension of human well-being, spirituality can play an important role in educating students with disabilities. As indicated earlier, spirituality is an important way of constructing knowledge and meaning; it deals with the sphere of values and beliefs, and informs the choices and actions of many individuals (Seymour 2004; Tisdell 2003; Zhang and Yu 2012). As a result, recognizing the spiritual dimension is central to constructing a life worth living for many people (Alexander 2003), including those with disabilities. As a unifying or "connecting force" (Baker 2003, p. 51), spirituality supports feeling whole or complete. Studies also show that spirituality affects one's quality of life in terms of emotional and physical well-being, relationships, career decision-making and self-efficacy (e.g., Duffy and Blustein 2005). This certainly has important implications for students with disabilities. Therefore, special education teacher training programmes need to help teachers understand spirituality as a dimension of education, to foster their own spirituality, and to provide spiritual care for children.

Indeed, the role of teachers in nurturing and nourishing the inner life of children with special needs is crucial. A holistic view of child development and learning in the context of special education can help teachers and other professionals address multiple dimensions of child development, which as a result, may mediate children's ability to meet the expectations of school and society, and enable them to have a sense of value and identity in life, regardless of their abilities and special needs. In short, when special education teachers look at children from a holistic perspective, they are in a better position to provide support for children's spiritual development and to help schools focus on what really matters.

Therefore, increasing the emphasis on students' spirituality has enormous implications for how teachers can approach student learning and development with the purpose of enhancing students' overall well-being. The question is then raised, how do special education teachers training programmes give greater emphasis to

nurturing teachers' spirituality? How can spirituality be included as an integral part of the training, since it has often been banished from educational discourse and practice in the name of science and secularism? Seeking to balance modern teacher education systems that overemphasize intellectual knowledge, the following sections present implications for educational programmes that address the spiritual dimension of learning.

Implications for Special Education Teacher Training

Spiritual Reflection

A chief aim of holistic teacher education is to develop reflective teachers who are concerned with the growth of their students as well as their own personal growth (e.g., personal and emotional development), self-knowledge, identity, and integrity (Conti 2002; Mata 2006; Palmer 1998/1999). Conti's (2002) study found that although teacher thinking is complex and influenced by many factors, there is a deep connection between pedagogy and teacher attitudes, values and beliefs. In other words, as teachers' beliefs serve as guiding principles in their teaching, the holistic beliefs that a teacher adopts will play an important role in his or her teaching, pedagogy, and interactions with children. Research (e.g., Conti 2002; Mata 2006) has also proven that teachers are often unaware of some of these values and beliefs, and teacher education programs have put little effort in encouraging reflection on personal beliefs and values. Therefore, to help encourage teachers to reflect on their values and beliefs, universal themes and values from both religious and non-religious sources may be introduced as a means to encourage reflection, internalization and application of moral values learnt.

Furthermore, if spirituality is inherent in all people (and not just "religious" people), then teachers need to consider this developmental process in their own lives. Teacher education must allow space for reflection on the biggest questions in life—how one creates meaning, purpose, and direction in one's life, what deserves commitment, what types of communities to belong to, why choose to work with the this group of people as opposed to that, and what is one's passion. Peterson (1997) once said that "work can conceal our real identity—as we get to know someone, we want to know if that person's job is a role to hide in or behind, or if it's an honest expression of character." (p. 33). The following is a dialog that should make us think:

A child asks a doctor: "Who are you, Dr. Smith?"

Dr. Smith: Well, I am a medical doctor; that is why you call me Dr. Smith.

The child thought for a moment, and asked again: "But who you are when you are not a doctor?"

Spiritual reflections may be done in groups and/or individually. In group reflections, there should be opportunities for reflection on and sharing of inner

emotions and life experiences between the facilitators and students and among the students themselves. As Kalpana Venugopal (2009) explains it, “It is only when we, as educators, look deeply within ourselves and strive to embody wholeness in our own lives, that we will inspire our students to do the same. Our lives make up the curriculum.”

Journal Writing

Another part of a curriculum for the inner life is keeping a journal. Journal writing is relevant to reflection. To stay refreshed and motivated, special education teachers need to look within and have a soul searching from time to time. A spiritual journal is a place where they can record different stages of their journey of growth and development.

Given that spirituality is about the search for personal meaning, purpose and identity in life, the reflective journal writing process inevitably involves the records of reflecting and clarifying beliefs and values about right and wrong, good and bad, justice and injustice, etc. This is also a “soul journal” where the student explores his or her deepest feelings and desires, which of course are not for public viewing.

Released Time Programmes

With the policy of the separation of church and state within present educational structures in many other countries in the world, one of the very few effective approaches that will satisfy requirements of justice would be the released-time model for religious instruction. Released time programmes were begun by Dr. William Wirt, a school superintendent in Gary, Indiana in 1914 (Baer and Carper 1998/1999). He created the programme as a way for public school students to receive religious education during the school day. Such an arrangement permits priests, pastors, rabbis, and others to instruct students in small groups in the religious and moral beliefs of their parents, or, in the case of university students, a religious faith of choice. Often, in the context of public education, as the instructor may adhere to a certain religion or even be an atheist, trying to teach about *all* religions/spirituality to *all* students in common classes will inevitably lead to distortion and indoctrination (Baer and Carper 1998/1999). As a result, religious studies are learning *about* religions, but the release time programme gives students opportunities to learn *from* religion.

A released-time model for university students honestly accepts the fact that we are a religiously diverse society. It’s based on the belief that the one-size-fits-all approach of religious studies in schools merely presents students with fragments from various traditions. It also recognizes that various religious organizations offer a rich pool of caring adults who are driven by their own spiritual commitments and

a strong ethic to serve others, hence offering a potentially ripe source of leaders for the time released model. To the extent that universities are willing to incorporate these lessons, they could be well positioned to have a positive impact on today's university students.

Social Media Detox

Social media links us to people half way around the world, and, used differently, also connects us more to our immediate communities. Internet, email, Twitter, video chats, sharing, and Facebook offer us much in the way of connection and information, but we all know they have their downside. However, increasingly, an overdose of and over-reliance on social media has contributed to stress and the collective noise in our lives (e.g., Rowan 2015; Turkle 2012).

Many educators would agree that too much time spent on the Internet involved with social media or otherwise can result in a reduction in academic achievement, less time spent in sports, and less time spent with family. Dr. Sherry Turkle (2012) from MIT, a specialist in technology and society, believes all of this virtual friendship is falling short of the real thing. In fact, she says, it's leaving us less human. After spending years researching the ways technology changes people, Turkle (2012) concludes that by trying to replace the vulnerability, intimacy, conflict and messiness of actual friendships with electronic substitutes, we diminish part of what it means to be human. Turkle (2012) warns of the need to cultivate a capacity for solitude, where we find ourselves so that we, in turn, can reach out to others to form genuine attachments.

In order to detoxify the worldly clutter from our lives, we must first realize how much we have accumulated. I (the first author) often challenge the student teachers I teach to embark on a social media detox. Students are asked to spend 24 h, 3 days, or even a week totally "off-line." They are encouraged to spend deliberate time connecting with friends and family the old-fashioned way, that is, without the text-lingo, and many of the "online friend requests." This social media detox provides opportunity to focus more on important areas of life when social media is put aside.

Indeed, in today's online age, it is critical that educators provide opportunities that help teachers thoughtfully and intentionally develop authentic relationship skills, the ability to stay away from distraction, and to focus on what is truly important in life. As a result, opportunities such as these will likewise encourage special education teachers to pass these much-needed skills on to their students.

Worldview Training

Typically speaking, worldviews answer four basic questions about life: origin, meaning, destiny, and morality. A person's worldview includes how he or she sees God, him/herself, others, the past, present, and future, money, time, good and evil.

In addition, worldviews govern every aspect of our life; we may not be aware of them, but they impact the decisions we make daily, be they big or small.

This is precisely where worldview training comes in. First, it offers insight into why we, and others, hold the values we do. This is not only true of adults, but also children. Children (with or without special needs) need to comprehend what is really going on in the culture, the battle between good and evil, justice and injustice, and more. It is essential to give children “the big picture” about the world in which they are growing up. The idea of worldview training is to teach students to place these battles in the larger context of the war of worldviews rather than thinking about them on an issue-by-issue basis.

Second, worldview training provides foresight. Once one realizes that ideas have consequences, often unintended ones, he/she will not watch films without automatically searching for the worldview messages. Teachers who have discernment will not allow the popular culture to brainwash their students, instead, they will instruct children how to think and to stand up for truths by using worldview analysis. Teachers can consider using books to introduce students to the concept of differing worldviews and how they shape our perceptions of the world around us. They can also teach students that conflicting worldviews cannot all be true. When they face contradictory worldview claims, teachers can invite students to ask themselves two critical questions: How do I know what is true? And how must we live our lives in relation to the truth we have come to know?

Research has shown that individuals who have spiritual support often develop a worldview that promotes well-being and an optimistic outlook on life (Dull and Skokan 1995; McIntosh 1995). Through strong, supportive spiritual and religious relationships, an individual develops spiritual values and appears better equipped to cope with life challenges and to attain a more positive life outlook (Hill and Pargament 2003). Worldview training starts at the teacher level (i.e., in the teacher training programmes), certainly not only to benefit special education teachers who need to have strong spiritual support, but also their students, given how much our culture now influences children (with and without disabilities alike) through school, television, films, advertising, and video games.

Creating Authentic Relationships in Small Communities and Care Groups

According to Palmer (1998/1999, 2003), schools should also create settings within the workplace where teachers feel comfortable to discuss and to reflect on questions related to meaningful living. Likewise, in order for teachers to grow spiritually, teacher training programmes should help create small care groups in which teachers are encouraged to explore their inner lives, to foster positive values, and to develop a deeper sense of self, understanding, and compassion for others, especially their students with special needs.

Special education teacher training programmes should also create a space for dialogue and spiritual growth as teachers pursue their own questions about the intersections between spirituality and education. With collegial support such as this, struggles are recognised, teachers' voices are actualized, and learning can be empowered. Halford (1998/1999) agrees that reading state and federal guidelines and posting them on school office bulletin boards is not enough; "the critical next step is community dialogue about the specifics . . . Open discussion about religious liberty rights enables community members to understand not only what is not appropriate in public schools, but also what is" (p. 8). Since spirituality is not based on any particular religious belief, this religious liberty rights discussion would open the door to spirituality in school settings and would allow for a more inclusive and, not only tolerant, but embracing way of nurturing spirituality. With support from authentic communities and care groups, special education teachers are in a better position to help their students with disabilities to reflect on key issues like the importance of religion and the meaning of commitment and sacrifice, and to discuss events happening around them, the value of life and the possibility that education itself can be a means of resilience. Indeed, teaching is a field with potential to experience and facilitate transformation in others as well as self.

Other Activities That Foster the Spiritual Development of Teachers

Support for teachers' spiritual development can take place in various subjects across the curriculum spectrum, especially the arts. For example, through arts, teachers can express their own inner world and join in the celebration of life, developing a sense of reverence for creation. Through expressive arts such as sculpture, painting, drama, and dance, teachers can explore chosen activities that engage their spirit and senses, while at the same time expanding the ways in which they know and experience the world.

Studies have also found that chaplains and/or mentors, and meaningful activities that can help individuals search for meaning in life and identity are helpful in nurturing teachers' inner life (Palmer 1998/1999; Zhang 2012). Opportunities such as these help teachers who have great work pressure to gain support from others, to relax and de-stress, and to grow spiritually.

Further, since research has found that practices such as student-centred pedagogy, service learning, meditation, and contemplation enhance university students' spiritual development (Astin et al. 2011; Zhang 2012; Zhang and Yu 2012), encouraging and enabling pre-and in-service teachers to engage in such practices could substantially enhance the positive impact of the university experience and/or training programme on student teachers' lives, and ultimately the lives of their pupils.

Conclusions

As indicated earlier, in teacher education, the provision of values education and personal and spiritual development are often neglected in practice, squeezed out by other things (e.g., core curriculum subjects) deemed more important. Special education teacher training programs can interrupt the processes that lead to more disconnection. The time has come for higher education to recognize the importance of teachers' inner life development and to nourish their spirituality.

In order to nourish spirituality in children with special needs, training programmes first need to help special education teachers foster it within themselves. McGreevy and Copley (1999) believe that "there is an equally powerful connection between spiritual nourishment of teachers and students and the quality of a school's teaching and learning" (p. 23). Thus suggesting that in order to nourish spirituality in students, we need first to start fostering it within the teachers.

By drawing attention to and offering a preliminary review on this topic, We hope to encourage more educators to explore the essential role spirituality plays in the life of special education teachers. We also hope that more scholars and researchers will be able to engage, examine, and debate this important yet often neglected dimension of education. Indeed there are many keys to improving special education teacher programmes, but if we expect teachers to address the holistic needs of children with disabilities, then an essential element must be the development of teachers who are reflective, who can understand themselves, who perceive their connectedness to the world, and most of all, who value the wholeness of the child.

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Part III
Health, Social Care and Wellbeing

Chapter 12

Spirituality and Cognitive Neuroscience: A Partnership for Refining Maps of the Mind

B. Les Lancaster

Abstract Spiritual and mystical traditions share with the approach of cognitive neuroscience an interest in mapping the mind. These traditions have always sought to find ways to promote a deeper understanding of our inner lives than simple untrained introspection on mental processes can reveal. Their insights arise through complex meditative, contemplative, and ritual practices directed at profoundly transforming the normal state of consciousness into one imbued with wisdom. These practices are complementary to the approach of cognitive neuroscience which studies states of mind from the outside, as it were. In this sense, an increasing number of neuroscientists view spirituality as a source of insights and practices that can be researched through neuroscientific analysis. There has been an exponential rise in research over some 20 years into changes in the brain and cognitive and emotional functions associated with spiritual practices. In large measure, claims by the spiritual traditions about the short- and long-term effects of these practices have been confirmed. Further areas in which cognitive neuroscience has drawn from the insights in spiritual and mystical traditions have focused on the nature of self and related mental processes such as memory and perception. The core feature in definitions of spirituality concerns our connectedness with a larger sphere—be that conceptualised in terms of a divine or more generally as an integral wholeness in the natural world. Given most neuroscientists' faith in the hegemony of scientific materialism, this feature of spirituality has been more challenging, with a predominance of reductive theories. Nevertheless, ways in which the functioning of the brain may be incorporated into that larger picture are beginning to emerge, and—it is argued here—are likely to become increasingly influential in the future.

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Spirituality as Incorporated in Neuroscience

In a 2013 symposium at the New York Academy of Sciences, two pioneers in the study of mindfulness were asked whether mindfulness should be regarded as a spiritual practice. Jon Kabat-Zinn replied stating that he tends to stay away from the word spirituality, and Richard Davidson said, “I don’t talk about spiritual because I don’t really know what spiritual means” (Paulson et al. 2013, p. 96). This anecdote effectively captures the wariness of psychologists and neuroscientists in embracing the term ‘spirituality.’ Given that the practices which Kabat-Zinn and Davidson advocate are drawn from religious traditions of long standing, it is understandable that many would connote the practices as being spiritual. Evidently we have a mismatch between the term ‘spirituality’ in common usage and its use in more scientific circles. The essential issue here revolves around our ability to capture the meaning of the term ‘spirituality’ and to establish whether it represents a distinctive construct (MacDonald 2011). To the extent that the term connotes different things to different people, Kabat-Zinn and Davidson were wise to evade committing themselves on the issue.

It has become commonplace to distinguish spirituality from religiousness. Walach (2015), for example, understands spirituality as the experiential core of religions that may effectively be dissociated from the doctrinal and dogmatic connotations of the latter. Accordingly, he argues for a *secular spirituality*. Pappas and Friedman (2007) emphasise the non-institutional basis of spirituality—that it is primarily an individual quest—again, thereby disassociating it from religion. And in popular culture, the refrain that someone is “spiritual but not religious” is frequently heard.

Pinning down the term ‘spirituality’ is not easy, not least because it has significantly changed its meaning over history, with this secular connotation coming to the fore only over recent decades. Indeed, as a cultural indicator the fluidity in the term’s meaning speaks loudly about the re-evaluation since the mid-twentieth century of those human aspirations that had previously been incorporated in terms such as ‘religion’ and ‘mysticism’. Interesting as this cultural phenomenon is, it need not overly concern us here. In considering spirituality and neuroscience specifically, the primary question is whether spirituality entails dimensions that cannot be addressed by science. To the extent that spirituality entails belief in non-physical ‘spirits’ (Lindeman et al. 2012), it would lie on the religion side of the science-religion divide. Science focuses on the physical—that which can be measured, controlled, and subjected to concrete intervention; its explanatory constructs must be part of the physical world. None of this is challenged in the interface between neuroscience and spirituality as it has developed through research over recent years. The secularisation of spirituality has gone hand-in-hand with the recognition that at least some of the qualities, captured in the term ‘spirituality’ are available to scientific enquiry.

In the neuroscientific study of spiritual practices, for example, bracketing aspects that lie outside the remit of science has enabled enormous progress. Lutz et al. (2007) are explicit on this point in relation to their studies of meditation:

[F]rom the vantage point of the researcher who stands outside the tradition, it is crucial to separate the highly detailed and verifiable aspects of traditional knowledge about meditation from the transcendental claims that form the metaphysical or theological context of that knowledge. (p. 502)

The enormous progress that has come about through incorporation of spirituality into science by taking such a stance is evidenced by the exponential rise in research papers demonstrating that the practice of meditation or some other form of mindfulness-enhancing technique is associated with measurable changes in the structure and function of the brain and other bodily systems, and can bring about cognitive, emotional, and health-related benefits (reviewed briefly in next section).

The incorporation of spirituality into neuroscience, then, has entailed the extirpation of those aspects of the former that cannot be accommodated in the latter. The meditation practices that Lutz, Dunne and Davidson have researched, for example, are drawn from Buddhist traditions which hold that consciousness does not have a material basis (Samuel 2014). This Buddhist worldview has been jettisoned since the hegemony in neuroscience views consciousness as inextricable tied to the brain.

Let us be clear: the contemporary flowering of neuroscientific research into spirituality is a logical continuation of the project to map all experience as arising from patterns of neural activity; there is no compromise of the metaphysical assumptions of science. The question that should be asked, however, is whether there has been a compromise too far on the part of spirituality.

The one area that penetrates to the core of this question is, I suggest, that of the *sacred*. For many, a definition of spirituality that leaves out the sacred would be emaciated. Hill et al. (2000) insist from a review of historical considerations and empirical research that spirituality is akin to religion in being concerned with subjective feelings, thoughts, and behaviours that arise from a search for the sacred. And the authors specify the sacred as referring to a “divine being, divine object, Ultimate Reality, or Ultimate Truth as perceived by the individual” (p. 66). Central to the notion of the sacred is connectedness—that individuals endeavour to become more connected to the divine, nature, or the ultimate in whichever way they conceive it, and thereby to realise their sense of meaning or purpose (George et al. 2000).

Paloutzian and Park (2005) subsume the notion of the sacred within human *meaning-making* systems, thereby placing the distinctive quality of the holy within the more general propensity to establish frames of reference within which our world becomes intelligible. Whilst there can be no doubt that this quest for meaning is a defining hallmark of the mind (Lancaster 1991), and imbuing objects and events with a sacral quality is for many central to the quest, it rather sidesteps the more ontological question—Is the sacredness only a projection of the personal psyche or is there some additional quality inherent in the object, ritual, or space deemed to be sacred? The roots of the words for sacred in both Hebrew and Latin have the sense of ‘setting apart,’ which was construed within a worldview that holds the psyche to be derivative of a more inclusive reality that transcends the seeming separateness between mind and the world of physical objects. In this spiritual worldview, intention impacts not only on the individual mind but also on the world of objects and events, thereby setting them apart. Thus a ritual, for example, would

be viewed as carrying the potential to affect not only participants' meaning-making but also the world beyond them.

The whole notion of *transcendence* brings into focus the challenge spirituality brings to the approach of science. A core feature of spirituality is experience of the transcendent, or at least the quest for such experience (Walach 2011). But does such transcendence necessitate a belief in some form of non-physical reality, as in the divine, for example? Again, we have two fundamentally different views, one compatible with science and the other incompatible. Walach (*ibid*), for example, holds that transcendence pertains to this-worldly experience, connoting transcendence of the ego and its narrow context. Hick (1989), by contrast, asserts that transcendence refers to contact with a non-physical transcendent realm, and that human belief that a transcendent realm exists is well-grounded (Hick 1989).

The tradition most often quoted in the encounter between spirituality and neuroscience is that of Buddhism. Not only has research into meditation frequently focused on Buddhist practice, but also Buddhism has been presented as a tradition that at its core eschews notions of the transcendent (Batchelor 1997), being focused rather on the purification of the mind in ways that sit easily with scientific psychology. In concluding his study of Buddhism and science, however, Lopez (2008) quotes from one of the oldest sources in the Pali canon to emphasise the inaccuracy of such a view. The Buddha is reported to have said:

Should anyone say of me: 'The recluse Gotama does not have any superhuman states, any distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. The recluse Gotama teaches a Dhamma [merely] hammered out by reasoning, following his own line of inquiry as it occurs to him'—unless he abandons that assertion and that state of mind and relinquishes that view, then as [surely as if he has been] carried off and put there, he will wind up in hell. (p. 217)

From the perspective of neuroscience, debates about the reality of transcendent realms and supernatural beings are largely irrelevant—the *experience* of connecting with such realms and beings is clearly real in psychological terms whether or not that which is experienced is. It is undoubtedly legitimate to study the brain states that accompany such experiences, even though, as noted by Fingelkurts and Fingelkurts (2009), we have no scientific way to answer the question as to whether the brain state generates the mystical experience or is a necessary receiving condition for contact with that which is not itself physical, be it God, an angel, or the spirit of a deceased person, for example.

At the end of all discussion, I arrive at the critical point: Does it make a difference? Does it make a difference whether the neuroscientific approach distorts the spiritual traditions it endeavours to study? From the vantage point of neuroscience, there is no reason to criticise demonstrations that specific brain changes accompany particular spiritual practices. The logic is impeccable: if, for example, a meditative practice is intended to have effects on attention, and we find changes in areas of the brain concerned with attention, we have demonstrated a neural correlation for the stated intention. Observation of the brain suggests that the practice does exactly what it says on the tin! But from the perspective of the spiritual traditions, the problem is that of *trivialisation*: There is more to the practice than fits into the neuroscientific bag. Two consequences follow:

1. There is a dilution of the meaning of spirituality as promulgated in the tradition from which the practices are drawn. This is of no consequence to neuroscience, but it has huge implications for our culture more generally. Indeed, there is little doubt that the move towards a plethora of applications of so-called ‘mindfulness’ techniques—in areas ranging from health to business—has eroded the meaning of spirituality. In relation to the dialogue between science and Buddhism, Bodhi (2011, p. 35) remarks that, “There is a real danger that the contemplative challenge might be reduced to a matter of gaining skill in certain techniques, dispensing with such qualities as faith, aspiration, devotion, and self-surrender, all integral to the act of ‘going for refuge.’” Or, as Lopez (2008, p. 216) succinctly puts it, we may end up thinking that the Buddha was “just a nice man.”
2. We may be missing areas of potentially fruitful dialogue as a result of neuroscience perpetuating its monolithic view that reality invariably reduces to physical properties. This view has led to the paramount interest within the neuroscience-spirituality dialogue of observing changes in the body (predominantly the brain) concurrent with the practice of relatively simple spiritual techniques. In the context of the Buddhist-science dialogue, Lopez (2008) and Samuel (2014) have both drawn attention to the much more complex visualisation practices within Tibetan Buddhism. By studying these kinds of practice in relation to the data from neuroscience about perception and memory, for example, we may have much to learn about the role imagination plays in generating models of our inner and outer worlds. Authoritative texts across traditions suggest that mystics have brought about tangible changes in their minds and bodies by effectively playing with the models in tightly disciplined ways. Neuroscience is not only about recording brain changes. The deeper challenge is to understand how the systems of the brain relate to the mind and consciousness, and this modelling process whereby self and world are made accessible in the individual mind seems to lie at the core of such understanding.

The cultural issue raised in the first point above is hardly specific to the encounter between neuroscience and spirituality, and therefore here is not the place to explore it further. The second point comes to the fore in reviewing the directions that recent and current research in the neuroscience of spirituality has taken. Whilst empirical study of neural changes concurrent with the practice of a technique such as meditation has taken pride of place, I shall also consider in the following review more theoretical considerations of the role of brain systems in perceptual and imaginative processes.

Current Research in Neuroscience and Spirituality

Empirical research into the effects of meditation has focused in two main areas: the positive consequences of regular practice for health, professional efficacy, and general well-being; and the neural and other psychological changes that may be

correlated with practice. Whilst these are clearly interrelated (explicating neural and cognitive processes can, for example, help maximise strategies for bringing increased well-being), I shall focus here selectively on the neurophysiological effects. In view of the sheer volume of research findings published over recent years, my review will necessarily be limited to the major considerations. Readers are directed to recent reviews for further detail (see, for example, Cahn and Polich 2006; Chiesa and Serretti 2010; Edwards et al. 2012; Lutz et al. 2008; MacDonald et al. Shapiro 2013; Malinowski 2013).

The consensus from research into meditation is that brain systems for attention are at the forefront of changes observed in association with the practice of a style of meditation that is intended to enhance focused awareness (FA). Malinowski (2013) identifies the processes that contribute to the complex of operations subsumed within the term ‘attention,’ suggesting how each may be involved in FA meditation. Each sub-process engages specific regions of the brain. These systems comprise (1) *the alerting network*, which is hypothesised to be involved in the initial focusing (for example, on the breath); (2) *the default mode network* (so named because its activation is associated with task-unrelated activity), presumed to become more active when the meditator loses focus, with their mind beginning to wander; (3) *the salience network*, which is involved when an individual recognises relevant, or salient, events, and is thought to become active as the meditator notices that their mind has wandered; (4) *the executive network*, presumed to enable the meditator to let go of the distracting train of thought; and finally (5) *the orienting network*, which together with the executive network may be expected to be engaged when the meditator shifts their awareness back to the intended focus.

Research has generally supported these proposed correlations between systems of the brain and the attentional processes thought to be involved in different phases of FA meditation. Thus, Hasenkamp et al. (2012), for example, showed that the *default mode network* became more active during periods of time just prior to meditators becoming aware that their mind had wandered from the specific focus of the meditation, in this case the breath. Conversely, during periods following this awareness, i.e. presumably when meditators became re-focused on the breath, significant activation in the pre-frontal cortex and the inferior parietal cortex was observed, regions associated with the executive network. This latter effect was more pronounced in those meditators having greater meditative experience, suggesting that prolonged practice brings cumulative increases in activation as far as these brain indicators of attention are concerned.

Connected to our control of attention is the ability to detach from habitual modes of cognitive processing. Such *cognitive flexibility* requires us to assert control to overcome the way that features of our world automatically grab our attention. Only by stopping the automaticity (Deikman 1966) might we be able to re-frame the approach we adopt in a given situation. A classic example of such a habitual mode leading to inappropriate processing is the *Stroop effect*. Stroop (1935) demonstrated that our ability to read a colour word (e.g. ‘red’) was compromised when the word was written in ink of a colour that conflicted with the word (e.g. ‘red’ written in blue ink). The Stroop effect demonstrates that the colour that is before our eyes captures

our attention, even when we have been instructed to ignore it. An obvious question therefore arises in relation to meditation given the claimed effects on attention: does meditation lead to increased cognitive flexibility as evidenced through decreased interference on a Stroop task? Studies by Wenk-Sormaz (2005) and Moore and Malinowski (2009) answer this question affirmatively. Moore and Malinowski's study showed that participants' scores on a scale of mindfulness correlated with their accuracy on the Stroop task, and that meditators achieved higher mindfulness scores than non-meditators.

Malinowski (2013) draws on recent evidence from neuroscientific studies to suggest that these effects are in turn mediated by lower emotional reactivity in the meditator group. It may be that performance improvements derive from the influence that greater control of attention can bring to emotional systems, inhibiting reactivity. Indeed, a state of equanimity, viewed as a major goal for many spiritual practices, clearly entails the ability to detach from the lability of emotional states. Research has generally demonstrated that meditation is associated with lowered emotional reactivity, which can bring measurable health benefits. Rubia (2009), for example, reports that regular meditation practice is associated with "positive mood, emotional stability and resilience to stress and negative life events" (p. 2).

Developing compassion is a primary aim of most forms of spiritual practice. Lutz et al. (2004) studied those with long-term experience of Tibetan compassion meditation, and found greater integration across widespread regions of the brain, compared with controls. The researchers studied the power in the gamma band of the EEG, a measure of synchrony in neural patterns of firing. Compared to controls, the long-term practitioners displayed high levels of synchrony not only during their meditation but also at baseline prior to meditating. This latter observation is striking since it suggests the influence of meditation in bringing about long-term changes. After all, the purpose of a regular practice is not simply to engender a given state at the time of the practice but to transform the practitioner in the longer term. Since the goal of the meditation in this study is to bring about a global state of compassion, the global coupling amongst widespread brain regions is especially suggestive. As the authors suggest, it seems that the meditators' brains had indeed been transformed to a more unified state.

In support of such evidence of long-term neural changes as measured electrophysiologically, it has been reported that meditation produces substantive and lasting structural changes in the brain. Lazar et al. (2005) reported that brain regions associated with attention were thicker in meditators than in non-meditators. Luders et al. (2009) showed greater volume of grey matter in regions related to emotional control. Vestergaard-Poulsen et al. (2009) found higher grey matter density in lower brain stem regions associated with breath control. Luders et al. (2012) examined measures indicative of the thickness and connectivity of the corpus callosum, the major neural tract bridging between the two cerebral hemispheres. They found increases in long-term meditators compared with matched controls, suggesting that inter-hemispheric integration may be enhanced through long-term meditation.

From this brief and selective review it is readily apparent that meditation and mindfulness training are associated with changes in the nervous system consistent

with psychological features of the intention behind the practices—gaining greater control over attention and emotion, attaining more integrative states, etc. Returning to my earlier comments about the ways in which spirituality has been secularised and psychologised through its incorporation within a scientific paradigm, the question may be asked whether neuroscientific research can input to a consideration of more transcendent aspects. Some authors have viewed their data demonstrating distinctive patterns of neural activity when participants appear to experience the divine, or some other formulation of an ultimate reality beyond the individual, as supporting the ‘reality’ of what it is that is experienced. Thus, Beauregard and O’Leary (2007, p. 290) assert that, “[T]he evidence supports the view that individuals who have RSMs [religious, spiritual, and/or mystical experiences] do in fact contact an objectively real “force” that exists outside themselves.” Similarly, the extensive studies conducted by Newberg and his colleagues lead them to propose that “Absolute Unitary Being is a plausible, even probable possibility” (Newberg et al. 2001, p. 171). Nevertheless, others are right to advise caution, inasmuch as such statements seem to reflect more the wishes and beliefs of their authors than the direct implications of the data. As Fingelkurts and Fingelkurts (2009, p. 312) put it, “neuroscientific arguments tell us nothing about the true nature of religious experience or God” (for further discussion of these issues, see Lancaster 2013a).

It would be a mistake, however, to think that the various spiritual and mystical traditions are concerned only with ultimate experiences. The nature of the mind is a central topic for these traditions, which leads to a field of enquiry examining the extent to which their insights into the mind accord with neuroscientific data and can contribute to formulating models and hypotheses for further research. Thus Buddhism has much to say about the minutiae of perception; Kabbalah explores the nature of thought beneath the limen of consciousness; Sufism is rich in its discussions of imagination; and the Advaita Vedanta school of Hinduism details the propensity of mind to split reality into subjects and objects. Each of these has been discussed in relation to relevant observations in neuroscience (reviewed in Lancaster 2013a). It is important to note that the religious imperative here differs from neuroscientific goals; in all cases, the religious texts specify details of relevant mental processes specifically to advance the quest for transformation of the adept’s mind. It is through coming to know the inner processes that we are able to harness them in quest of the aspiration to a higher state of being.

The role that religious texts can play is exemplified by the Abhidhamma texts of the Buddhist Pali canon, part of which explores in detail the full implications of the fundamental Buddhist teaching of momentariness for an analysis of the mind (Banerjee 2008; Cousins 1981; Ratnayaka 1981). The teaching insists that the notion of an enduring continuum of consciousness, an ever-flowing ‘stream’ of consciousness, is illusory. There are only *moments*, or *pulses*, of consciousness, each of which arises as a conditioned response to a prior moment, endures for a brief period, and decays, having triggered the next pulse. Unless prolonged through contemplative observation, each moment of consciousness is normally extremely brief, so brief, in fact, that the ancient commentators had calculated it to be 1/74,642 s per moment! (Collins 1982). While there is, no doubt, some hyperbole in such a calculation, the

authors' intention was clearly to stress the brevity of these moments of consciousness, which seemed to me to give a basis for viewing them as the experiential equivalents of micro-stages in neural processing (Lancaster 1997, 2004). In relation to perception, the Abhidhamma identifies seven sub-stages, each of which I have identified with well-researched aspects of the way in which the brain processes signals arriving from sense organs. The initial stages are concerned with the identification of features in the sensory input and their interaction with memory systems to generate hypotheses about the meaning of the input. Later stages lead to incorporation of the output from the earlier stages into an '*I-narrative*' which plays the core role in our normal state of consciousness. Spiritual states entail attenuation of this I-narrative bringing about awareness of processes normally conceived as being *preconscious*. Exploring the interconnections between these insights from Buddhism and relevant neuroscientific data has enabled me to enrich standard models of the mind in ways that do not close the door on the sacred in non-physical terms.

Kabbalah and Neuroscience

Since the editors included in the remit for this chapter a consideration of how spirituality has influenced my own knowledge and practice, I shall close with a brief consideration of the mystical tradition that I have studied and practiced most extensively, that of the *Kabbalah*. The primary thrust of the Kabbalah is towards understanding the ways of God—seemingly far removed from the discourse and methods of neuroscience. Nevertheless, a core feature of the kabbalistic worldview brings the human brain and mind into its orb, namely its teaching of an intricate correspondence between divine and human. In the words of the *Zohar*, the major text of Kabbalah, “The Holy One, blessed be He . . . made this world corresponding to the world above, and everything which is above has its counterpart here below,” and He “made man corresponding to the pattern above, for all is according to wisdom and there is not a single part of man which is not based on the supernal wisdom” (*Zohar* 2:20a; 1:186b, see Matt 2004–2014, for translations). The “pattern above” alludes to the pattern of the divine emanations that channel the spiritual efflux to our world. God and man are *isomorphic* in that they “share the same structure and are logically equivalent” (Shokek 2001, p. 6). In Elliot Wolfson’s (2005) poetic phrase, “God, world, and human are intertwined in a reciprocal mirroring” (p. 32). On the basis of this isomorphism, it is intrinsic to kabbalistic speculation that insights into the mind of God necessarily illumine the nature of the human mind. The “mirroring” equally means that the kabbalistic scheme depicting the divine conformations is effectively a projection of the human mind.

Guided by this principle of isomorphism, I have explored the relationships between core kabbalistic teachings about the macrocosm and processes viewed by neuroscientists as central to the brain’s role in consciousness (Lancaster 2004, 2011a, b, 2013a). In particular, parallels may be discerned between the kabbalistic teachings concerning *unification* and the process of neural *binding*, whereby the

activity in groups of neurones becomes integrated into coherent patterns that seem to prefigure the brain's function in regard to conscious states. In addition, a critical step in brain processes becoming associated with consciousness seems to entail *recurrent processing* whereby 'higher' processing areas feedback onto 'lower' areas (Dehaene et al. 2006; Dehaene and Changeux 2011; Lamme 2003, 2004, 2006). I have argued that this process is paralleled by kabbalistic teachings about the dynamics of the macrocosmic system in which 'higher' activity is initiated by 'lower' inputs and acts back to bathe the entire system in light, or consciousness.

A further initiative in this area attempts to find neuroscientific correlates of states of mystical consciousness as depicted in kabbalistic literature (Lancaster 2013b). Hellner-Eshed (2009) identifies three principal states of mystical consciousness as portrayed in the *Zohar*. Briefly, the first entails an intensification of perception and emotion, together with an attenuation of the inner chatter that generally focuses on the ego; the second state brings centeredness, and a kind of all-knowing awareness that transcends time and the everyday separateness of things; and the final mystical state is associated with an all-consuming light by means of which the mystic becomes integrated with the oneness and unity at the heart of all being.

Unlike the empirical research reviewed earlier my interest here does not entail hooking a would-be mystic up to a brain scanner whilst he or she attempts to attain one or other of these states. My interest lies in unpacking the phenomenology of the states from their descriptions as recorded in extensive texts, and thinking through the ways that known neural processes relate to that phenomenology. It is akin to the theoretical physicist who dreams up models of the fundamental nature of things in ways that may or may not be subsequently tested in the crucible of empirical research. Ultimately, these potential links between kabbalistic themes and our understanding of the brain contribute to a contemporary esotericism, which takes the 'sacred sciences' (Nasr 1993) of the past and projects them forward in relation to the new data revealed through twenty-first century research.

And it is here that I close my chapter with some speculation about the future of neuroscience and spirituality. Those formulations of spirituality that secularise it in order to bring it into the orb of scientific materialism will, I think, increasingly be seen to be inadequate. There is a balance between the role neuroscience plays in shaping views broadly held in society and its position as reflective of changing worldviews. It seems to me that the worldview in western society is changing, and will accordingly impact on the future of science. Many in our society are demanding more than neatly packaged mindfulness programmes; they seek nourishment through contact with the sacred in deeper ways. There are signs that science is growing beyond its narrowly materialistic bounds, with, for example, neuroscientists joining with quantum physicists to argue that consciousness extends beyond the brain (Schwartz et al. 2004). Our vision of consciousness and the mind will expand accordingly, perhaps increasingly recognising a transcendent, non-material basis. Beauregard (2014) has recently advanced such a view, arguing that the *primordial psyche*, as he names it, cannot be reduced to material processes. Similarly Barušs (2010) writes that at the core of everything lies "a form of transcendent consciousness accessed through the sense of presence that gives qualia their qualia-like properties" (p. 224).

Neuroscience will be seen as a part of a revitalised science that is no longer restricted by its adherence to a materialism appropriate to a bygone age. It will be a science that incorporates values appropriate to the study of the connectedness within all things, the transcendent unity that was traditionally the quest of all forms of spirituality and mysticism. Neuroscience will become a means to understand the brain's place in that larger scheme through which above and below are unified in a mind whose substrate cannot be located only within the human brain.

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Chapter 13

Spirituality: Perspectives from Psychology

Maureen Miner and Martin Dowson

Abstract The engagement of modern psychology with spirituality has spanned more than a century, following seminal inquiries by William James, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. Today, there is no single understanding of spirituality within psychology. Nevertheless, psychological and psychologically-informed studies of spirituality have consistently revealed important aspects of this area of human functioning including the identification of a range of approaches and orientations to spirituality; the importance of various beliefs, attitudes and cognitive styles associated with spirituality; the relationship and contributions of personality and emotion to spirituality; and the relevance of spiritual attachments to human development and well-being. In the practice of psychotherapy, spirituality's inclusion has some empirical support, although professional development in spiritually-informed practice is relatively sparse. The challenge for future research is to consider whether psychological approaches may illuminate additional aspects of spirituality – especially those (such as the numinous and mysterious) that are not easily constrained within a psychological paradigm. For this illumination to occur, psychologists must be open to apparently anomalous and inexplicable components of spirituality, while maintaining a psychological perspective that facilitates sound theoretical and empirical examinations of new arenas of spirituality.

Introduction

Following seminal inquiries by William James, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, the engagement of modern psychology with spirituality has spanned more than a century. Today, there is no single understanding of spirituality within psychology. Nevertheless, psychological and psychologically-informed studies of spirituality have consistently revealed important aspects of spirituality as both a psychological

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trait and a psychological state. These aspects have included the importance of various beliefs, attitudes and cognitive styles associated with spirituality; the relationship and contributions of personality and emotion to spirituality; and the relevance of spiritual attachments to human development and well-being. In the practice of psychotherapy, the inclusion of spirituality has some empirical support, although professional development in spiritually-informed practice is relatively sparse. The challenge for future research is to consider whether psychological approaches may illuminate additional aspects of spirituality – especially those (such as the numinous and mysterious) that are not easily constrained within a psychological paradigm. For this illumination to occur, psychologists must be open to apparently anomalous and inexplicable components of spirituality, while maintaining a psychological perspective that facilitates sound theoretical and empirical examinations of new arenas of spirituality. The involvement of psychology in the study of spirituality has a long, and sometimes fraught, history. This chapter outlines this history, noting progress from early psychological studies through to recent neurobiological research. In doing so, the chapter discusses various definitions of, and theoretical approaches to, spirituality; reviews historical and contemporary research and debates concerning psychology and religion; examines developmental approaches to spirituality and spiritual growth; and explores a variety of practical applications of spirituality in therapeutic practice – including the application of various modes of spirituality (e.g., prayer, meditation, and mindfulness) in professional interventions for mental health.

Understandings of Spirituality Within Psychology

Psychology has engaged with both spirituality and religion since its foundation as a distinct academic discipline around the end of the nineteenth century. Early work focused on religions as systems of belief, ritual, relationships, experience, and consequential behaviours; and/or on religiousness as the individual expressions of religion (e.g., Galton 1872; Starbuck 1899). However, in seminal descriptions of varieties of religious experiences, it might be thought that William James' definition of religion is similar to contemporary definitions of spirituality: "Religion, therefore, as I now ask you arbitrarily to take it, shall mean for us the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine" (James 1902/1961, p. 42). Yet, unlike some of his contemporaries, James distinguished between existential and spiritual judgments about religion. For James, existential judgments relate to religion's nature, origins and history, whereas spiritual judgments relate to religion's importance, meaning, and significance. In this way James in fact contrasted *religion* as feelings, acts, and experiences, with *spiritual* as the valuing of those phenomena.

During the first quarter of the twentieth century, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung also contributed to the *psychology* of religion, and thereby to an understanding of the nature and functions of spirituality even if 'spirituality' was not used as an explicit term in their works. Freud (1901) is well-known for his assertion that religion

is a neurosis, or defence against forbidden unconscious impulses and functions to provide a sense of psychological protection by the Father (1913). Jung (1961) also related the origins of religiousness to unconscious psychological needs: pre-existing spiritual archetypes within the collective unconscious functioned to meet needs for integration of conscious and unconscious material. Despite the early work outlined above, for most of the remainder of the twentieth century religiousness and spirituality were considered as similar, if not interchangeable, constructs. As such, studies in the psychology of religion during this period typically subsumed spirituality within substantive definitions of religion pertaining to the sacred, the divine, or an ultimate power; and functional definitions that asserted that the purpose of religion is to address existential issues pertaining to suffering, death, and meaning (Zinnbauer and Pargament 2005).

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, however, much more attention was paid to discriminating spirituality from religiousness, in some measure due to disenchantment with the disappointing results of positivist programs of research in the psychology of religion, and to the growing strength of the secularization hypothesis which appeared to foretell the death of religious influence (Beit-Hallahmi 1989). Initially, religiousness/religion and spirituality were distinguished as opposites: institutional, objective religion versus personal, subjective spirituality; static religion versus dynamic spirituality; belief-based religiousness versus experience-based spirituality; negative religion versus positive spirituality (Zinnbauer and Pargament 2005). Later, the possibility that the constructs were nested was considered: was spirituality one dimension of the broader construct, religiousness; or was religiousness a particular social form or dimension of the broader phenomenon, spirituality? As spirituality became the more popular term in public and psychological discourse, its position as the broader construct inclusive of religiosity strengthened. However, if spirituality was conceived as religiosity plus ‘something more’ questions about common features or dimensions, and the nature of the ‘something more’ remained. One attempt to specify the ‘something more’ held that the focus of religiousness was the divine (God or gods) whereas spirituality could have a focus on the divine, personal transcendence, or nature (Spilka 1993). In other words, sacred qualities could be attributed to those other than God, including other persons, the self, or nature.

