Journal for the Study of Religious Experience

Introduction

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The Religious Experience Research Centre (RERC) at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, founded by Sir Alister Hardy (1896-1985), houses a unique archive of personal accounts of a religious or spiritual experience. We have now over 6000 narratives, some very short and some over several pages long. Each of them present a unique insight into a personal experience with "a presence or power, whether you call it God or not, which is different from your everyday self" as the so-called Hardy Question phrased it. Some narratives report a Near-Death Experience (NDE), Afterlife experience, or an experience with angels; others speak about the awareness of an overwhelming presence while walking in a crowd or in nature. Among the accounts are experiences from ordinary people of different beliefs and commitments, including agnostics. One of the first accounts describes the uplifting experience the person felt in a hotel room in London in 1948 (RERC 000001). Another refers to an experience in the West Indies, during a walk through the hills of St Kitts (RERC 000011). A common feature in most accounts is the sense of uniqueness of the experience, that it is not possible to repeat it and that it changed one's perception of things, sometimes even their life. Because of the highly personal and subjective perception of the experience, the accounts are difficult to examine in an objectified, quantitative manner. Nonetheless, over time several scholars have worked with the accounts and published their analysis of them, from Alister Hardy (e.g., 1966, 1997) to David Hay (1982) and Peter Fenwick (1997), to name just a few. The new issue of the *Journal for the Study of Religious Experience* continues the tradition of Alister Hardy and presents a range of approaches to the study of religious experience, some of them with reference to some of the accounts while others refer to different examples of non-ordinary experiences.

The first article is by June Boyce-Tillman and is based on her Alister Hardy Lampeter Lecture given in 2015. Focussing on the study of angels, Boyce-Tillman shows various analytical frames to examine stories on angels. One of her themes is the spiritual experience in music as Boyce-Tillman combines academic scholarship and rigour with her experience as performer. The following article by Jonathan Tuckett also discusses different methodologies in the study of religious experience. His focus is on

[1] All accounts referenced with a six digit number following the acronym RERC are from the Archive of the Alister Hardy Religious Experience Research Centre, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Lampeter, UK.

phenomenology of religious experience and he discusses the differences between two phenomenological accounts of what it means to study religious experience. His critical engagement with Ninian Smart and other phenomenologists presents an interesting insight into the study of religious experiences.

The following two articles present case studies that take the study of religious experience in two different areas. Valerie Duffy-Cross presents the result of a small-scale empirical study about children's spirituality and silence. Following in the footsteps of David Hay, a former director of RERC, Duffy-Cross, a former school teacher and current PhD student, investigates the impact of opportunities for, and attitudes towards silence and solitude on children's spirituality. Luc M. H. De Backer examines conversion, a religious experience with life-changing impact, however, not from a Christian background but from a Hindu tradition. De Backer shows in his study that is based on fieldwork in various European centres of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) the different understanding of conversion within Hinduism and how it affects people.

The final article is by Adam Powell who presents initial results of the 'Hearing the Voice' project (Durham University). The project explores within a multi-disciplinary framework hallucinatory-type phenomena in an attempt to revaluate and reframe discussions of these experiences. The focus is on four cases of experiences with supernatural voices and visions in the United States from the first half of the nineteenth century. Powell uses the historical cases to examine the value of bio-cultural models of religious experience.

This third issue of the *Journal for the Study of Religious Experience* shows the richness of the area and the range of scholars involved in it. From theoretical contributions to empirical studies, from historical cases to the 21st century, from professors, post-docs and PhD students, the study of religious and spiritual experience is diverse and multi-disciplinary, no longer a forgotten path for a few handful of scholars but a rich field that produces fascinating research projects and insights into human experiences.

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Journal for the Study of Religious Experience

Crystallising the Angels: A Methodological Proposal for the Study of Angels

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This article will explore the complex issues involved in the study of angels, examining various frames to accommodate the variety of data available. The data includes accounts of people's experiences and questionnaires associated with them, reported visionary experiences and a variety of artistic sources. These will include images (such as Hildegard's choir of angels), poems (such as those of Rilke), historical accounts (such as the biblical account of the Annunciation) and music (such as Elgar's' *Dream of Gerontius* and hymn texts). The methodology will build on Fiona Bowie's cognitive empathetic engagement (2014), adding to this, methodologies from the area of Performance-As-Research (Boyce-Tillman et al 2013). These will be put together within the developing methodology of crystallisation which "combines multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a coherent text", to build a rich account of the phenomenon problematising its construction, highlighting researchers'' positionality and examining socially constructed meanings to reveal the indeterminacy of knowledge claims (Ellingson 2009). Within these it will draw on Boyce-Tillman's analysis of elements within the spiritual experience (Boyce-Tillman 2016) into the areas of Metaphysical, Narrative, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Extra-personal and InterGaian.