Although debates within the psychology of religion are ongoing, there is currently some consensus that spirituality can be defined as “a personal or group search for the sacred” where the sacred is understood to refer to “concepts of God, higher powers, transcendent beings, or other aspects of life that have been sanctified” (Zinnbauer and Pargament 2005, pp. 34–35). This definition implies a broad understanding of the sacred, and introduces the notion of spirituality as a search. Nevertheless, defining spirituality in this way may limit the conceptual scope of spirituality arbitrarily and unnecessarily by ignoring identifiable functions, modes and levels of spirituality.

Specifically, three main functions of spirituality can be identified. First, spirituality conduces to an integrated system of global meaning (Park 2005) that can be particularly important in contexts of suffering, and in experiences of beauty and other instances of ineffability. Similarly, the pursuit of inner transformation is

an integral function of spirituality (Cottingham 2005); i.e., spirituality addresses a yearning for wholeness, completion, and perfection of the self despite their apparent unattainability. Finally, spirituality is often viewed in terms of connectedness within and between people, and with the sacred (Spilka 1993). Three modes of spirituality, each related to core functions of spirituality listed above, can also be identified (Miner and Dowson 2012). The modes of spirituality refer to the ways in which the functions (or dimensions) of spirituality manifest themselves and include: spirituality as an experience (*sensing* meaning, transformation, and connectedness), spirituality as a trait (*seeking* meaning, transformation, connectedness), and spirituality as a state (*attaining* meaning, transformation, connectedness). Different levels of spirituality (levels of the person, society, environment, or divinity) can also be specified depending on the object or substance or transcendent focus of an experience, trait or state (after Spilka 1993). In light of these considerations, a more comprehensive definition of spirituality that can be applied across levels of spirituality has been proposed (Miner and Dowson 2012, p. 18): *In the context of spiritual experience, spirituality is the search, beyond psychology and physicality, for meaning, transformation, and connectedness (trait), success in which leads to new patterns of understanding, becoming, and relating (state).*

This more comprehensive definition addresses the concerns of Helminiak (2008) and others that equating spirituality only with divinity renders the causes and evaluation of spirituality opaque to psychological investigation. On the other hand, this definition allows reference to God or divinity as a substantive focus of spirituality for *some* people, thus allowing for psychological investigation of the functions and modes of spirituality amongst theists, adherents of non-theistic religions, and the non-religious.

Spirituality Informs Psychological Understandings of Humanity

Consistent with the analyses above, there is growing awareness within psychology that functions and modes of spirituality have wider psychological significance for individuals and hence, spirituality can be viewed as a core dimension of the psychological self (Piedmont and Wilkins 2013). This psychological view of spirituality enables studies of spirituality to use psychological methods and for the discipline itself to gain through the study of spirituality an expanded understanding of the human person. In particular, the sub-disciplines of personality, cognition and human development have been informed by studies of spirituality.

From the time Gordon Allport (1950) argued that spirituality or religiousness formed a core psychological trait that guided and directed the whole personality, researchers in the field of personality have investigated spirituality using empirical methods (see meta-analyses by Saroglou 2002, 2010). However, earlier studies of religiosity or spirituality and personality traits did not confirm whether or not spirituality could be considered (as Allport suggested) a dimension of personality.

As a means of directly investigating this topic, Piedmont (1999) developed a measure of Spiritual Transcendence that was largely independent of the well-recognized personality traits specified by the Five Factor Model of personality (McCrae and Costa 1997). Piedmont's definition of spirituality focused on the human need for transcendence, and "spiritual transcendence" was defined as "the capacity of individuals to stand outside of their immediate sense of time and place to view life from a larger, more objective viewpoint" (Piedmont 1999, p. 988). Subsequent work showed that, while spirituality is a dimension of personality, it is distinguishable from the traditional five factors of personality and represents a distinct motivation to find personal meaning in the search for the sacred (Piedmont and Wilkins 2013). Moreover, spirituality-as-motivation predicts psychological outcomes after other personality traits have been taken into account (Piedmont and Wilkins 2013). In this way, work on spirituality and personality has established that spirituality is a distinct and efficacious personality trait, and so should be considered as more complete understandings of human personality are being developed.

Spirituality has also been studied within the sub-discipline of cognition. Cognitive psychology holds that spiritual beliefs are particular cognitions that can be investigated in the same way as non-spiritual cognitions (Barrett and Zahl 2013). Since most of the psychological studies of spiritual cognitions have been conducted using samples of believers from theistic religions, the types of spiritual cognitions receiving most attention include concepts of God, causal explanations (attributions) relating to God, belief in orthodox religious statements, attention and memory in the context of spiritual experiences, and spiritually or religiously based attitudes. For example, belief in a just and benevolent God rather than fate leads to more positive attributions (Pargament 1997); attributions to God rather than to people or luck are associated with more positive reappraisals (Miner and McKnight 1999); and more positive spiritual attributions and reappraisals foster positive spiritual coping (Pargament 1997). Further, positive spiritual coping (such as seeking spiritual support, doing good deeds, etc.) is linked to reduced psychological symptoms and greater well-being (see a recent review by Barrett and Zahl 2013).

The third sub-discipline that has been informed by studies in spirituality is developmental psychology. Viewing spirituality as a trait that involves meaning-seeking, transformation, and connectedness across the lifespan has led to more complete accounts of human development, and studies of spiritual transformation and connectedness have been informed by developmental theories such as attachment theory (Bowlby 1969; see the next section). Early research (e.g., Elkind 1963) on the development of children's understanding of God investigated parallels with the development of abstract thinking structures. However, an appreciation of spirituality as a search for meaning also led researchers to investigate the inherent capacities of children to form content-meanings, and the ways in which people form meaning systems across the lifespan (Park et al. 2013). Research into preschoolers' understandings of God suggests that although young children may draw pictures of God in human form and recognize God as causal agent (Petrovich 1997), they typically think about God in terms of God's unique, non-anthropomorphic powers (Barrett and Richert 2003). These and similar studies (see a review by

Boyatzis 2005) suggest that children are prepared to draw conclusions about God as transcendent, and then acquire the content of their understandings through religious socialization. Further, children have spiritual experiences (Hay and Nye 1998) and seek to incorporate such experiences into their developing meaning system (Coles 1990). Thus, studies of spirituality and active meaning-making challenge the earlier dominance of socialization theories and establish that people are not passive recipients of meaning (Park et al. 2013).

Psychology Informs Understandings of Spirituality

Studies of spiritual experiences have been conducted by means of phenomenological, correlational, and experimental methods. Phenomenological studies provide rich descriptions of experiences of spirituality at the individual level. For example, William James' (1902) analysis of selected cases pointed to the transformative effects of spirituality and Rudolph Otto's (1958) examination of mystical experiences suggested a pre-conscious sensing of the 'Other' in spiritual experiences related to a personal transcendent object.

Questionnaire studies of spiritual experiences produce descriptions of common elements of these experiences across research participants, and investigate associations between elements of spiritual experiences and other psychological characteristics. In this tradition, Ralph Hood (1995; Hood et al. 2001) developed a measure of mysticism and confirmed three dimensions of mystical experience relating to an undifferentiated sense of cosmic unity; a sense of unity within multiplicity; and interpretative aspects relating to the assigned meaning of the experience (as religious, numinous, etc.), respectively. The reporting of mystical experiences is associated with reports of paranormal and anomalous phenomena (including experiences of UFOs, alien abductions, and near death or past life experiences), with irregular church attendance, and with membership of non-traditional religions (Hood 2005). These studies suggest that the propensity for spiritual experiences may be universal, but the form or meaning of spiritual experiences may be determined by identifiable psycho-social factors.

Experimental studies clarify the precise correlates of spiritual experiences, such as neurological or psychological states. Neuropsychological studies address spirituality as at least partly innate, or hard-wired, with evidence being extant for an array of neurological systems that prepare the individual for spirituality (e.g., McNamara 2009). Conversely, experimental manipulations in extreme situations such as isolation tanks, or using pseudo-psychedelic drugs in a religious setting, demonstrate that both settings and psychological states induced by preparatory mental sets are important correlates of reported spiritual experiences (Hood 1995).

Studies of spirituality as a trait (i.e., as the disposition towards a search for meaning, transformation and connectedness) and as a relatively attained state help clarify individual differences in the development and psychological expression of spirituality. As indicated previously, spiritual experiences are common among

children (Hay and Nye 1998). Yet the understanding of spiritual experiences is shaped by close human relationships. Thus, just as nurturing infant-caregiver relationships are necessary for the development of brain structures and cognitive-emotional templates for all subsequent relationships (Schore 1994), so too, the development of the infant brain in interaction with a sensitive caregiver provides the representational templates necessary for secure attachment to God (Miner 2009b). If early human attachment experiences are markedly deficient, then later theistic spiritual experiences will be less able to provide adequate meaning, transformation and connectedness (Miner 2009a), even when the child or adolescent is presented with effective religious teaching (Granqvist 2010). Moreover, infant-caregiver relationships are important for subsequent spirituality not simply because close relationships facilitate the acceptance of religious teaching in the family home. To the contrary, secure attachment to God predicts positive experiences of God beyond the effects of attachment to parents and doctrinally based concepts of God (Zahl and Gibson 2012). Further, children with secure attachment to caregivers are more likely to perceive God in positive ways, irrespective of whether the child is brought up within a religious home (Granqvist et al. 2007). For these reasons it is reasonable to conclude that secure attachment experiences in relation to God provide a basis for the development of a positive cognitive-affective framework facilitating spiritual seeking and at least partial attainment of spiritual states of meaning, transformation and connectedness. As such, psychological studies from an attachment framework demonstrate not only that religious education, but also emotional preparation for theistic spiritual understanding as provided by attachment with human parents, is essential in the development of spiritual traits and states.

Finally, psychological studies of adolescents and adults clarify how life contexts and psychological resources (such as human attachment styles, cognitive processes, personality, etc.) motivate trait-spirituality. The transcendent object of the search (e.g., God, gods, nature,) cannot be investigated psychologically. Yet psychological research clarifies the process of spiritual seeking, particularly when situations of threat, loss, or challenge motivate the spiritual search. In these situations, as causes and outcomes are questioned, meaning becomes salient (Spilka et al. 1985); self-transformation is typically sought (e.g., through psychotherapy or religious conversion); corresponding changes in meaning-systems occur (Paloutzian 2005); and relationships with others, including spiritual relationships, are intensified (Granqvist and Kirkpatrick 2013).

Applications of Spirituality in Psychological Practice

As both a trait and relatively attained state, spirituality is recognized as having implications for psychological health. For this reason, the profession accepts that spiritual issues may form a focus of therapy, as well as contributing to the treatment of psychological issues. For example, from edition IV onwards, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association has included loss of

faith, and questioning spiritual values as foci of therapy (see Turner et al. 1995). Further, despite some caution due to restricted clinical evidence, psychological practice informed by various theoretical orientations is currently being developed. This practice includes interventions based on the functions of meaning, transformation and connectedness in both non-religious and religious forms of spirituality.

Meaning is emphasized within existential therapies such as logotherapy, developed by Victor Frankl (1997). Frankl argued that there is an innate longing for meaning that can motivate perseverance through suffering and result in eventual healing. In therapy, the focus is on the spiritual, understood in terms of the human will as it seeks meaning, and not in terms of religion per se.

Transformation of the self is recognized as a goal of therapies broadly associated with positive psychology, and spiritually-based interventions in this tradition are used to enhance acceptance and other qualities previously understood primarily in religious terms. Acceptance is based on non-judgmental awareness of oneself, attained through the practice of mindfulness. Mindfulness has a long history within Buddhist practice and associated therapies include purposeful attention in the present (Kabat-Zinn et al. 1992) and observation of bodily sensations, thoughts and feelings (Bishop 2002; Shapiro et al. 1998). Through mindfulness clients learn to tolerate distress and regulate maladaptive emotions, thus promoting inner transformation and capacities for better relationships with others (Hayes et al. 1999).

Connectedness is emphasized in therapies that seek to deepen relationships with other people, and/or the divine, or develop a person's sense of unity with the cosmos. Therapies based on attachment theory such as schema therapy (Young et al. 2003) help clients modify insecure styles of attaching to others and promote adaptive modes of coping and relating (Giesen-Bloo et al. 2006). A spiritually modified form of schema therapy, incorporating thoughts and imagery relating to the client's attachment to God, has been developed for use with theists (Miner 2009c).

Availability of Professional Development in Spirituality for Psychologists

The study of spirituality is not compulsory for psychologists, although the psychology of religion and spirituality is recognized as a sub-discipline within psychology (as evidenced by Division 36, *Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, of the American Psychological Association- APA). As a non-sectarian grouping, Division 36 offers professional development through its journal, *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, mid-year conference, and program at the APA annual convention. As a discrete topic and subject, the psychology of religion is increasingly taught in tertiary psychology programs world-wide.

Further, some religiously-based institutions in the USA offer APA accredited graduate programs in psychology where the explicit teaching of religious spirituality is integrated with mainstream psychology. These programs include Christian

psychology programs at Azusa Pacific University, Biola University, Fuller Theological Seminary, George Fox University, Regent University, and Wheaton College. The *Journal of Psychology & Christianity* and *Journal of Psychology & Theology* also provide for the ongoing professional development of Christian Psychologists.

There is no corresponding APA-accredited Buddhist program that could encompass the whole of one's psychological training, but Buddhist practices are taught within graduate programs in transpersonal psychology. Often Jungian theories and parapsychology are also taught within the curricula informed by transpersonal psychology. Yeshiva University in New York offers an accredited graduate psychology program in which Jewish values and spirituality are emphasized throughout the curriculum and in campus life, and the *Journal of Psychology and Judaism* offers academic material for the professional development of psychologists working in the Jewish community.

Future Directions for Spirituality Within Psychology

Any discipline tends to fit the content of its focus into the contours or parameters of its own discipline. Hence, psychology views spirituality in ways consistent with psychological understandings of phenomena. The challenge for psychology, however, is to consider whether psychological approaches to spirituality can illuminate aspects of spirituality that are not easily constrained within a psychological paradigm. For this challenge to be adopted, psychologists must be open to diverse and seemingly anomalous components of spirituality, yet without losing the integrity of a psychological perspective.

Spiritual experiences, traits and states that are not yet satisfactorily explained by psychology present theoretical and methodological challenges to researchers. The experience of God as an attachment figure, for example, can be partially explained in terms of innate preparedness for God representations (Boyatzis 2005), human attachment (Kirkpatrick 1999), neurological and cognitive development (Schore 1994), and specific religious socialization (Granqvist and Hagerkull, 1999). However, the apparent capacity of (at least some) people with insecure human attachment, compromised neurological development and/or minimal religious education to develop secure attachment to God remains unexplained psychologically. Further, while the consequences of secure attachment to God for positive psychological outcomes are well-established (Zahl and Gibson 2012), it is not yet conclusively established whether secure attachment to God as a transcendent attachment figure can offer psychological benefits beyond those offered by human attachment figures. Research in this area must be informed by understanding of the content of spiritual representations, as well as by processes implicated in developing and maintaining secure attachment. In future studies, the interplay of content (clarified by theological or religious studies) and processes (clarified by psychological and neurological studies) should be considered.

Processes involved in seeking spiritual meaning, transformation and connectedness also require further research at the boundaries of other disciplines. Whereas the search for meaning clearly involves cognitive processes and representations (Park et al. 2013), it is possible that spiritual meaning-making might begin with direct relational knowledge of the spiritual object of meaning in cases where that object is personal. For this reason, other ways of meaning-making, such as those developed through direct relational knowledge of God or divine figures (Watts and Williams 1988) should be included in future work. The search for transformation as a dimension of trait-spirituality raises questions about the processes and outcomes of spiritual maturation: are these processes and outcomes the same as for psychological maturation in general, or different? Broadly, psychological maturation is understood as the unfolding of innate capacities within a facilitative environment, but the innate capacities for spirituality, the nature of a facilitative spiritual environment, and the degree to which ‘unfolding’ corresponds to the process of spiritual maturation require much more research. Finally, the search for connectedness with the transcendent is typically facilitated by human communities. Facilitating groups, such as those associated with a particular church, mosque, temple, or sacred site, have been studied psychologically to clarify their processes and functions (e.g., Krause and Wulff 2009). However, these groups also claim to be more than a club or social network by virtue of their reference to the sacred. If so, research is needed to establish what it is about these groups beyond the psychological that supports connectedness with the numinous or transcendent.

Spiritual states indicating relatively attained meaning, transformation and connectedness have not been studied extensively by psychologists. From time to time specific exemplars of attained spirituality have been invoked in the psychological literature (such as Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela), but there is little agreement regarding the antecedents and consequences of attained spirituality, even in paradigm cases where there is apparently high attainment of all three dimensions. There is also to date little investigation of states where spirituality is *desired* but not attained. These states may be indicative of spiritual disorders and conditions that have compromised the person’s grasp of meaning, their capacity for transformation, and their connectedness. Thus, more work from the perspective of psychopathology, with sensitivity to the desire for spirituality, is needed.

In order to investigate some of the boundary conditions between psychology and spirituality, research methods that can encompass both fields need to be further developed. One limitation of traditional quantitative psychological studies, for example, is their incapacity to fully encompass global experiences, traits and states. If the sacred and transcendent represents the unity and wholeness of existence, or God, then traditional quantitative methods will be inadequate for holistic investigations of spirituality. Conversely, one limitation of qualitative, phenomenological studies is that their focus and methods involve subjective human consciousness. Thus, aspects of spirituality that may be objective and/or not constituted by human consciousness cannot be studied phenomenologically. The method of William James (1902) was the first attempt to bring together objective and phenomenological approaches to spirituality. With increasing philosophical

explication of phenomenology (Heidegger 1962; Husserl 1913/1962), and the development of inter-subjective accounts of reality (e.g., Bracken 2009), it may be possible to suggest new research methods that investigate spirituality both subjectively and objectively, in the context of unified research programs.

Conclusion

Spirituality is increasingly accepted as an integral aspect of human psychology. With reference to both theoretical and empirical studies, this chapter has outlined historical and contemporary psychological understandings of spirituality; explored spirituality from personality, cognitive, and development perspectives; and addressed the contribution that awareness of spirituality can make to interventions directed towards mental health and personal wellbeing. While more work remains to be done in each of these areas, spirituality has emerged as a fundamental construct in psychology, and is now recognised as being critical when addressing the wellbeing and holistic development of human beings. This recognition has extended, and continues to extend, both our understanding of spirituality and our understanding of psychology as a discipline capable of addressing important spiritual issues.

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Chapter 14

Religion, Spirituality and Social Work

Sheila Furness

Abstract This chapter will set out key terminology relating to religion and spirituality and review the extent to which religion and spirituality have been recognised within social work education and social work practice in the UK. Case examples taken from research carried out by the author will be used to illustrate how religious and spiritual beliefs shape and influence decision making on the part of professionals as well as those accessing services. Social work needs to recognise that religion and spirituality can be potential sources of support at times of crisis as well as contribute to distress. Some of the challenges for social work in the twenty-first century will be acknowledged along with the pressing need to develop more appropriate plural social welfare policies and culturally sensitive services that reflect the diverse belief systems and traditions of an ever changing population.

Defining Religion and Spirituality in Social Work

Although there has been some interest and attention given to the relationship between religion, spirituality and social work, in practice the topic remains controversial and contested. It is necessary to appreciate its wider relevance, significance and contribution to social work practice if this matter is to be given greater prominence. This chapter aims to consider some of the differing definitions of key terms and to recognise that the terms themselves may hinder progress towards encouraging practitioners to become more culturally competent in their dealings with diverse service users, whether affiliated to a particular faith or not. There will be some discussion of the wider literature and resources relating to this area, and the place of religion and spirituality in contemporary social work practice. Possible future directions will be explored.

Greater attention has been paid to recognising and exploring the significance and impact of religion and spirituality in the United States (US) social work education, training and practice. Furman et al. (2007, p. 243) trace the development of this interest, most notably in the 1980s and mid-1990s, that led to a National

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Society for Spirituality and Social Work, and from 1995 when the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) reintroduced references to religion and spirituality in the social work curriculum. Likewise the British Association for the Study of Spirituality (BASS) was officially launched in 2010, however reference to religion and spirituality is more implicit rather than explicit in the British social work curriculum. Internationally, a number of authors have contributed to the growing literature (Canda 1998; Patel et al. 1998; Nash and Stewart 2002; Moss 2005; Gilligan and Furness 2006; Crisp 2008, 2010; Gray 2008; Canda and Furman 2009; Mathews 2009; Furness and Gilligan 2010a; Holloway and Moss 2010; MacKinlay 2010). I argue that religion and spirituality need to be recognised as legitimate areas of enquiry in the social work curriculum and ongoing professional development if these matters are to become accepted and routine aspects of all assessments, interventions and culturally competent practice (Gilligan and Furness 2006; Furness and Gilligan 2010a).

One cannot define religion or spirituality without first acknowledging that the bases of all of our actions are beliefs that assist us to determine our lives' goals and objectives. Beliefs give us purpose but when challenged we may either discard or change them or seek further supporting evidence. Beliefs can be directed towards a person, a set of ideas or an abstract principle and guide our choice of goals and decisions as in 'belief in my son', 'belief in democracy' and 'belief in God' (Coleman 2011, p. 1). Religiousness may include beliefs about a personal God and involve prescribed rituals, worship and a commitment to a religion's belief system (Hunt 2005). Beliefs about the nature of humankind, its purpose and destiny, and its relationship with the world are increasingly referred to as spiritual beliefs. Spirituality has been equated with personal, intimate, experiential experiences, and for some may be connected to their relationship with the sacred (Heelas 2002, p. 358).

Crisp (2010) finds that there is no consensus about the relationship between religion and spirituality, let alone about agreed definitions of each of these terms. The blurring between religion and spirituality is common in the literature. Holloway and Moss (2010) identify that for some spirituality is an aspect of religion whereas others consider religion to be a subset of spirituality. They advocate for spirituality to be an inclusive concept that accommodates those who have a religious worldview as well as those who do not.

Social workers need to be aware of differing interpretations and recognise that all constructs are subject to cultural variation and renegotiation that lead to continuity and change. Some individuals may not be comfortable using the term/s at all whereas others may not be able to separate their spirituality from their religious identity. Rather than impose a narrow definition and interpretation of either term, Beckford (2003) advocates an interpretivist approach that accepts how individuals define their beliefs and practices. Therefore the focus should be on finding out about the beliefs of the individual and not assuming that all those belonging to a particular faith share the same beliefs. Coleman (2011) recognises ambiguity in discourses of spirituality and ageing in terms of generational differences in communication and supports a view of studying belief in the context of people's daily lives.

In order to deal with some of the barriers and resistance towards the contested nature of these terms, as a starting point it is important that we reflect on our own understanding of what spirituality and religion mean to us. As a social work educator, I facilitate workshops that provide opportunities for students to explore their own beliefs and set exercises to assist them to identify the significance of religious and spiritual beliefs in the lives of service users as part of their training. The aim is to encourage students to overcome any embarrassment about discussing such issues and to help them find ways of talking about and sharing their own beliefs with others.

The Relevance of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work

Several authors, notably from the US, Britain, Australia and New Zealand, have made a compelling case for social work students, practitioners, educators, service providers and policy makers to pay greater attention to religion and spirituality as an essential part of developing cultural competence (Canda 1998; Nash and Stewart 2002; Gilligan and Furness 2006; Gray 2008; Canda and Furman 2009; Mathews 2009; Crisp 2010; Furness and Gilligan 2010a; MacKinlay 2010; Holloway and Moss 2010).

Cultural competence is a process of learning about self and the relationship with other cultures and worldviews and it can assist students and practitioners to develop greater awareness and sensitivity about the differing needs of service users (Kee 2007; Laird 2008; Furness and Gilligan 2010a). The term itself is problematic as it implies an essentialist, fixed and static notion of culture. The concept originated in the US and a number of authors have developed models of transcultural competence to assist health workers, in particular, to become more aware of the diverse cultural needs and responses of patients in their care (Campinha-Bacote 1994; Papadopoulos et al. 1998; Purnell and Paulanka 1998). The term also implies that it is possible to acquire knowledge about others' religious and spiritual practices and this can then be applied to all those identifying with a particular characteristic. This is unhelpful as it leads to stereotyping and a lack of recognition of difference between and amongst different groupings.

In the UK literature, Holloway and Moss (2010, p. 42) have developed a model for conceptualising spirituality and social work. They suggest that religion and spirituality are complex phenomena and share the potential for good and for bad. It is vital to recognise both elements as there have been serious injuries and fatalities where social workers have ignored signs and indicators of abuse and neglect on the basis of an unhealthy and unquestioning acceptance of others' religious and cultural traditions and practices (Briggs et al. 2011; Laming 2003; The National Working Group on Child Abuse linked to Faith or Belief 2012).

Furness and Gilligan (2010a, b) have developed a framework made up of eight principles that is designed to be applied at all stages of assessment, planning, intervention and evaluation and broadly follows person-centred and strengths-

based approaches (Rogers 2003; Saleeby 2008). The principles can be reframed as questions or prompts for reflection. Central to the encounter is the recognition of the strengths, needs, views, beliefs and experiences of the service user and acknowledgement of their expertise about their own needs and beliefs. The practitioner works to develop a relationship based on genuine interest and concern, trust, respect and a willingness to engage by listening to the individual, by being open and responsive, and to review and revise any plans in creative ways. The practitioner needs to seek out opportunities to discuss religious and spiritual beliefs and any strengths, needs or difficulties that arise from them with others. Where necessary, practitioners can seek relevant information and advice about unfamiliar religious and spiritual practices and also need to be self-aware and reflexive about their own religious and spiritual beliefs and their responses to others (Furness and Gilligan 2010a, b).

The framework has been tested out by the authors and a questionnaire was used to find evidence of its usefulness (or not) in practice situations (Furness and Gilligan 2010b). Findings from respondents indicated that some students made assumptions based on ethnicity and appearance and their own belief systems. Students with a lack of religious belief started to recognise that this may have contributed to their overlooking the importance of religion and belief in the lives of others as it was not significant for them and they made an assumption that others shared the same world view. Some Asian British Muslim students tended to view others sharing similar characteristics as sharing the same beliefs, and white British people as having no strong faith beliefs. The majority of students in this sample stated that they had responded to discussions about religion led by service users and had not imposed their own religious beliefs (if they had any) on others. However, these claims need to be treated with some caution as students may not wish to admit this or not recognise any omission. Fears about raising matters of religion with others may be due to ignorance, embarrassment and lack of knowledge; not being able to differentiate between religious and cultural practices; offending or upsetting people; and a lack of confidence or skill (Furness and Gilligan 2010b).

A further questionnaire surveyed students' views about the extent to which religion and belief had been discussed in practice settings (Furness and Gilligan 2012). Their responses suggest that individual perspectives on and experiences of religion together with the informal views of colleagues determine whether and how religion and belief are acknowledged as significant and relevant. Students reported that few agencies promoted any opportunity for staff development and training in respect of this area, perhaps because issues of religion and belief are not considered important, significant or relevant or are given less priority amongst other pressing issues and responsibilities. Employers must comply with equality legislation, but the experiences of respondents suggest that social care agencies need to become much more proactive in offering training and preparing staff to engage with matters of faith.

Making Links to Religion and Spirituality in Practice

There are key areas of social work practice where religion and spirituality are seen as more relevant and applicable to peoples' lives. This section cannot cover all areas in much detail but will signpost the reader to some relevant resources (Crisp 2010; Furness and Gilligan 2010a; Holloway and Moss 2010; Mathews 2009).

Religion and spirituality concern both the practitioner and their service users and carers. The word spirit is derived from the latin word 'spiritus' which means soul, courage, vigour and breath. When we are born, we take our first breath (inspire) as an animating force. By taking breath we make our journey through life, leading to our last breath when we die/expire. In this way, our spirit is essential to life experience and exhibits itself in our actions, relationships and engagement (Gilbert 2006 cited in Mathews 2009; Skelton 2014). Whether or not we are aware and define ourselves in terms of spirituality there will be times over the life course when key events prompt us to question for example, why those events occurred and their meaning, how we can survive or endure crisis and difficulty, and what can assist us to cope with challenges. Social workers will engage with people at those times and may be able to draw on peoples' inner strengths in creative ways to help them overcome any obstacles and realise their hopes for a better life (Canda 1998; Crisp 2010).

Many parents bring up their children to adopt particular religious beliefs, practices and traditions. Some may embrace those religious beliefs whilst others may decide to believe but not be outwardly religious, to change or lose faith, or have no faith. Within any faith, there will be wide variations of adherence to religious practices.

Crisp (2010) explores the connections between religion and spirituality across the life course, starting with childhood and giving some consideration to key life events and transitions. Social workers can assist individuals to make sense of and enrich their lives through recognising and enacting everyday rituals whether for religious, spiritual or other purposes. Everyday practical rituals may include washing before prayer, eating certain foods (kosher, halal, vegetarian), celebrating key events such as birthdays, marriage and festivals (Christmas, Eid), and acts of solidarity, such as fasting and attending funerals, all help to shape our identity and provide some sense of order, security and connection (Crisp 2010).

Religion is an important aspect of identity and for many believers shapes and determines everyday living. Horwath et al.'s (2008a, b) study provided an insight into the significance of faith to families of different religions. Most parents shared recognised core conditions of good parenting despite their diverse religious backgrounds and, for many, religious belief and practice strengthened this. Social workers need to be aware of the range of cultural differences around the roles and responsibilities of family members, for example, around child rearing and discipline in African families (Nzira 2011). Legislation and guidance relating to children and families in the UK, such as the Children Act 1989 and Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, requires social workers to take into account such matters as religious persuasion, racial origin, and cultural and linguistic background when assessing

children in need and placing or preparing young people for leaving care (Furness and Gilligan 2010a, p. 22–23).

Demographics indicate that there are growing numbers of older people living longer and although age alone is not a predictor of high dependency there is some correlation between the ‘oldest old’ and conditions such as dementia and poor health (Falkingham et al. 2010). Social workers can assist those diagnosed with dementia to maintain their sense of personhood through meaning making and creativity (Jewell 2011). For many religion and spirituality are important factors to be considered when dealing with loss, end of life care, death and bereavement (see Holloway 2007; Jewell 2004; Mackinlay 2010).

There is a growing body of research that links religion, mental wellbeing and health (Koenig 1998; Koenig et al. 2001; Loewenthal 2006). Western approaches to mental health need to change and adopt other perspectives taken from Asian and African cultural worldviews if services are to become more responsive and culturally sensitive to the needs of an increasingly diverse population (Fernando 2002). Dein and Bhui (2013) carried out a literature review of studies relating to cultural psychiatry. New areas of work involve understanding the psychological impact and effects of sex abuse, trafficking and torture among asylum seekers and refugees, and the potential role of religion and spirituality in promoting their recovery (George and Ellison 2014). It is vital that social workers keep abreast of emerging research findings in order to ensure that they are able to respond appropriately to the needs of a diverse population (Furness 2014).

The Importance of Developing Culture-Specific Understandings

All societies have developed culture-specific ways to deal with problems and distress. In the west, counselling and psychotherapy have become accepted psychological healing methods and “rely on sensory information defined by the physical plane of reality (western science)” whilst others have adopted a more holistic approach that “rely on the spiritual plane of existence in seeking a cure” (Sue 2006, p. 211). Western healing has tended to ignore or discredit alternative forms of healing. It is necessary at the very least to acknowledge these different help-giving networks as well as to question the use of some forms of ‘healing’ when the effects may be detrimental to the person’s development and well-being. In many cases, beliefs about miracle cures and the power of prayer can have a positive influence. However, individuals can also fall prey to those wishing to exploit that person’s belief system and extort money for miracle cures, healing and purging of evil spirits. Social workers need to be alert to such claims and try to work with the family and local community to understand their views and share any misgivings about potential harm. In some cases, it may be necessary to follow safeguarding procedures as a protective measure.

Culture teaches people how to think, feel and act in the face of death and are expressed in shared rituals (Weinstein 2008). The UK literature on death and dying tends to be Eurocentric and generally does not include discussion of how other cultures deal with such issues. Holloway (2007, p. 87) points out that “models of individual bereavement might not have universal currency in different social contexts”. Each religion as well as ethnic groupings will have shared understandings of the rituals surrounding death. Social workers need to seek out relevant information regarding unfamiliar religious and spiritual beliefs and practices; become self-aware and reflexive about their own religious and spiritual beliefs and their responses to loss and bereavement; listen to others’ views about their needs and beliefs and be open to learn by engaging with others of different faiths (Furness and Gilligan 2010a). The following authors consider the various social and cultural processes and events that need to be taken into account in the preparation for and aftermath of death from different religious viewpoints (Henley and Schott 2001; Holloway 2007; Crabtree et al. 2008; Johnson and Mcgee 1998). Social workers also need to be mindful of the support needs of children and how agencies can work together to offer financial, psychological, emotional and social aid to deal with loss and bereavement (Crompton 1998; Thompson 2002).

Professional Training and Development in Social Work

The professional award of social work in England is a generic qualification at Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate (PG) degree levels. Following recommendations from the social work reform board, the College of Social Work (TCSW) was established to promote high standards in social work education, training and practice. One initiative was to publish curriculum guides to assist Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) to ensure that key knowledge and skills were covered in the teaching of social work students. There are a number of relevant guides relating to religion, self-definition and spirituality, physical health, dementia and end of life care (see, for instance, Anderson and Sapey 2012; Castleton 2012; Fish 2012; Singh 2012). The curriculum is also informed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAAHE) benchmark statement for social work (2008, p. 8) that requires graduates to acquire, evaluate and apply knowledge of the processes contributing to social differences and problems of inequality.

In terms of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), qualified social workers are required to update their skills and knowledge as a condition of their registration with the regulatory body for social work in England, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). The Professional Capability Framework (PCF) can guide social workers in their choice of learning activity.

Likewise for academic qualifications, a number of Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) offer CPD short courses as well UG and PG programmes relating to religion and spirituality, often designed so that students can apply learning within their own

discipline. Local Authority workforce development also offers training to ensure that workers understand their statutory responsibilities and develop appropriate skills to carry out their roles.

Future Research and Directions for Religion and Spirituality in Social Work

There is a clear need for all social work students, practitioners and educators to give greater priority to exploring the potential significance of religious and spiritual beliefs in their training, in their professional practice and in the lives and perspectives of service users and colleagues (Gilligan and Furness 2006).

The population of Britain is continually changing and evolving with the flux of new economic migrants, international students, tourists and visitors, those joining family members already living in this country and those seeking asylum and refuge. The latest census data provide demographic detail about the make-up of population in terms of ethnicity and religious affiliation (ONS 2012a, b). These statistics are important aids to assist social workers gain some understanding of the characteristics of people accessing social care services in a particular locality and to inform social policy and service development. One challenge facing the state is how to respond to emerging social issues and demands on all of the public services from these different groups along with continuing to meet the emerging and ongoing needs of its more stable resident population (Furness 2014).

Future research could investigate the religious/spiritual needs of people affiliated to different religions to find out how their faith helps to sustain them and deal with any challenges arising from their caring responsibilities, distress and crises resulting from life experiences. Research participants could share who they would turn to for support at times of need and crisis in order to identify help seeking and help giving sources. The role played by family and extended family has policy implications in terms of formal support services. A universal westernised approach to helping is not fit for purpose to meet the diverse needs of those living in Britain today. Services need to be more creative, and promote different methods of delivery that take into account traditional helping practices (Kee 2007; Furness 2014).

Certainly, for those new to England, religion and religious worship have assisted believers to come together, to support each other and to develop networks that will enable them to adapt to living in this country. However, this process is not about assimilation, acculturation or total absorption. All parties need to be open to change and challenge and, at times, the state may have to intervene when certain behaviours and actions lead to harm and are not acceptable in a democratic society. There are a number of fault lines appearing where there are some indications that individuals living in some communities are being pressurised to conform or comply with cultural expectations against their will. Religious and cultural practices can

serve to maintain the status quo. In the interests of promoting and creating a fairer and more equal society, careful attention, scrutiny and challenge need to be given to any practices or traditions that are negatively discriminatory and oppressive (Furness 2014).

There is scope to carry out new research to understand how religion and related beliefs can be a source of support as well as harm and distress. In terms of older people, religion and spirituality can assist people to make transitions, as forms of healing and to deal with death and dying. Western healing has tended to ignore or discredit alternative forms of healing but there is scope to investigate the place of family and community, and of religious and spiritual beliefs and traditions for service users of different faiths in order to find new ways of assisting those in need to deal with ill health, distress and other difficulties or crises. The religious and spiritual needs of people with learning disabilities tend to be overlooked and parents have different expectations of their children in terms of having the ability to worship and their understanding of religious texts. There is some evidence that people with a learning disability have been forced into marriage and multi-agency practice guidelines have been written (Forced Marriage Unit 2010). It would be useful to conduct research into the reasons why this is occurring and investigate whether there are any links to religious or cultural factors at work here. There is a body of evidence and interest in the relevance of religion and spirituality and their association with positive mental health outcomes. Koenig et al.'s (2001, p. 135) review of relevant research concerned with religion and depression identified that some aspects of religious involvement are associated with lower levels of depression and can help people cope with stressful life events. Mental health professionals need to develop cultural and religious literacy so that they can aid an individual's recovery by drawing on their belief systems and helping them to build a sense of resilience (Mental Health Foundation 2007; Campbell et al. 2008).

The Equality Act 2010 legally provides protection for people of all belief systems (religion, belief or lack of religion/belief) from discrimination in a range of settings including work, education and when using public services. In a study, social work students reported that few placement agencies promoted any opportunity for staff development and training in respect of understanding religion and belief, perhaps because such issues are not considered important, significant or relevant, or are given less priority amongst other pressing issues and responsibilities (Furness and Gilligan 2012). Employers must comply with equality legislation, but the experiences of respondents suggest that organisations need to become much more proactive in offering training and preparing staff to engage with matters of faith.

It is of concern that organisations are also failing to recognise and tackle ill health and stress affecting employees related to austerity measures and cuts in service provision. There needs to be a commitment to find ways to heal a broken spirit and regain an ethics of care towards each other (Owen 2000). Spirituality and religion may hold the key.

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Chapter 15

Spirituality and Practice in Social Work, Youth and Family Studies

Anthony James

Abstract The academic fields of social work and family studies are two related, yet distinct, disciplines. Family Study practitioners consist of certified family life educators and marriage and family therapists (MFTs), though MFTs require a terminal degree and additional training. The field of social work includes various levels of licensed social workers. Across both fields, spirituality is viewed as a resource that is essential to physical and/or emotional healing and well-being. Social workers include spirituality as an essential component of practice in its person-in-environment guiding framework. Of note, family studies scholars put forth a theory of the sacred acknowledge not only the importance of spirituality, but also cautioning its ability to help or harm people. Moving forward, both fields can be advanced through the production of a theory that aid practitioners with prevention, assessment, and intervention tools that can improve the functioning of individuals and families.

Defining Spirituality Across the Academic Fields of Social Work and Family Studies

Across both academic/professional fields covered in this chapter, spirituality is defined in many ways. However, across both fields, a commonality is that spirituality is a component of the internal self and it involves processes or outcomes that help individual navigate their social environments. Additionally, both fields rely on person ↔ contextual relational frameworks to demonstrate how spirituality can advance the wellbeing of the individual. In social work, practitioners use the client's spirituality to aid the search for meaning, connectedness (to the divine or others), and purpose in life, all in hopes of helping the client better navigate the maladaptive aspects of their social environment. In family studies, specifically youth development, youth development professionals emphasize spirituality's ability to imbue positive qualities (e.g., transcendence, generosity) that help youth thrive.

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Thus, practitioners have emphasized the development or nurturance of youths' spirituality, in hopes of youth developing on a pathway where they thrive or make meaningful contributions back to their environment that they are embedded.

Definitions of Spirituality in Social Work

Domains within the field of social work most likely to focus on conceptions of spirituality in practice settings can be generalist social work practitioners, working from the person in environment perspective (i.e., a guide principle to practice that emphasizes the importance of understanding individual behavior in respect the context in which the person is embedded), or independently licensed social works in clinical settings. Generally, the goal is to work with clients by helping them through issues and difficulties they are facing (e.g., depression, eating disorders, marital problems, drug abuse).

A common thread among definitions of spirituality in the field of social work is the concept of meaning, purpose, and connectedness. Specifically, several definitions suggest that spirituality is intricately linked to establishing meaning in life. Additionally, such definitions imply that spirituality is distinctly an internal developmental process that helps individuals navigate aspects of their environment that produce maladaptive outcomes.

Barker (2008) conceptualizes spirituality as the process of making meaning so as to help determine purpose in life. Canda (1999) defines spirituality, broadly, as a way of life. Further, he asserts that spirituality helps with the meaning making process, developing a moral compass, establishing connections to others, and binding humanity together. Cascio's (1998) conception of spirituality is a combination of the previous two conceptions, but adds that it also helps people with developing a narrative for understanding the universe around them. Holloway and Moss (2010) use an action oriented conception by positing that spirituality is the process by which people make meaning out of their transcendent experiences. Jackson and colleagues (2010) also put forth an action based conception, though they assert that spirituality serves as an expression that "frees" the individual. Of note, their work was with youth in foster care, thus, a spiritual conception that helps individuals mentally or emotionally escape, or cope with, difficult circumstances is warranted. Hodge and Horvath (2011) define spirituality as the need or desire to align or affiliate one's self with something, with, McKenan (2007) theorizing that spirituality is the search for insight or wisdom that helps with meaning making through the connection to a larger life purpose.

In the person in environment model, practitioners use spirituality as an internal tool of the clients that can be tapped to help refocus the client, providing them with coping abilities to adaptively manage the environmental stressors that produce mental health struggles and/or maladaptive behaviors (Walsh 2008). There are various ways this model can be used in therapy. For one, practitioners can guild clients in using their spirituality make meaning out of the experiences that

are overwhelming their coping abilities. Another approach includes practitioners helping clients construct, or remember, perspectives whereby their spirituality gives them a larger purpose in life, which transcends the environmental pressures that led to mental health struggles. In other cases, clients may feel disconnected from their environment, which can ignite mental health problems. In these instances, practitioners can tap into the client's spirituality in ways that encourages perspectives (e.g., realizing that they are connected to a community of believers) and action (e.g., encouraging the client to physically connect to a [religious] community that shares their spiritual beliefs) that establishes a "sense of place" for the client.

Though the main organization for the field of social work, NASW (National Association of Social Workers), appears to not have a unifying consensus definition for spirituality, from the person in environment perspective, the commonality is that many social workers use spirituality as a client resource. Specifically, a resource that can be tapped into during therapeutic intervention that helps the client clients more effectively navigate and adapt to difficult aspects of their environment.

Definitions of Spirituality in Family Studies

Though it is the case that both fields, social work and family studies, covered in this chapter work with individuals and families, they have their distinctions as well. The field of family studies, in America, is multidisciplinary and covers many aspects of family life. One of, if not *the*, the main organization for this academic and professional discipline is the National Council on Family Relations. The theme or motto of the organization is "catalyzing, research, theory, and practice." The practitioner arm of the organization is its CFLEs (certified family life educators). The scope of CFLE work spans across ten content areas of family life: families and individuals in societal contexts, internal dynamics of families, human growth and lifespan development across the lifespan, human sexuality, interpersonal relationships, family resource management, parent education and guidance, family law and public policy, professional ethics and practice, family life education and methodology. Though spirituality has its place in most, if not all, of those content areas, it would be outside the scope of this author's expertise to explore its practical role in all of the content areas. Thus, this chapter will focus on spirituality, within the context of youth development and contexts where that component of development can be developed and nurtured (i.e., the family).

One of the fastest growing areas of research in the field of youth development has been the role of spirituality in youths' positive development. Since the call for more work on the spiritual development of youth (Benson et al. 2003), several studies have been conducted examining its role in youths' development, particularly their positive development. What those works also identified, is that the subjective nature of spirituality means it is conceptualized in a myriad of ways, even among researchers.

Pittman et al. (2008) define spirituality as a core developmental process that serves as an engine for cognitive awareness or awakening, making social connections or sense of belonging, and shaping one's way of life. In their research evaluating the effectiveness of youth programs, Catalano et al. (2002) used a dictionary definition of spirituality, which defined the concept as "relating to, consisting of, or having the nature of spirit; concerned with or affecting the soul; of, from, or relating to God; of or belonging to a church or religion" (Berube et al. 1995). Later, they added that spirituality also concerns "beliefs in a higher power, internal reflection or meditation . . . sense of spiritual identity, meaning, or practice" (p. 20). Desrosier and Miller's (2007) definition mirror the work of Hay (2000), in that they both argue that spirituality is inherently relational, whether it be to other people or some greater divine source. More specifically, Desrosier and Miller conceptualized spirituality as "a sense of closeness with God, feelings of interconnectedness with the world or an awareness of a transcendent dimension" (p. 1022). Of note, these authors explicitly made a distinction between religiosity and spirituality. King et al. (2013) note the oft-cited definition of spirituality as the "search for the sacred" (p. 188), but also acknowledge that spirituality is conceptualized in various other ways, such as: pursuing meaning, purpose, transcendence, connections, belonging, and passions. In line with King's assertion, Good et al. (2011), defined spirituality as the search for the sacred, but also pointed out that such processes usually take place within religious contexts. Thus, they combined religiosity and spirituality as a single construct, while recognizing the many domains in which people can connect with the sacred (e.g., institutional vs. personal). Damon (2008), though not asserting a particular direction, says that spirituality is linked to youths' search for meaning and purpose in life. A wealth of studies on adolescent spirituality conceptualize the term as being related to transcendence, or becoming aware of or connected to something larger than oneself (Benson et al. 2003, 2010; Kim and Esquivel 2011; Koenig et al. 2001; Lerner et al. 2008). But many of these studies use definitions that were constructed by adults. This begs the question of how do youth define the concept.

In a mixed method study, using data from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development, James et al. (2012) found that youth also define spirituality in many ways. Their qualitative analysis revealed that youth conceptualize being spiritual in ten, somewhat mutually exclusive, ways: possessing keen consciousness, self-confidence, high religious involvement, being connected, belief in a higher power or force, having purpose, exuding radiance, being virtuous, unarticulated spirituality, the same as being religious.

Regardless of whether the definitions are constructed by adults, or youth themselves, in the field of family studies the concept is overwhelmingly linked to processes of the inner self (e.g., consciousness, feelings, identity). Additionally, the various conceptualizations imply that spirituality is a positive developmental process. In the youth development literature, there appears to be no definitions suggesting that spirituality is linked to negative developmental outcomes for youth. Thus, it makes sense that much of the work investigating youths' spirituality frames it within the context of positive development.

Reviewing How Spirituality Has Informed the Practice of Social Workers and Family Practitioners

Field of Social Work

In the field of social work, in American, spirituality is an essential component of practice in its person-in-environment guiding framework. Usually couched in a Jungian (1959) perspective, social workers have historically believed in the therapeutic benefits of spirituality. More specifically, social workers have taken notice in the important therapeutic role that spirituality has in wellness and health (Ben Asher 2001; Koenig et al. 2012; Sermabeikian 1994; Zapf 2005). Though many practitioners include spiritual based interventions into their practice, the field lacked a standardized and evidenced based way to assess spirituality, much less select interventions (Hodge 2006; Sheridan 2004). In fact, the field struggled with the overwhelming use, and acceptance, of such practices without much formal training (Rothman 2009). Regardless, spiritual interventions continue to be used in social work practice. Here, I review some of those interventions, discuss “what works” and provide some general advice about how to incorporate them into practice.

One international study found that qualified British and American social workers viewed several spiritual interventions as appropriate when working with clients in their practice (Gilligan and Furness 2006). Though there were differences in whether the two national samples had actually used such interventions, those interventions that were overwhelmingly considered appropriate across the two samplings included: gathering information about the client’s spiritual lives, and helping develop rituals as an intervention, with recommending spiritual based literature and using spiritual language and concepts in practice receiving moderate support. Barker’s (2008) research suggests that spiritual interventions such as encouraging spiritual practices (i.e., prayer, reading spiritual texts), or connecting with faith communities are other interventions social workers can use to help their clients with the problems they face.

In her review of the literature, Sheridan (2009) found that social workers use a variety of spiritual based interventions in their practice, though decisions guiding how and what interventions to use are based on the practitioner’s own spirituality. Further, practitioners receive little to no training on such interventions and the field lacks a comprehensive ethical guideline for use of such interventions. Hodge (2011) highlights the gap between practitioner’s use of spirituality based interventions without having much training on such interventions nor evidence based support for using it.

In the absence of unified training on spiritual aspects of life in social work training, Hodge (2011) suggests that, at the very least, practitioners use spirituality interventions that are evidence based. He defines evidence-based spiritual practice as “*the integration of the best available research on spirituality, with clinical expertise using spiritual interventions, in a context that respects clients’ spiritual values, cultures, and preferences.*” But with that said, it does not mean that social

workers have ceased using such interventions with clients. One plausible reason clinicians continue to use spiritual intervention that are not evidence based can be attributed to the power of belief and how those beliefs can produce beneficial mental health outcomes that are difficult to capture in empirical research (Meraviglia 1999; Palmer et al. 2004). This begs the question of are there any therapeutic spiritual interventions that can be classified as evidence based and effective.

In separate systematic reviews, Hodge (2006, 2007) investigated the effectiveness of two spiritual based interventions: intercessory prayer and spirituality modified cognitive therapy. His findings suggest that intercessory prayer cannot be classified as an empirically based spiritual intervention to mitigate any psychological problem, though evidence does exist for its benefit in limited practitioner-client settings (e.g., patients in hospitals; Hodge 2007). Conversely, Hodge (2006) found spiritually modified cognitive therapy to be an effective intervention, but particularly with patients suffering from depression.

Even though the research shows limited effectiveness of spiritual interventions, this has not prevented social workers from using them. In light of this, Cascio (1998) advice remains to be applicable, which suggests that practitioners first clarify any potential differences in understandings of spirituality between the client and practitioner to avoid any negative consequences (i.e., differential spiritual beliefs between the practitioner and client that erode away the trust in that relationship, which prohibits effective therapeutic intervention), if such differences exist. Also, Cascio (1998) asserts that practitioners should not impose their own personal beliefs on the clients, rather use their competencies to understand the client's spirituality beliefs and develop strategies that harness spirituality as a resource in therapy. Of course, using sound spiritual assessments aids in this process (see Hodge 2013a), while also relying on Hodge's (2011) advice to use evidence based research to help determine the best spiritual interventions when working with clients.

Field of Family Studies

As a CFLE, my work regarding spirituality has focused primarily on investigating linkages between youths' perceived spirituality and their positive development. The practice component of that is that such research allows me to provide direct (i.e., workshops or direct consultation), or indirect (i.e., publishing in professional outlets) information to individuals, families, or institutions (e.g., schools, community centers) about how to incorporate spiritual development into programming.

Theoretical and Empirical Support for Practice

The cutting edge of research in youth development is relational developmental systems theory (RDST; Overton 2011), out of which derived the positive youth development (PYD) framework (Lerner et al. 2009), a strengths based approach

to youth development that is more balanced than the deficit approach (i.e., storm and stress; Hall 1904) that historically dominated the discipline of adolescent development. The advantage of this approach to youth development, and the role of spirituality in it, is that it has both theoretical and practical application (Lerner et al. 2009). I briefly describe each theory (PYD & RDST), followed by how to put spirituality research into practice.

Relational developmental systems theory emphasizes that the course of human development is regulated by the mutual interactions between individuals and the multi-level contexts (e.g., home, school, community) that they are embedded in, what is known as person↔environment context (Overton 2011). A promise of this theory is its focus on the plasticity of development, meaning individuals are not on a fixed ontogenetic path; rather, development is *plastic* in that multiple developmental outcomes are possible with the systematic change that can occur based on the vast array of person↔environment interactions (Lerner 1984). When the person↔environment relations are mutually beneficial, they are said to be adaptive developmental regulations (Brandtstädter 2006). The purpose of PYD theory is to advance *adaptive developmental regulations*, which develops or nurtures the strengths of youth; in turn, youth then use those strengths to meaningfully contribute to (and benefit from) institutions in their environment (or thrive) (Lerner et al. 2005).

PYD conceptualizes positive development as internal strengths through its five C model. The five Cs (competence, confidence, character, connection, caring) represents meta indicators that when developed in youth, places them on a pathway toward thriving. Thriving is conceptualized as the sixth C (contribution), which is defined as youth using their strengths to make meaningful contributions to their selves, families, communities, and other institutions in their environment. (For a more comprehensive review of the PYD theory and its empirical validation, see Lerner et al. 2005).

Putting PYD into Practice

Accordingly, to ensure thriving, institutions (e.g., the family) in which the youth are embedded can recognize the actual, or potential, strengths of youth and provide opportunities to develop and nurture those strengths. A comprehensive approach to implementing PYD in youth programming was put forth by Lerner (2007) in *The Good Teen*. He uses empirical-based literature to support his arguments for best practices helping youth thrive. The constructs that “big three” model that helps youth develop and nurture the five C strengths needed to help them thrive. Those three factors are: positive and sustained relationships with adults (e.g., peer-mentor relations; Rhodes and Lowe 2009), increasing life skills (e.g., developing goal setting behaviors; Freund and Baltes 2002), and opportunities for youth to exert leadership roles in meaningful community activities (e.g., serve as a delegate on city council).

Putting Spirituality into Practice

Both James et al. (2012) and Warren and colleagues (2011) provide empirical support regarding the relation between youths' spirituality and their positive development. Specifically, James et al. (2012) study found concurrent positive correlations between youths' perceived spirituality with each of the six Cs of the PYD model (Lerner et al. 2009), with their spirituality scores being linked to their character scores 1 year later. The conclusion was that spirituality is an additional internal asset that is linked to youths thriving behaviors. Thus, the question becomes how do we grow or nurture the spiritualist of youth.

Lerner's (2007) big three model relies heavily on both community and family resources to help grow the five Cs in youth, but do those same factors work similarly for growing youths' spirituality? In a follow-up study, James and colleagues ([in press](#)) investigated the mediating role of family assets on the relationship between community assets and youths' self-ratings of spirituality. They found that human resources in a given community were positively related to youths' spirituality and were partially mediated by family religiosity. Thus, both the community and family play a role in growing the spirituality of youth, an internal asset that helps them thrive.

With that in mind, my advice to parents has been to create a home environment that supports the spirituality development and growth of their children. For instance, have open dialogue with their adolescent children about their spirituality. This can help them clarify their notions of spirituality, with research has been shown to also be linked to positive development (James and Fine 2015), specifically allowing them to clarify their notions of spirituality. Also, parents can find mentors for their teen children, but mentors that will intentionally invest in the process of helping youth clarify and internalizing spiritual values. Finally, borrowing from Lerner's (2007) model, parents can seek out opportunities that allow their children to exert leadership roles reflecting their spiritual values. If the youth define spirituality as transcendence or helping others, have her develop a plan where she can serve others, but be sure to have her link that activity back to her notion of spirituality. Such opportunities validate the spiritual notions of the youth, while also encouraging her to make meaningful contributions to the greater society.

Spirituality Based Professional Development in Social Work and Family Studies

Professional Development in Social Work

With its licensure process, the field of social work has a host of professional development requirements (also known as continue education or CE), and opportunities and resources to satisfy those CE requirements. The NASW website has

a *practice & professional development* page (see: <http://www.naswdc.org/pdev/default.asp>) where social workers can go to search for CE opportunities. Additionally, CE formats include workshops, online webinars, agreements with university social work departments, opportunities at national conferences, etc. Specific to CE opportunities in regarding practice and spirituality, noted social work scholar David Hodge (2013b) created a webinar describing the best practices for using spiritual assessments in practice. The webinar is available to NASW members on their CE platform.

Professional Development in Family Studies

There is an abundance of professional development (also referred to as continuing education or CE) opportunities that exist for CFLEs, which is required to maintain one's certification. The NCFR website has a CFLE certification page (see: <https://www.ncfr.org/cfle-certification/cfle-continuing-education>) that explains the requirements and opportunities for obtaining CE credit. CE can occur across many formats (e.g., webinars, teaching or taking a class, attending or facilitating a workshop, attend or present at the national conference, etc.), the key is that the CE is related to one of the ten content areas of family life listed above. The organization does not have a professional development format that specifically relates to the incorporation of spirituality into practice; however, a search of the organization's website using the term "spirituality" revealed a host of published papers about the topic, though few were specific to practice (NCFR Report 2012). Of note, access to much of the professional resources is limited to NCFR membership.

Future Directions of the Role of Spirituality in Social Work and Family Studies

Across both fields, more work is needed to improve understanding of how spirituality can inform practice. The field of social work is further along this path, with published work on ways to assess spirituality in practice, developing spiritual practice, and research on what spiritual interventions are actually effective and the contexts they are successful in (Hodge 2006, 2007, 2011, 2013a, b). Additionally, Hodge (2007) and Hodge and Bushfield (2007) provided a method for the field to train social workers on spiritual competencies, something that wasn't and appears to still not be consistent across curriculums. Family studies have not reached this level of scrutiny (i.e., systematic reviews and Meta analyses) regarding how CFLEs practice in the domain of youth development. Thus, both fields have room to grow regarding developing mechanisms (or theories) to explain how to incorporate spirituality into practice as well as constructing specific evidence based spiritual interventions that can be used in practice.

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Chapter 16

Spirituality and Occupational Therapy: Reflections on Professional Practice and Future Possibilities

Mick Collins

Abstract Spirituality has been recognised as an important part of client-centred occupational therapy practice for many years. During the past two decades, occupational therapists from around the world have contributed to a growing body of literature, which has enabled the profession to explore ways of integrating spirituality into clinical practice. These developments continue to evolve through on-going conceptual and theoretical refinements, as well as through empirical research, which has laid the foundations for an emerging evidence-base. Researchers have also addressed issues related to working definitions of spirituality, as well as examining the beliefs and attitudes of occupational therapists in practice, and how spirituality can be embedded effectively within occupational therapy education. Spirituality within occupational therapy is viewed as an important part of holistic practice alongside bio-psycho-social considerations. In addition, occupational therapy continues to expand its understanding of spirituality, in particular how *doing* can be considered from a transpersonal perspective. In turn, this transpersonal-occupational connection poses questions for how the profession can contribute its knowledge and skills to tackle global problems, such as the burgeoning ecological crises. Climate change is impacting on communities worldwide, through droughts and floods for example, which is disrupting people's lives and highlights the need for adaptive responses. Occupational therapy and spirituality can open up new vistas of unexplored potential, and these future possibilities are an important part of human flourishing, which can come forth in all that we do.

Introduction

In recent decades there has been a growing interest in spirituality within health care (Stoter 1995) which has emphasised the importance of taking a holistic view of human beings (World Health Organisation 2001). Occupational therapy (OT) is a

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profession that focuses on people's meaningful engagement in everyday activities following injury, illness or disability. From a theory-practice perspective, OT considers spirituality equal to biological, psychological, social and environmental influences, which in turn underlines its holistic credentials (Larson et al. 2003). The OT profession has made reference to spirituality since the early part of the twentieth century (Barton 1920), however, contemporary explorations have considered complexities, such as the ways spirituality is acknowledged, understood and represented in clinical practice (Engquist et al. 1997), particularly in relation to well-being and quality of life (Mayers 1995). This chapter will outline some of the key developments since the early 1990s, taking into account how spirituality has evolved in terms of OT theory, practice, research and education.

In the early 1990s the International OT literature started to critically explore the subject of spirituality, ensuring its relevance for twenty-first century practice. Canadian occupational therapists played a key role in reigniting the interest in spirituality with notable contributions from authors such as Egan and DeLaat (1994), who viewed spirituality as central to the person, and the work of Vargo and Urbanowski (1994) touched upon the links between spirituality and meaningful activity. Around the same time Australian occupational therapist Loretta do Rozario (1994) published research in the *Journal of Occupational Science* which included the role of transcendence in people's journeys of rehabilitation and recovery. American occupational therapists also joined the discussions with contributions from Christiansen (1997), who noted the links between spirituality, occupation and health; whereas Peloquin (1997) focused on spirituality, doing and depth, particularly in the ways that people create their lives. In the UK, Collins (1998) examined the relationship between spirituality, occupation and quality of experience, and Hume (1999) discussed the role of spirituality in relation to total care. From the turn of the new Millennium onwards, spirituality has remained an important area of occupational therapy theory and practice. The words of Elizabeth Yerxa (1998, p. 412) exemplify how the profession is uniquely placed to address the relationship between "health and the human spirit for occupation."

Evolving Theoretical and Practice Links

The work of Mary McColl (2000) affirmed the importance of spirituality as a central point of discussion in the OT literature, and she noted some emerging themes, such as: *narrative, ritual, appreciating nature, creativity and work*. She suggested that spirituality can enhance human potential, especially when its inspirational and transformational qualities are considered. Around the same time, discussions in the OT literature continued to focus on what constitutes a meaningful understanding of spirituality within the profession. For example, it was evident in the first decade of the twenty-first century that a working definition for spirituality was needed (McColl 2000; Wilding 2002). To this end, a critical review of the spiritual literature, carried out by Unruh et al. (2002, p. 8) identified that spirituality can include a "relationship

to God, a spiritual being, a higher power, or a reality greater than the self”, they also noted that it can be experienced as a sense of “transcendence or connectedness unrelated to a belief in a higher being”. In addition, they found that spirituality could also be understood as a “life force”, or that it can have an “existential” quality, as well as providing opportunities to engage “meaning and purpose in life”. The literature reviewed at this time started to reveal the complexities associated with understanding and integrating spirituality into clinical practice.

Whilst occupational therapists were exploring and discussing possible meanings associated with spirituality, there were still uncertainties in the way spirituality and occupation were understood in the lives of clients (Wilding 2002). At the turn of the Millennium the profession was mostly focused on exploring conceptual ideas, or carrying out research into occupational therapists’ beliefs, attitudes and their diverse opinions about spirituality (Collins et al. 2001; Engquist et al. 1997; Rose 1999; Taylor et al. 2000), which included both religious and secular views (Egan and Swedersky 2003). As a consequence, the profession sought greater clarification in the ways that spirituality could be defined, inclusive of diverse representations. These formative discussions not only included the potential meaning that spirituality has within clinical practice, they also raised questions about how the subject relates to the daily tasks of being a therapist (Beagan and Kumas-Tan 2005).

An in-depth review of the spiritual literature by Johnston and Mayers (2005, p. 386) led the authors to propose a definition of spirituality, which included many of the religious and secular perspectives already outlined above. In addition, they emphasised how “personal belief or faith also shapes an individual’s perspective on the world and is expressed in the way he or she lives life.” The article by Johnston and Mayers (2005) provided a further refinement and synthesis of the literature, emphasising the diverse ways that clients may represent spirituality in their daily lives. However, Collins (2006) cautioned against too much reliance on a fixed consensus with regard to definitions, noting that people’s spiritual *needs*, *experiences* and *journeys* in life will not always fit into neat conceptual categories. However, with this point in mind, the work of Johnston and Mayers (2005) consolidated much of the established research, and in doing so, provided clear working parameters for how spirituality could be considered in clinical practice.

As the new Millennium dawned, researchers started to explore how clients’ associated spirituality in relation to their lived experiences (MacGillivray et al. 2006; Wilding et al. 2005). For example, research by McColl et al. (2000) identified that spirituality is important in the lives of people with a traumatic-onset disability (and chronic illness), highlighting the importance of promoting *awareness*, *trust* and *purpose*. However, Schulz (2005) found differences between groups of people with disabilities, where the meaning of spirituality for people with child-onset disability appears different from people with adult-onset disability. Schulz’s (2005) research identified that people with child-onset disability have had more time to adapt to their disabilities, which may also include the spiritual resources they draw upon. In the field of mental health, Wilding et al. (2005) found that spirituality was *life-sustaining* for adults, and their findings identified that it

could be potentially life-enhancing or life-saving. In another study exploring the experiences of adolescents with mental health difficulties, MacGillivray et al. (2006) found that participants were more inclined to consider spirituality in relation to the self (and self-knowing), which included their thoughts, feelings, beliefs and values. Finally, research into the lives of community-dwelling older adults (Griffith et al. 2007), found that participants made adjustments to their identity (over time), inclusive of psychological, social and spiritual considerations, which were linked to their meaningful occupations.

The process of understanding what spirituality means to clients in the context of occupational therapy practice has affirmed the importance of taking a person-centred approach to people's lived "quality of experience" (Collins 1998). However, as the profession continues to expand its knowledge about spirituality, an important consideration remains *how* OT students – as emerging health professionals – are supported to explore, understand and include spirituality in clinical practice (Morris et al. 2014).

Education and Practice Considerations

Occupational therapists consider spirituality to be an important part of health, but studies have revealed that therapists can be ambivalent or under confident about implementing spirituality into practice (Collins et al. 2001; Engquist et al. 1997; Farrar 2001; Taylor et al. 2000; Udell and Chandler 2000). The implications of the above research suggests that spirituality needs greater consideration within OT education, which is also an issue for other health professions (Koenig 2004). Interestingly, research carried out by Belcham (2004) found that occupational therapists were struggling with a *theory-practice gap*. This research alerted the profession about its responsibilities to ensure OT's are adequately educated (and confident) to address spirituality in terms of theory and practice links. However, a recent study by Morris et al. (2014) found that occupational therapy practitioners continue to identify their professional education as inadequate when preparing them to integrate spirituality into professional practice. Morris et al. (2014) even suggest that occupational therapy has no claim to be holistic if it is not implementing spirituality into client-centred treatment. The research by Morris et al. (2014) underlines a persistent issue within the profession regarding students not feeling ready to engage theories about spirituality into practice.

Research into final year OT students' preparedness to integrate spirituality within clinical practice placements identified that spirituality can be associated to a variety of meanings (Csontó 2009). The above research further underlined the importance of students being encouraged to engage their client-centred skills whilst on practice placements, and this includes exploring their clients' personal meanings, associations and narratives about spirituality. Also, as consumers of research, students are in a position to draw upon a wealth of published literature, including

how spirituality is embedded within theoretical models (Collins 1998; Kang 2003; McColl 2003; Wilson 2011). However, whilst students' have a responsibility to study professional literature about spirituality, they also need opportunities to reflect (Hong and Harrison 2012), particularly on theory-practice links.

As well as the theory-practice gap (Belcham 2004) the profession also needs to re-examine the connections between the *personal* and *professional* dimensions of spirituality when working with clients, as originally noted by Prochnau et al. (2003, p. 196). The personal and professional dimensions of students' continuing professional development (CPD) were also identified as an important educational issue by Collins (2012), who ran two 6 week modules for students exploring spirituality in relation to OT practice in 2007 and 2008. After completing the modules, students filled in questionnaires, and the findings revealed that they had been experiencing a *personal-professional divide* about spirituality in relation to their personal beliefs and/or their professional competencies. Importantly, the students identified that they had been helped by the teaching materials (theories, research, definitions and assessments), as well as the reflective exercises used. The importance of using reflection is that it provides students with opportunities to develop awareness (McEvoy et al. 2014), which in turn, can enable them to explore interactions between their personal beliefs and professional attitudes and behaviours. Interestingly, the occupational therapy literature (since the 1990s) has championed the use of reflection to encourage students to explore and engage spirituality in practice (Barry and Gibbens 2011; Collins 2007a, 2012; Kirsch et al. 2001; Townsend et al. 1999).

The modules run by Collins (2012) affirmed the importance of CPD in relation to spirituality and student education. Feedback from students identified three interrelated developmental themes about spirituality and their educational needs: (1) the need for reflection with others; (2) the need for reflection on self; (3) the need to reflect on OT practice (Collins 2012). In addition, the modules also addressed complex issues such as how to engage spirituality in relation to *therapeutic use of self*. This relies on their interpersonal skills to create meaningful interactions with clients, thereby helping to evolve effective *therapeutic relationships* (Collins 2007a, 2012, 2013). Indeed, the modules supported the assertion made by Ghaye (2004), who stated that professionals need opportunities to reflect on spirituality, which enables them to be responsive to others in nourishing and meaningful ways. In addition, students on the modules were also introduced to ideas that are still emerging in the profession, namely transpersonal considerations.

Transpersonal Considerations

The links between human occupation and a transpersonal perspective were initially championed by Australian occupational therapist Loretta do Rozario (1994, 1997), who explored the meaning of transcendence and how it could lead to new

connections for living and wholeness (do Rozario 1997). A transpersonal-spiritual perspective not only emphasises people's experiences of connectedness (Schulz 2004; Unruh et al. 2002), it also underlines how humans can have a greater sense of belonging in life (beyond individualism) through experiences of interconnectedness and interdependence (do Rozario 1997). The transpersonal dimension also takes into account the role of consciousness in terms of engaging human potential and development (Wilber 1977).

The question of consciousness is a complex issue and a more detailed exploration of the subject is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, transpersonal states of consciousness can impact on people's everyday sense of identity, linked to experiences of *transcendence* and *transformation* (Lancaster 2004). Here, the prefix 'trans' in the word *transpersonal* can either mean *beyond* our existing ego/identity boundaries (to transcend), or *through* certain lived experiences (to transform), which can impact on people's experiences of consciousness and self-identity (Collins 2008a; Heron 1998; Rothberg 2003). A clear example of the importance of transpersonal phenomena in the context of professional health care practice is found in research by Cardiologist, Pim Van Lommel (2013). He found that 62 participants in his research reported transpersonal experiences following cardiac arrest. The research findings offer some support to the belief that health professionals need to be educated about the possibilities of transpersonal experiences being reported in clinical settings (Collins 2008a), particularly as such experiences can enhance or challenge everyday notions of identity (Washburn 1994). It further suggests that transpersonal issues need to be taken more seriously, especially if therapeutic practice is to be considered fully client-centred and holistic.

Occupational therapy as a profession has more work to do to in terms of understanding the connections between spirituality, human occupation and transpersonal states of consciousness, as originally noted by do Rozario (1997). Such a proposition is based on a need to understand the interface between psychological and spiritual dimensions of human experience and development (Sollod et al. 2009), and how transpersonal potential is expressed in occupational terms. The work of Mary McColl (2003) has helpfully contextualised spirituality and OT in relation to *intrapersonal*, *interpersonal* and *transpersonal* domains, however Griffith et al. (2007) have called for further clarification and definition about transpersonal-occupational links. In this regard, Collins (2001, 2007b, 2008a, 2010a) has outlined the theoretical underpinnings for how a transpersonal perspective connects to occupational science and therapy, particularly in relation to understanding the impact on behaviour, identity, self-awareness and consciousness.

There has been a gradual integration of transpersonal ideas within OT; yet, there still remains a theory-practice gap in the way transpersonal-occupational connections are understood. Moreover, in terms of CPD, a transpersonal-occupational perspective also presents new developmental opportunities for therapists, particularly as many areas of transpersonal therapy are yet to be fully explored in the context of OT education and practice.

Transpersonal Links to Therapy

The work of transpersonal therapist John Rowan (2002, p. 107–9) has made reference to some key areas of therapeutic practice, which he refers to as “doing the transpersonal”. These areas of practice will be compared to similar developments that have been noted within occupational therapy:

Spiritual Emergencies These are transpersonal experiences, which were originally noted by Grof and Grof (1989). Spiritual emergencies can happen spontaneously through a variety of antecedents. They often shift people’s experiences of ego-identity in terms of being opened-up to a wider experience of life and the cosmos. It is not uncommon for experiences of spiritual emergency to appear similar to, or overlap with psychotic phenomena, and there is growing body of literature in this area that identifies how people can be best supported (Collins 2007c, 2008b). The UK Royal College of Psychiatrists, special interest group on spirituality (Cook et al. 2009) have already acknowledged that spiritual emergencies can be productive in terms of people’s growth and development. In this way, spiritual emergencies have been explored from an occupational therapy perspective, where *doing* is considered highly important when integrating these challenging experiences. (Collins 2007c)

Big Dreams Transpersonal therapists have used dream work within the therapeutic process for many years (Mindell 1989). Occupational therapists have sought to integrate dreams into theory and practice (Nicholls 2007) with transpersonal significance (Collins 2004). Big dreams often have a numinous quality, which means they can link people to a mystery in terms of lived experience, which can have significant therapeutic value if explored with clients. (Collins and Wells 2006; Collins 2014)

Mythological Visions From a transpersonal perspective Feinstein and Krippner (1997) have outlined how people’s transpersonal development can be linked to a mythic path in life. From the perspective of *doing*, Collins (2014) has explored how people’s transpersonal potential can connect to an *occupational myth*. Such a perspective identifies how our everyday actions can be pivotal when engaging a spiritual vision into everyday reality.

Meditation and Mindfulness The transpersonal literature has championed the use of meditation and mindfulness for decades (Deatherage 1978/1996). The recent upsurge of interest in mindfulness based therapies (Segal et al. 2002) has grown within the occupational therapy profession in terms of theory and practice (Elliot 2011; Martin and Doswell 2012; Reid 2011; Wright et al. 2006), as well as within student education (Taylor Gura 2010; Stew 2011). Greater links to the transpersonal literature could be relevant for OT’s, in terms of exploring possible contraindications when using meditation practices as noted by transpersonal therapists (Epstein and Leiff 1981). These transpersonal observations are instructive to practice developments and competencies, for example, understanding that meditation may act as a catalyst for spiritual emergencies. (Collins 2007c, 2008b, c)

The Shadow Originally conceptualised by psychiatrist Carl Jung, he used the term shadow to identify the repository of unprocessed (unconscious) feelings and experiences that are repressed and/or projected on to others (Jacobi 1968). Rowan (2002, p. 109) refers to the shadow as “one of the most important areas for transpersonal work”. The shadow side of spiritual processes has been marginally considered within occupational therapy theory and education (Collins 2007a, 2012). However, more work needs to be done to integrate this important aspect of transpersonal therapy in OT, particularly in relation to engaging reflection, self-awareness and the personal-professional issues discussed above. (Collins 2012)

Other Cultures Transpersonal therapy honours spiritual traditions and cultures from around the world (Boorstein 1978/1996). The OT profession also has equal regard for diverse cultures. However, the issue of *cultural relevance* has been raised in regard to dominant Western OT models, whose suitability is questioned in terms of their applicability to non-Western cultures (Iwama 2006). In addition, the OT profession has diverse cultural-spiritual representations in the published literature (Tse et al. 2005), but more inclusion of other cultural-spiritual traditions is needed, such as found in shamanism for example. (Collins 2014)

It is clear that occupational therapy as a profession is making an effort to integrate a wider transpersonal perspective into practice. For example, Kang (2003) has formulated a *psycho-spiritual integration* (PSI) frame of reference, which makes some links to a transpersonal perspective. This approach considers the individual and community impacts of “spiritual fulfilment”, linked to occupational engagement, which can be considered in terms of *abundance, function, balance* and *justice*. Kang (2003, p. 97) also notes how “spiritual deprivation” can have a disabling impact on our occupational lives, through *dysfunction, imbalance* and *injustice*. Kang’s (2003) PSI frame of reference also appears sensitive to the assertion made by Maslow (1999), who noted that without the transpersonal we become sick and impoverished. Maslow’s statement highlights the importance of cultivating meaningful connections between transpersonal and occupational experiences, which encourages people to engage their human potential.

A transpersonal-occupational perspective may also be an important factor in helping humanity to evaluate what can be done to start tackling the global ecological crisis, which is expected to impact heavily on health and human behaviours (Collins 2014). The OT literature has already identified that human beings’ relationship to nature can be a source of spiritual inspiration or connection (McColl 2000). However, more explicit links could be made between transpersonal and occupational considerations, especially in the ways that humanity can be inspired to actively engage their human potential in relation to sustainable ways of living (Collins 2014).

Ecological Considerations

There is a growing body of literature that has explored human occupation in relation to global ecology, wellbeing and sustainable development (Hudson and Aoyama 2008; Persson and Erlandsson 2002, 2014; Wagman 2014; Whittaker 2012). There is little doubt that humanity needs to wake-up to the escalating levels of ecological degradation, which are predicted to impact on communities in terms of health, forced migration (climate refugees), as well as limited access to fresh water, fuel and food (Collins 2014). The consequences of ongoing ecological degradation could lead to increases in occupational deprivation (Whiteford 2000) and occupational injustice (Townsend and Wilcock 2004) for many communities around the world. Humanity needs to start making serious adaptations to existing occupational behaviours if sustainability is to become a viable way of living (Collins 2014).

The links between transpersonal theory, global ecological problems and human occupation were originally developed by occupational therapist Loretta do Rozario (1997) who linked ideas about human potential to an occupational focus, highlighting the need for ecological action. It has been proposed that human beings have a fractured relationship to the containing eco-system that sustains all life, which further suggests that the global crisis is also a spiritual crisis (Collins 2008c, 2014; Laszlo 2006). In order to tackle the global crisis, Ervin Laszlo (2006, 2008) has called for greater development of our collective transpersonal awareness to bring about radical change (Laszlo et al. 2003) and catalyse a transformational shift in human consciousness and behaviours (Collins et al. 2010). It is what Thomas Berry (1999) called *The Great Work*.

Humanity has an incredible opportunity to co-create an improved future (Collins 2010b, c) which can be engaged through assertive action (doing), linked to sustainable ways of living that promotes wellbeing for all (Collins 2011). An occupation-focused approach (with transpersonal significance) could inspire communities to engage their human potential, to start taking action and work together for the greater good (Collins 2015). Here, our transpersonal-occupations could fuel our transformative potential, inspiring and infusing all that we do with deeper meaning and purpose. These transformative actions include making complex adaptations and transitions, which are linked to shifts in our consciousness and behaviours (Collins 2014). In this era of ecological crisis collective transformation is set to become the great task of the age, and any successful transition to a sustainable future will have to include transpersonal-occupational knowledge and practices (Collins 2014). If ever an emblem summed-up the transformative potential that humanity needs to draw upon in this time of collective crisis, it is the Phoenix, a mythical bird that regenerates after being incinerated. Interestingly, the Phoenix is the symbol of the UK OT profession, and it is an apt representation of what the profession can offer in terms of regenerating collective human purpose and action in these troubled times.

Conclusion

Spirituality within occupational therapy has continued to develop over the past two decades, providing clients with opportunities to engage meaning and purpose in everyday life contexts following injury, illness or disability. Yet, it is in the context of OT education that the profession must empower the next generation of therapists to fully integrate spirituality into practice to ensure that this important aspect of health is not marginalised. Students and qualified therapists need to be motivated to engage spirituality in practice, inclusive of using CPD to address any *theory-practice gaps* or *personal-professional divides*, particularly when new knowledge is being explored. In this regard OT's could make more use of transpersonal-occupational connections in order to serve individuals and the collective. Occupational therapy is well placed to assist humanity in the exploration of sustainable and transformative actions to help address the ecological crisis and to start co-creating an improved future. This holistic perspective is at the very heart and soul of the profession.

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Chapter 17

Spirituality and Midwifery

Jennifer Hall

Abstract Pregnancy and birth is viewed by women and midwives as a transformative, life-changing event. It could therefore be considered surprising that there remains limited research around the spiritual aspects of having a baby. The focus of this chapter is to address how spirituality is understood within a holistic paradigm, considering the current focus on the need for greater dignity and compassion within health care. The limited research evidence that is available will be discussed and this will be applied to current practice in the UK and internationally. Further discussion will consider how spirituality is explored in order to educate future midwives. The chapter will include reference to the spirituality of the mother/baby dyad and the relevance of the awareness of the spirituality of the unborn. The need for more research and debate of spirituality within midwifery will be addressed.

Introduction

Pregnancy and birth is experienced by women to be an intensive, transformative and life-changing event. Since the earliest literature of ancient philosophers such as Plato and Socrates, the powerful forces of birth and motherhood have been recognised and discussed (e.g. Crowther et al. 2014a; Lintott 2011; Mullin 2002). The growth of a new life and the subsequent bringing of that new life into being is something that is bathed in both mystery and meaning and is significant to the family but also to the carers involved and the wider social community (Wickham 2001). The aim of this chapter is therefore to address the current understanding of spirituality around this event.

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Spirituality in Midwifery Practice

Despite the transformative potential of pregnancy and birth and the mystery described above it is perhaps surprising that there is little focus on spirituality in international midwifery texts, and minimal discussion, even though there has been long term emphasis at the end of life. Clear statements of expectation for midwives to provide spiritually based care are present in some international standards for competence. For example in the UK midwives should:

act on their understanding of psychological, social, emotional and spiritual factors that may positively or adversely influence normal physiology, and be competent in applying this in practice (Nursing Midwifery Council (NMC) 2010:4)

In the United States the Midwives Alliance of North America (MANA) guidelines indicate midwives should provide care that recognises:

Physical, emotional, psychosocial and spiritual factors synergistically shape the health of individuals and affect the childbearing process. (MANA 2014: 1)

And in the New Zealand Code of ethics midwives should:

respond to the social, psychological, physical, emotional, spiritual and cultural needs of women seeking midwifery care, whatever their circumstances, and facilitate opportunities for their expression. (New Zealand College of Midwives 2015)

However, despite the stories of women who have clearly identified birth as a spiritual event (e.g. Wallas LaChance 2002; Klassen 2001; Hebblethwaite 1984), there is limited research evidence to underpin the statements above. Instead, in midwifery, the focus is more around 'holistic' care with an aim of 'woman-centred' care.

'Holism' includes the concept of spirituality, with the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM 2014) stating that 'Midwifery care is holistic and continuous in nature, grounded in an understanding of the social, emotional, cultural, spiritual, psychological and physical experiences of women'. Rooted in the NHS constitution (Department of Health (DH) 2013) is the concept of 'value based care' where 'everyone counts' which includes the centrality of the service user, and care that is respectful. In the UK current maternity care guidance encourages viewing the pregnant woman as central to care, as an individual and as a whole person (National collaborating centre for women's and children's health (NCC-WCH) 2008).

Holistic practice is often discussed without identification of what this means. A whole person approach implies addressing all aspects of a person's life, including spirituality, as well as understanding the interaction between them. This integrated approach is highlighted by Janice Clarke (2013) where she suggests that spiritual care is 'person-centred care'. Within midwifery 'person-centred' or more usually 'woman-centred' care is embedded in the philosophy. The midwife was the 'woman that women went to' whether for caring for the start of life or for those nearing death (Cassidy 2007). They tended to be chosen within the community which gave a sense of 'calling' or 'vocation'. Later the role became embedded within a 'religious'

context, and the expectation was for life-time dedication in service to others, tending to be single and on constant call to the community. The intensity of the relationships and trust through being 'known' were a key measure of midwifery. In fact the old English meaning of midwife (or midwife) is 'with-woman'. Connection in relationships across the past, present and future has been considered a particular factor of feminine traits of spirituality (Burkhardt 1994). This illustrates that the connecting relationships created in midwifery care, specifically 'woman-to-woman', should therefore ensure the holistic needs of the woman, indicating that recognition of spirituality is included. The implication is that understanding of 'whole person' care is so embedded in midwifery culture that there has been no need to discuss spirituality in isolation.

The current reality of midwifery practice in many areas of the developed world however is not as pictured above. There has been a move away from a 'whole person approach' to one that is more fragmented and focused within a 'technocratic' paradigm (Davis-Floyd and Mather 2002). Move of care into hospital settings away from the local community, shortage of midwives, increasing birth rate and increasing complexity of needs alongside a changing health service has required 'management of care' that may have lost some of the intensity of the relationship. Within this structure the ability to provide 'whole person' care, to recognise spiritual need or to develop understanding of a spiritual focus would be more challenging. However it could be argued that for those women in more complicated pregnancies there is a greater requirement for more awareness of spiritual need (Caldeira and Hall 2012; Price et al. 2007; Breen et al. 2006). In previous studies a student was able to articulate their awareness of providing increased spiritual care to women requiring caesarean sections following an education session (Mitchell and Hall 2007) and a qualified midwife related how midwifery is developing a 'new art' in caring for women with complexity, including building up connecting relationships 'at speed' (Hall 2012). This indicates that, despite the challenges midwives are facing, an attempt to recognise spirituality in the context of holistic care is taking place. It would however be appropriate to suggest that it would be easier to provide spiritual 'whole person' care where the environment of practice is more conducive to do so. That is, where there is time to create trusting connecting relationships, where there is time to provide care, where policies are not restrictive and reflect the midwifery role, and in a physical environment that is comfortable, and aesthetically pleasing.

Women's Experience

For many women the passage into motherhood is a 'peak' learning experience in their lives (Belenky et al. 1997; Bergum 1989). The transformation into being of a new mother and baby, and a new family is meaningful and powerful and in many cultures is regarded in the context of a rite of passage (Klassen 2001; Ayers-Gould

2000; Kitzinger 2000). The way women speak about birth often indicate spiritual meaning and belief (e.g. Clark Callister 2004; Semenic et al. 2004; Milan 2003; Gaskin 2002). Women's religious belief is also known to be relevant to care. It is suggested that giving birth may bring these women closer to the Higher Being they believe in (Baumiller 2002). In addition the use of religious ritual is used as a coping mechanism, the belief becomes more meaningful, birth is a transforming experience and the Higher Being is viewed as being able to influence birth (Clark Callister and Khalaf 2010). Despite this knowledge little notice is taken of religious belief and the impact on pregnancy experience in the UK.

The Baby

It needs highlighting that midwives do not just care for women, but are caring for the dyad of the mother and baby who are inextricably linked. It is not just holistic care that is required for the mother but also for the baby, and in the context of the whole family. Recognition of the infant as a spiritual being is limited within Western culture (Hall 2006). Yet there is developing evidence of the perception of religious women toward their unborn and change of their behaviours according to their spiritual awareness (Heidari et al. 2014). The women in this study would avoid eating harmful food, avoid those who were perceived as 'negative or offensive' in their language, avoided harmful environments and attempted to keep their minds free from what they perceived to be 'evil' traits. In doing so they hoped to provide a more 'spiritual' environment in which to nurture their unborn baby. Midwives also care for women where in reality some babies are not born to live. In addition the need for spiritual care of parents and babies in the stressful environment of special care units and in complex situations is being recognised (Caldeira and Hall 2012). Care therefore should include the recognition of the spiritual nature of the unborn/newborn and a need to treat babies with gentleness and kindness, promoting values for humanity.

Education

As the NMC (2009) guidance for pre-registration midwifery includes expectancy that students will address spiritual need and consider religious and cultural groups in the holistic paradigm, there is a requirement to explore the concepts in the curriculum. Across nursing there has been debate about whether spirituality may be 'taught' or whether it is something 'intrinsic' in people (Timmins and Neill 2013; Meredith et al. 2012; Mitchell and Hall 2007; Greenstreet 1999). It is not known how all Higher Education institutions are currently meeting the requirements, but there

is anecdotal evidence that there is a tendency to ask a chaplain to give a talk to the students to cover everything or spirituality is addressed via the mention of 'cultural groups'. However this does not cover the requirements to consider the holistic focus as required by the NMC and there is a danger that lip-service is paid to the subject.

Education of student midwives around spirituality has had minimal consideration in the literature (Attard et al. 2014; Hall and Mitchell 2008; Mitchell and Hall 2007). Once more the question arises that the reason may be that spirituality is integral to midwifery care but there may also be a wider discussion to be had around the recognition of more ethereal subjects in an evidence-based culture. Without the 'evidence' many educators will be reluctant to explore the issues, even though they are content to introduce 'emotion' as a subject. Spirituality has been compared to emotion (Vaughan 2002) and it is sometimes difficult to find the borders between emotional, psychological and spiritual aspects of care but there could be an argument that, in a truly holistic paradigm, these borders of understanding around the human state would not be present. It could be reflected in the metaphor of the baby who is an individual person but is completely linked and dependent on the mother. With holism the physical-emotional-spiritual-social being has no borders as each is impacting on the other. It has been argued that carers should have self-awareness of their own views and recognise their limitations (Kelly 2002), particularly to distinguish between their personal spiritual issues and those of the person being supported (Greenstreet 2006). Students and practitioners therefore need to consider spirituality at a personal level. The development of education sessions over time have attempted to facilitate this depth of learning and provide a safe environment for students to discuss meaning and spirituality before exploring within practice (Hall and Mitchell 2008; Mitchell and Hall 2007). It has been suggested that the only two things required to provide spiritual care are being open to the individual and being aware of your own spirituality so that you are open to discussing others' beliefs (Delinger 2010:417). The implication is that facilitation of learning around spiritual care should include enabling the student to explore personal expression and develop awareness.