Keywords: Angels, Methodology, Thomas Aquinas, Hildegard of Bingen, Music, Art, Psychoanalysis

Introduction

This paper is concerned with a complex topic because of the nature of the available data on angels. The story of angels is one that has been an extraordinarily resilient story in human history,[1] epitomised by the centrality of the Sanctus[2] to the Eucharistic liturgy. The question for this paper concerns why the stories of angels have succeeded and what evidence has been used to support them. Have they survived because they are true, or because they are helpful or because the dominant culture has supported them (Foucault/Gordon 1980)? In the latter area the attitude of the dominant culture has changed dramatically over the years in Europe. Brynjulf Stige (2002) emphasises

[1] It was Beth Shapiro[1], Assistant Professor in the Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology at the University of California, Santa Cruz who linked fiction and non-fiction books in at the Hay Literary festival who asked why some stories succeed.

[2]What do people think of this act? There are those who see it simply as part of a tradition, and that angels are simply relics of a bygone age and we have moved on, while others still rejoice in the continual help of the angels especially their guardian angel or see each time a beautiful image of the glories of heaven.

how meaning necessarily reflects the norms, values and assumptions of a particular context. Interestingly it is a debate of the relative value of human reason and intuition (Boyce-Tillman 2005) – the interface within human experience of two different but interfacing ways of knowing which at some times have been seen in our history as opposed to one another and incompatible. The notion of holding these two ways of knowing together with several others is the substance of this paper.[3]

The evidence concerning angels draws on a variety of different sources. There are historical texts of one kind or another and theological expositions. There is data from a number of artistic sources such as music, poetry, image and drama. These have been analyzed from cultural perspectives using methodologies from such disciplines as religious studies. Finally, there are accounts of experiences from a variety of historical periods including the last century in the Alister Hardy RERC Archive. There is also the burgeoning area of performance-as-research (Boyce-Tillman et al 2012) which I have used to present the visionary experiences of several mystic women. There will also be some autoethnographic material.

All of this problematises the methodology appropriate for a subject which lies broadly in the area of spirituality. There are a number of texts outlining and attempting to chart the dilemmas:

> In the present debate, theorists that base themselves on, on the one hand, the diversity of culturally constructed spiritualities with variable overlap and, on the other hand, a strong intertwining of concrete cultures are the most convincing. …New forms of spirituality are often not encountered in an explicitly religious domain but rather in a secular context, such as education, health care, the work place, psychotherapy, and the arts…In this type of research, the interest lies in the social, material and symbolic dimensions of culture, human physicality, and language. (Hense 2011 p14)

Frans Jespers (2011) *Investigating Western Popular Spirituality* (where much of contemporary thinking about angels exists) identifies a typology of popular spirituality that include classical engaged spirituality, classical folk spirituality within established religions such as devotions to saints, holistic engaged spirituality such as deep ecology, and theosophy, holistic ordinary spirituality such as holistic health, astrology and wellness, inner-worldly (secular) spiritual practices using religious symbols as found in engaged environmental, feminist and gay movements and human potential movements and spiritual fragments such as temporal devotions such as 'silent marches' and religious imagery in films and pop music (Jespers 2011 p110). Despite this helpful and detailed typology, he concludes:

> How shall we continue this investigation into popular spirituality? For the present, anthropological, psychological and sociological research of religious studies are more desirable than philosophical or theological judgements. (Jespers 2011 p111)

From the Titus Brandsma Institute based in Nijmegen University comes the SPIRIN project – Spirituality International – 'an academic forum, multi-disciplinary in structure and multicultural in approach.' Within the SPIRIN Encyclopaedia they distinguish ten dimensions of spirituality: words, things, arts, texts, forms, connections, processes,

[3] Howard Gardner set out a set of multiple intelligences: musical–rhythmic (musicality), visual–spatial (spatial), verbal–linguistic (facility with words) , logical–mathematical (reason), bodily–kinaesthetic (motor skill) , interpersonal (social skills)l, intrapersonal,(introspective) and naturalistic.(nature, existential (spiritual) (Last two added later). These were set out Gardner 1963, 1983, 1999, 2011).

professions, disciplines and theories. This sets out clearly the complexities of the field. So the study of spirituality is no longer enclosed in faculties of theology, Christians of catholic traditions or the privilege of the western culture of the Northern hemisphere. On the contrary, the study of spirituality has to be reinvented beyond all fragmentation linked to identity, research tradition, culture, religious adherence or ideology (Huls, 2011 p141).