Achieving competence in midwifery (and nursing) has become embedded in culture. The ICM provides global competencies for midwifery programmes while the NMC provides essential skills clusters for students to achieve to demonstrate they have passed the required elements to be accepted as a midwife. A recent study is considering the introduction of competencies that students may achieve in relation to spiritual care (Attard et al. 2014). The danger is that such 'tick-box' practice may decrease the depth of spiritual care further rather than practitioners looking at the wider meanings for the woman and her family. However it could also be suggested that at the moment there is potentially little education and spiritually-based care taking place so introducing competencies may be better than nothing. There is further need to discuss these concepts.

Spirituality Research and Midwifery

Women's Experiences

As indicated above there is minimal research around the spiritual meanings for women in pregnancy, and none at all based in the UK. There are however a number of international studies that have described qualitatively the individual experience of women from many cultural and religious backgrounds (e.g. Heidari et al. 2014; Varcoe et al. 2013; Clark Callister and Khalaf 2010; Mann et al. 2008; Carver and Ward 2007; Jesse et al. 2007; Clark Callister 2004; Semenic et al. 2004; Sered 1991). This makes extrapolation to the UK practice settings difficult but provides evidence for recognition of individual needs. The individual nature of the experience makes interpretation of research a challenge and it is clear that women do have a wide range of spiritual experiences and meanings associated with pregnancy (Carver and Ward 2007). However studies have shown how spirituality and religious belief appear to provide support or impact on decision-making during the pregnancy continuum (Heidari et al. 2014; Mann et al. 2008; Jesse et al. 2007; Klassen 2001). In one US study it appears that religious belief and spirituality may have an impact on levels of anxiety in pregnancy (Mann et al. 2008), while for some women spiritual belief impacts on behaviours in order to protect the wellbeing of the baby (Heidari et al. 2014). The indication is that more questions around the values framework under which women live their lives may help midwives identify how support may be better provided.

Place of Birth

The environment of care has received considerable attention in recent years. Historically midwifery care was community based with a true recognition of the social place of birth in society, and recognition of birth as a 'normal life event' in contrast to a medical process. The move into hospital based care took place from the 1960s onwards, with political drivers (House of Commons Social Services committee 1980) as well as increasing medical control. This resulted in a more medically based organisation of care, in line with nursing management, as well as an increasing focus on technology. The impact of this has pulled the focus away from the home as the usual place of birth within the context of the family. In recent years women and midwives have been questioning the need for stark clinical backgrounds in the birth environment (Symon et al. 2008; National Childbirth trust (NCT) 2005). But this was also explored back in the 1980s when Sally Stockley (1986) was advocating a more spiritual focus on environment and encouraging women to prepare themselves by visualisation when needing to be within a hospital situation. It is known that a stress-free environment where women are undisturbed will enable the hormones associated with labour to work effectively (Fourreur 2008).

In addition making the birth environment more welcoming appears to have an effect on birth outcomes (Hodnett et al. 2009). This indicates that the physical and emotional impact of environment is considered significant. The spiritual meaning of place of birth has also been addressed in recent studies in Australia (Fahy et al. 2008). There is a suggestion that we attach meaning to the place where we are born (Crowther 2014; Hall 2008) and the emotional significance should not be underestimated (Wallas LaChance 2002; Klassen 2001). In addition the spiritual significance of water to women in labour has also been discussed (Odent 2014). It is evident that more research needs to be carried out to explore the significance of the meaning of the place of birth to women and the family.

Midwives' Views

The experience of midwives in relation to pregnancy has rarely been discussed. However, in a recent study of the meaning of midwifery, the midwife participants related spiritual care to the 'art' of midwifery. They identified the need to recognise women's individual religious belief; that women had individual spiritual resources in order to cope and that spiritual care and intuition are linked (Hall 2012). In addition they were clear that the birth event itself is 'spiritual'. A Delphi study that took place in Hawaii (Linhares 2012) identified that Nurse-Midwives viewed midwifery as a spiritual role, with a belief in a higher power: described spirituality in the context of personal belief and feelings; that it was not necessarily based in religion and that they used prayer and spiritual communication in their practice. They also viewed birth as spiritual, that midwifery was a 'calling', and that there is power in the connecting relationships between midwife and women. In an Australian study the sacredness of birth is recognised by women and families, but also by midwives and doctors involved (Crowther et al. 2014b). The powerful nature of birth has therefore been identified to impact on care givers as well as women and their partners.

Midwifery Education

As indicated above education for spiritual care has been addressed in a limited way in midwifery. Nursing authors have attempted developing competencies to demonstrate ability in provision of spiritual care (Baldacchino 2006; van Leeuwen and Cusveller 2004). A recent pilot study, also related to spiritual competency, included midwifery students within the project but did not isolate them in the analysis, making it difficult to establish if there are any differences with student midwives (Ross et al. 2014). A Delphi study exploring developing competencies for student nurses and midwives in Malta shows that teaching sessions are beneficial for improving spiritual care practise (Attard et al. 2014), though this was more likely

for the nursing students than those studying midwifery. Overall spirituality remains a neglected aspect of the formal midwifery curriculum in the United Kingdom. However a small research project identified that student midwives appeared to benefit from addressing spirituality in the curriculum but also that the use of creative methods also enabled consideration of a wider perspective (Hall and Mitchell 2008; Mitchell and Hall 2007). More evidence is required to consider how education around spirituality in the holistic paradigm may be enhanced and how it will impact on practice.

Spirituality, Knowledge and Practice: A Personal View

From my early career as a nurse to now I can recognise how acknowledging spirituality has played a part. My very early experiences of being present at the death of a person, followed by the respectful laying out of the body, in a central London backdrop of cultural and mix of people, led to questioning of how spiritual needs are addressed. This was enhanced as a student within a maternity setting observing many rituals around birth and daily life that were new to me. I questioned why those of us in a traditional English culture had little ritual around the passages of life and death. As a student midwife I observed mentors and was able to identify some who were undertaking the same tasks as others yet had ‘something different’ about them. It was later when I qualified that I was to discover from their personal lives that many of these midwives had some kind of religious or spiritual belief that was underpinning the way they approached care. I wanted to emulate their practice. I was also influenced by working closely with a Chaplain who was keen to celebrate the start of life and to provide support for those who had challenging births or unwell babies.

I was also strongly influenced by my own experiences of pregnancy and birth. The intensity of the connecting relationships of the developing children as part of me as mother, but also as individuals led to my further questioning around the humanity and spirituality of the unborn. These experiences led me to explore the literature and to recognise the lack of evidence around spiritually based care. I was able to discover more when I undertook a literature review around spirituality and childbirth as part of a Masters level degree. The concept of spirituality has consistently underpinned my writing around midwifery and my education of students. As explored previously the recognition of the students as spiritual beings has encouraged development of educational sessions where they may have an opportunity to explore their own spirituality. The use of arts based methods as a tool to unlock hidden meaning have provided opportunity for further reflection and research as indicated in previous sections.

Personally the discovery of meaning and recognition of the value of humanity and the unborn baby are aspects that continue to underpin my career. Reflexivity is an important concept alongside creative activities that provide context and balance for the more academic and cognitive aspects of my role. I aim to develop students

to consider holistic approaches to care but also to recognise their own search for meaning and purpose in life. It appears to me, as we are dealing with the increase in complexity in pregnancy, that it has become even more important there is now a spiritual focus in grounding pregnancy in the realms of normality. Those with complex needs require holistic, women-centred care more in order to meet all their needs. My purpose therefore is to continue to ensure this is addressed.

What Professional Development, If Any, Is Offered in This Discipline?

In view of the lack of discussion and debate around spirituality in relation to pregnancy there are limited opportunities for professional development. There are broad Masters level programmes in spiritual studies that midwives could opt into and study from a professional background. My previous colleague Mary Mitchell and I presented a workshop in Cornwall around spiritual care. In addition I have discussed the issues at a number of professional study days or conferences. It would be pertinent for interested readers to contact research groups at Universities such as the Centre of Spiritual studies in Hull (<http://www2.hull.ac.uk/fass/css.aspx>) or the Spirituality interest group in Trinity College, Dublin to establish if there are any professional development opportunities for midwifery. Broadly though opportunities to explore the issues are few and need further exploration.

And What Are Possible Future Directions for Spirituality in This Discipline/Area

There remains limited current research around spirituality in relation to midwifery and childbirth; therefore there are significant areas of research that could be completed. More understanding is required of the context of spirituality for all women, not just those with specific cultural or religious backgrounds. This is especially pertinent in relation to rising complexity and complications. More understanding is also required of the spiritual impact on partners and their families of the birth process. The meaning of the birth environment could also be explored to more depth, especially from a longer term perspective. In addition the effects on the care-givers at birth require more investigation, including the obstetricians and paediatric doctors. Intuitive practice is referred to in midwifery and more discussion could be had around the depth of intuition as a spiritual role versus intuition as acquisition of knowledge. Finally education for spiritual care for midwives is limited in the UK and more research and discussion is required to address the subject. Discussion around spiritual assessment may be a direction but there would be a fear of developing an increasing 'tick-box' culture that detracts from the holistic

approach required. However debate needs to be had around how midwives can be encouraged to ask the right questions to meet spiritual need for all women.

Conclusion

Overall there remains limited evidence to underpin practice and education for midwifery in relation to spiritual care. There is much work and discussion still to be had in order to explore the issues to greater depth. There is an assumption that this is carried out in holistic women-centred care, but it is also assumed spirituality is more related to normal birth. In the increasing complexity of women's health in pregnancy the spiritual needs of all women need to be explored along with the experiences of the care-givers.

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Chapter 18

Spiritual Screening in Community-Based Palliative Care by the Multidisciplinary Team

Julie Fletcher

Abstract The provision of holistic care is expected across the multidisciplinary team within community-based palliative care incorporating the physical, the social, the emotional and the spiritual aspects of each patient. However, deficits in education, training and organisational definitions of spirituality can leave staff ill-prepared. In contemporary society the characterization of spirituality is moving from a strictly religious provision of care to a more humanist spiritual support which encourages an individual search for meaning. This broad spiritual discourse encompasses connectedness, meaning and purpose, compassion, hope, and forgiveness, while at the same time acknowledging that the individual patient contextualises spirituality for themselves. Education regarding spirituality, spiritual care, and spiritual screening is vital for the professional development of the multidisciplinary team. In true hermeneutic phenomenological style, *Connecto*, a spiritual screening tool rose from the research. This tool provides a lexicon of spirituality assisting identification of spiritual strengths and vulnerabilities, and places where referral to specialised spiritual support would be beneficial. Spiritual care embedded in everyday practice for the multidisciplinary team members can improve the provision of true holistic care and bring capacity for professional and personal growth for the professional staff.

Spiritual screening is indispensable in community-based palliative care where holistic care is the mandate of each member of the multidisciplinary team. Without a triage tool, spiritual pain often sneaks under the radar and spiritual care is neither recognized nor performed. However, end-of-life care by the multidisciplinary team, as instructed by the World Health Organisation and palliative care peak bodies, is expected to take into account the whole person (Holloway et al. 2011; Palliative Care Australia 2005; World Health Organisation 2005). Holistic care challenges a purely biomedical model focused on the dying process, acknowledging the dying person also has a psychological, social, and spiritual context (Rosenberg 2011), and that care is best delivered by a professional multidisciplinary team.

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Community-based palliative care, with its holistic approach, is uniquely placed for the provision of basic spiritual care by the multidisciplinary team as they provide care within the home and familiar surroundings of the patient. Yet education and training in spirituality have been sorely neglected, leaving the team members ill-prepared for the provision of spiritual care. Spiritual screening can provide the team with language to identify spiritual strengths, vulnerabilities, and the places where referral to specialised spiritual support would be beneficial. As a result of my doctoral research into community based palliative care, I developed a screening tool, *Connecto*. This will be discussed later in the chapter.

How Spirituality Is Understood in Community-Based Palliative Care

In view of the fact that each human being has a spiritual dimension, conscious or pre-conscious, there is capacity for each individual to benefit from spiritual support (Pichon 2007; Speck 2005). National and international policies of palliative care affirm spiritual care as an integral component of holistic care (Palliative Care Australia 2012; Palliative Care Victoria 2006; World Health Organisation 2005). Australia integrates spiritual care within their quality improvement program NSAP (National Standards Assessment Program) (Palliative Care Australia 2012), similarly this integration of spiritual care occurs within other peak bodies internationally (Holloway et al. 2011). This incorporation within everyday care aligns with the concept of multidisciplinary involvement and the presumption that all professionals working within palliative care will have the capacity to provide basic care of spiritual needs (Fletcher 2016; Walter 2002). This is important as the patient will not necessarily differentiate between diverse professional roles, but rather, will share immediate concerns about spirituality with the next team member that comes in the door (Fletcher 2016; Hartley 2012).

Spirituality, taking place in the everyday of life and intrinsic to the human person (de Souza 2009a; Fisher 2011; Fletcher 2016; Sulmasy 2002), is relational, being based in the connectedness of all things (Bennet and Bennet 2007; de Souza 2009b; Swinton et al. 2011). Spirituality is frequently identified in the literature as featuring connectedness with the Self,¹ with Other,² with creation and with mystery/transcendence (de Jager Meezenbroek et al. 2010; de Souza 2006; Ellis and Lloyd-Williams 2012; Fletcher 2016; Kelly 2012a; Liu and Robertson 2011;

¹*Self* is used throughout the research to refer to the inner self, also acknowledging that each human being bears the image of the Transcendent within the true self. "If I find Him I will find myself and if I find my true self I will find Him." Thomas Merton (1972). *New Seeds of Contemplation*. New York: New Directions Books, p. 36.

²*Other* is used as a personification of, and encounter with, the collective other. Michael Buber (1957). *I and Thou*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, uses 'I-Thou,' or Other, describing encounter that is based in relation, and has capacity to lead to transformation of both the I and the Thou.

Sheldrake 2007). Spirituality, as connectedness, can be represented on a continuum ranging from secular spirituality through to religious spirituality (Murray et al. 2004). For some, spirituality is based in religion and a focus on the Divine (Koenig 2008; Pargament 2013), while for others spirituality involves existential questions of meaning: Who am I? Why am I here? Have I made an impact? (Frankl 1992; Puchalski 2002). The relational features of community-based palliative care easily position themselves within this definitional framework of spirituality as connectedness placed on a secular-religious continuum, and also assist in identification of spiritual pain.

Spiritual pain rises when a person experiences themselves as disconnected from their inner selves and from others, or when there are alterations in significant relationships (Holloway et al. 2011). An absence of meaning, connectedness, and acceptance, provokes disconnectedness, often leading to desolation and alienation (de Souza 2012; Emblen and Pesut 2001; Fillion et al. 2006). Rising out of neediness within the human spirit (McGrath 2002; Mehta and Chan 2008), spiritual disconnectedness is a highly personal and subjective matter that only the individual can describe and assess completely (McGrath 2002; Pesut 2008). Disconnectedness can occur with the Self, with Other, with creation, and with mystery and transcendence through both psychological and religious expressions.

Disconnectedness with Self can occur when intrapersonal expectations and ideals are not attained, when self lets down the Self (McGrath 2002), leading to rejection of the Self which can be observed in self-deprecation, fault-finding, and a focus on weaknesses and mistakes (Fillion et al. 2006). Another form of disconnectedness with Self happens when an individual connects to something that is not beneficial to their own wellbeing (de Souza 2012). Disconnectedness with Other brings a loss of shelter against isolation and loneliness, that connectedness with Other characteristically supplies (Sand and Strang 2006). Disconnectedness to creation, the natural environment, to the here-and-now, and to one's place in the world can all lead to a sense of global loneliness (McGrath 2002). Disconnectedness from mystery or transcendence can lead to a small, mundane, controlled world where there is little surprise, hope, or change accessible (Fletcher 2016). Disconnectedness, then, provides useful language for spiritual pain that requires spiritual care.

It is spiritual care within holistic care that supports the spirituality of the patient and carer. Described as "Lifting the spirit" (Fillion et al. 2006, p. 335), research shows spiritual care incorporates connectedness (de Souza 2006; Fisher 2011; Fletcher 2016; Yan et al. 2010), a search for meaning and purpose (Fletcher 2016; Saunders 2002; Walter 2002), and compassion, hope, and forgiveness (Bennet and Bennet 2007; Holloway et al. 2011; Kellehear 2000). This broad spiritual discourse acknowledges that it is the individual patient who contextualises what the experience of spirituality is for them personally (Macleod 2013; McGrath 2002; Pesut 2008). A broad discourse also provides space for all members of the multidisciplinary staff to provide spiritual care at some level (Fletcher 2016; Walter 2002), and builds capacity to meet end-of-life issues that can be complex and unique (Hartley 2012).

Multidisciplinary provision of spiritual care is founded on the availability of consultation with, and referral to, specialised spiritual support (Holloway et al. 2011).

The palliative care literature shows a contemporary move by chaplains away from a strictly religious provision of care to a more humanist spiritual support that encourages an individual search for meaning (Cobb et al. 2012; Holloway et al. 2011). This is consistent with the western move towards being “Spiritual but not religious” (de Souza 2009c; Marler and Hadaway 2002; Pargament 2013; Peterman et al. 2002). Sometimes labelled the post-secular society, this era takes in various fresh spiritual worldviews, many with a focus on the individual (Watson 2013). This move supports a provision of spiritual care that allows the individual to direct and receive spiritual support that is individually tailored. Nevertheless, spiritual care referrals from the multidisciplinary team are most often made when the patient or carer declare themselves to be involved in a religious denomination (Fletcher 2016). Referring only self-reported religious people for spiritual care denies the innate human nature of spirituality (Culliford 2007), and the continuum of spirituality that exists through the community (Murray et al. 2004). Attaching spiritual care to religion excludes all other patients from true holistic care, and ignores the need of humans to answer the big questions and to make meaning in life (Frankl 1992). Hartley (2012, p. 266) declares: “where we might fail those people who we care for is when we leave them alone with their questions, helpless and afraid.”

Current Practices That Address Spirituality in Community-Based Palliative Care

Spiritual care has been characterized as any activity that can identify and enhance the connectedness a person experiences with Self, Other, creation and mystery/transcendence as sources of strength and meaning (de Jager Meezenbroek et al. 2010; de Souza 2009b; Ellis and Lloyd-Williams 2012; Holloway et al. 2011; Liu and Robertson 2011). Practice informed by spirituality refrains from taking a position of problem solving, but rather it listens with the heart (Fletcher 2016; Kelly 2012a), where the beliefs of the professional are put aside in dual respect to allow the beliefs of the Other to be the focus (Hodge 2005). Spiritual care is not an expert coming to solve a problem because this present circumstance “needs to be lived through” (Kelly 2012b), and the patient is the expert on their life, not the professional (Macleod 2013; Pesut 2003). This approach can be a challenge for members of the multidisciplinary team whose professional culture is based in problem solving and expert knowledge (Bamforth 2001). Spiritual care is about focussed discussion rather than formal assessment (Ellis and Lloyd-Williams 2012), and most commonly arises from an ordinary interaction between two humans where spiritual care is the professional interest of one (Pesut et al. 2012). Care for the spirit is relational, allowing and enabling each person to be as they need to be at this time, rather than attempting to soften fury, calm distress, or provide answers to existential uncertainty (Kelly 2012a). For the patient who actively wants to explore beliefs, meanings, and connections, spiritual care is an expression of companionship that

willingly enters into the often weak and vulnerable spaces of disconnectedness (de Souza 2012; Ellis and Lloyd-Williams 2012; Kelly 2012b). Someone who, while not afraid to be ignorant of another's personal world, can serve as respectful witness (Kelly 2013).

Research indicates that members of the multidisciplinary team are neither educated nor confident in providing basic spiritual care, due to:

- A sparsity of training, knowledge, awareness, and common language around spirituality held by the multidisciplinary team (Emblen and Pesut 2001; Fletcher 2016; Holloway et al. 2011; McGrath 2002);
- An absence of confidence to speak of spiritual matters (Emblen and Pesut 2001; McGrath 2002);
- Poor attention to spiritual research (Emblen and Pesut 2001; McGrath 2002);
- Unwillingness to refer patients to spiritual support workers (Holloway et al. 2011).

Professional Development

Education regarding spirituality, spiritual care, and spiritual screening is vital. Within community-based palliative care it can address the issues identified in the literature and bolster confidence to identify spiritual strengths that can be drawn upon, as well as spiritual and existential pain that could be appropriately referred to professional spiritual support. A simple, yet profound spiritual screening tool, called *Connecto*, has been developed which provides language for the multidisciplinary team members to identify spirituality through connectedness, and spiritual pain as disconnectedness, along with language for referral to specialised spiritual support. Implementation is quick, and it is easy to utilize within existing practice, revealing rich information occurring throughout what would be seen as normal conversation between the professional and the patient or carer.

In true hermeneutic phenomenological style, the *Connecto* tool emerged through immersion in current community-based research (Fletcher 2016). Focus groups and individual interviews were conducted with members of the multidisciplinary team (health professionals, welfare workers, administration, management, spiritual support), to gather their perception and understanding of spirituality and spiritual care. This was placed in dialogue with existing theories from contemporary research and then presented to the participants where it was enthusiastically received. The name *Connecto* was chosen to symbolise the focus the tool places on connectedness. *Connecto* was initially examined by two experienced staff members involved with initial assessment of new patients. It is now being trialled across the whole organisation.

Connecto does not evaluate spirituality as a whole, but rather it distinguishes spiritual strengths of connectedness and vulnerabilities of disconnectedness. This occurs through the theoretical framework of spirituality understood as

connectedness and disconnectedness with Self, Other, creation, and mystery/transcendence, with capacity for integration towards ultimate unity (Buber 1957; de Souza 2009b, 2011; Fisher 2011). *Connecto* is a comprehensive tool that screens for spiritual distress (Koenig 2007), current spiritual state (Monod et al. 2011), and spiritual strengths (Hodge 2005), while having the capacity to be embedded within routine multidisciplinary patient care (Jenkins et al. 2009).

Filling out *Connecto* (Diagram 18.1) begins with the question: “What is important to you?” (Bhuvanewar and Stern 2013; Kelly 2013; Miner-Williams 2006). Then on reflection, which can be as the conversation occurs, or later as notes are written, places of connectedness are identified and a line is drawn from the self at the centre, towards the aspect recognized. Places of disconnectedness are identified and a similar line is drawn, and two short lines across it (—/—/—). This provides a visual account of spiritual screening, indicating spiritual strengths and

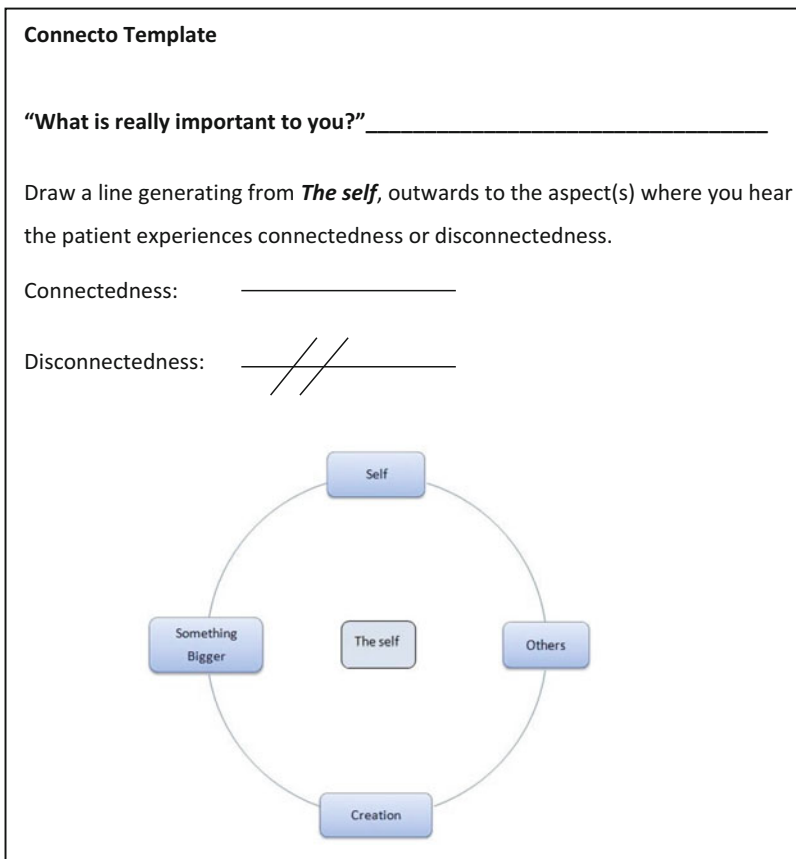


Diagram 18.1 The *Connecto* spiritual screening tool

Table 18.1 Attributes of connectedness and disconnectedness

	Connectedness	Disconnectedness
Self	Acceptance, comfortable, contentment, forgiveness of self, inner harmony, inner peace, serenity, inner strength, thankfulness, valuing, self-identity, self-knowledge	Decreased confidence, despair, distress, fear, focus on weakness/mistakes, frustration, guilt, helplessness, exacerbated pain, restless, suppression of feelings, uncomfortable with self, Who am I? Why am I here?
Other	Accepting, belonging, being valued, caring, compassion, forgiveness, gratitude, harmony, helping, peace, respecting, reconciliation	Alienation, conflict, fault finding, isolation, feeling unsupported, regret, separateness, vulnerability, withdrawal
Creation	Appreciating, beauty, natural environment, gratitude, peaceful, respect, sense of belonging, wonder	Global loneliness, missing the outside/nature
Something bigger	Awe, belonging, faithfulness, fulfilment, gratitude, hope, meaning and purpose, mystery, meditation, peace, reason to exist, sacredness, secular, transcendence	Doubt, fear, loss of faith, lack of hope, inability to transcend the present, meaninglessness
Religious attributes	Afterlife, church, divine, God, God's presence, faith community, heaven, higher being/power, prayer, religion, religious leaders (pastors, priests, rabbis), religious literature, rituals, sacred, scripture, worship	Doubt, lapsed/backslidden, loss of connection with religious peers/leaders/rituals/God, "Why did God allow/cause this?"
References	Chao et al. (2002), de Jager Meezenbroek et al. (2010), Fillion et al. (2006), Holloway et al. (2011), McGrath (2002), Murray et al. (2007), Sand and Strang (2006), and Sessanna et al. (2011)	

vulnerabilities. Basic spiritual care can then support and draw on the connectedness strengths and is aware of places of disconnectedness that may need a referral.

Attributes of spirituality from the literature have been collected (Chao et al. 2002; de Jager Meezenbroek et al. 2010; Fillion et al. 2006; Holloway et al. 2011; McGrath 2002; Murray et al. 2007; Sand and Strang 2006; and Sessanna et al. 2011) giving some description and language to the different domains of connectedness and disconnectedness which might be discussed by the patient (Table 18.1).

Instruction in *Connecto* focuses on four aspects:

- The literature foundation of the connectedness framework for understanding spirituality and enhancing language about spirituality (Champagne 2008; de Souza 2009a; Fisher 2011; Sulmasy 2002).
- An increasing appreciation of the patient as expert in their own context (McGrath 2002; Pesut 2008);
- The reflection on ordinary conversation and story (both the told and untold) for identification of strengths of connectedness and places of disconnectedness (Pesut et al. 2012);
- It takes into account the distinction between religious and spiritual care (Fletcher 2016; Hodge 2005).

These aspects are the foundation of spiritual care which involve the offering of sacred space where big questions can be contemplated (Kelly 2012a). The literature indicates the basic competencies of spiritual care that are expected of the multidisciplinary team:

- Active listening;
- Awareness of own spirituality;
- Big questions and life review;
- Dignity, encouragement, presence, responding, respect, and support;
- Importance of verbal and non verbal communication;
- Identification of places of disconnectedness;
- Preparation for death;
- Recognition of spiritual needs and appropriate referral procedure (Fletcher 2016; Marie Curie Cancer Care 2003; Rumbold and Holmes 2011).

While providing a sacred space for patients and carers they also bring capacity for professional and personal growth for the multidisciplinary team members (Mitchell et al. 2006). The total focus is on the patient and their spirituality, placing the patient's life experience and their agenda (*What is important to you?*) at the centre of spiritual screening and spiritual care (Cobb et al. 2012), which builds on the patient's stories of connectedness and disconnectedness (Hodge 2005).

The Features of *Connecto* Which Make It an Effective Screening Tool

Connecto is:

- Quick and easy to learn, requiring little training time, and yet the potential for inordinate outcomes and depth of assessment is vast, only being limited by the reflection capacity of the practitioner;
- A tool that identifies aspects of connectedness and reveals disconnectedness, where a lack of connectedness leads to spiritual pain and despair;

- Not derived from a particular religious tradition, but for the individual it transcends specific beliefs, and is personally tailored to the specific context;
- A tool that provides a framework of relevant language for spirituality and spiritual care within community-based palliative care, allowing for shared meaning and constructive spiritual referral;
- An effective tool in community-based palliative care as all members of the multidisciplinary team, regardless of personal philosophy, beliefs, or values can use it within their professional practice, as the notion of dual respect signifies intentionally putting one's own beliefs aside and seeking to understand the phenomenological spiritual reality of the Other (Hodge 2005).

For the multidisciplinary team member, *Connecto* has the capacity to support self-care through an increase in self-awareness, awareness of Other, reflective practice and the practice of presence. It can also be used for personal reflection in consideration of strengths in connectedness and personal areas of disconnectedness. While created specifically for the multidisciplinary professionals working in community-based palliative care, *Connecto* does have the potential to be used for spiritual screening, and as a prompt for spiritual conversation, within any context where care is extended to people. For example this could include all health services, education, and social work; anywhere that it is useful to identify personal strengths of connectedness and places of disconnectedness. The basic competencies of active listening and noting the importance of both verbal and non-verbal communication prepare any practitioner to carry out spiritual screening with *Connecto*. Further, the capacity to embed the consideration of *Connecto* aspects within ordinary practice conversations, and through reflection on those conversations, means that implementation of the tool requires no additional time to complete, while bringing language to hunches that arise. *Connecto* has the facility to be employed in a very simplistic mode, or with more depth to provide rich layers of meaning, depending on the spiritual awareness and individual requirement of the professional using it.

Future Directions for Spirituality in Community-Based Palliative Care

Spirituality as connectedness and spiritual pain as disconnectedness can bring useful language about spirituality and spiritual care to the multidisciplinary team. Educational components for skills of basic spiritual support include:

- Identification of places of connectedness and disconnectedness: spirituality and spiritual pain (de Souza 2012; Fletcher 2016);
- Providing presence: the encounter of peaceful presence, just being there, can provide a co-created sacred space where fears, misdeeds, and places of lost opportunity can be drawn out (Ellis and Lloyd-Williams 2012; Kelly 2012b).

- Active listening: this highly personalised space involves genuine openness and an authentic approach emphasised by acceptance, active listening, and an absence of judgement (Kelly 2012b).
- Life review: a space to explore what are considered big questions about personal meaning and purpose: Who am I? Why am I here? What is the meaning of Life, and of my life? Do I make an impact? (Frankl 1992; Puchalski et al. 2009). An important part of the journey, meaning and purpose are poignant within palliative care where so much reflection may occur around legacy and life review (Hack et al. 2010; Trueman and Parker 2006; Wlodarczyk 2007; Xiao et al. 2012).
- Preparation for death: in palliative care the person-centred style of spiritual care can help with preparation for death (Henriksson and Årestedt 2013). Through the dying journey the patient is confronted with looming non-existence; the spiritual pain of ultimate disconnectedness and alienation (Kearney and Weininger 2012). While the spiritual body is encased in a failing, declining physical body that holds all of life within it, this time can often be accompanied with growing spiritual strength (Kellehear 2000).
- The implementation of spiritual screening across community-based palliative care organisations, embedded in everyday multidisciplinary practice can improve the provision of true holistic care.

Within community-based palliative care the use of connectedness with the Self, with Other, with creation, and with mystery/transcendence as understanding for spirituality, and disconnectedness in those areas as definition for spiritual pain, provide relevant language for talking about spirituality, providing basic spiritual care, and appropriate referral to specialised spiritual support.

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Part IV
Business, Social and Cultural Studies

Chapter 19

Environmental Issues and Spirituality: Tracing the Past and Making Contemporary Connections

Jane Bone

Abstract In this chapter current aspects of spirituality are presented that contribute to the field of environmental and sustainability studies. In the twenty-first century both spirituality and sustainable practices are the foundations of hope. Sustainable practice is commonly associated with scientific knowledge and rationality and is less often connected to spirituality in its many forms. With its roots in deep ecology, ecofeminism and the ever present connections to indigenous knowledge(s), this chapter proposes that the notion of spirituality is embedded in understandings of sustainable practice. Short excerpts from ethnographic travel journals are used to connect the literature with experience.

In environmental terms the present time is now called the age of the Anthropocene, a time when humanity is displaced and takes its chance beside other species in a bid for survival. Many writers and researchers argue that extinction demands attention. At the same time people are using inventiveness and creativity to hold back what many see as an inevitable fate given the global evidence for climate change. With ever increasing momentum and popular support the Green movements are perceived by the author to be a new and politicised spirituality for the twenty-first century. For many people, their relationships with other species, with nature, and with new technologies, creates new possibilities focused on common threads and community and on spiritual connectedness, grounded in ways of life that sustain and hold promise for the future.

Introduction

I am travelling in Central Australia and in the middle of the continent in the middle of the desert is the sacred rock, Uluru (also known as Ayers Rock). It is an icon that represents everything that endures under the hot Australian sun and is regarded as sacred in Indigenous Australian spirituality. It is a manifestation of the spiritual connection between the land and the indigenous peoples of Australia who have lived sustainably in Australia for

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40,000 years. My respect has increased for people who can thrive in this landscape despite the destructive processes of colonisation on the environment. I am aware that if the vehicle in which I am travelling ran out of fuel, if I did not have water and if the air-conditioning stopped, that my survival would be uncertain. Later in the day, we are taken on a walk with an elder of the Central Arrernte people who explains the intricacies of the shrubs, the value of certain tubers and the healing properties of plants: she lives in country, not on the surface, and her knowledge is sure and deep. In the evening we watch the sun go down behind the rock and as the colours change it seems obvious that we, the tourists, who are watching and taking photos, are transient, but also careless and disrespectful, trampling in the red earth, leaving junk behind, petrol fumes and tyre tracks. Meanwhile, Uluru waits, massive, beautiful and glowing, as if lit from within, before fading into the night. (Narrative constructed from author's travel notes)

I am aware of certain charges that could be laid at my door from the above narrative: excessive romanticism, irrational imaginings, lack of trust in the technologies that surround me, an over-critical orientation. It is a story told in opposition to current political ideas in Australia that favour scepticism toward climate change and tolerate a denial of global warming as a 'man-made' phenomenon, despite dire predictions about the future, with prophesies of mass extinctions and increasingly unstable weather patterns (Flannery 2012). It seems that even the most reliable science is not enough to drive policies that might support a sustainable future. In this scenario there seems to be an underlying belief in the primacy of 'man' and 'his' works in perpetual triumph over nature. At a time when evidence fails to convince and the economy takes precedence over the environment a question arises about how to maintain connectedness and to advocate for sustainable practices without becoming depressed or defeated. In this chapter, I argue that the field of environmental studies and associated 'green' issues have multiple connections with spirituality and that acknowledging these spiritual connections brings hope to a challenging field. I trace some of these threads, from nineteenth century romanticism to the age of the sixth extinction, proposed to be a feature of the Anthropocene at the present time (Wagler 2011).

Definition of Terms

Studies of the environment encompass a range of issues. Hay (2002, p. 9), in his introduction to environmental thought, suggested that it might be conceptualised as "recycled nineteenth century romanticism . . . history's second great articulation of the ecological impulse". Alternatively, its defining feature may be "its opposition to the 'eternal human progress' agenda of the Enlightenment". Hay (2002, p. 9) describes the Enlightenment as the time when the secular and humanist triumphed over the divine. At this stage environmentalism was attached to the natural sciences rather than to the sacred and is now, like ecology, more likely to be linked to science; both words are often used as synonyms for 'green' issues.

More recently there has been an increased emphasis on sustainability. Desjardins (2006) suggests that "the language of sustainability has proved quite popular, even

among those who might otherwise not be identified as environmentalists” (p. 89). The words he connects with sustainability are: economic, growth, development, the *status quo*, and resources. Sustainability can apply across all disciplines, for example, architecture, design and agriculture as well as education for sustainability linked to environmental issues. In contrast to sustainability and its associations the perspectives that emphasise nature are often concerned with wilderness and wildlife, animals and biodiversity. Biodiversity implies that all lifeforms need to be accepted with their differences because of their contribution to the earth (Holmgren 2002, p. 5) and because they maintain ecological balance. The related concern with conservation is linked to protection of sensitive ecologically important areas and species. In order to maintain and protect ecological systems many environmental groups build relationships with indigenous peoples, with communities and corporations, and significant partnerships are often negotiated in terms of equity and sustainability (see, Greenpeace International). The discipline is thus political, educational, scientific and connected to personal values and beliefs.

Changes Over Time

Significant changes over time within the discipline are emphasised in the literature. Hay (2002) suggests that the environmental movement, when viewed holistically, has a base in both spirituality and science. Spirituality is emphasised in the personal travel narrative that begins the chapter. This narrative highlights that what follows is a subjective perspective about the field of environmental studies and spirituality, a view supported by the work of those who have contributed to the combined field of environmental issues and sustainability. It may be helpful to know that in my own research I define spirituality as follows:

Spirituality connects people to each other, to all living things, to nature and the universe. Spirituality is a way of appreciating the wonder and mystery of everyday life. It alerts me to the possibility for love, happiness, goodness, peace and compassion in the world. (Bone 2010, p. 403)

Spiritual Perspectives

From a spiritual perspective it is useful to reflect on Thomas Berry’s influential eco-philosophical dream to be “mindful of the earth” (Berry 1988, p. 6). Through this awareness a “loving bond” with nature (Nicholson 2002, p. 196) can be developed. Spirituality is sometimes a feature of eco-feminist work and writing. By acknowledging the spiritual it is possible to recognise the power of deep ecology and the ethical turn taken in this work often includes the spiritual dimension. These aspects will be expanded upon and connected to spirituality in this chapter. By taking an overview of these predominately Western perspectives and seeing them

in their historical context this discussion will consider their potential to support ethical and spiritual ways of life and will include reflections on their relevance to environmental concerns. The field of environmental (science) and sustainable issues now includes the notion of the Anthropocene, a new geological epoch.

A Bond with the Earth: A Spiritual Relationship

Spirituality has been at the margins of the environmental field for a while. The work of Thomas Berry was very influential in bringing spirituality forward. He wrote about the earth “infused with spiritual energy” (Berry 1990, cited in Hay 2002, p. 111). Hay (2002) describes Berry as a creation theologian, a believer in the ecological web of life. In his key work, *The Dream of the Earth* (1988), Berry argued that humanity could turn away from exploitation and realise a different future in relationship with the environment. He felt that “a truly human intimacy with the earth and the entire natural world is needed” (1988, p. 13). According to Chapple (2011), some of Berry’s early experiences were transformative and support an emotional attachment with nature. He describes the “magic moment” (Chapple 2011, p. 337) in childhood that gave Berry the lifelong ability to be in spiritual attunement with the earth, a moment when he was in a meadow and felt at one with the universe. This transformative experience explains Berry’s profound level of devotion to nature. From then on he argued for the possibility of an intimate relationship with the earth and “rather than seeing the earth as something to be abused and exploited, Berry urged compassion for the suffering earth” (Chapple 2011, p. 338).

In contrast to Berry’s emphasis on intimacy, a common definition of spirituality includes feelings of awe and wonder (Bone and Fenton 2015; Hay and Nye 2006) and this is very much linked to experiences in the natural world, particularly in places where the grandeur of nature is obvious. Wharton (1996, p. 130) describes the sense of awe and wonder as spiritual and says that this can happen when in “places of power”. In these places people feel a sense of their human insignificance and this is often interpreted as a being in touch with the spiritual. These spiritual feelings also include a sense of being in the presence of something Other than the human and a feeling of displacement from the usual hierarchies where the human is at the top of the chain.

Early memories of forging a relationship with nature influence some people so that the environment may then become what they care about throughout life. Environmental advocacy is a passion for those who may be involved in politics and activism or it may be a personal spiritual practice. According to Louv (2008) sharing stories where awe and wonder are a factor and acknowledging “the largeness of the world, seen and unseen” makes “cultural, political and religious walls come tumbling down” (Louv 2008, p. 354).

Bonding with the earth might seem something that happens ‘naturally’ but ideas about what constitutes ‘natural’ are also changing. In Australia 87% of the

population live in urban environments (Hugo 2012) and this means that there is more likely to be ‘nature deficit disorder’ (Louv 2008) than a close and harmonious relationship with nature. The divide between rural and city living is wide and Louv (2008) suggests that this can mean that children in urban environments might not have the opportunity to have adequate experiences in nature and the outdoors. Bonding is often associated with something that happens in infancy or in early relationships. In her recent book ‘Kith’ the author, Jay Griffiths (2013), proposes that for many children the state of childhood itself has become “unnatural” (p. ix) and she noticed that “born to burrow and nest in nature, children are now exiled from it. They are enclosed indoors, caged and shut out of the green and vivid world, in ways unthinkable a generation ago” (Griffiths 2013, p. ix). Griffiths (2013) sees this as a feature of children’s lives in an increasingly industrialised world, a world that encloses children rather than honouring their right to be in nature.

A memory of being close to nature still has the power to construct an enduring orientation toward being ‘green’ or becoming an environmental advocate. Griffiths’ (2013, p. 1) explorations took place with a range of cultures around the world but she starts with her own memory:

Stumbling on a bird’s nest as a child, I was breathtaken. I gasped at the tenderness of it, the downy feathers, softer than my fingers, moss folded into grasses and twigs in rounds. My eyes circled and circled it, caught by the mesmerizing perfection of the nest. It was the shape of my dream, to be tucked inside a nest and to know it for home.

Griffith’s work has attracted many readers who still feel drawn to the romanticism of a childhood spent in the natural world. Griffiths (2013) ideas are in a European tradition that came from the ideas of Rousseau and the romantic poets, Wordsworth and Shelley. Her writing recreates the moments of bonding with nature that, for some, might be thought of as spiritual.

Taking a Jungian perspective, Liotta (2009) proposes that bonding happens between people and places, a sense of putting down roots and learning to belong. She says that early on, or if transplanted to another place as a migrant or refugee, people, like seeds, put down roots “in the sense of being attached to an umbilical cord that takes vital substance from the earth/placenta/ body/*mater*/material’ (Liotta 2009, p. 61). To have roots is to recognise traditions, feel a sense of attachment to place and to have a need to belong fostered by “historical memory” (Liotta 2009, p. 62). The idea that the place itself holds memories is another aspect of this, the sacred places that are revered over millennia, either natural or part of the built environment or an artwork. While this aspect of spirituality may be questioned by some in terms of the idea that some places hold a spiritual energy, these beliefs persist. Attributing spiritual significance to certain sites has probably meant that many beautiful places in nature have been preserved and protected. Accordingly, some places are seen as untouchable and become sacred gathering places where bonding happens between people as well as with the environment, ensuring that they remain part of the collective memory over time. I experienced this in Europe, that is, a sense of a connection with the ancient world and the present, and made the following observation:

Recently, in Athens, a place where I had never been before, I felt this connection to the land, the memory of myths and legends, of gods and goddesses, of olive groves and sacred mountains, temples and burial sites, the genus loci, the spirit of the place. I felt that the dusty paths, lumps of marble, ruins, museums, pillars and statues, were all urging me to remember that there was a time when sustainability was a way of life and care for the environment was linked to the divine. Also to the feminine, Athena after all won the right to be the goddess most favoured in Greece through her gift of the olive tree. (Travel notes of the author)

Ecofeminism

Interest in ecofeminism, apart from in the ancient world, was at its peak in the 1990s. A central claim, according to Gaard and Gruen (1993, p. 236), is that “problems (environmental) stem from the mutually reinforcing oppression of humans and of the natural world”; hence the connection between women and the environment. Writing 20 years ago this comprehensive account by Gaard and Gruen (1993) shows them looking back at the rise of ecofeminism in the 1960s and 1970s and stating that “it is no longer possible to discuss environmental change without social change; moreover, it is not possible to address women’s oppression without addressing environmental degradation” (Gaard and Gruen 1993, p. 236). They linked ecofeminism to the connection made between the environment and fertility and goddess traditions. Some see that a split happened where these beliefs changed because of the ‘age of reason’ influenced by Descartes’s philosophy which argued for a separation of body and soul. Others propose that this division happened in 4500 BC with the rise of monotheistic and patriarchal religions. Gaard and Gruen (1993) argued that a link between the earth and being female supports a sense of the sacred but they acknowledged that spirituality was not a focus for everyone in the ecofeminist movement. A range of examples they cited identified factors that economically disadvantage women’s work: mining, intensive farming and general environmental policies. In their view this made it “easy to see why global health and planetary ecological destruction are feminist issues” (Gaard and Gruen 1993, p. 247). Twenty years on ecofeminism was still influencing thoughts about sustainability although the problems, accelerated by climate change, seemed to have grown bigger and more urgent (Gaard 2002).

Ecofeminism is a stance that has been critiqued in the environmental field because of its New Age associations. Gaard (2011), in a recent overview of ecofeminism, says that the link with the spiritual is sometimes seen as essentialist and unnecessary. She cites authors who have rejected the idea of ecofeminism because of its holistic perspective and its connection to the goddess mythologies but also notes that many ecofeminists who affirmed spirituality were also advocates for social justice (for example, Starhawk 1982). This is a contested area because to be female does not mean to be automatically counted as an ecofeminist and

ecofeminists themselves are aware of the danger of dualisms and essentialism. According to Adams and Gruen (2014), ecofeminists take an activist position in supporting marginalised groups and “those struggling against environmental injustice, colonialism, speciesism, and environmental destruction” (Adams and Gruen 2014, p. 35). According to Turner and Brownhill (2010) there has been a re-acknowledgement of “Mother Earth” but this is not necessarily a focus for either all ecofeminists or all adherents of spirituality. Joanna Macy (2007), for example, a woman and lifelong environmental campaigner and adherent of Buddhism, is not included in much of the ecofeminist literature, instead her work is more likely to be connected to deep ecology, another area that brings together spirituality and environmental issues.

Deep Ecology

Arne Naess (1912–2009), a Norwegian conservationist, first introduced the idea of a deep ecology in the 1970s and refers to the sense of ‘oneness’ that is also a feature of spiritual endeavour. Spiritual practices are often designed around the notion of becoming One with the universe and it is a spiritual lesson to feel that the One (including the self) is subsumed in the whole. The possibility of feeling completely an individual but also completely part of the collective was commented on by Naess, who emphasised that:

if you hear a phrase like ‘all life is fundamentally one!’, you must be open to *tasting* this, before asking immediately ‘what does this mean?’. Being more precise does not necessarily create something more inspiring. (Naess 1976, cited in Palmer 2001, p. 211).

Naess’ introduction of ‘deep ecology’ was conceptualised as going beyond the material but was also based on ecology as a rational and scientific aspect of sustainability (Palmer 2001).

According to Naess, deep ecology is “a set of practical environmental policies underpinned by a set of normative principles which in turn are supported by a scientifically informed, but ultimately philosophical, view of reality and humankind” (Palmer 2001, p. 213). This emphasis on the normative and scientific was, according to Gaard (2011, p. 40), one of the problems of deep ecology, and it was critiqued as “white middle-class environmentalism”, especially in regard to its support of hunting and the orientation toward wilderness activity rather than social justice. In a book about environmental ethics, DeJardins (2006) supports the idea of deep ecology embedded in ecofeminism rather than in deep ecology per se. He comments that “until all forms of domination are eliminated, we can expect little real progress to be made on the environmental front” (DeJardins 2006, p. 254). The idea of man alone with nature, and often in a covert kind of opposition to nature, simply keeps the ‘hero’ myth alive. Many supporters of ecofeminism have become involved in other advocacy groups and are especially active in issues that support animal

rights. Animal issues connect to ideas about re-wilding and conservation and again there are grey areas, for example, dealing with some species as worthy of saving and others as pests. Decision making about these things is becoming especially important in what is now known as the age of the Sixth Extinction (Kolbert 2014).

Contested Spaces

It is in these contested and ambiguous spaces that those involved in environmental issues and those who support sustainable practices lose touch with each other and with the many splinter groups that have formed from mainstream movements. Environmentalists are defined by their urge to protect and conserve, and the term is an umbrella for all the movements that have followed. Sustainability is concerned with practices that include economic and cultural practices, that minimise harm, and sustainability is linked according to Hay (2002, p. 213) with new trajectories of development. This is also where the environmentalist and animal rights/vegetarian/vegan lobbies find encounters with those who have different cultural practices, including religious rituals involving harm to animals, problematic. Where they might connect again is in the spiritual spaces of 'reenchantment' with nature (Tacey 2000).

Some people believe that damage to the planet can be controlled rationally and through the intervention of human beings. This is in contrast to many spiritual believers who are more likely to hold the extreme belief that the earth would be well rid of people, the most destructive animal. Sites like Chernobyl are perceived as a return to Paradise and wild flowers, animals and butterflies flourish in this area once devastated by nuclear leaks and radiation. These more apocalyptic scenarios are extreme and a wish for the extinction of people through a virus, war or natural disaster is hardly reasonable but does get voiced by people who believe passionately that human beings have done enough damage. Dystopian visions are surprisingly popular in film and fiction and require people to think about a future after environmental disaster (Bone 2015). Peter Singer, discussing the ethics of conservation, says that destruction of the natural world can never be compensated for and contemplation of nature brings with it a powerful "spiritual intensity" (Singer 2011, p. 244).

Extinctions

The extinction, of species, insects, animals and birds, is not only happening but is set to escalate with climate change and the destruction of habitat. Extinction is forever and as yet, no species has been brought back to life so it is surprising that the damage to the spirit due to the disappearance of so many animals is

not treated as a crisis, a spiritual trauma. As noted by Flannery (2012, p. 17), the failure of not paying enough attention is causing “Australian species to slide towards – and into extinction”. In Australia the future of the koala, always associated with Australia, looks uncertain. Not only are koalas not protected and therefore vulnerable to deforestation and predation, but they are also dependent on certain kinds of eucalypts, trees that may not survive warmer and more unpredictable weather patterns. Flannery (2012) critiques the treatment of the environment and endangered species in Australia and suggests that increasing selfishness and “the spurning of environmental values that goes with it, is a temporary madness for which future generations will despise us” (p. 77). Flannery suggests that science holds the answers, environmental solutions like creating ‘arks’ for the protection of endangered species and also sees the potential of partnerships with indigenous people. As he says, fire management saved species and says that use of fire was an act of management and stewardship that was effective for thousands of years. These practices have been shown to work in Australia and there are increasing partnerships forming between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the government bodies responsible for conservation and biodiversity (Langton et al. 2014). There is an underlying recognition of stewardship as spiritually powerful where Flannery (2012) acknowledges that:

Every species given life by that stewardship should be looked upon as the most precious gift imaginable – a gift of rare beauty, diversity and ecological health bequeathed by Australia’s indigenous people to those alive today. (Flannery 2012, p. 57)

The strength of these practices are that they were a way of life, not an add on, not about being part of an advocacy group or a discipline, simply about a way of living that had regard for the seasons, the plants and animals and that made living in harmony with nature a priority..

A Spiritual Way of Life

I am invited to very peaceful spiritual retreat centre for the weekend. The building itself is designed to conserve heat and is full of natural light. The garden is a mass of green and people here work hard to keep it free from invasive species. The trees and birds are beautiful. Walking in the garden is its own meditation. We eat vegan/vegetarian food and drink water. In the centre itself there are spaces to be alone and places to be together. We go to bed at 9 pm and get up early. My thought – if only I could achieve this purity of living all the time. (Author notes constructed from retreat journal)

An ethical and spiritual way of life is very hard for people in the minority/western/ first/developed/industrial world. Even those who are devout in their commitment to the environment in so many ways still fly, drive cars, use electricity from non-sustainable sources, buy goods made from unsustainable hardwoods, choose overwrapped items, accept plastic as a fact of life, drink bottled water and eat meat. In an environmental group I am involved with, for example, there are only two vegetarians despite everyone in the group knowing about the damage caused

by greenhouse gases and the pollution of rivers and streams by effluent and run off from farms. This remains an unspoken division between us as it is also difficult to critique the lifestyle choices of others. It is not spiritual, as Palmo (2002, p. 195) argues, to get caught up in negativities; it is far more useful to work together.

Environmental Issues and Lifestyle

It must be acknowledged that it is hard for people in the West to make decisions that might impact on their way of life, or rather, on their 'lifestyle', a word that sums up the construction of a certain way of being in the world, self-chosen and usually marked by the consumption of certain goods and by making specific choices. The same might also be said of ways of life that remain traditional. Certain ways of life are often romanticised and in this chapter I suggest that there is no way of being and living that does not have an ecological impact, often destructive, on soil, plants, birds and animals. People increasingly impact on each other and on plants and animals and the proof of this is in climate change. Because of maintaining a certain lifestyle, sustainable choices are filtered through questions such as 'how might this affect me?' These questions are driven by the recognition that the activity of humanity has led to the creation of a new geological era, the Anthropocene. This will be a time of increasing unpredictability in terms of environmental issues (Crutzen 2002). The Anthropocene marks a time when human activity becomes as significant as that of nature on the Earth. This can be seen in terms of irreversible damage but there are alternative discourses and spirituality may sustain those who find that the inventiveness of people and the ability of populations to change direction gives hope that change is still possible.

In terms of sustainability, gains are being made, and one argument for change towards sustainable practice is that people who make decisions to benefit self and others feel spiritually stronger (Palmo 2002). Spirituality can build awareness and encourage mindfulness toward the environment; the impact of small personal change is important. In Australia quite sizeable fast food outlets have agreed not to use eggs from battery chickens in order to make suffering less certain and there is a demand for 'free range' food, and sustainably sourced products. Many people avoid using plastic bags, travel on public transport and check labels in order to avoid buying products with palm oil or items that use unsustainable or exploitative materials and labour. Some of this is dismissed as 'green wash' and seen as purely middle class initiatives. Organic food, for example, always costs more and the main gain is to the consumer who may simply be making choices for personal health reasons. However, making these choices implies taking a more holistic attitude toward wellbeing and having an awareness of environmental issues. Nicholson (2002) suggests that by taking any action there is an element of experimentation and that "there is no one best thing" to do in terms of 'saving' the environment, however, because "our relation to the natural environment is so complex and multifaceted" (p. 198) she supports reflection as well as experimentation. This connects with the

related notions of awareness and mindfulness that can operate as spiritual supports in everyday life. A mindful orientation gives a spiritual edge to the process of making decisions about how to live and mindfulness implies being spiritually aware. Tenzin Palmo is a Buddhist nun who lived for many years in a cave high up in the Himalayas. She is revered as a teacher and is someone who can articulate spiritual wisdom. She says:

we are all our own gurus. In the end we have to access our own innate wisdom. This can be dangerous because our inner guide may appear to be telling us what we want to hear. But we know it really is the inner guide if it tells us to do exactly what we don't want to do! (Palmo 2002, p. 213)

Becoming Mindful

Many people are becoming aware of the practical nature of spirituality, the 'everyday spirituality' (Bone 2010) that constitutes daily life and supports practices that are ethical, that 'do no harm' and do not cause suffering to others. Changing an everyday practice might seem a very small thing and it may be challenging but when everyone does it or if all people boycott something (like caged eggs or factory farmed meat products) then big businesses have to listen. In these ways changes are made that support a sustainable way of life. The same practices can also support spirituality. David Holmgren (2002), a co-originator of the permaculture concept, says that as an atheist he did not connect permaculture with spirituality but he became aware of a shift in his perception and tries to move beyond material/spiritual dualities. Not everyone can be so influential or will join advocacy groups, but anyone can choose to act in ways that are, as Palmo (2002) readily acknowledges, rewarding rather than exciting. In work to do with the environment it is what people do that counts; the action. According to Palmer (2001, p. 213), Naess urged those who were inclined toward a deep ecology to support "conservation of biotic diversity, living in small, simple and self-reliant communities, and – less specifically – a commitment 'to touch the Earth lightly'". Evidence would show that this is an ongoing struggle that permeates environmental issues at all levels: personal and collective, local and global, material and spiritual.

Conclusion

This chapter traced some of the spiritual aspects in the field of environmental and sustainable studies. It included literature about bonding with the earth, the current interest in wilderness experiences and being in nature. Spirituality has been linked to the environment through ecofeminism and connections with goddess cults. Deep ecology also has a spiritual aspect. Sustainability is currently emphasized and I am reminded of how long the First Peoples of Australia lived in a sustainable

way. Reflecting about this is a reminder to take a mindful approach to everyday decision making and to embrace everyday spirituality (Bone 2007). We live with the consequences of the Anthropocene, with climate change and extinction; hope will come from inventiveness and technology, and also through renewing our spiritual connections with the earth.

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Chapter 20

The States of Spiritual Communication (in Part): Exploring the Sharing of Meaning

John L. Hochheimer, Timothy Huffman, and Sharon Lauricella

Abstract Contemporary work on spirituality in the field of communication and media studies consists of three principal areas: theoretical development, field praxis and pedagogy. Fundamental is the conceptualization of spirituality as the creation of meaning, the sharing of which defines the parameters of communication. In an age in which communication is increasingly practiced via social media, people are beginning to find, and to share, their own voices for gathering and disseminating news, creative arts, and community engagement and development.

Focusing on field and pedagogical work, the proposed chapter examines approaches to scholarship and application in these areas in order better to explicate how spirituality grounds communication practice, both intrinsically and among others. By doing so, exploring the spiritual dimensions of communication theory, praxis and pedagogy open possibilities for future directions for the field, as well as refined possibilities for communication pedagogy based upon listening, both within and without.

Introduction

The study of spirituality focuses upon the human experience of making meaning, tapping into the perception of connecting with something larger, grander, more profound, more meaningful to life than mere sense experience. Spirituality is ubiquitous, spanning all eras, chronological and physical ages, genders, social classes, religious systems, races, cultures,

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geographic locations, monotheism, polytheism, non-theism, agnosticism, and/or atheism. It is one of the endeavors that constitute a person's, or people's, perceived and expressed experiences of being human throughout life. As such, its study constitutes not only the most fundamental of any social scientific approach to comprehending the human condition, but also the humanities and arts as well. (Hochheimer 2013)

Humans have been having spiritual experiences and making sense of those experiences across cultures, geographies, and histories for millennia. Indeed, this may be the oldest continuous area of scholarship and speculation spanning time, culture and physical location. Humans are also fundamentally communicative and make, derive, and transmit meaning via connection with others. As two principal meaning-making activities, communication and spirituality have much overlapping intellectual and practical terrain.

Presently, there has been something curious, powerful, and undeniably spiritual in process all over the world. Within and across cultures, economic, political, and belief systems there has been a growing sense of disaffection with institutionalized religion by young, and not so young, people. Simultaneously there has been a growing yearning for a greater sense of meaning and purpose in their lives. This phenomenon has been developing concurrently with efforts to mandate authoritarian adherence to fundamentalist conceptions of religious belief in The United States, Europe, the Middle East, West Africa, India, and elsewhere. Whichever curiously spiritual changes are at play, the old verities of faith, belief and understanding are being challenged by emerging demands for tolerance and respect for difference, all stemming from a profound sense of connection.

Digital media, an emerging and increasingly important means of communication, is contributing to how people in all geographical locations are coming to see and know differences, changes, and developments of spirituality in real time. These media, and especially the growing presence and use of social media, have allowed people to make contact with others, to find connections, and to explore the meanings of differences and similarities without the intervention of institutionalized power. This, in turn, provides empowerment for people to define what they experience in the world on their own terms, rather than on terms dictated by the "powerful." From the streets of Prague in the 1990s to the streets of Cairo in 2011 and beyond, it is a time, as Hochheimer and Al-Emad (2013) have argued, for the emergence of *spirals of voice* as increasing numbers of people have been experiencing first-hand what Václav Havel (1986) termed "The Power of the Powerless." "It seems to me," wrote Mary Parker Follett,

that power usually means power over, the power of some person or group over some other person or group. It is possible to develop the conception of power with, a jointly developed power, a co-active, not a coercive, power. (cited in Schaaff et al. 2012, p. 3)

This ability to connect, to witness, to share, and to act with anyone, anywhere, and at any time, unmediated by institutional power, is unprecedented in the history of the human experience.

Thus, questions of how we communicate with each other, why, and how this helps us better to comprehend both spirituality and communication have come to the

fore. In searching how best to answer these emerging concerns, there has also been growing attention paid to the relationship between spirituality and communication from two opposite directions in order to answer two fundamental questions: (1) How best can a sense of spirituality and the growing field of spirituality studies better inform scholarship in communication? and (2) How best can communication scholarship better inform studies of spirituality?

The legitimacy of spiritual communication as a subfield of inquiry is at least demonstrated by statistics about spiritual identity and practice in North American culture (Pew Research Centre 2012a, b), and is at best shown by the desire for individuals to meaningfully connect with one another and to lead fulfilling lives (Hochheimer 2012). Results from national surveys show that spirituality is a prominent part of American culture, as more than 90 % of Americans still say “yes” when asked if they believe in God or a universal spirit (Newport 2011). What people do in their everyday lives with this belief demonstrates a want for spiritual communion and connection; for example, 55 % of Americans say that they pray every day (Lipka 2014). As spiritual communication scholars, we (both the authors and the readership of this volume) have the opportunity to understand how spirituality is communicated in our culture, how communication manifests between people and God/Universal spirit, and how we as individuals come together in a sense of spiritual connection and community.

We see three modes of scholarship thriving at the intersection of spirituality and communication. The first investigates the *communicative* dimension of spiritual practice. The second looks at the *spiritual* dimension of communication practice. The third collapses spirituality and communication and articulates how they are, in essence, much the same.

The Communicative Dimension of Spiritual Practice

Communication undergirds various practices of spirituality. The first trend in spiritual communication studies is done by scholars plying their investigative trade to understand and to articulate how various religious and spiritual processes are informed by communication. The methods for doing so vary. Examples include the rhetorical aspects of exorcism (Rich 2013), peak communicative experiences (Edwards et al. 2011), the role of religious communication in relationships (David and Stafford 2011, 2013), narrative approaches to spiritual identity (Smailes 2011), the rhetorical aspects of blogging about spirituality (Lauricella 2012, 2013b), and how digital technology can mediate spirituality (Ramasubramanian 2014a, b).

If spirituality is about the process of meaning making, important new questions have arisen with the growth of communication technology. Many have seen, from a spiritual perspective, the same optimism and pessimism about the digital world as have other social thinkers (for instance, Bauwens 1996). The Internet as a sacramental space (Campbell 2005) advances a long intellectual history of spirituality and technology (see also Warner 2006).

New possibilities for expression and connection have necessarily reshaped the current state of spirituality studies. Bauwens (1996), for example, notes that the nature of communication enabled by the digital revolution has had serious impact on the speed of cultural evolution. Much as with the written word, knowledge is liberated in the networked society, only more widely and more quickly. He argues that pessimists see technology as weakening mankind's inner senses (the spiritual) in strengthening and extending (*a la* Marshall McLuhan) our exterior senses.

Optimists, meanwhile, view the onset of universal communication technologies as promoting 'global consciousness,' – a 'noosphere' or collective mental space. Like the cathedrals of Europe in past centuries, Bauwens (1996) argues, cyberspace is a parallel space to reality, one to which we may escape momentarily. It also is seen by some as another immaterial space in line with ancient ones that have been a part of spiritual traditions 'from time immemorial,' – for instance, Hinduism's Indra's Web and the Askashic Records. Spiritual optimists see it as a utopian social project. Of course, many in traditional spiritual modes – for instance, organized religion – make use of the Internet as an auxiliary tool. Others (less in the mainstream) have ritualized the internet, sacralizing it and incorporating it into spiritual practice. In essence, new technology has been seen as being integrated with, parallel to, an extension of, or even degenerative to previous spiritualities. From an outside standpoint, meanwhile, some see techno-spirituality or cyber-spirituality as anthropological developments (Holmes 2007).

In each of these projects, scholars seek to reveal important ways that a communicative reality informs spiritual practice (Holmes 2007; Bauwens 1996; David and Stafford 2013). Some of these projects are not mystical in the least. In fact, this layer of spiritual communication studies can be a place for secular or humanist scholars to offer a communicative interpretation of what was previously understood as a metaphysical phenomenon. Rich's (2013) work on exorcism and rhetoric is an excellent example. Exorcism can be explained in a purely spiritual way: using prayer or magic to cast or coax out unwanted spiritual entities from a person or place. Rich (2013), on the other hand, argues that exorcism rhetoric serves a constitutive function for a community. Demonic spiritual others become the perfect scapegoat for a community and, therefore, become the perfect "outgroup" against which the community is defined. In this way, non-empirical realities, whether because they are fictive or unperceivable, can be grappled with using robust communication methods because the communication *about* those realities is observable.

In nearly every spiritual exercise, some aspect of communication can be found and studied, which allows communication inquiry to provide descriptions and evaluations of the spiritual topic. But the intersection can also be approached in the inverse.

The Spiritual Dimension of Communication Practice

A second research area has been the study of transcendental and sacred readings of human communication. Scholars have looked at how spirituality moves through various communication phenomena, including relationships, dialogue, rhetoric, and embodied communication (Goodall 1996; Pearson 2011; Roy 2013). Communication can be defined and approached in many ways; these spiritual communication scholars offer accounts of communication that take into account the mystical and metaphysical aspects of humanity. Examples of this line of scholarship include Pearson's (2011) work reframing work/life balance issues in the academy using African spiritual ontologies, Roy's (2013) articulation of spiritual versions of masculinity in rhetorics of nationalism, McLaughlin's (2014) identification of the spiritual dimensions of the coordinated service of quilting circles, and Deagon's (2014) exploration of the "diverse and cross-cultural perceptions about transcendental aspects of spirituality" within the family (p. 41).

As a group, these scholars examine the spiritual sides of communication by highlighting the transcorporeal and intersubjective. For instance, silence can be understood as the lack of spoken communication. Poulos's (2009) work on Quaker prayer practices reveals the richly spiritual aspects of silence and the transformative power it holds. By seeing human life as informed by spirituality, this scholarship reveals the spiritual nature of communication. This theme is further developed by Novek and Hochheimer (2012) in exploring development of alternatives to violence initiatives. Additionally, while there has been a great deal of attention devoted to the communicative roles of spirituality in the arts (including dance, literature, music, painting, performance, sculpture and theater), we leave that to others to develop more directly.

The third line of scholarship at this intersection is work that celebrates the ways spirituality and communication are much the same (Redick 2009; Lauricella 2012, 2013b). These thinkers intentionally highlight the common ground the spiritual and the communicative hold. They often redefine communication, communication theory, or communication methods in ways that also reconfigure our understanding of the spiritual. In short, they explore spiritual comprehension through peoples' experiences from a *Point of Being*, i.e., "the psycho-physiological dimensions of the ways people experience their presence in the world and the world's presence in them" (de Kerckhove and de Almeida 2014, p. 1), rather from a post-Cartesian *Point of View*.

To illustrate the point, consider the following descriptors: ephemeral, ongoing, emergent, embodied, transcendent, communal, transforming, generative, reciprocal, within people, between people, and beyond people. Those descriptions fit both spirituality and communication equally well. These scholars suggest that this similarity is not accidental. For instance, Redick's (2009, 2014) work on the spaces created by pilgrimages or kitchen gardens demonstrates how spirituality and communication coalesce in liminal spaces where the self, human, and nonhuman others emerge. Schmidt (2012) makes much the same arguments in his reflections on

his pilgrimage across northern Spain to Santiago. Lauricella (2012, 2013a) blurs the realms between meditative communication and communicated meditation. Huffman (2011) argues that spiritual practices and communication research practices can be productively integrated. Hochheimer (2010) imagines the common, mediated nature of communication and spirituality. These scholars instantiate the third movement in spiritual communication studies by highlighting the comingling of spirituality and communication. They demonstrate how both concepts ultimately account for a similar process: humans emerging from and relating to each other and the world around them.

More globally, there has also been an upsurge of scholarly, field, and pedagogical work on spirituality as it relates to such fields as Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation, Architecture, Business, Ecology, Education, Home Economics, Hospice and Palliative Care, Management and Leadership Studies, Nursing, Perinatal Studies, Prison Rehabilitation, among many other fields. There have been conferences held, books published, and journals established within and across these seemingly disparate fields. What unites much current thinking and praxis is that, at their bases, they explore how humans perceive and express meaning – that is, how they communicate – within themselves, among meaningful others, and to the greater worlds in which they live and exist.

Spiritual, But Not Religious

Thoughtful study of spiritual communication is of particular importance given notable and identified cultural shifts presently occurring in western culture. Heelas and Woodhead (2005) have acknowledged what they call a “spiritual revolution,” or a “massive subjective turn in modern culture.” This notable shift is described by the authors as a movement away from living in tune with particular social roles and expectations (which the authors call “life-as”) and a movement toward living in connection with one’s own unique and deepest experiences (which they call “subjective life”). This appreciation of a “subjective life,” whereby personal experiences are valuable, worthy, and govern one’s decisions and lifestyle, results in growth of an interior or personal spirituality (Heelas and Woodhead 2005). This spiritual growth is, indeed, what Vaclav Havel (1990) called for in his plea for a shift in human consciousness and spiritual transformation (Stanger 1990). So, too, it is what Mikhail Gorbachev (1993) appealed for in his call for a caring attitude and spiritual health, which he deemed necessary for a revival and transformation to a modern and dignified life. Mohandas K. Gandhi (1957), bell hooks (2000), Martin Luther King, Jr. Washington (1986), Schaaf et al. (2012), among many others, have made similar arguments. The significance of the current state of spiritual communication is therefore indicative of positive changes and progress in spiritual awareness and connections, many of which have been outlined as necessary and helpful for an advancement of human lives.

Heelas and Woodhead (2005) suggest that the movement toward spirituality that they identify is simultaneous with a movement away from religion. Similarly, large-scale surveys show that one fifth of the American public (and one third of adults over 30 in the US) do not identify with any religion (Pew Research Centre 2012a). However, 68% of these religiously unaffiliated say that they *do* believe in God or a Universal Spirit (Pew Research Centre 2012a). These figures show a clear identification with spirituality, given the near ubiquitous belief in God or a universal spirit, yet this spirituality is becoming less tied to organized or declared religion. The movement away from religion (yet with an inherent spiritual element) is of particular relevance to communication scholars because the proportion of those who do not identify with a particular religion is rapidly growing (Pew Research Centre 2012b). Although the “spiritual but not religious,” or more commonly used “SBNR” (www.sbnr.org, 2015) group is on the rise, it has been shown that such individuals still maintain experiences in communal practices (Bender 2010) and both think about and discuss theology on a deep level (Mercadante 2014). It has also been shown that those who ascribe to more recently popularized non-religious spiritual frameworks such as *The Secret* still engage in beliefs and practices usually attributed to religious activity (Lauricella 2011; Lauricella and Alexander 2012). Among college and university students, despite a disengagement with religion while in college, more than half say they look for a greater sense of spiritual connection through their college experience (Astin et al. 2011).

It is therefore evident that despite a widespread declaration to avoid thinking of themselves, or being seen as “religious,” a spiritual element thrives in a variety of forms for a great many people. Understanding spiritual connection – whether it is in communication via prayer (Baesler 1999, 2002, 2003), discussion/discourse/dialogue, joining the presence of a group (Lauricella 2013a), or understanding the inherent connection between and amongst individuals (Hochheimer 2010) – communication, the perception and sharing of meaning, is at the heart of the spiritual experience. William James (1902/2008) argued that the spiritual experience is one which is individual, profound, and personal. The “unshareable feeling” (1902/2008, p. 363) that James describes is what spiritual communication study seeks to understand so that the unshareable becomes more shareable. Given that religion evolves and changes in accordance with the desires of the people, the spiritual/religious experience will also speak to cultural shifts and desires.

The recent shift away from religion and toward spirituality is notable in the publications of religion skeptic Harris (2014), who argues that spirituality is possible without religious doctrine or dogma. Harris’s recent focus is on the ancient practice of meditation, which has enjoyed a surge in popularity (particularly in the West) in the last few decades. Whether it is mindfulness, mantra, transcendental or contemplative meditation, the practice of quieting the mind and experiencing stillness has become a spiritual experience in which increasing numbers of individuals have become involved. A great many how-to meditative guides exist (for example, Gunatarana 2011), high-profile spiritual “celebrities” such as Oprah Winfrey and Deepak Chopra (2014) provide free meditation podcasts and online groups, and

testaments to a positive experience with mediation (Harris 2014) provide support to the notion that this practice can be a communal experience.

It is quite likely that the practice of meditation, and its realization as a spiritual experience, is also an entryway through which many individuals will take their place in the spiritual forum and cultivate the ability to live full, happy lives. Meditation is therefore likely to be a spiritual practice that attracts significant scholarly attention going forward. The meditation experience is at once individual, as James (1902/2008) describes, and communal, as Hochheimer (2010) suggests, as the means through which to experience spiritual connection. As a practice that is largely without religious underpinnings, meditation offers up an appreciation for the lived experience by acknowledgement of the present moment.

Understanding the marked increase in spiritual (but not necessarily religious) activities such as meditation helps to answer the communication issue of how and why we engage with each other. For example, Lauricella (forthcoming) has shown that mainstream print media coverage of meditation has proliferated over the last 30 years, and that news coverage of meditation is reflective of a need, by the general public, to find relief from modern ills such as stress, insomnia, hypertension, and depression/anxiety. Understanding communicative outlets such as print or online news, social media, advertising, or popular music, among others, informs a deeper understanding of spirituality, for such media are reflective of the current state of our culture, and are therefore indicative of the state of spirituality as demonstrated within the communicative context. Further research on the representation of spirituality in the media, whether it be in studies of prayer, yoga, meditation, or investigations of social media usage (using methodologies such as those employed by Tande et al. 2013), is a promising avenue for advancing and deepening the understanding of spirituality in communicative context.

Moving Forward: Spirituality, Communication, and Research Method

The future of spiritual communication studies has much promise. It serves as a scholarly venue within which communication scholars can investigate the spiritual aspects of their fields. More importantly, spiritual communication scholarship serves as a resource for academics and practitioners in diverse fields. Thinking about the future of this intersection, it is important to consider how research methods inform (and are informed) by studies in spiritual communication.

Pragmatic and discursive approaches also serve as a productive framework for understanding communicated spirituality. We can study the outcomes of various discursive ideological formulations by asking “What actions do these discourses enable?” The postmodern landscape offers much in the way of understanding the communicative dimension of spiritual practices. Notions of simulacra, hyperreality, *différance*, and liminality, not to mention the uses of phantasmagoria as means

through which (i.e., *media*) humans have tried to comprehend the spirit (see Warner 2006), all have analytic power in various aspects of spiritual life. Finally, postsecular perspectives (Habermas 2008) offer a fruitful foundation for investigating the ways in which spirituality intersects with political and social spheres.

For scholars who are interested in articulating the spiritual dimensions of communication phenomena, there stands much promise in mysticizing methods. There is promise in understanding how particular spiritual practices contribute to methodological practices. For instance, meditation practices could potentially have valuable impact on data analysis and interviewing. While this may in some ways seem “heretical” to strict humanist scholars, it is important to note that some terms, like reflexivity and theoretical saturation, are so ambiguously deployed they are all but linguistic fetishes that obscure actual processes. On the other hand, many spiritual practices are very clearly laid out, highly repeatable, and teachable.

Further, there are various methodological resources for scholars who seek to blur the lines between communication and spirituality. Ontological approaches to scholarship highlight “being” in ways that allow both spirituality and communication to be salient (Fry and Kriger 2009; de Kerckhove and de Almeida 2014). Work on the relational nature of knowledge (Thayer-Bacon 2003) is also a productive space to consider the inter-subjective nature of human experience. Community-based research methods offer important ways for spiritual notions of solidarity and kinship to inform communication scholarship.

Spiritual communication is exceptionally rich in that it encompasses intrapersonal, interpersonal, and group communication on a transcendent level so as to both create and foster connection and understanding within, between, and amongst spiritual practitioners. It is this connection that inspires and ignites future research studies in our field.

The place of Spirituality in the broad field of Communication study is also clear. If the making, perceiving and sharing of meaning is fundamental to social engagement, and the spiritual dimension is fundamental to communication study, then Spiritual Communication is fundamental to comprehending many subfields within the field of communication, writ large. If, as H.L. Goodall, Jr. (1996), has written:

(w)hat gets left out of our theories of communication is what lives in-between those empirical manifestations (of consciousness) and their localized interpretations, or the ‘music’ between the notes, the work of the insight on lectures and discussions producing education. Put simply, what is missing is imagination which . . . is also to miss the spiritual basis for communication, relationships and communities (pp. 20–21),

then,

(t)heories of the spiritual bases for communication . . . can be built upon efforts to understand human efforts in closing the gaps between perceptions of incompleteness in the search for wholeness. They could be grounded in people’s and communities’ personal, social and cultural perceptions and expressions given what lies “in-between,” i.e., the “life force” flowing through, between and among each of us as we construct, and manifest, meaning. To extend our analyses to mediated communication, such theories must also identify and define the various ways through which we can ascertain, and express, the *logos*

in our efforts to perceive and to express (or to derive and to share) meaning within ourselves, between and among each other. (Hochheimer 2013, p. 6)

If we further recognize that the process of communication begins with a person's or a culture's efforts to comprehend and to explain the world, to give it meaning and to share that meaning with others, then we can say that communication is an act beginning within the perceiver, and not with the creation of messages. Here we find the emergence of spiritual exploration and expression as a necessary foundation for communication in all its forms.

Thus, the study of the theory, praxis and pedagogy of spiritual communication also opens up the possibility of better comprehending new dimensions, not of human beings, but of *humans, being*.

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Chapter 21

Spirituality in Management

Eleni Tzouramani and Fahri Karakas

Abstract The increased dissemination of the notion of ‘spirituality’ in the world of management and work organisations takes various forms, and is usually referred to as the ‘Spirituality at Work’ phenomenon (SaW). This has led to new practices within the workplace as organisations seek to increase their employees’ spiritual awareness.

The literature on ‘Spirituality at Work’ (SaW) is increasing, but as the phenomenon is new and amorphous there are still many gaps that call for empirical research. Moreover, most of the academic literature on SaW is polarised between the affirmative side arguing for introducing ‘SaW’ in organisations and the critical side cautioning against the oppressive potential of ‘spirituality’ adopted as a management initiative.

This chapter will analyse this main argument at the societal, organisational and individual levels. At a societal level the discussion focuses on whether spirituality is a social apparatus to maintain capitalism or if it is a means of social change. At the organisational level the argument is used to question whether spirituality enhances organisations by providing meaning to work or whether it masks manipulation for compliance. At the individual level, the emphasis is placed on employee development and organisational performance, focusing on the ‘spiritual’ self and identity in relation to work, which has contributed to various professional development and management initiatives, ranging from leadership development and mindfulness, to introducing meditation rooms in organisations. Finally the chapter will offer future directions for spirituality and management.

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Introduction

A growing number of related books, articles and journals have been published in recent years on Spirituality and Management. Much of this literature is less critical and analytical in the sense that most writings are written 'from the heart' (Mitroff and Denton 1999, p. 83), offering broad and vague definitions (Benefiel 2003), but academic analysis based on critical premises is emerging. The American Academy of Management started a 'Management, Spirituality and Religion Interest Group' in 1999 and special issues of other highly reputable social scientific journals have appeared.

The academic literature mainly sees indications of the increase in interest on Spirituality in Management as evidenced by the following: the number of academic books, articles and especially the devotion of special issues of highly reputable social scientific journals on the topic; the 1999 Academy of Management introduction of the 'Management, Spirituality and Religion Interest Group' and the increasing number of its annual meetings; the increasing number of related conferences as well as the increase in courses on 'spirituality' taught in business schools (Boje 1995; Cavanagh 1999; Neal 1997). However, as the phenomenon is still new to the academic field, academics face difficulties in describing it and finding alternative ways to research it. Spirituality in Management is a broad theme, it contains seemingly contradicting concepts and ideas, it does not consent to a particular name or definition and it does not have recognisable leaders.

Most literature is prescriptive with the more affirmative side arguing for including Spirituality in Management within work organisations and the more critical side warning about the manipulative effects of this use. In general however, all writers include in their work both positive and critical elements towards Spirituality in Management, as the main arguments are still debated and emergent.

Spirituality in Management as a Source of Meaning

In general the literature views Spirituality in Management emerging as a counterpart to the problems of downsizing, job insecurity, work stress and increased work hours. Although definitions vary, most relate spirituality to work organisations. For example Ashmos and Duchon (2000) define spirituality in organisations as 'a major transformation' (p. 134) where organizations make room for the spiritual dimension, which has to do with meaning, purpose, and a sense of community. Along similar lines, Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) explain that 'Workplace spirituality is a framework of organisational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provided feelings of completeness and joy' (p. 13).

The above definitions are further analysed at three different levels: societal, organisational and individual. At the societal level, spirituality in management is understood as a set of beliefs and their influence on the work ethic, the different ways of organising work, and the overall economy. Here the discussion concentrates on whether 'spirituality' is a social apparatus to maintain capitalism and the power of consumer markets or if it is a means of social change. At the organisational level, spirituality is understood as a set of management initiatives implemented to increase organisational effectiveness and employee wellbeing. The argument here is presented as whether 'spirituality' enhances organisations and provides meaning to work or, on the contrary, whether it is masking manipulative directions for compliance. Finally, at the individual level, spirituality is understood as the individual's effort to bring their whole self to work and use spiritual ideas and beliefs to address ethical tensions in their work. At this level, literature is mostly concerned with analysing whether the ideas involved in Spirituality in Management are enabling a self suited for consumption or a self escaping consumption patterns in capitalist societies.

Current Research on Spirituality in Management

Both the affirmative and critical approaches to researching Spirituality in Management are interested in improving workplaces. The affirmative approach encourages the injection of spirituality in the workplace as a solution within the existing capitalistic, bureaucratic structures whereas the critical approach warns about the risk of turning spirituality into a management initiative. Spirituality in Management is still developing and initiatives so far have been included in only a few organisations and mostly as values based initiatives or practices such as offering yoga and meditation rooms in organisations. However, both approaches contribute to developing a balanced introduction of spirituality to the workplace, where the individual will be able to bring their whole self to work and the organisation will allow this without imposing spirituality as the next new management fad.

Affirmative Views on Spirituality in Management

Grant et al. (2004) support the view that the spirit is already present in an organisation even if only a few employees experience the sacred through their work. This point of view addresses the intangible side of spirituality. Mitroff and Denton (1999), however, find that current work organisations seem to be more oppressive than enabling of the spiritual. A more pragmatic view of bureaucracies on the one hand and what Spirituality in Management is about on the other indicates incongruence between the two constructs. It is not suggested that the spirit should remain in an 'other-worldly' realm but, as Mitroff and Denton (1999) suggest, organisations

as wholes and not just individuals need to become more spiritual because ‘unless organizations become more spiritual, the fragmentation and ambivalence felt by individuals cannot be repaired’ (p. 7). Academic theorists, popular writers and practitioners try to propose feasible ways to cultivate ‘spirituality’ in the workplace. A large part of the literature discusses the potential of organisational transformation, either through raising consciousness at the individual level by cultivating spiritual values, or at the organizational level by designing new organisational models, or both (Biberman et al. 1999; Cavanagh 1999; Neal 1999). Ashmos and Duchon (2000) looked at organisations as communities for spiritual expression; Milliman et al. (1999) developed a model to analyse the way spiritual values affect an organisation and applied it in Southwest Airlines; Khan (2003) conducted a 3 year case study of worker perceptions on two spiritual transference processes introduced in an optical services company.

The majority of the writings on Spirituality in Management relate it to the incorporation of values, a sense of community and ethics, into work and into the organisational culture (Neck and Milliman 1994; Butts 1999; Konz and Ryan 1999; Milliman et al. 1999, 2003; Ashmos and Duchon 2000; Cacioppe 2000; Giacalone and Jurkiewicz 2003). These studies concentrate on separate aspects of ‘spirituality’ expressed as socially oriented values which are positively associated with spirituality, but which can also be seen as secular values reflecting a concern for the betterment of society. Pava (2003) alleges that attempting to tap the supernatural realm is problematic in organisations. However, it seems that by excluding the transcendent part of spirituality, Spirituality in Management becomes equivalent to any ‘values implementation’ or ‘values alignment’ management initiative. Mitroff and Denton (1999) conclude after having evaluated the Values Based Organisation that values and virtues alone are not sufficient to ‘produce organizations that can sustain a high sense of ethics’ (p. 161).

In 1999 Milliman et al. conducted an empirical study in Southwest Airlines and created a model to evaluate spiritual values’ impact on both profitability and employee attitudes. Using their model, they explored the relevant literature to examine how this would influence different types of people such as managers, employees and customers. They revealed certain out-of-the-ordinary practices, such as the CEO accepting to freeze his pay, employees creating a fund to help co-workers and more importantly the choice to meet customer needs or help fellow employees even if it means breaking company policies. They reported other, more debateable, practices such as assessing humour in recruiting. Milliman et al.’s (1999) argument that ‘spirituality’ is not only in mission statements but is woven into business strategies and practices, could be more thoroughly assessed with research on employee opinions. It seems that, although Southwest Airlines is an enjoyable, values based place to work for certain employees, it is not necessarily spiritual. The assertion that the central interrelating aspects of workplace ‘spirituality’ are an organization acting as a community, and with a cause or important purpose, can also apply to a family business with no spiritual associations.

In certain cases people borrow from spiritual practices to create psychological mechanisms to cope with stress. Laabs (1995) describes the case of a company

that installed a machine called Natural Enhanced Sound Transmission where people listen to music, read a book, or just take a break. This type of application, together with schemes that allow employees to pray at work, might be effective and seem to have the potential to nurture the spiritual side of employees; however, they remain organisational schemes and do not demonstrate the transforming potential that Spirituality in Management promises.

The solutions proposed for the instigation of spirit in organisations are either top down through leadership or bottom up through the employee base. In both cases the assumption is that changing the individual can change the organisational culture. Heaton et al. (2004) suggest an inside out approach that will develop the individual which 'becomes an instrument for organisational change' (p. 63). In the first case – the top down approach – the intention is to influence organisational culture through leaders (Schein 1992; Neck and Milliman 1994; Harung et al. 1995; Cacioppe 2000; Benefiel 2005). Fairholm (1996) promoted a model to apply spiritual leadership at work based on morality, stewardship and community in order to achieve a culture that would fulfil whole-self needs at work. Within this framework leaders take on the task of connecting spirit with work and the emphasis is placed on their values and their ability to facilitate spiritual development and become role models (Howard 2002) as well as spiritual counsellors (Konz and Ryan 1999). In opposition, Tourish and Pinnington (2002) argue that current models of transformational leadership might encourage organisational 'spirituality' initiatives promoting the kinds of group dynamics more often found in cults than in business organisations, and they suggest more participatory models of leadership.

In the second case – the bottom up approach – employees are encouraged to bring their 'whole selves' to work since it is proposed that when individuals can be 'whole persons' at work, they can offer several advantages to the workplace. Researchers expect that 'whole persons' care for meaning and personal growth, which are expected to translate to increased motivation, empowerment, enthusiasm, a higher sense of service and organizational commitment (Neck and Milliman 1994; Laabs 1995; Delbecq 1999; Porth et al. 1999; Zinnbauer et al. 1999). Moreover, they are seen to develop stronger intuition that is usually associated with enhanced creativity (Biberman and Whitty 1997; Freshman 1999; Neck and Milliman 1994), innovation (Neck and Milliman 1994; Zinnbauer et al. 1999), good leadership (Duchon and Plowman 2005) and heightened commitment to organisational goals (Delbecq 1999). Finally, the link between 'spirituality' and values at work is seen to increase ethical behaviour (Laabs 1995), teamwork (Biberman and Whitty 1997; Laabs 1995), caring for others, the community and the environment (Cavanagh 1999), as well as social action (Zinnbauer et al. 1999).

Although being critical of the use of 'spirituality' as an ideology of domination for corporate purposes, Casey (2002) chooses to see spiritual seeking as a resource for self and social transformation and as 'efforts to criticise, revitalize and transform.' (p. 193). Similarly, Boyle and Healy (2003) see it as one of the few ways in which workers can practice resistance in a controlled work environment.

Cautions Against Introducing Spirituality in Management Initiatives

Critical theorists who caution against the use of 'spirituality' in organizations are mostly concerned that it can be used as a manipulative tool, reduced to a management initiative or extended to a cult like initiative (Bell and Taylor 2003, 2004; Carrette and King 2005; Tourish and Pinnington 2002). They warn that 'spirituality' and the search for meaning at work can enable exploitation (Bell and Taylor 2001; Dehler and Welsh 2003), create a flexible and adaptable workforce that will accept a potential downshifting (Casey 2002), or facilitate the acceptance of situations as they are (Wallis 1984) in order to serve specific organizational goals. Casey (2002) asserts that 'the reappropriation of spiritual interests and impulses toward conventional organizational end and modern productionist rationalities does not generate conditions for reenchantment, dealienation and self creation in the workplace' (p. 214).

However, most writers are positive towards a more appropriate instillation of Spirituality in Management that can 'disrupt the metarationality of capitalist production and economy' (Casey 2002) and bring about social and organizational change (Carrette and King 2005; Taylor 2005). In this regard, Carrette and King (2005) distinguish between those businesses that seek to use 'ethical' values in their practice and those that market 'spirituality' within business as a form of product enhancement (p. 127). These differentiations are difficult to make in organizational environments where different views and needs are negotiated. Boje (1999) cautions against 'spirituality' being a new fundamentalism and is concerned that 'one person's 'spirituality' is another's iron cage' (p. 10). Moreover, instilling 'spirituality' in organisations through 'raising consciousness' (Aupers and Houtman 2006; Biberman et al. 1999; Dehler and Welsh 1994) involves individual practice and personal development. This view tends to overlook the likelihood that there might be incongruent purposes and development paths amongst individuals and between individuals and the organisation.

Both views are salient in the development of Spirituality in Management as the efforts so far to implement spiritual initiatives in the workplace are sparse and mostly work as 'values' initiatives. It is still important that the affirmative side will support the introduction of spirituality in the workplace and the critical side will regulate this so as not to turn spirituality into just another management initiative.

Reflection on Researching Spirituality in Management

Throughout our professional careers and in our research, we have experienced both sides of the argument: the affirmative side arguing that individuals can be healthier, happier, more fulfilled and whole through the introduction of spirituality at work and the critical side arguing that individuals can be exploited as organisations seek

to re-enchant work, commitment and devotion by harnessing the human spirit. We have observed an organisation where the introduction of spiritual practices has worked to enable a culture of trust and collaboration, and we have also observed a ‘values implementation’ training where the mention of ‘spirit’ divided the group and took the discussion on to the exploration of the coercive enforcement of organisational imperatives on individuals.

In our discussions about our personal experiences with Spirituality in Management we have seen the importance of the relational self and a sense of interrelatedness with others, our work and our environment. We relate to accounts of a sense of connection to others, community (Ashmos and Duchon 2000; Karakas 2010) interconnectedness (Mitroff and Denton 1999; Tzouramani 2008) and interpersonal connection (Bloch 1998; Kinjerski and Skrypnek 2004) as a relational view of the self is central in the literature on spirituality. Accounts of the whole self and holism (Asforth and Pratt 2003; Biberman et al. 1999, Dehler and Welsh 2003; Hadot 1995; Heaton et al. 2004; Heelas and Woodhead 2005; Kinjerski and Skrypnek 2004. Miller 2010; Milliman et al. 2003; Neal 1999) are common since ‘The spiritual dimension is (basically) understood as the dimension at which all life connects, and where the individual realises her or his true nature in relationship with the ‘whole’ (Heelas and Woodhead 2005 p. 99)

This is reflected in our research, through our interrelationship with research participants, the research approaches we adopt, and our everyday work. We have noticed that drawing on the constructs we research, such as ‘presence’ and ‘flow’, allows us to ground ourselves in our everyday work both in academia and in work organisations. Kelemen and Peltonen (2005) adopt a relational view explaining that in self formation practices, ‘spirituality’ is rooted in the here and now and opening a way to a relationship with the inner side of the individual and with a larger cosmos. In this we can experience this interrelationship as observers and as participants where such a relationship can only take place in the present where the individual detaches themselves from the future, or the past. We therefore try to remain present in our everyday work and be true to our values when interacting with students, colleagues and research participants.

Professional Development for Spirituality in Management

In work organisations, spirituality in the workplace is seen to be encouraged through organisational design, human resources practices and various management initiatives. From yoga mornings and multi-faith prayer rooms, to employee wellness initiatives, to leadership development and coaching, there are multiple ways in which spirituality infiltrates management. Management development courses range from individual coaching, to leadership development and teamwork training. For example, Findhorn Consultancy Service has provided ‘developing practical spirituality in the workplace’ consulting services to companies like Pricewaterhouse Coopers and Shell. A range of other providers of management development courses

related to spirituality have delivered training and coaching to executives from companies such as the Bank of England, Mars and British Petroleum. Our research has shown that it is difficult to classify a particular initiative or training as 'spiritual' as practitioners in the field have repeatedly told us that they don't advertise themselves as 'spiritual' to avoid prejudice in work organisations. Besides, Bell and Taylor (2004), in their research on spiritual management development courses, view the emphasis on finding inner strength as a way to cope with organizational demands (Bell and Taylor 2004; Bell et al. 2011) and warn of the potential of spiritual management development to become repressive in the effort to reconcile the needs of the individual with the needs of the organization.

With regard to education, universities in the US include relevant centres within departments of religious studies such as Princeton's Faith at Work Initiative and Yale's Ethics and Spirituality Program, which is also now hosting the Spiritual Capital Initiative. These centres tend to include teaching, research and consulting aspects. Business Schools are encouraging spiritual exploration (Alsop 2005) and some even introduce Spirituality in Management related courses. This is supported by an increasing number of published papers on the need to introduce spirituality into management courses (Barnett et al. 2000; Dhiman and Marques 2011). Dhiman and Marques (2011) introduced a workplace spirituality course in an MBA and found that it generated insights about spiritual behaviour in successful organisations. As participants were supported to integrate spirituality in their everyday work and encourage this further into their workplace, the course demonstrated the significance of re-educating future and current business leaders.

Possible Future Directions for Spirituality in Management

Managers and academics in the field of business have been criticised for not predicting or acting against organisational misconduct, environmental damage, and the economic crisis. To address this responsibility, researchers are called to see the interrelation of spirituality and management constructs in developing organisational ethics and their potential for social change.

Both affirmative and critical scholars are pointing to the potential of particular 'types' of 'spirituality' for social change (Aupers and Houtman 2006; Carrette and King 2005; Lynch 2007; Mitroff and Denton 1999; Woodhead 2001). Carrette and King (2005) assert there is potential for social change only through socially engaged forms of spirituality; Lynch (2007) discusses the engagement of 'progressive spirituality' with broader debates about the moral decline of contemporary society, whereas Taylor (2005) refers to the disruptive potential of 'spirituality' and religion in relation to industrial organization. Mitroff and Denton (1999) find that none of the organizational models they researched are 'very advanced' (p. 182) or 'particularly well integrated or developed across all of the four orientations' (p. 183) of 'spirituality' they examine. However they assert that this should not be a block to fostering 'spirituality' in the workplace but should be seen instead as a challenge, and they therefore propose an integrative model.

Carrette and King (2005) distinguish between individualist/consumerist or corporatist/capitalist forms of ‘spirituality’ which place the individual or corporate wealth above social justice and socially engaged forms of ‘spirituality’ which are ‘grounded in an awareness of our mutual interdependence, the need for social justice and economically sustainable lifestyles (and) may yet prove our best hope for resisting the capitalist excess of neoliberalism [...]’. They conclude that ‘Our futures may depend upon it’ (p. 182). They assert that private psychologised ‘spirituality’ ‘fails to acknowledge the interdependence of self within community and the ethical necessity of countering the abuses of power within market societies.’ (p. 182) They go on to say that this ‘restricts the individual to a unit of consumption rather than a dynamic of relation and creative expression’ (p. 78) as well as ‘breaks the social self and conceals [...] the collective manipulation of isolated individuals in the language of free will and choice (p. 80).

The theorists that distinguish between different kinds of ‘spirituality’ fail to acknowledge that the interrelation between self, organisation and society is ingrained in the spiritual discourse through subjectivities of holistic thinking (Hadot 1995; Heelas and Woodhead 2005), reflexive relationships (Roof 1999) and ideas of active creation of one’s reality. This may not be visibly apparent because within this holistic discourse it is possible to argue that individuals are part of society and therefore cannot fight against it, but might nonetheless influence it by a constant focus on the here and now, reflective work on the self, combined reflective work in interrelation with others, and active engagement in addressing issues or problems that arise.

Summary

The challenges facing Spirituality in Management operate at different levels and in different intensities. Most of the academic literature on is polarised between the affirmative side arguing for introducing spirituality in the workplace and the critical side cautioning against the oppressive potential of spirituality introduced as a management initiative. The debate revolves around a line of arguments which can be analysed in three levels: societal, organizational and individual. Research and practice in the field seeks to attain a fine balance between the varying expressions and experiences of Spirituality in Management.

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Chapter 22

Spirituality and the Arts: Interwoven Landscapes of Identities and Meaning

Marni J. Binder

Abstract This chapter explores the influences of spirituality on the arts and the depth of expression in, through and with the arts. A Canadian perspective frames contextual connections to culture and identity. It is through these artistic spaces of interconnection that affords us new possibilities of being in the world. With what appears to be a commodification of western and Indigenous art in a linear, text-driven society, I also argue for “unsilencing” the discourse around spirituality and the arts in higher education, drawing on what can be learned and acted on in professional practice. As well, I share through personal experience what it means to live spiritually and artistically in the world.

Introduction

Creating works of art articulates our deepest yearnings and serves to mend the heart while nurturing mind and spirit. (Colalillo Kates 2005, p. 199)

Expression in, through and with the arts provides the creative spaces to connect with our inner landscapes. The creation of art as Colalillo Kates (2005) suggested, be it through visual arts, music, dance, and performative endeavors, calls attention to and reflects our lived experiences, interconnecting mind, body and spirit. Spiritual expression through artistic engagement opens up the liminal spaces that can inform everyday life, making visible the multiple layers of one’s identity. Allen (2005) considered that “art is a vehicle that allows us to transcend linear time, to travel backward and forward into personal and transpersonal history; into possibilities that weren’t realized and those that might be” (pp. 1–2).

It has been my experience that the word spirituality evokes many responses, ranging from discomfort, association with religiosity and curiosity to exploring deeper meanings of life aside from religious beliefs and practices (Binder 2011; Bone 2008; Crossman 2003). For the purpose of this chapter, I conceive of spirituality as the honoring of the sacred: holding reverence and respect for being in

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and with the world. It is such awe and wonder that calls our attention to the profound interconnection with all that lives on our planet, embracing the mystery in everyday life (Bone 2010; Miller 2014).

This chapter explores the influence of spirituality on the arts, in particular, spiritual expression through art making within a Canadian context, the liminal spaces in constructing new possibilities of being in the world, and personal experience. With what appears to be a commodification of Indigenous arts and in the field of the arts in general due to a linear, text-driven society, I argue for “unsilencing” the discourse on spirituality and the arts in higher education. Challenging the silence in the academy and hence work in higher education, addresses what Maxine Greene (2012) discussed as the importance of dialogue that “ends with an open question, with a lot of things unsettled” (p. 182). Within the spaces of the unsettled, new understandings through lived experiences emerge and become visible, where the creative spirit can live aesthetically and artistically in the world (Walsh et al. 2015).

Spirituality and the Arts

Much of the literature reflects the influences of spirituality on the arts, the deep spiritual connections artists make and the profound expression of the spiritual self, mystery and meaning-making. Hughes (2011) discussed that spirituality has always been of a concern in art, but determined by the “cultural universe” (p. 2) at the time, meaning the time and place historically and through multiple art forms. Each century reflects its own particular lens on spirituality through the dominant art form and beliefs of the era. He views shifts in the use of symbols and metaphors over time and believes that “art will always function in cultural life to remind us we are spiritual creatures (p. 3), whether through religion or through the more secular viewpoints he observes now in the west. Hughes frames his discussion on poetry but makes strong reference to the visual arts and the shifts observed in the twentieth century connecting spirituality and the arts.

One can only look to the early twentieth century and the work and writings of Kandinsky to see where some of the shifts began to occur with the birth of modern art. Kadinsky’s work had a deepening effect on my connections to art-making as a spiritual practice and in my explorations of creativity and play. In his seminal work, *On the spiritual in art*, Kadinsky (1912, p. 13) writes:

The spiritual life, to which art belongs and of which she is one of the mightiest elements, is a complicated but definite and easily definable movement forwards and upwards. This movement is the movement of experience. It may take different forms, but it holds at bottom to the same inner thought and purpose.

Nachmanovitch (1990) explored the movement of experience Kandinsky speaks of through the spontaneity of creation, play, and improvisations of life as they occur. He suggests that people are the conduit through which the creative energy flows. His view of play as “the taproot from which art springs” (p. 42) is echoed in the work

of Crowell and Reid-Marr (2013), who view creativity as a “ceaseless imperative” (p. 67), Colalillo Kates (2005) who suggested creativity “offers us a shared and shareable language” (p. 193), and MacKay (2014) who explored the “reciprocal relationship between art making and spiritual practice” (p. 1).

Mackay (2014) in her research about art making in women’s lives, discovered the synchronicity of art making with spiritual experiences. She discovered that the art creations and stories of the women from different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds demonstrated that “everyday lived experiences of spirituality, motherhood and connectedness with nature, remain devalued and marginalized because they are not marketable commodities or deemed significant to the cultural conversations by patriarchal systems” (p. 2). Mackay’s work supports the discourse needed on spirituality and the arts in higher education. It would appear that inside the academy as London (2007) suggests, protocols and limitations produce silence. Artists outside of these restrictive institutional boundaries can explore their identity and personal landscapes more openly.

Tisdell (2006) argued that the spiritual experience is uniquely personal, and can exist outside of religion. She provided a theoretical foundation and epistemological slant in her discussion of culture, spirituality and use of image, symbols and other expressions of creativity. She advocates specifically for cultural discussions to include spirituality. Such visibility is a rarity in cultural conversations, nor connected to artistic forms of expression. It could be suggested that grounding our spirituality in one’s cultural community is strengthened through artistic experiences and engagement. It is here that the “cultural imagination” (Tisdell 2006, p. 23) of experiences and not just the work of others allows space for personal art making through many artistic forms such as painting, music, and poetry. This view resonates with Pencchenino’s (2009) stance that spirituality “provides a means to become” (p. 35). I would argue the spirit of ‘becoming’ is intricately connected to artistic expression.

Lingan (2009) viewed a swell of interest in how spirituality informs creating art across many disciplines (performance, media, photography, dance, installation for example). He observed that a reductionist view of religion was one possible reason but also saw the deep interconnection and variations of spiritual dimensionality artists were exploring in their work. He acknowledged the complexity and messiness of defining spirituality and how artists often avoid discussing spiritual attributes of their work. This begs the question: Is there a silencing of such discourse? Is the tension using the word spirituality with one’s art the issue? It can be inferred that the use of the word spirituality and connection to the arts are silenced in the field, yet at the same time, the arts offer the opening for the discourse to unfold. As Greene (2001) suggested, here lie “the opening realities or alternative realities with moving through doorways into spaces some of us have never seen before” (p. 44).

Whether it is the mystery of the “creative calling” (Nachmanovitch 1990, p. 32), allowing our souls to sing and to experience awe and wonder (Miller 2014), the embodiment of wholeness through sensory engagement and knowing through the arts (Blumenfeld-Jones 2012), it is the relational qualities and connectedness to others, the natural world and to the cosmos that offers expression of deep places in

our lives and to our development (de Souza et al. 2009). Whatever the arts discipline, for example, painting, sculpture, dance, music, poetry, writing—the significance of bringing creativity into the everyday through shared lived experiences connects to us to moments of discovery and spiritual spaces.

A Canadian Perspective

Historically, in the Canadian field of the arts, and art history studies, research revolved around Christian constructs, where a more Eurocentric perspective dominated (Friesen and Friesen 2006). With the dominance of Christianity throughout Europe, one could not separate art from the religion, through sacred symbols, representations of human form and architecture. Religious subject matter selectively dominated content and what was of value (Rowe 2013). One cannot negate the beauty of the art forms that have become so prevalent in our visual lexicon (for example, Michelangelo's David, The Sistine Chapel), but what needs to be challenged is the status quo and the exclusion of other artistic spiritual connections, religions and Indigenous world views.

In Canada, there are several artist scholars in many of the arts disciplines who make profound connections between their art and spirituality, challenging the status quo and drawing on other artistic spiritual connections. As artists teaching in higher education, it is through their art making that they explore spiritual and contemplative practices and embody this in all that they do (Walsh et al. 2015). Their art is their research. In their art making they reflect the spiritual spaces that emerge from artistic inquiry. Irwin (2007) discussed the importance of liminal spaces artists work in and “their presence and way of being in the world are derived from the dwelling in social, temporal, and spiritual thresholds of understanding” (p. 1402).

Snowber (2007, 2012a), a dancer/poet/scholar, explores dance and poetry through the embodiment of the spiritual. Her discourse raises questions, and challenges western thinking. She views the body as a sacred space for expression; one that is sensual and visceral. Dance as a way of knowing and being is also a mindful expression of creative presence. She suggested “dance vibrates out of the soul as a pulse of life asking to take form” (2007, p. 1449). Snowber (2012b, pp. 118–119) poetically explains from *We are the body*:

ears of the soul
 eyes of the feet
 the body's knowledge
 is the gift
 a curriculum of hope
 where we are revealed
 in the mystery
 and the story
 of being human
 (self)

Huey-Heck and Kalnin (2006) acknowledged the significant stories told through various art forms from many religions, but stressed the profound contribution that artists outside institutionalized religion have made to human spiritual development in modern times. Bickel (2008) is one such artist and scholar. She has embraced *a/r/tography* (see Irwin 2004), as a research methodology in her practice and expresses her spirituality through the embodiment of human inquiry and visual performative art through ritual and connection with the sacred. *A/r/tography* is a living inquiry that interconnects the artist and researcher to the in-between spaces, and builds strong communities of practice (Neilson 2008).

A/r/tography is inherently about self as artist/researcher/teacher yet it is also social when groups or communities of *a/r/tographers* come together to engage in shared inquiries, act as critical friends, articulate an evolution of research questions, and present their collective evocative/provocative works to others. (Irwin and Skinner 2013, p. 1)

Bickel (2008) recognized such interconnections and building of artistic community as rituals the artist brings to society through awareness and explores “ritualizing as an important mode of knowing” (p. 88) in her artistic inquiry. Hasebe-Ludt et al. (2009) explored their life writing through *métissage*, an organic approach that uses the metaphor of braiding. They interwove their lived stories of experience through diverse backgrounds and forms of writing. Leggo (2009), breathed spiritual life into his poesis and continues to view his work as “a site for dwelling, for holding up, for stopping” (as cited in Hasebe-Ludt et al. 2009, p. 164). Walsh (2012) too focused on the word ‘dwell’ to reflect on and to describe part of the research process. Her poetic interpretations of transcripts and words from women educators around the world drew on the Buddhist principle of Dharma art, embracing art as a way of being and knowing in the world. Contemplation as research for Walsh unfolded from deep listening and creative energy. Both Leggo and Walsh resonate what it means to be fully present through the act of creating, and in doing so bring the arts to their everyday, unfolding their artistic experience and research as spiritual practice.

London (2007) drew on artists such as Kandinsky, Mondrian and Mark Rothko as examples of what he calls “spiritually grounded art” (p. 1489) and advocated for a paradigm shift to embrace this. He challenged the omission of discourse on the spiritual contribution to art in educational systems, and lack of presence in the professional literature. London (2007) questioned the exclusion of the spiritual and lack of intent as a loss to the artist and to society as a whole. Museums and galleries are viewed as unrestricted spaces not governed by academic conventions or procedures. London’s work draws our attention to how we make the spiritual visible through art-making. Similar to art, he suggested the spiritual is about the process, not the product. Both are about ongoing growth and ways of being in the world (Painter 2007).

Indigenous Ways of Being with the Arts

Connecting to ways of being in the world, Vicky Kelly (2015), an Indigenous Canadian artist, scholar and educator, discusses how “the artist endeavours to create an artistic representation which honors the essential truth of being through the mediums of sound, colour, form, texture, word, or tone” (p. 58). She reminds us of the importance of cultural knowledge through ceremony, and seeing the arts as “the place, the liminal space or the surface where worlds meet” (p. 60). Further, Kelly (2015) experiences spiritual space as a “complex web of reciprocal inter-rationality, a living wholeness” (p. 46). She reveals the many forms and relational experiences of her spiritual and artistic path to craft her personal renewal, processes and “act of becoming” through time (p. 63). Kelly reminds us that “the artistic process and ceremony of art also gift us when we engage in the practice of the arts” (p. 64). This relational quality is one we can all draw on and learn from.

Critical to the discussion of Indigenous world views of spirituality and art in the everyday, is the commodification and appropriation guised as appreciation. Part of the reason this occurs could be the difficulty to position the discourse with western art forms and the focus of art as product not process (Bickel 2014). I have witnessed this in art history courses within the university where memorization and analysis trumps the creative act. Today, spirituality still is not discussed within the overall arts disciplines, and Indigenous art is compartmentalized and not situated contextually and historically within the broader picture. In the field of the arts, such fragmentation leads to omission in the mainstream.

The spiritual connection to the land, importance of the spirit world and holding Mother Earth as sacred are worldviews observed in many Indigenous cultures globally through stories told, dreams, the heartbeat of the drum, or symbols worn on clothing (Archibault 2008; Cajete 1994; Four Arrows (Don Trent Jacobs) 2013; Maclean 2008). In Canada, Aboriginal art has distinctive regional qualities as well as, an embedded spirituality in the everyday. We learn that art creation has purpose and meaning (Friesen and Friesen 2006).

In a recent traveling exhibit, Canadian west coast Haida artist Robert Davidson reflected on the significance of community engagement and regeneration as essential to his artistic being (Brotherton et al. 2013). Davidson crystallizes his now abstracted art approach through the traditions of oracy, ceremony and music through ancestral symbolic language. He honors his culture in his paintings and sculptures through the songs, dances and masks he wears in ceremony with his community on Haida Gwaii, off the coast of British Columbia, Canada. Davidson (2013) explains: “I draw on the lessons of our ancestors. Our ancestors left an incredible legacy of art and, in order to honor them, it is our responsibility to relearn that legacy” (as cited in Brotherton et al. 2013, p. 51). Davidson draws on the wisdom and sacredness of the ancestors to create his spiritual visual vocabulary.

In the province of Ontario in Canada we can look to the Woodland style developed by Norval Morrisseau. His powerful and iconic six piece painting *Man Transforming into a Thunderbird* reflected not only his own name of “Copper

Thunderbird' but also the deep spiritual world of his lived experiences as a shaman, his visions and shapeshifting transformations (Armand 2014). Daphne Odjig, embedded her spirituality through her Woodland style paintings reflecting deeply profound personal stories and lived experiences (see Divine et al. 2007; Odjig et al. 2001).

A strong Indigenous presence has slowly entered into art institutions such as the Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCAD)¹ where there is now an Indigenous visual culture program. In exploring courses offered, the word spirituality is not mentioned; however, it could be argued that spirituality would be a natural part of the discourse. Perhaps it is something that does not need naming as it is embedded in the everyday experience. The question is, unless one takes an 'Indigenous art' course, is there open discussion in the discipline about the connection of the two within this context? While the value of a separate course on Indigenous art can be acknowledged due to previous omissions, why is this then, the only place that spirituality and the art form are brought together? Understanding Indigenous spirituality and art and how this is embedded in culture and identity echoes the importance of recognizing these qualities in our own lives. As a non-Indigenous person, I am challenged to question the role and responsibility within issues of cultural saturation and how contextually one can honor, draw from, and interpret another culture's art within one's own lived worlds and cultural identity. How can one be influenced and affected by the spirit of another's art form, and honorably express one's lived experiences through the artistic, the aesthetic and hold true to one's spirit?

For example, Archibald (2008) explored the importance of Aboriginal storytelling through what she calls 'storywork'. Storytelling is the context for oracy in many Indigenous cultures. The stories share understanding about the natural world, and wellbeing for example, and echo the strong belief in the interconnection of all living things. This spirituality unfolds through the art form of storytelling, shared by the elders. Being a storyteller is the storywork where living and balance are experienced in and through what the story represents. Archibald draws our attention to the importance of story in the everyday. What can be drawn from this is honouring and respecting the stories of others and how stories shape and speak to one's identity.

Wane (2011), explored her spirituality and identity through her Indigenous African roots. There is disquiet as she expressed "great concerns of appropriation and commodification of past traditions and knowledges" (Wane et al. 2011, p. xix). Wane (2011) argued that her cultural and ancient spirituality is one of experience, and intuition, not conceptual. One can see such commodification in marketing Indigenous spirituality through art artifacts such as dream catchers, totems, masks, where the authenticity, spirit, story and wisdom behind the artwork are lost. Spirituality through the art object becomes a marketable item that is then appropriated. Appreciation is masked under the untruths. Spirituality is part of one's identity, and

¹ <http://www.ocadu.ca/academics/undergraduate/indigenous-visual-culture.htm>

how one lives in the world and is active through the everyday relationship with the universe and most often expressed through the many art forms. Wane (2011) draws our attention to the profound importance of cultural identity and the arts through the spiritual spaces that are in between. These are deeply profound moments we can bring to our lives, reflect within our particular contexts and as Wane (2011) so eloquently described can be found everywhere, in “the stars, music, song, dance, beauty of nature, in the intimacy intimate relationships, but also every moment of everyday life” (p. 78).

Art-Making as Spiritual Experience

Campbell (2006) suggested “the reflective meditative aspects of art making and inquiry provide deeper and more authentic insights into an artist’s identity and purpose” (p. 31). While spiritual aspects of knowing and being are unique to each culture, through a secular or religious lens, it is the search for identity and expression through different artistic modes that form the inbetween spaces. These spaces of liminality entertain the tensions and messiness of creating art and getting to know oneself (Blumenfeld-Jones 2012). This shared connection between art making and the spiritual allows an artist to not just reflect on personal landscapes of identity (MacKay 2014), but also returns the experience to the audiences.

On a recent trip to Bali to explore the arts, spirituality and culture, an understanding of Balinese identity was informed by the intricate interconnection of ritual, spiritual practice and the arts. Many of the arts in Bali are rooted in an Indigenous belief system that weaves together animism and reverence for the ancestors (Dibia 2008). Rituals have been created through the aesthetic process of making statues, puppets and masks. Stories of the kings connect the people to their history. Wayan (shadow puppets) and Topeng (mask dance) are two of the most important art forms connected to ceremony and ritual (Foley and Sedana 2005). The use of the Balinese language in performances preserves community identity and culture. Culture, identity and spirituality co-exist through the many art forms, and inbetween spaces of the everyday.

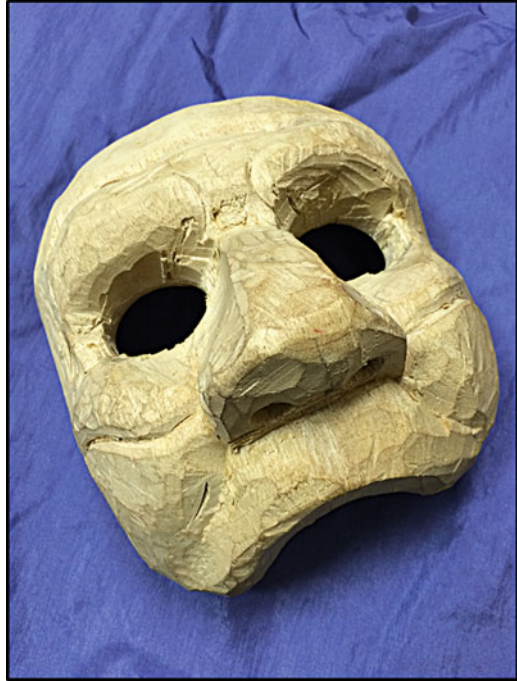
I spent time with master carver Nyoman Setiawan. I immersed myself in an ancient art form; using traditional carving tools handed down by his father and grandfather through the years (see Fig. 22.1). Between discussion, silence and the creative liminal space of gratitude emerged balance and harmony. I expressed my inner lived self through the carving of the wood. The pele wood took on a life of its own as I engaged in a process centuries old. Out from the relational space shared with my teacher, my mask emerged (see Fig. 22.2), left organic in completion.

As I reflect back on this profound moment of creating from the heart, what resonates was how cultures not dominated by monotheistic beliefs appear to live

Fig. 22.1 Tools

their culture in the everyday, and define identity and express spirituality through not just art making but what I would call “artistic being”. Drawing on Bickel’s (2008) exploration of emergent ritual as sacred liminal space that requires our “witnessing and closure” (p. 92), I view this opportunity as a gift of sacred artistic space. This experience has shaped further my artistic moments through the continued holding of spiritual space. As an artist/teacher/researcher, I bring this concept of holding spiritual space through art making to the students I teach. The significance of personal context and how this resonates in my interpretation and story of my “doing and being” transforms my own practice.

The liminal spaces that allow for the spirit and art to meet bring shared understanding through situating self within a larger place of community. Creating balance and harmony through lived aesthetic experience through whatever art form used (dance, puppetry, painting) is ritualized through individual belief, cultural knowledge and active community engagement (Archibauld 2008; Wane 2011). Unfortunately, too often according to Nachmanovitch (1990) “art, music, poetry, paradox, sacrament, theatre are the very medicines we need, yet they are the very things our modern minds drop by the wayside” (p. 187). Blumenfeld-Jones (2012) argues that this privileging of the mind over everything creates fragmentation and marginalization of the arts in society. I would add the spiritual to this disconnect.

Fig. 22.2 Mask

Final Thoughts

The influence of spirituality on the arts is apparent through the artists/scholars/teachers who weave their spirituality through art making, be it visual arts, performative work, dance, or poetry. Their art form is what Lucerna (2012) called “a door to go deep within themselves” (p. 47). Many of the artists who also situate themselves in art education discussed bringing ritual and ceremony into their art form: the embodiment of the senses through movement (Snowber 2012a); the poetic spirit of language (see Leggo, in Hasebe-Ludt et al. 2009); and ritualization of the art as human inquiry (Bickel 2008). Many of the artists advocate for further discourse on the influence of spirituality. This could be viewed as needed professional development but it extends beyond. There is a sense that it should be part of artistic dialogue and art making. It brings the outside world of the everyday to higher education. It forges ties with artists outside of the academy and offers the possibilities of learning from cross-cultural engagements.

Learning from the wisdom and example of Indigenous cultures illustrates a strong spiritual interconnection of meaning through art forms to the natural world. In such cultures, there is no separation but a cohesive conscious joining of the creative to the everyday and it is through the representations, spirituality is made more visible and embodied (Kelly 2015). The years of traditions and handing down of the stories, songs and symbols are the cultural and historical definitions of identity.

Spirit becomes one with artistic expression. What is critical is how we bring this to our own artistic contextual expression and communication. How do we translate such knowledge and spirit to our own way of being in the world and into the everyday?

Such understanding of the interconnection between spirituality and the arts as part of the everyday is to return to an aesthetic appreciation of life. Greene's (1978) discussion on the importance of wide-awakeness is one that connects deeply to personal landscapes of learning. Artistic expression provides openings for spiritual discussions to become visible as part of the process and validates the search for meaning and understanding of the mystery of being.

From my own learning about ritual, the importance of ceremony and aesthetic practices of different cultures in relation to my own, I have come to understand more about how spirituality and the arts are woven together through deeply intense cosmological beliefs in our world. While religion is an integral part of ancient cultures, it is not the religiosity and monotheism of western thought. At the core of many of these belief systems, rituals, and practices, are aesthetic and creative activities embedded in daily life through the wisdom of the ancestors. It is this embodiment of identity through the sacred that brings meaning to the everyday and has shaped my artistic practice. Understanding this connection lays the groundwork for receptive interaction, unsilencing the discourse around spirituality and the arts.

Irwin (2007) states: "The arts offer practices that are inherently liminal because they highlight taken-for-granted experiences or conversely, make strange experiences seem familiar . . . they offer individuals to understand their own strangeness, their own liminal spaces of experiences" (pp. 1402–1503). In these liminal spaces, one's spirituality is explored, understood and can unfold through different modes of artistic expression. Opening these spaces for exploration and discussion enhances opportunities for future practice and engagement.

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Chapter 23

Nurturing Spirituality Through Picture Books in Children's Literature: A Focus on the Upton's Golliwogg Stories

Olga Buttigieg

Abstract Children's spirituality is an innate disposition of children that has been referred to as an is-ness for life and picture books have the capacity to nurture children's spirituality. For instance, the Upton Golliwogg picture books invited children to enter a world not their own and to identify with new characters and experiences that would awaken their imaginations. There have been many misrepresentations of the Golliwogg which have led to him being labelled as a racist and politically incorrect image. However, the Upton Golliwogg was a character who brought a new kind of spiritual presence to childhood literature. Accordingly, this chapter recognizes the Upton Golliwogg as a spiritual character and it examines the notion that Golliwogg's spirituality was communicated to children as a way of being in the world. Rhetorical narrative criticism and a visual analysis of picture books were used to determine the spiritual qualities of the Upton Golliwogg. Two themes were identified: freedom and a paradoxical way of being. Further investigation showed these to be spiritual traits of Golliwogg. Indeed, his key spiritual qualities of kind-heartedness and imagination were legitimate ways of knowing and being in the world. These are qualities, amongst others, that can be encouraged and nurtured in children.

Introduction

This chapter intends to examine the potential of picture books to nurture children's spirituality. In particular it will examine Upton's Golliwogg¹ narratives to identify ways in which the Golliwogg may be seen as a spiritual character who models spiritual behaviour.

¹The original Upton Golliwogg along with his peg doll companions are housed at the Victoria and Albert Museum of Childhood, Bethnal Green, London. The first Golliwogg story by Florence

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It is important to acknowledge at the start that the Golliwogg has become a symbol of racism. This point needs to be made because of the author's experience during her research studies, as critics consistently responded negatively to her presentations precisely because they were about the Golliwogg. Their censure was based on the fact that, over the twentieth century, the Golliwogg became a symbol of racism (Davis 1992, <https://moniqueamynewton.wordpress.com/2015/08/01/the-golliwog-cherished-childhood-toy-or-destructive-image-of-racism/>).

When Upton neglected to patent the Golliwogg, they lost something less tangible than the royalties, but far more important: control over the personality of the character . . . In England, it seems . . . no attempt has been made to distinguish the Golliwogg from the golliwogs and to consider the books objectively. This should have been done in order to assure their rightful place in history . . . The issue of racial discrimination is mainly responsible for the books' near obliteration in the annals of history. Therefore, Upton's work must be given the same consideration other children's books receive before being condemned to oblivion (Davis 1992, pp. 105–106).

Upton created the Golliwogg as a black fictional character. She also had other black characters in various adventures in her books such as Indians, Africans, Turks whom Golliwogg and his friends encountered on their many adventures. One of her black characters, Sambo, in the first Upton narrative, *The Adventure of Two Dutch Dolls* (1895) resembled an African person and was portrayed quite differently from the exaggerated, mask-like features of the Golliwogg. It is quite possible, given the era when the Golliwogg arrived, that Upton's imagination was influenced, nonconsciously, by what was happening in the 1890s. Intent upon earning money for her family and for the education of her brother, Upton decided to create a picture book with her mother using her childhood toys as inspiration (Lyttelton 1926). One toy was a black doll and it may have resembled the minstrel images of the 1890s, which at the time were not viewed in the same way as the image is viewed today. Upton recalls that "tracing him back to as near the beginning as I can get, he came from an American fair" (Peet 1950, p. 697). Further, when asked in an interview of the origins of the word Golliwogg she explained:

The actual origin is difficult to explain; it came of itself. As the Golliwogg has always seemed to me to be telling me his own biography, so in the same way he must have told me his own name, for one day, when the pictures were about half completed, and the verses not yet begun, I picked him up from the table in my studio, and without the idea of a name passing through my mind, I called him 'Golliwogg' (Peet 1950, p. 697).

If we note, then, that attitudes towards racism changed significantly over the twentieth century, a possible explanation as to why Golliwogg is now seen as a racist image, is that he is linked to the minstrel images of the 1890s. What has not been recognized is that Upton appeared to be progressive in her intentions because she made Golliwogg into her hero character by giving him human qualities that

Upton appeared in 1895 and such was its popularity amongst children that another 12 storybooks were published in the successive years until 1909.

were noble and spiritual, and his actions were not the kind of actions expected of or associated with black people in the US or Britain at the time of writing.

It is important to recognize how perceptions and experiences of racism have continued to exist throughout the twentieth century so that many non-white people have been subjected to appalling attitudes and behaviour directed at them to somehow diminish their very being. Racism reduces the humanity of both the abuser and the victim and many non-white people who live in predominantly white countries can remember experiences of racism that were soul-destroying. Recalling her early years of growing up in Britain in the 1960s, Sushi Das, an Opinion Editor for *The Age* a Melbourne newspaper, speaks of how racism affected her: 'The experience of racism diminishes your confidence. It makes you smaller....Racism in all its overt and insidious ways, has the capacity to sear its mark on a person' (Das 2012, pp. 62–63). Das reflects on how she wanted to reject her own Indian identity because 'it got in the way of everything' (p. 63). It is no doubt also, that the impact of racism on the people of African origin in Britain and the US and their sense of identity was cruel and devastating.

It is not surprising, then, that there has been a distinct socio-cultural change in the way the Golliwogg, is perceived today. However, this chapter attempts to contextualize Upton as a white woman of her time, who would not have personally experienced the impact of racism. However, her portrayal of white and black characters as co-companions in her stories showed her awareness and rejection of racism because her characters' behaviours did not reflect black and white relations from that era.

In this sense, the negative present attitude to the Golliwogg, as a racist image, may be seen as an inversion of Upton's intention. There is an interesting double inversion: Upton sought to use the Golliwogg as a figure to address racist attitudes of her time and now the Golliwogg itself has become a stereotypical example of racist depiction (Erricker 2015).

Given Upton's efforts to create a character that, clearly, did not portray black people at the time when she wrote her stories, it is, indeed, unfortunate that the name and image of the Golliwogg evokes much anger and emotion since many people link the image to the portrayal of black people in the 1890s which, consequently, provokes a hugely negative response. Other childhood authors (for instance, Blyton 1959, pp. 64–73), responding to social and cultural contexts in later times, caricatured the Golliwogg through appearance, name and story or portrayed them anthropomorphically as minstrels (Aris n.d.; Ainsworth 1957). In some of their stories, the Golliwogg's spiritual characteristics were diminished or lost and through this misrepresentation.

What this chapter will show is that Upton's portrayal of the Golliwogg character actually removed him from the sphere of negativity because she portrayed him as a black character in her stories who modelled positive human qualities. His behaviour and actions did not reflect the stereotypical images of black people at the time, but, rather, proclaimed him as a spiritual character, who lived life to the full, and who had a deep connectedness, on equal terms, to all people and to the world in which he lived. Therefore, the chapter hopes to re-introduce Upton's original Golliwogg

while also acknowledging the existing conceptions of the Golliwogg that prevail, especially in a context where racism is not just a hideous memory that stains human history but is still the everyday reality of many people. It is this reason why children today should be introduced to a black character who is portrayed as a hero who is loved and respected by his friends and which is, possibly, what endeared him to children.

The character and name of the Golliwogg first came into being by Florence Upton, artist and childhood author, in 1895 and her 13 Golliwogg narratives (1895–1909) were filled with characters whom she modelled on her childhood toys. Upton said of the Golliwogg:

He was born of no deep, dark intentions, nor was he a product of a decadent craving for ugliness on the part of his creator. He simply walked quietly side by side with me out of my own childhood (Peet 1950, p. 697).

In later years, Upton confessed to being frightened and dismayed when she read of the ‘fearsome etymology some deep, dark minds can see in his name . . . golli . . . being a corruption of Dolly . . . wog, a low form of the verb wag’ (p. 697). Indeed, so much incorrect information has been communicated and perpetuated today, that Golliwogg has lost his presence as the storybook character, as imagined by Upton, whose spiritual qualities are reflected in his actions. Instead his colour and physical features have dominated the discourse.

A name, like Golliwogg, which started innocently in 1895 now is seen by many as a racially, negative epithet . . . The original innocence of the Golliwogg, as a literary image, as a folkloric image, has now been perceived as a racist symbol (MacGregor 1992, p. 131).

The Golliwogg narratives are unique for their spontaneity and ‘gay abandon’. They respond to inventions and events that were going on in the world at the time, for instance, the invention of the bicycle, air-ship, war, and President Roosevelt’s safari. Further, there is the distinctive action that is described in the opening lines of her first book, where two dolls cut up the American flag so that one was dressed in stars and the other in stripes. And there is a constant reminder of this action in all the stories that followed since that is how we always meet them. Upton’s motivation in introducing such an action, which is suggestive of subversiveness, has to be left to interpretation. Nonetheless, it is possible to gain an insight into Upton’s critical attitudes to some social and political events, as in the story when Golliwogg and his friends go on a safari which followed the headlines describing the US President’s safari. In Upton’s story, Golliwogg and his friends end up saving the animals rather than killing them (Upton and Upton 1909). Perhaps, these children’s stories, in fact, provided an avenue for social commentary by Upton.

Upton’s books are refreshing in promoting a child-centred voice and allowing children to come to their own conclusions. “They present morality with an attitude of sincere respect for the mind and spirit of the child” (Davis 1992, p. 20). Golliwogg is depicted in the Upton narratives as engaging with virtuous behaviours such as forgiveness when the friends gang up on him (Upton and Upton 1895), and compassion as seen by his protection of animals (Upton and Upton 1909). In the Golliwogg’s circus when he offered a refund to all who attended, due to

unforeseen circumstances of a lion escaping, he was described as 'honest to the core' (Upton and Upton 1903, p. 62). His behaviours of relatedness and connectedness are displayed in word and image when he showed spontaneity and embracing the otherness of Other and with 'big ideas' for adventures to different places such as Holland (Upton and Upton 1904), Japan, France (Upton and Upton 1896), North Pole (Upton and Upton 1900) and the African Jungle (Upton and Upton 1909). More importantly, he revealed self-awareness and awareness of other through his respect for the different customs in each of the places he visited, including his connectedness to nature and the need to protect animals. For instance, Golliwogg decides not to kill and instead, invites animals into his zoo, to prevent them being killed by other safari hunters (Upton and Upton 1905, 1909), and the spiritual message of peace is visually displayed by way of a flag with the words PEACE in the Golliwogg's war narrative (Upton and Upton 1899, p.65).

Golliwogg's connectedness to the people and the world around him was also demonstrated through his actions and friendships which were on equal terms with everyone (Upton and Upton 1896). His creativity and innovative skills could be seen in the way he built bicycles (Upton and Upton 1896) and airships (Upton and Upton 1902) which were part of the new technology during those times. He was also progressive (Upton and Upton 1898, 1900, 1901, 1907) and showed problem solving skills when stranded on a desert island (Upton and Upton 1906) as well as providing his friends, the Dutch Dolls, with 'enchanted' experiences as seen in *The Golliwogg's Christmas* (1907) where a spirit of understanding was shared with his friends. The adventures often showed the Golliwogg as the leader (Upton and Upton 1896, 1903, 1909) who provided adventures and opportunities to act with sympathy and inclusiveness (Upton and Upton 1909) not with revenge or retribution (Upton and Upton 1903). In other words, Upton's Golliwogg's actions and behaviours demonstrate clearly that he was a gifted and likeable character with much potential rather than someone who had been marginalized and treated as sub-human which was the plight of so many black people during Upton's era.

Unfortunately, there has been no recognition of these traits of Upton's Golliwogg, nor of his humane and spiritual qualities, the very qualities that promote human dignity. Few people in the contemporary world know Upton's Golliwogg but they are familiar with other golliwogg characters created by childhood authors and with other black dolls, such as minstrel dolls, mammy dolls and black rag dolls. Collectively these dolls have all been given one identity- golly, golliwog or gollywog, and these words have become a racial slur. Later incarnations of the Golliwogg, by other childhood authors, may have reflected racist views of the time. It is this confusion of identity that this chapter intends to address.

Upton created the stories (her mother, Bertha, translated them into verse) and paintings of the Golliwogg for the books and it was this Golliwogg character that children loved. His physical appearance, described initially as a 'horrid sight', did not detract from the spiritual character who, through his actions and adventures, demonstrated his connectedness with his friends and the world. This, in itself, is a paradox and, perhaps,

Upton was exploring the way in which the exclusion of certain physical types (black people, for example) through an overarching negative stereotypical representation within a specific cultural mythology of difference, prevented others from being aware of their spiritual qualities (Erricker 2015).

Upton's Golliwogg, then, was more than just the black doll that was her childhood toy. She had transformed him into something else – a spiritual character who crossed all boundaries. Apart from the other spiritual traits mentioned above, Upton portrayed Golliwogg as having a “good heart” (Lyttleton 1926, p. 12) and a “beautiful personality” (Lyttleton 1926, p. 12) and all these aspects of the Golliwogg have not been addressed in the current anti-racist arguments that have been proffered against the Golliwogg.

To conclude this section, Upton used words and images to portray the Golliwogg as a spiritual character who modelled qualities of an adventurous and free spirit filled with curiosity and the joy of living and whose relationships reflected acceptance, inclusivity and equality regardless of difference (see Buttigieg 2014). His spirituality was communicated to children as a way of being in the world. He captured the paradoxical nature of Being including the concept of embracing all life's experiences, the ‘ups and the downs’ as he moved towards interconnectedness or Oneness.

An Understanding of Children's Spirituality

Spirituality has been referred to as an “is-ness for life” (Sinetar 2000, p. 17). The child is animated with a sense of ‘aliveness’ or a heightened awareness that has been referred to as inspired thought (Sinetar 2000, p. 13). Sinetar's (2000) research has shown that this heightened consciousness is related to a perception of unity. This perception relates to the way we see ourselves and others. Nye's (2009) research concurs with Sinetar's understanding of spirituality as a natural capacity for awareness of the sacred quality of life's experiences and an attraction towards being in relation to more than just self. Nye calls this capacity relational consciousness which is understood in terms of connectedness, responding to a call to relate to others, creation and a deeper inner sense of self. Hay and Nye (2006) suggest that nourishing children's spirituality involves allowing children's imaginations to question, explore and create a personal worldview. This dynamic searching capacity that all people are born with, seeks to find expression throughout a person's life. It may be perceived as a search for unity or oneness with everything and has been described as a fundamental quality of what it may mean to be human (Adams et al. 2008).

Spirituality is the relatedness or connectedness that a child feels to him/herself, to others, and to the world and beyond (de Souza 2012; Hyde 2008). It emphasises the potential of right relationships (self, others, world) to be life-giving and transforming. Spirituality is concerned with the fundamental quality of what it means to be human (O'Murchu 1997; Zohar and Marshall 2000). All people are spiritual

regardless of whether or not they belong to or practise a particular religious tradition (O'Murchu 1997). Recent research indicates that children are particularly spiritual (Hay and Nye 2006; Hart 2003; Hyde 2008) and it is this inherent quality that can be nurtured if particular characteristics of children's spirituality are recognised. Children's spirituality has been defined as a natural capacity for awareness of the sacred quality of life's experiences (Nye 2009). This awareness can be conscious or unconscious and can affect actions, feelings and thoughts (Nye 2009). In childhood it is "especially about being attracted towards 'being in relation'" (Nye 2009, p. 6). The concept of children's spirituality as 'relational consciousness' emphasises the children's emerging awareness of themselves in relation to others, the world and beyond. Nye (2009) writes that children are hungry for a language to address their complex experiences and sense of being.

Spirituality in Children's Literature

Contemporary literature emphasises that childhood is important and children are seen as being active participants and co-constructors of meaning (Adams et al. 2008). Hay and Nye (2006) challenge educators to nurture and protect this dimension in children's lives.

Florence Upton was an innovative childhood author who observed the need to nurture these spiritual characteristics in children. She created picture books that captured and reflected the Romantic concept of childhood. She valued many qualities as expressed by the Romantics such as the child's imagination and the love of nature and the exotic, as well as the importance of expressing feelings and emotions. Her characters showed spiritual characteristics of imagination, feelings, emotions and connectedness to nature. These characteristics are arguably especially embodied by a character she created, the Golliwogg, whose key spiritual gifts are his kind heart and free spirit. Upton's Golliwogg modelled these spiritual traits and therefore, he had the potential to nurture the spirituality of the child through the stories. By following the Golliwogg and his adventures, children were reminded of their own sense of connectedness with self, others, the natural world and the liberating experience of transcendence. Most noticeably, Upton also acknowledged experiences that reflected the dark side in children's lives.

The Dark Side of Spirituality

The dark side of spirituality refers to those aspects of an individual's relationality or connectedness which do not nurture his/her wellbeing or may impede his/her progress toward human flourishing (de Souza 2012). de Souza's research on human spirituality refers to a relational continuum and a forward movement on this continuum reflects the growth of spirituality in terms of having a raised awareness of oneself as a relational being (de Souza 2012).

There are both positive and negative aspects of relationality and connectedness. For instance, any relationship or experience of connectedness that obstructs an individual from flourishing and/or impedes his/her wellbeing represents the dark or shadow side of spirituality (de Souza 2012). In depth psychology, the shadow may refer to everything that the individual is not fully conscious of or aspects of personality that one tends to reject or see as least desirable. “It is the inferior part of the personality, the sum of all personal and collective psychic elements which, because of their incompatibility with the chosen conscious attitude, are denied expression in conscious life and therefore coalesce into a relatively autonomous splinter personality with contrary tendencies in the unconscious mind” (O’Connor 1985, p. 46). Jung postulated on the importance for individuals to enter the darkness and to discover what lay within (Storr 1973) and, likewise, Tacey (2003) encourages people to befriend and confront their own shadow.

Upton’s narratives identified this darker side of spirituality in children through elements of disconnectedness such as fear, anxiety, aloneness and feelings of loss or being lost in the Golliwogg narratives. Children’s spirituality may be nurtured when the dark side of spirituality is recognized so that it can be addressed. This is particularly pertinent in the pluralistic context of today’s world and the fear of Otherness. Robinson (2009) recognises that human beings are naturally different and diverse and Upton acknowledged diversity through the different spiritual gifts of her characters, for instance, Golliwogg’s patience, bravery, imagination and kind heart, Peg’s daring and quick acts, and sometimes her mischievous and bossy ways, and Sarah Jane’s love of simplicity and nurturing disposition. Midget creates humour and has many experiences of getting lost and separated from the group. Such diversity is key to the flourishing of human minds and hearts since it encourages connectedness leading to empathy and compassion towards others who are different. The world Upton created reflected these varying circles and layers of connectedness since she created a variety of encounters with the ‘other’ in the form of the unknown, that is, people from different countries and backgrounds.

The Importance of Picture Books in Children’s Literature

Recent research by Kendall (1999) and Trousdale (2004) indicate that spiritual development might be addressed through the use of picture books in the classroom. Hart’s (2003) research emphasises the importance of questions that help to activate and open life to the sacred for children. The opportunity to explore spiritual questions are evident in the Upton narratives when the toys are faced with opportunities to meet life’s challenges with a spirit of understanding and empathy, not retribution. There is no evil character but there are dangers to be faced. The dolls make choices together and are respectful of each other and with a developed sense of humour. These particular aspects of Upton’s stories reflect qualities that are identified in the research and literature in contemporary spirituality where connectedness and

relationality are foundational. Current research informs the importance of picture books as a way of nurturing children's spirituality.

The paradoxical nature of Being is linked to the concept of embracing all life's experiences which may be seen as opposites, the 'ups and the downs'. This has been expressed as a movement towards interconnectedness or Oneness. The Oneness with self, others, the world and God has been described as a seamless whole. The seamless experience involves moving out of our self-centred isolation into union with all, that is, "it is a movement from separation to Oneness, from selfishness to love, from ego to God" (Nolan 2006, p. 176).

This movement towards Oneness is captured by Upton as an expression of her attentiveness to the world. Her voice can be heard in the narratives through the utilisation of the technology of her time to speak of freedom. Her awareness of Oneness includes the sacredness of all of creation. The Upton Golliwogg stories have a non-dualistic voice that captures the integration of both male and female, black and white, and embraces the natural world as integral. The embrace of all of life's experiences as being sacred and the importance of freedom affirmed spiritual values that were evident in the Golliwogg stories. In reading these stories, the spirituality of the child is nurtured through being in the present moment, learning to confront their fears, acceptance of difference, encouraging curiosity and being attentive to truth in our world and to subvert the values of the grand narrative of her time, such as the exploitation of the environment. Upton, through her imaginative and innovative interplay of word and image, conveyed meaningful ways in which the spirituality of the child could be nurtured through the Golliwogg picture books. This is because she authenticated the ordinariness of life, such as the ups and downs, the struggles and joys. She arguably engaged the readers to reflect on their own stories and she challenged them to reflect in a deeper sense on their own identity and their way of being.

Features of Picture Books That Nurture Spirituality

One of the key features of a picture book is the fact that the pictures pause or stop events. This pause or stopping nurtures the child's spirituality by encouraging them to be in the present moment. The interplay of word and image is an invitation for the reader to enter and connect to the story. "Juxtaposition of picture and word ... words are left out – but the picture says it. Pictures are left out – but the word says it" (Salisbury and Styles 2012, p. 16). Ultimately, picture books can take us on a spiritual journey which may involve taking risks, venturing into the unknown, valuing friendship, showing resilience and deeply connecting to the present moment. These are spiritual traits that may also be found in other children's storybook characters and picture books.

Picture books engage the imagination. With picture books, the reader needs to interpret the images and this enhances the story so as to provide an experience for the reader that is potentially transformative. The story of the picture book is created

in the mind of the reader where the image and text meet and the picture book may be seen as a book that tells the story predominantly through the interdependence of pictures and words. Because word and image are so closely intertwined in the picture book, it is often, though not always, the case that the best picture books are written and illustrated by the same person (Salisbury 2004).

“Perhaps the most important influence of Upton’s work . . . comes from the ‘voice’ or attitude she employs” (Davis 1992, p. 19). Upton actually speaks to the modern child (Beare 2002). Her narratives do not talk down to the child and the toys (characters) were given a freedom to experience the world without interference from adults. Upton was recognised as an artist in her own time and created illustrations in new and interesting ways. For instance, she showed the toys from different perspectives such as disappearing off the edge of the page and facing away from the reader. She made good use of white space and did not fill the pages with extraneous backgrounds. Her use of bold lines and colour was symbolic of the importance of drawing the reader’s attention to focus on what really mattered and not to scatter their attention all over the page.

In our urge to puzzle over or censure the series it is easy to forget that the [Upton narratives] were always very odd. Lively, sweet, and funny, they are a great contribution to the grotesque in children’s literature, (Olson 2013, p. 22)

In a picture book the words and images interact dynamically and provide ‘textual gaps’ which the reader can fill in with their previous experience, knowledge or expectations. This interactive dimension provides infinite possibilities for the word-image interaction. The picture book provides the reader with an opportunity for personal, emotional and spiritual development (Kendall 1999). Each child comes to the text with their own range of life experiences. What the reader brings to the text affects the meaning the reader will make of the text (Trousedale 2004). “The disparity between the reader’s ‘horizons of expectations’ and encounter with a new text can bring a ‘change of horizons’ . . . through raising newly articulated experiences to the level of consciousness” (Jauss 1982, p. 23). Upton provided children with the opportunity to engage in this active process of meaning making.

The search for meaning through picture books enables children to explore their ordinary, everyday experiences in a safe environment. Green (2001) defines the spirituality in picture books as connectedness. This connectedness is seen in relation to people, the environment and the universe. Spirituality is also seen in terms of a yearning, a longing within each of us to make a connection with a higher realm of another dimension. This sense of connection, of spirituality, was offered in the Upton Golliwogg narratives. They provide a vehicle for transporting the reader into another way of being. Picture books hold many possibilities in the ways in which spirituality may be nurtured. First, they authenticate the ordinariness of life such as the ups and downs, the struggles and joys. Secondly, picture books engage us to reflect on our own story; they challenge us to reflect in a deeper sense about who we are and they lead us to sense the sacred in ourselves. Nodelman (1992, p. 153) highlights the unique dynamics offered in the picture book: a picture book contains at least three stories: the one told by the words, the one implied by the pictures, and

the one that results from the combination of the two. Nodelman (1992) comments that one of the picture book's key features is that the pictures stop events. This pause or stopping nurtures the child's spirituality, to be in the present moment.

Picture books slow down the reader; "their mere presence changes the texts they accompany . . . their intrusiveness has a strong effect on the narrative even apart from their subject or their mood . . . they demand that we pause before we go on to the words on the next page" (Nodelman 1988, p. 248).

This stillness or pausing allows reflection to be part of the experience (Buttigieg 2010). Trousdale (2004) refers to this interplay as black and white fire. The black fire is seen in the form of the printed . . . words on the page . . . the white fire is found in the spaces between and around the black. The black fire is fixed for all time; the white fire is forever kindled by fresh encounters between changing times and unchanging words . . . the endless potential for the fresh interpretation of that object (Pitzele 1998, pp. 23–24).

The white fire may also be interpreted in terms of spaces for personal engagement such as imaginative leaps of understanding. White spaces may allow for pausing. It allows what Shea (1978) suggests as a retelling of the story so that it connects or resonates with the reader's experiences. Stillness also helps to facilitate a new way of knowing by allowing the rational mind to find a quiet and a more intuitive way of knowing to surface. By silencing or stilling the mind we allow ourselves to be 'filled' with a new story and allow mystery to unfold.

The Adventures of Two Dutch Dolls: An Analysis

Foss' (2004) rhetorical narrative criticism and Gangi's (2004) visual analysis of picture books provided the analytical framework which was applied to the narratives in order to interpret both text and images in order to understand the spirituality of the Golliwogg. Rhetorical criticism is the engagement in the process of "thinking about symbols, discovering how they work, and trying to figure out why they affect us" (Foss 2004, p. 3). "How we perceive, what we know, what we experience, and how we act are the results of the symbols we create and the symbols we encounter in the world" (Foss 2004, p. 3). In the case of the Upton Golliwogg picture books, they are made up of both text (prose) and illustrations and these were analysed symbolically. Gangi (2004) provided a visual language to analyse illustrations in terms of elements of art. By analysing the different elements of art, the researcher could discern the way spirituality was conveyed by Florence Upton visually in the character of the Golliwogg.

The first Upton Golliwogg narrative begins on a frosty Christmas eve. Peggy Deutchland wakes up from her "wooden sleep" (p. 2) and wakes up Sarah Jane, a smaller wooden doll who lies sleeping on the ground. The dolls are resting in and next to a box that reads "Dutch Dolls all prices" (p. 3). The narrative is set in a shop as the clock strikes the midnight hour (Foss 2004). The dolls that Upton depicts are based on her own childhood dolls. These jointed wooden dolls were produced in

Germany and were known as ‘Dutch dolls’ – “the usual anglicization of Deutsch or German” (Davis 1992, p. 9). The dolls were also referred to as ‘penny-woodens’ as they were bought in a penny shop, usually sold undressed (Davis 1992). Upton’s use of her own toys as models and her “intense love for ‘things’” (Lyttelton 1926, p. 10) showed a connectedness to her own childhood.

The rhetorical narrative criticism dimension of audience asks the question, who is the person or people to whom the narrative is addressed? (Foss 2004). This narrative is addressed to a young audience about their own daily experiences such as playing with their toys and invites them to reflect on their relationships with their toys. The toys come to life and “taste human joys” (p. 2). The young reader is invited to reflect on the spiritual dimensions that are present in their life, such as joy. “Every writer writes from their own ethical position, their own social position, their own world view” (French 1998, p. 102). Your own worldview influences what you give attention to in your life. Upton revealed to the audience the importance of a good sense of humour. Humour has been defined as a spiritual quality (Sinetar 2000, p. 13), “it warms, uplifts, and transforms mood and outlook” (MacHovec 2007, p. 57). Upton’s value of a good sense of humour is revealed with a reference made to the fact that the dolls are made of wood and they ‘pine’ for liberty.

The rhetorical narrative criticism dimension of theme points to the general idea illustrated in the narrative (Foss 2004). One of the themes in Upton’s narratives relates to freedom. Freedom may be related to both physical and mental realms. Freedom was depicted in the outer experiences of roaming and exploring the physical surroundings and the inner experience of imagining. “Imagination gives us the ability to be other than we are. It allows us to be somewhere we’re not, and it allows us to be somebody we’re not, whether that’s a human character or a non-human character” (Freeman 1998, p. 76).

Upton’s narratives empowered children’s imagination by creating spiritual characters and a fantasy world through the Golliwogg adventures. The expression of the imagination is an acknowledgement of the soul, of the self (Fienberg 1998, p. 66). Imagination has been described as the eye of the soul as it enables the reader to develop empathy and grow in understanding of self and others and allows the reader to transcend their own circumstances (Matthews 1998, p. 10). The imagination of the reader is stirred by the characters of Peggy and Sarah Jane. The first major event after awakening Sarah Jane and Peggy clothe themselves in an unusual manner, by climbing up a flag pole and cutting up the American flag. Sarah Jane wears a dress of stars and Peggy a dress of stripes. Upton clothes her characters in an American flag and invites the reader to reflect symbolically.

As you view picture books there are questions that can guide your aesthetic experience. Gangi (2004) refers to set questions by philosopher and educator Greene (1977) when looking at art. One of the questions is: what in this work do I personally find most striking? This question could be applied to a particularly striking the image on the front cover of *The Adventures of Two Dutch Dolls*. Sarah Jane is dressed in stars (a symbol of unity) and Peggy dressed in stripes (a symbol of separation/independence), and Golliwogg is in the middle as if he is keeping these two opposites in tension. Golliwogg demands the reader’s attention by his direct

look and grotesque appearance, emphasized by his exaggerated feature, but his kindly smile adds reassurance to his invitation – not to fear.

However the first time the dolls meet the Golliwogg they do experience fear. This is communicated through text and visuals. This suggests an unconscious reaction to the Golliwogg. One doll screams, then both dolls move backwards, away from the Golliwogg. Sarah Jane has her face hidden in Peggy's dress. Peggy looks like she might fall again as she steps backwards, supports Sarah Jane and is balanced herself precariously on her toes. These reactions suggest an unconscious or unknowing reaction to the Golliwogg because he is different. The reactions are immediate and generate a high level of energy, as experienced by the piercing scream and the scattering in fright. The dolls have not encountered the Golliwogg before and respond as if in fear.

Zweig and Abrams (1991) comment that as we bury into our shadow what is deemed unacceptable, sinful or 'bad', negative emotions and behaviours such as fear, lie concealed just beneath the surface and are usually masked. The description of the Golliwogg as a "horrid sight" (Upton and Upton 1895, p. 23) may be a projection of the Dutch doll's reaction to the Golliwogg's physicality. The Golliwogg may be seen as symbolically standing for what we have labelled as 'different' or 'unacceptable' in our society. He may also stand for anything that does not fit our worldview or that we prefer to remain hidden. The "horrid sight" may be Upton's comment on our judgmental attitudes and the many fears we harbour that may imprison us in the way we connect to our world. Upton seems to be evaluating society through the different characters that she created.

It would seem that the Golliwogg acts as if he was an archetypal image. He intrudes into the dolls' consciousness in an unexpected way. His encounter elicits a sudden burst and flare up of emotions and actions (Thomson 1972). Jung (1964, p. 79) explains that archetypes have their own initiative and own special energy, "they seem to hold a special spell" (Jung 1964, p. 93). Jung (1964) explains that cultural symbols express eternal truths and retain their original luminosity to evoke deep emotional responses in individuals that makes them function in the same way as prejudices. "When we react intensely to a quality of the individual or a group – and our admiration overtakes us with great loathing or admiration, this may be our own shadow showing" (Zweig and Abrams 1991, p. xviii). The shadow stores all the feelings and capacities that have been rejected by the ego and contribute to the hidden power of the darkness of human nature (Zweig and Abrams 1991).

Jung's psychology valued the potential of the shadow and he felt that it had been 'demonised' and made evil (Tacey 2006). When Western civilisations emphasize 'light' over 'darkness' and decide that darkness is to be avoided, they upset the natural gradient of life (Tacey 2006, p. 55). de Souza (2012) comments on the importance of acknowledging the dark side of spirituality in the child's growth towards wholeness. Tacey (2006) comments on the 'gold' aspect of the shadow, often the stuff of life that gives it its highest value. He writes that a civilisation that emphasizes 'light' ends up being "pallid, empty, bloodless, superficial, routine, devoid of adventure" (p. 56). Good and evil are usually associated as fixed or absolutes to what consciousness values or dislikes. But these qualities are relative

and conditioned by society. Tacey (2006) states that consciousness should not be trusted with such absolutes and when the unconscious introduces a new dimension, it can be unsettling for a society.

Foss (2004) explains that all narratives express the values of a society. The Golliwogg possibly embodied and kept in tension spiritual values. The reader experienced this as a clash of opposites. He is attractive and ugly at the same time. The Golliwogg arguably acts like a grotesque archetype in that he is able to keep the opposites within himself in tension. His appearance of excess as seen in terms of hair, eyes and blackness, which is described as a horrid sight, is kept in tension with his kind heart. This image is compelling as the Golliwogg gives the reader the permission to keep in tension within themselves all of life's experiences. He also teaches about inner beauty and not to judge outwardly appearances. This message is even more relevant to our contemporary society, so obsessed with outwardly appearance and with a fear of Otherness that can be seen in different forms of exclusions. The Golliwogg was a new childhood character and Upton included other black characters in her narrative to make the reader/researcher aware of this difference.

The Golliwogg tells children not to be frightened of new experiences and to go beyond outward appearances to discern inner qualities. Upton, through her imaginative and innovative interplay of word and image, conveyed meaningful ways in which the spirituality of the child could be nurtured through the Golliwogg picture books. This is because she authenticated the ordinariness of life, such as the ups and downs, the struggles and joys. She arguably engaged the readers to reflect on their own stories and she challenged them to reflect in a deeper sense on their own identity and their way of being.

Conclusion

Drawing on the above discussion, the following guidelines have been developed for ways in which picture books, such as the Upton Golliwogg books, can be used to nurture children's spirituality:

1. Embracing all of life's experiences – The Upton picture books provide a safe physical space and emotional space for children. Upton was an innovator for her time as her characters showed emotions such as fear, enthusiasm, joy and sadness in their faces and bodies. The narratives arguably embraced all of life's experiences and allowed children to have space to explore their own emotions. The Upton picture books nurtured children's spirituality by being attuned to children's emotions.
2. Being in the present moment – slowing down – The Golliwogg narratives are about adventure and venturing into the unknown. The stories are about the spiritual journey – the ups and the downs. The Upton narratives provided the opportunity to be in the present moment and to slow down. When the pace of the

narrative slows down they are able to connect more to the world and each other. Upton recognised that children needed stillness and silence in their lives and the narratives reflected this in the way the characters contemplate – as seen in the sea-side adventures.

3. Imagination – Golliwogg is recognised for his big ideas and kind heart. His ideas enable him to create experiences with his friends that are about connecting with the world. He is open to new experiences and has an inclusive attitude to difference as seen by the way he embraces different people and places. The Upton stories and, indeed, others educate both the heart and the head and invited children to explore their own story creatively through imagination.
4. Relationships – The characters of the Golliwogg stories modelled authentic ways of relating to others – including each other, animals and the natural world. They arguably inspired a nondualistic way of looking at the world and seeing all of life as being sacred. They invited children to be aware of the sacredness of the Other. As well, children were invited to take risks, delve deeper and pursue passions in a safe place.
5. Trust and interconnectedness – Golliwogg and the Dutch dolls trust each other. They are always on the journey together and arguably reveal the importance of interconnectedness, a spiritual quality. They draw children in to interconnect with the characters and to learn how to trust them and this learned trust may help them in their everyday relationships and may help them to transcend their everyday problems.

These guidelines should be useful for parents and educators in helping young children read, absorb and reach out for the spiritual connections that can be found in picture books.

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Chapter 24

Taoism Through Tai Chi Chuan: Physical Culture as Religious or Holistic Spirituality?

David Brown

Abstract The discipline of Tai Chi, rooted in the Taoist tradition, has much to show us about the development of spirituality through movement. This chapter outlines an alternative perspective on relationships between religious and holistic spirituality that emerge from an examination of Tai Chi Chuan, the popular martial and health promoting art and its connections with Taoism, the Chinese religio-philosophical movement. Sociological understandings of spirituality tend to be polarised as a binary opposition between, on the one hand religious spirituality associated with established institutionalised religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism and, on the other, so called holistic spirituality which is assumed to be un or disconnected with any established religion, its congregational activity and core doctrines. This chapter challenges such a binary view on the grounds that it is informed by and defends Western materialistic dualist perspectives of spirituality and religion. Alternatively, it is argued, that Tai Chi Chuan is a case example of a living and evolving art form that intermingles religious and holistic forms of spirituality without contradiction even though it is a self-contained spiritual activity.

Introduction

This chapter outlines an alternative perspective on relationships between religious and holistic spirituality that emerge from an examination of Tai Chi Chuan, the popular martial and health promoting art and its connections with Taoism, the Chinese religio-philosophical movement. Sociological understandings of spirituality tend to be polarised as a binary opposition between, on the one hand *religious* spirituality associated with established institutionalised religions such as Judaism, Christianity,

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Islam and Buddhism and, on the other, so called *holistic* spirituality which is assumed to be un or disconnected with any established religion, its congregational activity and core doctrines. In her conceptualisation of identity construction as binary differentiation through *Othering*, Young (1990, p. 99) proposes:

The first side of the dichotomy is elevated over the second because it designates the unified, the self-identical, whereas the second side lies outside the unified as the chaotic, unformed, transforming, that always threatens to cross the border and break up the unity of the good.

Viewed in these terms, holistic spirituality is often Othered as the un-unified, transforming and chaotic collection of perspectives and practices which threaten to disrupt a number of established identifications such as the relationship between spirituality and institutionalised religion and the relationship between religion and the sacred. Flanagan (2010, p. 10) highlights this concern commenting, “in dealing with holistic spirituality, sociology faces a dual problem, of an endless diversity of forms of channelling and expressions of a phenomenon that is also uniquely resistant to a common and acceptable definition.” Further indicative of the Othering of holistic spirituality is that the very notion of holistic spirituality (that spirituality can have a non-religious form) is called into question (Voas and Bruce 2010) and defended (Heelas 2010). The problem presented by the religious/holistic spirituality binary is exemplified when trying to better understand relationships between Taoism and Tai Chi Chuan. Due to assumptions about its focus on religiously disconnected forms of spiritual development Tai Chi Chuan tends to be placed within an amorphous mass of ‘secular’ activities loosely associated with holistic spirituality, also often assumed to be part of or even indistinct from the New Age Movement. The Othering of holistic spirituality is used to denigrate its gravitas and protect the legitimacy of sacred forms of spirituality from secular/profane contamination. This is again illustrated by Flanagan (2010, p. 57):

Meditation, yoga, bodywork and aromatherapy may all go mainstream but their spiritual content will be drained off. Practices like feng shui will appear, enjoy 15 minutes of fame, and then will be displaced by another fad. These activities have the same relationship with spirituality as a concert performance of the St Mathew Passion does with religion. Whether pleasant and diverting or beautiful and uplifting, such experiences are essentially secular.

This chapter challenges such a binary view on the grounds that it is informed by and defends Western materialistic dualist perspectives of spirituality and religion. Alternatively, it is argued, that Tai Chi Chuan is a case example of an activity that intermingles religious and holistic forms of spirituality without contradiction even though it is a “self contained” (Heelas 2010) spiritual activity. The reason for this is the intimate connection between Tai Chi Chuan and Taoism that is contained and transmitted through its conception as a practice in which spirituality might be cultivated through bringing together the body, mind and environment in movement. Crucial to this discussion is that the dichotomy of the religious and the secular is also a problematic feature within the study of Taoism itself. As Kirkland (2004, p. 2) argues, “most scholars who have seriously studied Taoism both in Asia and in the West, have finally abandoned the simplistic dichotomy of *tao-chia* and *tao-chiao* – “philosophical Taoism” and “religious Taoism””. Kirkland’s point highlights that we cannot understand Taoism or Tai Chi Chuan in terms of normative frameworks

of understanding usually applied to Western religion, spirituality and philosophy. Therefore, the primary concern of this chapter is to collapse the religious/holistic spirituality binary and refer instead to Taoism's internal logics (Taoism itself refuses such distinctions) and how this refusal gives rise to a core part of Tai Chi Chuan's alternative approach to spiritual development.

Tai Chi Chuan and Taoist Spirituality

Taoism as a religious and philosophical movement contains multifarious beliefs and practices. Kirkland (2004, pp. 181–182) notes “there was no single scripture to which all Taoists through the centuries felt it necessary to tag their beliefs or actions.” The perplexing thing about Taoism is that for most of its history it has had very little formal hierarchy that sought to establish a doctrine. Rather, “the reality is that Taoism is a tradition defined (perhaps, more correctly not defined) by people who never saw reason to struggle to achieve agreement about most of life's deepest ambiguities” (p. 181). Instead, Taoism is characterised as a religious philosophy in which individuals *self-identified* as Taoists. Subsequently, the body of Taoist literature, although extensive in volume,¹ reflects this lack of “effort to achieve or maintain any ‘philosophical’ precisions, consistency, or sophistication” (p. 181).

Cosmology

Nevertheless, in spite of Taoism's many eclecticism's important commonalities did and still do emerge. The first of these is the central cosmological understanding of the *Tao* variously described as a sense of “Void,” “the One,” or “supreme source ultimate/polarity”: a universal creative force (chi energy) consistently articulated through the interplay of two polarities of this energy, the *Yin* and the *Yang*. Reid (2001, p. 21) provides a particularly accessible description of this interplay and how it is represented through the iconic Taijitu symbol² (Fig. 24.1), in the following:

The original meaning of the Chinese ideogram for “Yin” is “the shady side of a hill.” It represents darkness and passivity, and is associated with the qualities of yielding, softness and contraction. It moves downward and inward, and its primary symbols are woman, water and earth. “Yang” means “the sunny side of the hill,” represents light and activity, is associated with resistance, hardness and expansion,

¹The Daozang (Taoist Canon), depending on the compilation consulted, has between 1200 and 1500 volumes of Taoist texts.

²Taijitu translates as ‘diagram of the supreme ultimate’ but it also translates as ‘supreme pole’ or ‘supreme polarity’. Each translation renders subtly different interpretations available.

Fig. 24.1 The Taijitu symbol

moves naturally upward and outward, and is symbolized by man, fire and heaven. Yin and Yang are mutually interdependent, constantly interactive, and potentially interchangeable forces. Despite their polarity, each contains the embryonic seed of the other within itself, as illustrated by the familiar Yin/Yang circle. The circle itself represents the Supreme Source, half Yin and half Yang, each with a dot of its own opposite growing inside it. The S-shaped boundary between the two indicates that their borders are never fixed. Whenever the constant waxing and waning of polar energies leads to a critical excess of one or the other, it spontaneously transmutes into its own opposite.

It is no coincidence that Tai Chi Chuan takes its holistic symbolism from the Taijitu, neither is the relationship superficially symbolic: all primary Tai Chi Chuan styles³ incorporate this symbol and, its name Tai Chi Chuan or Taijiquan – supreme ultimate boxing. Furthermore, Taoism’s cosmology and explanatory framework via the concepts of Void, balance, chi energy and the yin-yang interplay are not retrospective interpretations of Tai Chi Chuan, rather, they are foundational principles around which this system of movement, was, and still is, interpreted and practiced.

Self-Cultivation

A second shared belief within Taoism is spiritual transformation through self-cultivation. While Taoism shares the Chan Buddhist idea that spiritual

³Primary Tai Chi Chuan Styles include Chen, Yang, Sun and Wu. Most other styles emerged from adaptations of these (this is subject to debate).

transformation can occur in individuals to a point where they may begin to see the “true” nature of reality. Unlike Chan Buddhists however:

Taoists did not find value in the Buddhist assumption that spiritual transformation could take place merely as a change in one’s consciousness, without any real reference to one’s physical life or to the subtle processes at work in the world around us. Taoists typically believed that personal transformation must be a holistic transformation, a transformation of all their being – including what other traditions have often distinguished as mind, body, and spirit – in accord with the most subtle and sublime processes at work in the world in which we live. (Kirkland 2004, p. 192)

This is, as Schipper (1993, p. 130) explains, because for “the Taoist Master, the true Gods are found within himself [sic].” Reid (2001, p. 4) clarifies, “Taoists . . . speak not of a supreme being but of a supreme state of being – a sublime state that lies deeply locked within every human being and can be reached only through the great personal effort and self-discipline.” The achievement of this form of spiritual realization is sometimes referred to as *Keeping the One* or *Returning to the Void* in which “the inner and the outer being must act together,” a state in which “action and thought must agree” (Schipper 1993, p. 133).

Taoist Religious Spirituality

Religious spirituality in a Taoist sense involves the balancing and harmonising of body and mind with the cosmic energies the Tao and its rhythms which are manifest though the interplay of yin and yang polarities. Therefore, *Keeping the One* as Schipper interpreted amounts to a “cosmologization” of the individual” (p. 139) and has many complexities (too many to document here) and several developmental stages: “first, equilibrium is reestablished, then comes the movement towards chaotic order, total union in the center; and, as a final image, the vision of the Ultimate Principle (*t’ ai-chi*)” (p. 158). The first stage begins by focusing on the *Yellow Court*⁴ – an allegorical sacred inner place/space in the body which is cultivated through *Tao-yin* (sometimes referred to as Taoist Yoga) or guiding the chi energies⁵ which involves harmonising the breath and learning to guide the breath and chi mentally to various parts of the body in a rhythmical manner. In turn, *Tao-yin* was accomplished through the work of the Chi (exercise currently referred to as Ch’i-kung/Qigong/Chi Kung/Chi Gong). The subsequent stages pursue not just a balance, but a *union* with the cosmic forces through a careful consideration of the

⁴The idea is documented in the *The Huang-t’ing ching* (The Book of the Yellow Court), written in the second or third century A.D. It is also often referred to as the Yellow court classic of the Jade Book.

⁵ *Tao Yin* features strongly in the *Daozang* (Taoist Canon) with one volume ‘The Dao-yin classic’ devoted to the subject. Excavations of King Ma’s (circa 168 B.C.) tomb revealed a 50 × 100 cm silk wall hanging now known as the Tao Yin Tu. It depicts participants practising the various qigong exercises, many of which are now embedded in Tai Chi Chuan movements.

correspondences of *yin* and *yang* in every aspect of inner and outer life. The final paradox, of this paradoxical belief system is that this union is then “abandoned as a sacrifice, and sublimated” (p. 159), by keeping the one or *returning to the void*:

The Void, the state of empty, clear mindedness, remains both the goal and the source of practice. We don't achieve the Void, we “return” to it. The Void is your original mind, an inner purity that has never been clouded by concepts and images. (Cohen 1997, p. 46)

Furthermore, according to Schipper (1993, p. 158–9) returning to the Void is “a *creative process*” in which *yin* and *yang* become fused in a person “in a moment of self-mastery”. This can occur through love, calligraphy, poetry, dance and any form of artistic practice in so far as these internal practices are adhered to. That said, a group of activities known as the *internal (martial) arts*⁶ are seen as central vehicles for this form of spiritual attainment:

Careful control of respiration and the cultivation of *chi* are the basic aims of the internal arts. These are also the same basic aims of other practices in Taoist philosophy . . . There is a congruence between the very elements that compose the arts in action, and these elements form part of the wider framework of traditional Taoist thought and practice. (Reid and Croucher 1983, pp. 112–113)

Tai Chi Chuan has emerged as a significant and popular exemplar of amongst these internal arts:

Intended to develop suppleness and relaxation and to improve circulation these exercise were the origin of today's Taoist gymnastics, of which T'ai-chi-ch'uan (boxing of the highest ultimate) is an example. This wonderful method of harmony and well-being is a martial art for the defense of the inner world. The slow, supple dance of T'ai-chi-ch'uan performed with no apparent effort, is for everybody an excellent initiation into the very essentials of Taoism. It requires no special equipment, very little space, and no prior training, yet it is so efficient that even thinking through the movements provides some benefit. In the same way as reciting the *Book of the Yellow Court*, this form of “boxing” is a rhythmical expression which guides the breathing and which, through daily practice, conditions one for the Keeping of the One. (Schipper 1993, p. 138)

Miller (2003, p. 66) concurs, commenting, “in Daoism, the most important bridge between religion and health today is the practice of taiji quan.” The fusion of a martial art with core religiously spiritual principles and practices of Taoism has been a long and gradual process.⁷ Taoist knowledge is utilised to depict not only the higher purpose of Tai Chi Chuan (returning to the Void) but also its practical applications in principles and techniques of movement. Tai Chi Chuan solo practice includes forms, energy developing exercises and standing meditation. The forms are highly choreographed patterns of movement performed by individuals containing both martial elements (such as locks, traps, punches, kicks, parries, elbows strikes etc.) and Chi Kung movements. The execution of these practices (performed daily) are exemplars of Tao-yin or guiding the chi energies mentioned above in order to

⁶Chinese internal arts include; Hsing I Ch'üan, Tai Chi Chuan, Pa-kua chang.

⁷The historical “facts” of these developments is frequently contested by practitioners and scholars in ways mirroring Taoism's development.

harmonise movement with the breath of the body, the “chi/qi” within and around practitioners, and mental *intention*. The centrality of this is illustrated in writings from the Tai Chi Classics normally attributed to the twelfth century Taoist monk Chang San Feng.⁸

The body must move as a single unit at one with breath, qi and spirit. The rooting of the feet, the strength of the legs, and the power of the waist all manifest in the hands. The whole body is connected moving as one. Our movement is guided by our Intention. Taijiquan is like the great river rolling on unceasingly. (Translated by Brecher 2000, p. 45)

It should be noted that questions remain over the historical accuracy of Chang San Feng’s biography and writings (Henning 1994) and the way in which contemporary interpretations of Tai Chi Chuan draw on these ancient texts to re-invent their authenticity (LaRochelle 2014). Nevertheless, even in its more martial oriented partner practices such as sticking, pushing hands, and uprooting exercises, Taoist principles are clearly present. Exercises such as pushing hands is a form of Tao-yin with the added complexity of harmonising with the moving chi of others. Participants learn to redirect an attackers force whilst also drawing on their own chi and releasing it forcefully (a principle referred to as *Fa Jin* or explosive energy) in acts of self-defence. The fusion of spiritual cosmology and martial application is further illustrated in a later extract from the Tai Chi classics from the eighteenth century Tai Chi Chuan Master, Wang Tsung Yueh:

Yin and Yang continually transform within each move:
Without this balance the Qi stagnates.
Allow the Qi to gather in the Lower Dan Dien;
from long practice one develops Jin.
Pursue the opponent and move as he moves;
know his intention while concealing yours.
To be an unequaled fighter results from this. (Translated by Brecher 2000, p. 45)

Taoist principles of yin and yang coupled with the self-cultivating practices of Tao-yin and Chi Kung for harnessing and utilising chi energy are fused the martial aspects of Tai Chi Chuan. However, as considered next, in the modern era, perhaps particularly in the West, Tai Chi Chuan practice is subjected to a further re-emphasis.

Holistic Spirituality and Tai Chi Chuan

As discussed, Tai Chi Chuan’s existence is not merely *associated* with Taoism, it is rather a *manifestation of* Taoism. In the introduction to this chapter it was indicated that most scholars have abandoned the binary distinction between *tao-chia* and *tao-chiao* (philosophical Taoism and religious Taoism) and that Taoism is eclectic, having no overarching agreed doctrine or hierarchy, yet “elements of a common

⁸A mythical Taoist who is now officially ‘canonised’ by Chinese authorities as having initiated an early form of Tai Chi Chuan.

“Taoist worldview”” (Kirkland 2004, p. 190) are nonetheless identifiable. These underlying ambiguities help expose the difficulties of imposing binary thinking about the relationship between arts like Tai Chi Chuan and religious and/or holistic spiritualities that may be developed from their practice. Indeed, it is precisely this underlying ambiguity and eclecticism that renders Tai Chi Chuan so *open* to secular, holistic and even individualised interpretations, as Miller (2003, p. 66) points out:

The basic principle of taiji quan as it is practised today is that the individual physically embodies the interplay of yin and yang in a sequence of movements that embody assertive (yang) and receptive (yin) modes of action. Of course it is perfectly possible to practice taiji quan as a form of gentle exercise, and this is the way it is most commonly presented to newcomers. At the same time it is also possible to undertake tai chi quan as a form of qi cultivation in which the individual is guiding the qi of his or her body through the various movements. At a more cosmic level, it is possible to see taiji quan as a type of ritual dance in which one embodies and plays out the basic yin-yang complementarity of the Dao.

In order to elaborate this view, it is necessary to consider briefly how shifts in the Western cultural context have created cultural spaces in which practices like to Tai Chi Chuan currently flourish. A detailed exposition of this shift is provided by Campbell’s (2007) *Easternization of the West* thesis. Fundamental to Campbell’s argument is that the primary worldview of Western culture has hitherto been characterised by a materialistic dualism in terms of religious and secular beliefs and practices. Campbell postulates that for a variety of reasons this cultural worldview is slowly being eroded and replaced by one aligned with a metaphysical monism that is not only characteristic of Eastern culture, but also traceable to it.

There is not enough space here, either, to document Campbell’s detailed presentation of evidence, nor to defend his Easternisation interpretation. However, Campbell argues that diffuse forms of spirituality of Eastern origin including “a wide variety of beliefs and practices that actually originated in Asia – from acupuncture to Zen –” (2007, p. 140–1) have been embraced by an equally diffuse yet spiritually significant New Age movement that also encompasses engagement with other spiritual knowledges including (neo)paganism and theosophy. Campbell (2007, pp. 140–141) qualifies that while a number of “these practices have been ‘Westernised’ – which is to say, essentially stripped out of their spiritual significance – when they were first introduced, this is a process that, if anything, has now been reversed; that is to say, a marked trend toward an Eastern-style ‘spiritualisation’ of life’s activities is discernible.”

Cambell’s thesis resonates with a number of empirical studies in relation to secular or holistic spirituality, notably Heelas and Woodhead’s (2005) *The Spiritual Revolution Why Religion is giving way to Spirituality*. A similar resonance is also emerging from studies of physical cultural practices including oriental martial arts, yoga and meditation (Brown 2013). For example, Pérez-Gutiérrez et al. (2015) work examined the contents of martial arts publications in the Spanish context between 1906 and 2009. A significant feature of their findings was that the theme of spiritual development *through* martial arts was initially absent (the focus being on utilitarian concerns of effective techniques and sporting application), however, spirituality re-emerges strongly from the 1960s onwards suggesting that, “increasingly, these

assimilated Asian martial arts are being presented as vehicles for spiritual and religious self-cultivation” (p. 1). Brown et al. (2014, p. 380) concluded how one UK based Tai Chi Chuan organisation they studied “promotes the idea of interconnectedness, wellbeing and an alternative meta-narrative for living through the practice of Taijiquan,” which evidences a marked holistic spirituality directly connected to living sustainably. There is re-interpretation here. As Shilling and Mellor (2007, p. 539) highlight these *Taoist body pedagogics* (as they refer to them) show how “the embodied subject is turned not into an instrumental object, a standing reserve for efficiency, but exists in a state of *immanence* with respect to the environment.” Shilling and Mellor’s point helps to reveal the connection between the re-interpretation of the religious notions such as returning to the Void and the holistic spiritual ideas of “being in the Zone/moment,” “going with the flow,” or indeed, harmonising with one’s environment.

The Taiji Symbol

One brief example beyond self-cultivating oriental martial arts practice is that of soul surfers⁹ who sometimes use the Taiji symbol as a representation of their interpretation of surfing practice as spiritual, in a manner strikingly similar to the above arts (see Fig. 24.2). Indeed, Taylor (2007, p. 923) argues that *soul surfers*:

as a subset of the global surfing community... should be understood as a new religious movement... aquatic nature religion. For these individuals, surfing is a religious form in which a specific sensual practice constitutes its sacred centre, and the corresponding experiences are constructed in a way that leads to a belief in nature as powerful, transformative, healing and sacred.

Moreover, it is no coincidence that these studies identify the holistic spiritual re-interpretations of Asian martial arts and surfing were increasingly popularised



Fig. 24.2 The Taiji Symbol

⁹Booth (2004, p. 96–97) describes soul surfing as “riding waves for ‘the good of one’s soul’” and “signified self-expression, escape and freedom.” Many of these forms of expression had overt or implicit reference to religion, spirituality and the New Age movement.

in the West during the 1960s. Campbell proposes that since its emergence in the 1960s the New Age movement has acted as a vanguard for a Western cultural shift that increasingly embraces metaphysical monism as a worldview, self and worldly transformation as a life goal, a new age or individualistic epistemology and a new age “holistic” science that is distinctive for its incorporation of a “spiritual” ontology.

Concluding Comments

In conclusion, this chapter argues that *to practice Tai Chi Chuan is to practice Taoism*. This is because Taoism provides the interpretive foundations for all of Tai Chi Chuan’s basic movement principles and thus has become an important vehicle for the transmission of this form of religious spirituality into broader Western culture. As a practical manifestation of Taoism’s own version of metaphysical monism, Tai Chi Chuan is a uniquely situated art that has contributed to and is concordant with, but crucially is *not the same as*, New Age beliefs and practices. This distinction is important because framing activities such as Tai Chi Chuan as either religiously spiritual or holistically spiritual imposes a binary that is not present in everyday practice and the intention here is to show the significance of contemporary holistic spiritualities and also how some religions evolve in response to (physical) culture.

While very few Western individuals might seek to practice the ascetic lifestyle that would be classically Taoist (with reference to the Taoist classics), the diffusion of Taoist ideas and practices across the world via Tai Chi Chuan and their embedding in other activities is increasingly difficult to dismiss. Therefore, it would be erroneous to conflate the two or to suggest that Tai Chi is nothing more than another secular New Age holistic practice, which as Flanagan (2010, p. 57) puts it “will appear, enjoy 15 min of fame, and then will be displaced by another fad.” Rather, as Clarke (2000, p. 139) observes:

It is inevitable that in their transposition to the West these ancient arts, along with their theoretical presuppositions, should have undergone a degree of metamorphosis, but certain basic elements -the integration of physical and mental therapies, or internal and external energies, the emphasis on meditation, harmony and balance, and perhaps above all their sense of being close to the rhythms of nature- mean that these techniques will enjoy continuing appeal in the West.

This chapter has highlighted in a little more detail the unique cultural space Tai Chi Chuan currently occupies in the contemporary West which is simultaneously religiously and holistically spiritual; Religiously spiritual because it is an evolved form of *Tao Yin*, or “Taoist body pedagogics” (Shilling and Mellor 2007) concerned with enhancing religious spirituality (as part of a pursuit of cosmological union or “returning to the Void”); And holistically spiritual because Tai Chi Chuan has become a *self-contained* (Heelas 2010) spiritual practice with Taoist connections de-emphasised or adapted by and for a more Western *habitus* (Dawson 2006) via the

integration of common New Age metaphors and narratives such as wellbeing, interconnectedness, harmony and holism. However, Tai Chi Chuan unproblematically affords both of these interpretations simultaneously in the same practice precisely because the *metaphysical monism underpinning religious and holistic spiritual interpretations remains stable* in either case. Such a view, is again supported by Clarke (2000, p. 139) when he discusses both Tai Chi Chuan and Chi Kung practice in contemporary Western culture:

Both families of techniques are frequently taught in a simplified form appropriate for modern Western culture, but equally they are also often presented in connection with fundamental Daoist principles of balance and harmony with nature and offered as a means towards spiritual goals as well as promoting general health and well being.

Clarke's description hints at one final point worth concluding with. In their examination of relationships between a range of traditional Asian martial arts and religion, Brown et al. (2009, p. 62) highlight that many arts are open to subjective interpretation and "constantly in the process of reinvention" by practitioners (see also LaRochelle 2014; Jennings et al. 2010). As individuals become increasingly immersed in Tai Chi Chuan's transformative physical practice, "it gradually takes over daily schemes of perception much like religion would and in so doing reveals certain elective affinities with specific spiritual and religious ideas" (Brown et al. 2009, p. 62). This latter point is important because it reminds us that just as Taoism as a religious practice/philosophy continues to evolve as people engage with it, so Tai Chi Chuan is a living art form that is also evolving. Therefore, in its current incarnation it appears that this engagement is highly receptive to both religious and holistic forms of spirituality.

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Part V
Analysing the Voices and
Concluding Thoughts

Chapter 25

Understandings and Applications of Contemporary Spirituality: Analysing the Voices

Marian de Souza and Jacqueline Watson

Abstract This final analytical chapter brings together the range of perspectives that have been offered across the many disciplinary voices that have been included in this book. Particular attention has been given to the way the concept of spirituality has been understood and interpreted across Education, Health and Social Care, Theology, Business, Sustainability and Cultural Studies. Following this, an attempt is made to identify common features contained in diverse discussions of the concept of spirituality as well as similarities and differences in the way the concept is applied and practised in different disciplines. Drawing on the findings of this analysis, a distinct attempt is made to provide a holistic description of spirituality which has the potential to bring some unity to the meaning and practices of spirituality across a variety of disciplines as well as across cultures and religious and secular worldviews. Accordingly, the conclusions offered in this final chapter will inform future research studies and enlighten existing practices.

The intention of putting a book like this together was to examine the perceived variety of interpretations of the concept of spirituality in current research. To achieve this aim, we brought together the voices of a range of academics and scholars from relevant disciplines to discuss and present views on spirituality. In this final chapter we will attempt to discover whether there are some commonalities in the different understandings and applications of spirituality and to identify any apparent differences. The ultimate aim is to try and clarify the diverse ways the

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term is understood so as to increase its applicability across a range of professions and disciplines that focus on the progress and wellbeing of individuals and their communities.

The structure of this chapter will follow the structure of the book so it will begin by examining how spirituality is used in more traditional areas of religious mysticism and, more recently, in secular cultures. It will then move on to examine spheres in education that are addressing or incorporating spirituality into professional practice and then to look at the ways in which spirituality has become a distinct element in some areas of the health and caring professions. The final section of the book contains multiple voices, each reflecting a particular discipline and, accordingly, this chapter will attempt to summarise what these voices are saying about the role and impact of spirituality in these separate disciplines. At the end, an analytical discussion will aim to bring some coherence and clarity to the understandings and perceptions of contemporary spirituality.

Perspectives from Mysticism and Secular Cultures

And so, to the beginning. Spirituality, in the western world, has traditionally been an essential element in religious and theological discourse, often pertaining to the lives and writings of mystics and mysticism. Therefore, it seems appropriate to begin our analysis with Bernadette Flanagan and Haleh Rafi who discuss religious mysticism from two widely divergent perspectives. Flanagan explains how the influences of the contemporary world have led to a changed understanding of Christian spirituality. In the past, the intense focus on interiority in spiritual practice provided evidence of a dualistic approach to understanding spirituality. The inner journey was seen by many as something separate from the outer journey. However, in today's world, such dualistic notions have been overtaken by a recognition of the intrinsic connectedness of human lives so that relationality is perceived as foundational to understandings of spirituality. Flanagan acknowledges that the writings of Christian mystics have always been indicative of relationality but, in general, these would have occupied the fringe of academic debate, and she recognizes that spiritual lives take on a different outlook and action when they reside within a worldview of interdependence rather than separateness.

Rafi's discussion draws on Persian literature to identify two apparent forms of spiritual writings in Sufi texts. First is the exoteric form which deals with the external aspect of religion and consists of a study of holy books. However, Rafi argues that it is the second form, the esoteric form, which provides a common language that stretches across boundaries and focuses on the unity of all people. She concludes that the spirituality embedded in these ancient writings takes the form of the spiritual journey towards enlightenment, that is, it is about the individual's search for Truth, self-knowledge, and divine knowledge.

Indeed, an indispensable aspect of religious mysticism, both Eastern and Western, is concerned with the way the individual experiences a sense of God. This applies to spirituality in Christianity and Islam as discussed by Flanagan and Rafi

respectively. In other words there is a transcendent dimension to understanding spirituality in a religious context and there is an expectation that religious people are spiritual because they have a religious consciousness and are, in different ways, searching for the ultimate mystery. Flanagan points to contemporary consciousness studies which have attempted to identify interaction between states and stages of consciousness in the unfolding of mystical development. Flanagan also identifies four distinct perceptions and expressions of Christian spirituality: intellectual, affective, erotic or integrated. Each of these expressions are distinctive but the fourth one appears to be holistic as it incorporates spirituality in the everyday. In terms of spiritual practice, Flanagan speaks of prayer as a means of reaching God, empathy and compassion for Other, and social concern, while Rafi talks of the study of wisdom literature and sacred texts which provide enlightenment for the spiritual journey.

Thus, both these authors have identified similarities in the way spirituality and spiritual journeys may be understood within the context of religious mysticism. Wisdom literature in both traditions act as 'treasure maps' and both refer to different stages of consciousness that the individual will pass through in their search for truth where the finding of God requires an 'emptying' of oneself, that is, losing one's ego and opening up to the divine mystery. What we find, then, is that in these traditional understandings of spirituality, there is a distinct understanding of a transcendent dimension that is God-related which influences the way one lives one's life.

These traditional levels of certainty become problematized when we move on to understanding spirituality in the wider secular culture. Andrew Singleton refers to the fact that sociologists were instrumental in recognizing spirituality as a distinct discipline as against the reductionist approach that treated it as, merely, the affective dimension of religion. In particular, it was those who were interested in the sociology of religion that began to make a study of this phenomenon. Spirituality for sociologists is about an encounter or awareness of transcendence or sacredness but this is not necessarily about God. It can include practices, feelings, experiences and beliefs centred on this 'higher' or 'transcendent' dimension of life.

Accordingly, Singleton says, these early studies of a spirituality outside the framework of religion led to it being called a 'new spirituality' in sociological terms and it was a distinct move away from the traditional view where a concept of a Divine Being was an essential part of religious spirituality. The naming of this phenomenon as a new spirituality corresponded to the beginning of some confusion in discussing the concept which is captured by Singleton when he describes the difficulties experienced by social researchers in shaping the questions and methods used for their data collection. This could be partly because a certain nebulous quality emerged around concepts of western spirituality, like the sense of a universal consciousness or oneness among all living things which are difficult things to pin down or quantify. As well, the beginning of the uncertainty in understanding the term could be related to the fact that, as Singleton points out, sociologists began to understand spirituality as not just a way of being in the world which was guided by religious instruction and dogma, but as a person having some conscious awareness of his/her own individual way of being which impacts on the choices s/he make

and the actions s/he take. Moreover, by removing spirituality from the confines of a religious framework, the ground was laid for the often heard phrase in relevant contemporary literature: I am spiritual but not religious.

In a contemporary world, then, social researchers have noted that apart from a traditional religious spirituality, there are alternative expressions of spirituality such as New Age spirituality which is ascribed to those following non-traditional religions, and a secular spirituality which derives from those committed to humanist principles. Spiritual practices then may be conceived in traditional terms of religious ritual and prayer but also practices such as yoga, tai chi, past-life therapy, channelling, divination and Tarot, among many others. Other contemporary expressions relate to cosmology and the sacredness of the environment, and mindfulness and other forms of meditation inspired by Eastern religious practices have become part of the secular spiritual culture. Importantly, Singleton emphasizes the need for further research to understand and recognize authentic forms of secular spirituality which can be found amongst many non-religious people who live ethical, altruistic and purposeful lives and encourage others to do the same.

The chapter from Jacqueline Watson echoes Singleton's concern about the lack of research in a distinctly non-religious, secular spirituality. She stresses its importance for academic discourse today given the growing number of people who identify as non-religious across the western world. Watson bases her investigation on the notion that all people, whether religious or non-religious, are spiritual. Her analysis points to the added complication of the potential wide variation in beliefs of non-religious people which include atheist, agnostic, or those who may just be objecting to religious authority. More significantly, she also notes that some non-religious people may not wish to self-identify as spiritual. For Watson, *all* human beings want to make meaning of their lives and to feel a connection to something greater than themselves and she argues that atheists and agnostics are capable of developing personal meaning through a materialist understanding of the universe and a social ethic, and they experience many of the same awe-filled human experiences as those who are religious, they just interpret them differently.

In particular, Watson looks at how an understanding of secular spirituality is played out in the literature and practices of professionals in education and the health and caring professions. She reports a level of prejudice towards atheists and the non-religious in society which means that people who profess to be non-religious are not really catered for. As well, she notes that there has been a breadth of research in the health and caring professions about religion and wellbeing, and about the relationship between spirituality (or religion) and coping, especially coping in ageing and with pain. This body of research emerges from a growing interest in the potential benefits of religious belief and practice to coping, and to health and wellbeing more generally. However, she argues that there is a problem when some authors, and the US media in particular, have used this research to claim that people's wellbeing is necessarily improved by religious belief and practice. Ultimately, Watson argues that, in the UK, while significant changes have been made to address the spiritual needs of non-religious people, in health and social care and in schools, non-religious people are not yet treated equally with people of

religious faith. For instance, in hospitals, nurses have a responsibility to address the spiritual needs of patients but can remain uncertain of what this means; spiritual needs are too often equated with religious needs, and seen as the responsibility of the hospital chaplaincy service. Watson points to the lack of clarity that still prevails amongst many professionals in understanding the concept of spirituality. Finally, Watson concludes that much of the health care research suggests that it is strength of belief that is good for us, therefore non-religious people need equal space and attention to develop personal meanings and strengthen spiritual resilience in all areas of care and nurture.

In examining the concept of a non-religious or secular spirituality as discussed by Singleton and Watson, we find references to a lack of clarity around the term, spirituality. It would seem that once spirituality was moved out of the religious sphere, the certainty surrounding spirituality was problematized. However, both authors clearly observe that all people are spiritual and their spirituality influences their way of being in the world as relationally aware people who live ethical lives, caring for other people and the world around them. Both authors also identify that there may be a transcendent dimension in secular spirituality which is not related to some divine mystery or divine person, but is more about the individual reaching out to something that is beyond the self.

Perspectives from Education

The second section of the book brings together voices that reflect a range of perspectives in education. They come from different sectors, systems and regions and, together, present an array of ways in which spirituality is understood and translated into practice. This, in itself, highlights the complexity of the term since it includes so many different aspects of human life and endeavour that, in order to interpret and apply it in education, there is a distinct need to identify what is understood as a spiritual dimension in education, and what are the best and most appropriate means by which to address this dimension.

To begin with, Gillian Goodliffe discusses spirituality, in the context of early childhood education, as linked to all human experience which provides a framework for meaning-making. Consequently, spirituality applies to health and wellbeing, personal, social and emotional development, creativity, play and learning where it may be reflected in the reciprocal experiences of children's social and cultural relationships and through reflective experiences derived from imaginative and creative play.

Goodliff also identifies the problems of incorporating spirituality into educational practices in Britain because of perceptions that see it embedded in religion, and this is an issue that occurs across all educational spectrums. For instance, Karen Marie Yust acknowledges that the concepts of spirituality and religion live in an intertwined and contested relationship but extends the discussion to include other cultural perceptions of the relationship between spirituality, good citizenship, and psychosocial well-being. Drawing on research in the US, Yust

provides three broadly construed core dimensions of spirituality which have been foundational to the articulation of what spirituality is. First, there is the dimension of connectedness and belonging which points to the interdependent and relational aspects of spirituality. The second is about a growing self-awareness which links to meaning making and identity. And thirdly, there is the propensity to develop a particular world view and way of being. Yust shows that these dimensions have been influential in the development of different character education programs in the US which aim to inculcate in students habits such as caring and giving, civic virtue and citizenship, justice and fairness, respect, responsibility and trustworthiness which will nurture their spiritual wellbeing to become caring and concerned future citizens who promote socially just and cohesive societies.

Bob London highlights another issue in any discussion of spirituality in education and that is the lack of appropriate terminology. Underlying a spiritual perspective to education is a recognition that Spirit, a 'nonmaterial source of meaning and value for our lives,' is connected to the unconditioned world and is mysterious, so London argues for a form of spirituality in education that emphasizes a transformation of the self and the way of being in the world. This requires a degree of self-awareness and being present for both teacher and student. A further element is one that was identified by the other voices in education and that is the deep connection experienced with all beings, which can manifest in a variety of ways, including as a sense that we are all interconnected and interdependent. This leads to a feeling of acceptance, compassion and respect for all beings, or a natural inclination to address and relieve suffering. Ultimately, London argues that there is a need for a holistic approach to education where students' physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs are balanced. He lists the following ways in which spirituality may be nurtured in education: nourishing the inner life of students and teachers; developing a strong connection with nature; providing accessibility to quiet spaces and places; integrating aesthetics and imagination, such as storytelling, drama, visual art, music and movement into the curriculum; integrating ritual, ceremonies and celebration into the school day; emphasizing the development of creativity and intuition; and encouraging reverence, care and deep appreciation for all experiences.

Some of the strategies identified by London may be found in an aspect of education that is becoming more widespread in today's world. Aostre Johnson points out that spirituality is an intrinsic part of the discourse of contemplative education. She identifies several intertwining and overlapping categories which frame the different approaches to addressing spirituality in education but recognizes the ability to be contemplative as being at the depth of all spiritual capacities so that each way of understanding spirituality contains a number of contemplative capabilities that form the core of a meaningful spiritual education. The eight categories Johnson identifies are: reflective/meaning-making, emotional, creative/imaginative, ethical, ecological, intuitive/mystical, religious and contemplative. Within these categories, spirituality may be perceived as differing connections with self, others, world, spirit, soul, or God which relate to a more ideal aspect of human possibility. In particular, Johnson suggests a religious/secular spiritual continuum and shows how contemplative education can sit comfortably within and at both ends.

Particular features of contemplative education noted by London are the emphasis on sustained attention, deep concentration and an effortless absorption in experience, inner stillness, a sense of the ultimate goodness of the world, and a connection with and embodiment of various deities of religions (in religious contexts). Hence, educational practice in contemplative education is holistic, and requires an aesthetically pleasing learning environment which includes spaces that encourage concentration, quiet and solitude, as well as social interaction. Further, as Johnson argues, the use of technology should be balanced with “hands on” learning and education about regulating attention. Students practice contemplative methods such as working with the breath, visualizations, concentration on objects, sensory awareness, observing thought processes, and relaxation techniques.

The perspective of indigenous educators is heard in a group of voices who write as a collective. *Manu’atu, Kēpa, Pepe, & Taione’s* voices are particularly relevant in a pluralist world since they propose an education that will serve a diverse linguistic and cultural student population thereby providing opportunities for transformation of marginalized people in a system where the power structures are held and determined by others. Such an approach focuses on love, customs, relationships with people, nature and spirit, and peaceful dialogue that are embedded in the idea of the unity of spirits, people and lands. While the word spirituality is not used, its essence is captured through the words and wisdom of indigenous people, and it is implicit in the notion that education must aim to resurrect and restore the unity of spirits, people, and lands.

Finally, from the vantage point of teacher training in special education, *Kaili Zhang and Deirdra I-Hwey Wu* brings an additional perspective to an understanding of spirituality in education. Like others, they perceive spirituality as being about meaning making, and values and beliefs which determine the individual’s actions and behaviour, and they also accept the strong links between religion and spirituality. Like London, they recognize that addressing spirituality requires a holistic approach and argue that a balance is needed between the acquisition of knowledge and the nurturing of the teachers’ inner life which leads to spiritual development, growth and change. This aspect should be an important part of the training for special education teachers so that, in attending to their own capacity for spiritual growth, they enhance their ability to develop a more holistic perspective when working with children who have special needs. Accordingly, *Zhang and I-Hwey Wu* suggest some teaching strategies that can be used to provide support for children’s spiritual development and to help schools focus on what really matters, including times for reflection and silence, nurturing the relational dimension of children’s and teachers’ lives, learning about different world views, restricting time on social media and journal writing.

In general, then, we find many common understandings of spirituality across the education arena. It is an innate human characteristic which is intrinsic to establishing connections and relationships. As well, it provides a framework for meaning making and developing world views which, in turn, influence decision making and actions taken. More importantly, from an indigenous perspective, a need to re-connect and re-engage with the wisdom of their people and their lands is

identified. This is important for children who have become marginalized and who may feel dispossessed as a result of the ravages of wars and other human actions or, indeed, because they have become victims of natural disasters. By drawing on their own cultural heritage, their ability to forge new identities and develop their potential as whole people will be enhanced.

One issue that emerged in the above discussions is that there can be a special problem when spirituality and religion are regarded as synonymous when attempting to address spirituality in the context of educational systems where religion and education are separated. As well, the lack of language in western cultures to discuss spirituality without resorting to religious terminology was also noted. On the other hand, the chapter from the indigenous authors captured the nature of spirituality without ever using the term, which provides some insights into how spirituality is viewed as something that is closely integrated into everyday life.

Applications of spirituality to education requires a holistic approach that balances knowledge acquisition and the development of the intellect alongside of nurturing the inner life and spiritual development of all parties involved in the educational transaction. As well, there needs to be a recognition of the unity of people and all of creation.

Perspectives from Neuroscience and Psychology

An identification of the role of spirituality in wellbeing emerged in early twentieth century studies in the psychology of religion and B. Les Lancaster notes that there has also been some caution in using the word spirituality in the field of neuroscience but points to relevant research which has furthered knowledge of the links between spiritual practice and the brain. One aspect focuses on the inclusion of meditation or other forms of mindfulness-enhancing techniques which have been beneficial for mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. However, Lancaster identifies a mismatch between the term 'spirituality' in common usage and its use in more scientific circles. He argues that the separation of spirituality from religion created a secular form of spirituality. Nevertheless, in the process, spirituality has become compromised because of the elimination of the *sacred* which is at the core of human endeavours to connect to the divine, nature, or the ultimate so as to provide their lives with meaning and purpose. This leads Lancaster to argue that, in the future, people will want to move past current offerings in mindfulness practices to discover ways of connecting more deeply with the sacred where they can experience the connectedness within all things, that is, the transcendent unity that was the quest of traditional forms of spirituality and mysticism.

Likewise, Maureen Miner and Martin Dowson highlight the ongoing discussion about the relationship between religion and spirituality, that is, whether spirituality flows from religion or whether religiousness flows from spirituality. Therefore, we find yet another discipline where there are problems associated with the use and interpretation of the terms religion, religiousness and spirituality. Miner

and Dowson contend that there is no single understanding of spirituality within psychology but aspects of spirituality have been identified as both a psychological trait and a psychological state. These include the importance of various beliefs, attitudes and cognitive styles associated with spirituality; the relationship and contributions of personality and emotion to spirituality; and the relevance of spiritual attachments to human development and well-being. Ultimately, there is evidence that spirituality has a role in improving psychological health and clinical practices are being developed which include interventions based on the functions of meaning, transformation and connectedness in both non-religious and religious forms of spirituality.

Perspectives from the Health and Caring Professions

One of the key aspects raised in the discussions from the health and caring professions is the recognition that both the positive and the shadow side of spirituality need to be addressed in the journey to becoming whole again. Further, there is an understanding that the dark side of spirituality resides in experiences of disconnectedness from the inner self impacting on one's self knowledge, from the healthy physical self because of illness and/or disability, and from others, thereby leading to alienation, disengagement and spiritual distress.

In the field of social work, Sheila Furness argues that social workers need to recognise that religion and spirituality can be potential sources of support at times of crisis as well as contribute to distress. But she also cautions that the topic remains controversial and contested. She says that more attention is given to religion and spirituality in social work in the US than in Britain but spirituality needs to be inclusive of those with and those without religious belief. Spirituality in social work is equated with personal, intimate, experiential experiences, and, for some, may be connected to their relationship with the sacred. As well, there needs to be cultural competence and the importance of culture-specific understandings when finding a way to heal a broken spirit and regain an ethics of care towards each other.

Anthony James, writing from both the fields of social work and family studies in the US, identifies spirituality as a component of the internal self, which involves processes or outcomes that help individuals navigate their social environments. Additionally, both fields rely on a relational framework comprising the person and the context to demonstrate how spirituality can advance the wellbeing of the individual. Practitioners use the client's spirituality to aid the search for meaning, connectedness (to the divine or others) and purpose in life, all in hopes of helping the client better navigate the maladaptive aspects of their social environment. In family studies, and specifically youth development, an emphasis is given to spirituality education to imbue positive qualities (e.g., transcendence, generosity) that help youth thrive. As well, spiritual development is viewed positively and it is linked to the developmental processes of the inner self (e.g., consciousness, feelings, identity).

Next, Michael Collins indicates how a holistic approach to occupational therapy incorporates a spiritual dimension by embracing the concept that spirituality is central to the person. Occupational therapy recognizes spiritual influences as being equally significant as biological, psychological, social and environmental influences to an individual's quality of life and wellbeing. Spirituality adds meaning to people's work and activity, and experiences of transcendence play a role in people's journeys from illness, injury and disability to rehabilitation and recovery.

Importantly, in occupational therapy, understandings of spirituality include both religious and secular expressions so that experiences of connectedness and transcendence may be God-related or existential. However, as Collins argues, it is important to recognize the perception that it is spirituality which generates the life-force and world-view of the individual which leads him/her to their ways of being in the world. Some of the issues in occupational health are linked to an understanding of how spirituality may be incorporated into clinical practice. These are usually related to a lack of training and multiple interpretations of the concept which has led to a theory-practice gap. Nonetheless, one way forward is a transpersonal-spiritual perspective that emphasises people's experiences of connectedness and also underlines how humans can have a greater sense of belonging in life (beyond individualism) through experiences of interconnectedness and interdependence. The transpersonal dimension takes into account the role of consciousness in terms of engaging human potential and development and can be linked to instances and experiences of spiritual emergencies, big dreams, mythological visions, meditation and mindfulness, the shadow, and other cultures.

The next chapter discusses midwifery as a transformational and life-changing event. However, Jenny Hall argues that, as yet, the role of spirituality has not been given enough attention so that there is limited research in the area to assist midwives to provide holistic care which includes spiritual care. Hall observes that in the developed world, there has been a move away from a 'whole person approach' to one that is more fragmented and focused within a 'technocratic' paradigm. Birth, for women, may be a spiritual experience, sometimes influenced by women's religious belief, however little notice is taken of religious belief and its impact on the pregnancy experience in the UK. It is Hall's contention that holistic care should be provided for the mother and the baby within the context of the whole family which will incorporate religion and spirituality. As well, she identifies the need for health care professionals to recognize the spirituality of an infant so that appropriate practices may be developed to address the spiritual needs of mother and child.

At the other end of the journey of human life, Julie Fletcher discusses the challenges in community-based palliative care of acknowledging that a dying person also has a psychological, social, and spiritual context all of which need appropriate care. She acknowledges that community-based palliative care, with its holistic approach, is uniquely placed for the provision of basic spiritual care by the multidisciplinary team as they provide care within the home and familiar surroundings of the patient.

Fletcher speaks to the fact that education and training in spirituality have been sorely neglected which leaves team members ill-prepared for the provision

of spiritual care. She recognizes that without a triage tool, spiritual pain often sneaks under the radar and spiritual care is neither recognized nor performed; she describes spiritual pain in the context of when a person experiences themselves as disconnected from their inner selves and from others, or when there are alterations in significant relationships. Fletcher articulates an understanding that each human being has a spiritual dimension, conscious or pre-conscious, which suggests a capacity for each individual to benefit from spiritual support. Thus, for Fletcher, spirituality is an everyday and intrinsic experience of relationality in an individual's life which is grounded in the connectedness of all things, and it includes religious and secular forms of spirituality. She identifies the former as a belief and practices focused on the Divine, while the latter involves existential questions of meaning: Who am I? Why am I here? Have I made an impact? Ultimately, Fletcher establishes that there is a need for more professional development to encourage community based palliative care workers to engage with their own spirituality and to recognize that they are able to offer spiritual care to their clients.

Perspectives from Society and Culture

The fourth section of this book brings together a collection of individual voices which identify understandings and applications of spirituality in their particular disciplines.

To begin with, Jane Bone draws on the deep connection to the land that is implicit in the spirituality of indigenous people. There has always been the opportunity for understandings of ecology and environmental studies to acknowledge this influence. The chapter traces spiritual threads that have been apparent over time in an increasingly important discipline. Spirituality can be understood as the connection of people to all living things. The chapter addresses the time of the Anthropocene and its challenges. In practice, she argues for the need to transform our lives and develop habits of everyday spirituality and mindfulness that will promote a more sustainable way of living and renew our spiritual connections with the earth. The importance of this is one of the major issues for the twenty-first century and will determine our future.

Following this, we hear from John Hochheimer, Timothy Huffman and Sharon Lauricella, who offer an understanding that spirituality is an essential aspect of the human condition which, therefore, applies to all areas of human life. The authors recognize that, in general, human experience is concerned with meaning making and tapping into something larger and beyond the physicality of human existence. As well, an aspect of being human is that individuals make meaning of their experiences within a communal framework and they find a need to communicate and share these experiences with others. Accordingly, Hochheimer et al. contend that these innate qualities of humanness provide a platform for the studies of spirituality in communication studies. In the contemporary world, the advent of digital media has emerged as an increasingly important means of communication and has contributed

to the widespread knowledge and understanding of the similarities and differences in regional, cultural and religious expressions of spirituality. Ultimately, making, perceiving and sharing of meaning is fundamental to social engagement and this brings a spiritual dimension to communication study.

An interesting point made by the authors in regards to the rise in 'spiritual but not religious' people in western climes is that such individuals still maintain experiences in communal practices, and, the authors argue that both reflect and discuss issues that could be considered to be theological on a deep level. They also contend that those who ascribe to more recently popularized non-religious spiritual frameworks continue to engage in certain rituals and practices often associated with religious activity. This confirms, for them, that communication, which they see as the perception and sharing of meaning, is at the heart of the spiritual experience, and they propose that it provides appropriate avenues to better understand the different dimensions of being.

From the business arena, we hear from Eleni Tzouramani and Fahri Karakas who note that, while spirituality in management is a relatively new discipline, there is much research being carried out in the area. They particularly identify the tension that has arisen between two different discourses. One is based on affirmative views which argue that individuals can be healthier, happier, more fulfilled and whole through the introduction of spirituality at work. The more critical views caution against introducing spirituality in management initiatives because individuals can be exploited as organisations seek to re-enchant work, commitment and devotion by harnessing the human spirit. The role of spirituality in management has emerged today in counterpoint to the problems of downsizing, job insecurity, work stress and increased work hours. However, it can also be understood as a set of beliefs which influence the work ethic, where 'spirituality' is seen as either a social apparatus to maintain capitalism and the power of consumer markets or it is a means of social change. In general, the discipline contains seemingly contradicting concepts and ideas and does not consent to a particular name or definition. However, spirituality may be reflected and identified in constructs such as 'presence' and 'flow', relationality, the 'here and now', and opening a way to a relationship with the inner side of the individual and with a larger cosmos.

The arts are integral to the ways in which humans communicate their visions, ideas and meaning-making. More particularly, Marni Binder claims that expression in, through and with the arts provides the creative spaces to connect with our inner landscapes and reflects our lived experience transcending linear time. The creativity inherent in artistic expression is deeply spiritual and relates to the profound expression of the spiritual self, mystery, and meaning-making which, through shared lived experiences, connects us to moments of discovery and spiritual spaces in the everyday. Spirituality in art, then, is the embodiment of wholeness through sensory engagement and knowing. As well, it reflects human relationality through connectedness to others, the natural world and to the cosmos, thereby offering expressions of the deep places in our lives which are necessary to our wellbeing.

Another form of the arts comes out of children's literature and Olga Buttigieg provides a chapter on how to use picture books to nurture children's spirituality. Buttigieg uses the original Upton golliwogg picture books as her focus which, she recognizes, is problematic in the contemporary world because the golliwogg has become a symbol of racism. Indeed, she identifies a serious issue linked to the shadow side of spirituality which is about fear of difference and otherness. However, addressing these fears is about looking beyond physical difference to the kind and compassionate heart that lies beneath. Buttigieg identifies spirituality in children as a sense of 'aliveness' or a heightened awareness or consciousness linked to perceptions of unity. She then points to the golliwogg stories which show him as a character who has the spiritual qualities of a hero, someone who reaches out with empathy to all others, and who teaches us to embrace new experiences and live life to the fullest. Buttigieg concludes that picture books can engage readers in their own stories and be challenged to reflect more deeply on their own sense of identity and ways of being in the world.

The last chapter brings additional perspectives on spirituality which have emerged in the contemporary world. David Brown speaks of the spiritual dimension in martial arts and challenges the concept of traditional spirituality which restricts its application to a religious framework. He speaks of holistic spirituality which is often 'Othered as the un-unified, transforming and chaotic collection of perspectives and practices which threaten to disrupt a number of established identifications such as the relationship between spirituality and institutionalised religion and the relationship between religion and the sacred'. With specific reference to Tai Chi Chuan, Brown argues that this practice is often characterised as New Age – and therefore holistic or secular when, in fact, it is a religious expression of spirituality because, in its original context, it derives from expressions of Taoism. Therefore, Brown indicates that in western culture today, it is important to move away from the western dualistic attitude and maintain a holistic recognition that Tai Chi Chuan is both a form of religious spirituality and a form of holistic or secular spirituality.

Discussion

The Nature of Contemporary Spirituality

One of the clear findings from the analysis of the voices in this collection is that contemporary spirituality appears to have two broadly distinct categories. One is the traditional perspective, drawn from a variety of faith traditions. The other encompasses newer religious and non-religious expressions of spirituality, often referred to as New Age and/or secular. These two broad groupings provide an umbrella under which we find many characteristics across the different expressions that clearly represent one or other form.

Traditionally, religious spirituality was the dominant discourse on spirituality in western cultures. In this form, expressions of spirituality are seen as essential elements in the beliefs and practices of religious traditions involved in the search for God, an Ultimate Reality, or a Divine mystery. As such, spirituality pertains to the affective dimension of religious activity such as the experiential aspects of participatory rites and rituals which are perceived as enhancing the spiritual journey towards an Ultimate Reality. As well, spiritual practices across different faith traditions include reading and contemplation of sacred texts and wisdom literature, prayer, meditation and community worship.

More particularly, traditional religious spirituality focused on interiority in spiritual practice which assumed a dualistic approach, where the interior journey took precedence, and in some instances became distanced from engagement in activities related to the outer, existential lives of individuals. Further, a transcendent dimension that is God-related is foundational to religious spirituality and mysticism, and mystics are an integral part of its expression.

The broader applications of newer forms of religious and non-religious understandings of spirituality, which have been identified as New Age and/or secular spirituality, emerged through the twentieth century. This was a time when many people began to drift away from organized religious communities which resulted in individuals beginning their own search for spiritual nurturing and growth along alternative paths. This movement has also led to variations on mainstream religious traditions so, for instance, new forms of Christian religious practices have emerged leading to new forms of religious spirituality. As a part of this more individualised spirituality, the New Age movement also began, and is now recognized by some as a new form of religion since it incorporates supernatural beliefs, belief in gods and goddesses, witchcraft and angels, along with rituals that are similar to traditional religious practice. Some expressions may be linked to traditional religions, such as Eastern or Pagan traditions, and others will be individualized hybrids. However, it is important to note that some traditionalists consider New Age spirituality as secular rather than religious and, therefore, relegate it to a category of 'less important'. Often this is a result of a lack of knowledge about these new forms and expressions of spirituality which result in a fear of difference which, in turn, may promote a sense of superiority about one's own spiritual expression.

This period in human history also coincided with large movements of people across the globe so that many societies changed to become globally-influenced, plural societies with evidence of the growth of multiple religious cultures with corresponding multiple religious expressions of spirituality. Again, there has been some resistance to recognizing these spiritual expressions as authentic representations of human spirituality, including from traditional mainstream Christian Churches towards newer forms of Christianity which are sometimes perceived by the older Order as somehow lacking authenticity. Nonetheless, these factors have all contributed to newer understandings and expressions of spirituality, some of which may look, sound and feel quite different to the traditional expressions found in mainstream Christian-influenced Western cultures.

Alongside this, with the dwindling influence of institutional religions in the West, people began to identify their spirituality in different terms and contexts, and a distinguishing factor with these new forms was the recognition of spirituality that was not necessarily God-related. However, some forms of this secular spirituality may, indeed, include a transcendent dimension which is not focused on a divine mystery or divine person. Instead, it may be based on an awareness that one is connected to something more, beyond the individual self, but which is grounded in an existential reality.

An extension of this theme is that religious and secular forms of spirituality have varied interpretations of the word 'sacred'. Within a religious framework, sacredness is usually related to God and aspects of religion such as liturgy, music and doctrine. However, sacredness in secular forms of spirituality can include everyday activities, experiences or things that contain deep meaning and sentiment for the individual or group of individuals, including experiences of transcendence and deep connections to the earth and the Universe, all of which may inspire a sense of unity and oneness.

It is important to note, here, that while religious mysticism may have traditionally been focused on a search for God within a religious framework, we can also find mystics through the ages who have spoken of unity and oneness with a Divine mystery rather than with a personal God. So this aspect of contemporary spirituality is not actually new. It has just become a more commonly applied understanding, different to the more traditional perception of something exoteric that applies to the few.

However what is clear, as shown in many of the chapters in this book, and indeed in the Preface, is that once spirituality was moved out of the traditional religious context, questions arose in relation to what the term 'spirituality' meant. If it was not about the search for God, what was it about? Thus, at the end of the twentieth century, while the term 'spirituality' was increasingly being used, this was accompanied by some uncertainty around what contemporary spirituality was. Indeed, there were many discussions about the perceived ambiguous nature of spirituality which raised questions in some academic circles about the credibility of the findings of research into a concept that appeared to lack clarity. These are questions that have been at the core of research across many disciplines exploring the role of spirituality in the human condition since the late twentieth century. It is important to recognize that while human spirituality may have been recognized from the earliest years of known human existence, throughout the twentieth century it was in a state of transition, which also involved finding new ways and language to discuss, study and understand it.

The discussions contained in this book provide some answers. By listening to the different voices across disciplines we have attempted to discover and identify key traits and understandings. The authors in this book reveal the relational dimension of being human which is reflected in deep connections to others, to the Earth, and to God or a transcendental mystery. They include a variety of capabilities and attributes of the human condition which are expressed through actions inspired by values and beliefs, a duty of ethics and care, social justice, care for the natural world and environment, and a sense of unity and oneness.

Key Traits of Contemporary Spirituality

A significant understanding of contemporary spirituality that is reflected across all the chapters is that all people are spiritual. In other words, spirituality is seen as an innate human characteristic, as essential to the wholeness of being as intellectual, physical and emotional attributes. Accordingly, spirituality is no longer conflated with religiosity but is recognised as applying equally to all people, religious and non-religious. To be sure, there may still be some traditionalists who reject this notion, but generally, the view holds that spirituality is a shared human trait.

Contemporary spirituality, then, is about connectedness of self to other people, to the natural world and environment, and to the universe. Expressions of spirituality reflect these connections. A primary connection is to the inner self, and developing self-knowledge is seen as an important part of the spiritual journey. It is this aspect of spirituality that has become relevant to many disciplines including those in the health and caring professions, education as well as across the other studies reflected in this book. Connectedness is also about experiences and expressions of empathy and compassion to others which, again, is a vital factor in nurturing the wellbeing of individuals and their communities, and to their connection to other living creatures in their natural environment, to the planet Earth and, for some, to God.

The spiritual dimension of life helps individuals create frameworks of meaning and provides individuals with a way of being in the world which influences their decisions and actions. It enables them to interpret their life experiences, which can help them to work through difficult and unhappy times, overcome challenges, and find purpose in being.

Finally, in a plural, global world, we find a wealth of expressions of contemporary spirituality which reflect the diversity associated with humankind and each has its own integrity and credibility because spirituality is very much an individual entity that is part of being human. We have reached a stage in the transitional process of this discipline, then, where we can say that no particular form or expression of spirituality is superior to another, or which can be weighted more favourably than another.

There is one exception to the above statement and that is when forms and expressions of spirituality reflect the darkness that is also part of the human condition. This is when expressions of spirituality reflect a disconnectedness and alienation to others, the environment and the planet, Earth, and God or a Transcendent Other. There is much evidence of this in society and in the world today and many of these problems, issues and man-made disasters may be attributed to the dark or shadow side of spirituality. It is important to note that the influence of negative spirituality on human action is an area that is under researched and would benefit from closer examination. As shown by the voices here, most disciplines tend to focus on the more positive side of spirituality, and the beneficial aspects for humans, although the health and caring professions have registered and addressed this facet of darkness to some extent as they work with individuals who are in need of help, to become whole again.

These are the understandings that have emerged through the analysis of the different disciplinary voices. We heard about the more traditional forms and expressions of spirituality where there appeared to be a consistent understanding that spirituality involved a search for God and/or a Divine mystery. We then followed a journey which indicated a movement towards what can be described as contemporary spirituality which includes both religious and non-religious forms and expressions of spirituality. More importantly, by identifying some key traits of spirituality that appear across these different expressions we find much clarity in the discussions of and research in spirituality. We feel, therefore, that the transitional process alluded to earlier, has culminated in the emergence of a spiritual discipline that has both credibility and validity as a field of study which has the capacity to contribute to and further our knowledge and understanding about the human condition.

Conclusions

In general, our discussion points to the fact that humans are, indeed, a spiritual people. Their spirituality complements their other human traits – mental, emotional and physical – which, together, compose each individual as a whole person. The implications of this in disciplines that are focused on the education and wellbeing of humans and the natural environment in which they live are clear. Spirituality has a distinct role in associated research studies and professional practice. In addition, strategies and resources need to be developed which can be implemented to assist practitioners to recognize, respond to and foster the diversity and divergence of spiritual expressions. Consequently, spirituality should no longer be left out of academic, social and political discourse around human and environmental development and care. We believe that spirituality should be moved forward from the fringes of debate so that it will be included and recognized as a vital and essential element of human beings that, if understood, addressed and nurtured, will promote the wholeness and the wellbeing of individuals and their communities.

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