All of these attempts at analysis have fed into this paper which represents an interdisciplinary weaving together. It weaves many strands and traditions with their associated methodologies. I have gradually come to see truth as a crystal with different facets revealing different aspects of truth:

> Crystallisation combines multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a coherent text or series of related texts, building a rich and openly partial account of a phenomenon that problematises its own construction, highlights researchers' vulnerabilities and positionality, makes claims about socially constructed meanings, and reveals the indeterminacy of knowledge claims even as it makes them. (Ellingson 2009 p4)

In line with this crystallisation methodology (Richardson 2000) it sets out a complex landscape made up of pieces similar to those of a jigsaw without a completed image. It does not make claims to a definitive truth (Haraway 1988), but sets itself up as a survey of a landscape and the variety of methodologies that might be used to explore it. It will examine the competing truth claims of various traditions and individuals, power relations and where spirituality/spiritualities fit within these:

> I propose that the central image for "validity" for postmodern texts is not the triangle—a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather, the central imaginary is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. (Richardson 2000 p934)

The crystallisation model enables us to examine the complexity of the landscape with its diverse facets that we experience with different intensities at different times and in different contexts. Crystallisation offers a thick description of the angelic phenomenon (Geertz 1973) and accepts the place of subjectivity in the experience - with different aspects becoming apparent, depending on the face of the crystal through which the experience is being viewed. So for example, quantitative psychological methodologies testing, for example, common elements in people's experience may in some areas be appropriate whereas textual analysis may be more appropriate elsewhere:

> Crystallisation provides another way of achieving depth, through the compilation not only of many details but also of different forms of representing, organising, and analysing those details. Strong themes or patterns supported by examples provide a wide-angle view of the setting or phenomenon; stories or poems highlight individual experiences, emotions, and expression. (Ellingson 2008 p11)

It will show in a story spanning cultures and centuries with insights drawn from a huge variety of disciplines and methodologies. These will include textual analysis of various kinds, historical analysis, feminist methodologies, cultural analysis, artistic methodologies, autoethnography and grounded theory.

One of the central problems here is what constitutes a fact and what constitutes a belief. It is easy today to dismiss angels as a product of human imagination for:

> The big challenge is to recognise the objective existence of nonhuman intelligences. (Fox and Sheldrake 1996 p 27)

Malcolm Godwin starts his text *Angels: An endangered species,* by debating these issues:

> There seems to be two basic methods to approach a subject like angels. One fruitful approach appears to be historical. This can be summarised as the method in which *facts outweigh faith….* Each separate species can be traced back to its particular cultural origin. …There is, however, another method that may be labelled supernatural. In this *faith outweighs fact.* This is actually the one most of us apply to a subject like angels without really thinking. (Godwin 1993 pp14)

Godwin goes on to look at the possibilities of a scientific method in which faith is created by fact, verified by careful observation:

> But modern scientists are discovering that the world is not quite so simple and that *fact is created by faith.* Quantum physicists know that if they expect a particle to behave like a wave, it does…This is partially due to the fact that any method of observing the world necessarily changes it. More fundamental is the notion that we cannot stand outside of the universe to observe it. We are part of our own experiment. (Godwin 1993 pp15)

This links with the idea of Dionysius the Areopagite who sees God as adapting visions to the nature of the visionary person, giving appropriate form to the formless (Dionysius the Areopagite from *the celestial hierarchies quoted in* Fox and Sheldrake 1996 p 45).

In the context of this paper it is the artefacts that may be regarded as facts, and the culture in which they are placed, whether personal or cultural, the faith. This thinking necessarily places the experiencing subject as an important part of the discourse rather than relying exclusively on the tradition of objectivity rooted in dogmas and doctrines (Conn 1980 pp24-7). There is a theological methodology called by Kwok Pui Lan 'dialogical imagination'. She draws this way of working from the work of Asian Christians who are heirs to both the biblical story and to their own story as Asian people; these need to be in creative dialogue with another (Kwok 1995 p13).

Many feminist methodologies use interviews (particularly of an unstructured or semi-structured kind) as a way of accessing a spirituality rooted in people's lived experience, rather than logic and argument; interviews clearly have a significant place here including a variety of ways of analysing them such as narrative analysis and grounded theory. Academic philosophers and theologians like Grace Jantzen base their work on a philosophy of desire rather than the rationality of creedally based belief systems, drawing on the gap between these creedal statements and the lived experience of women. Her concern is not with an objective truth of the traditional kind but of the effect of the religious symbolic on human subjectivity both at a personal and a global level (Jantzen 1998 p.192).

It is in this context that Fiona Bowie (2014) called for cognitive empathetic engagement as an ethnographic method. The characteristics of this methodology are openness to the other, critical awareness of one's own perspective, reluctance to move too quickly to explanation and inclusive of an anthropology of wonder. Many of these characterise this paper.

Also, in this cultural complexity, the role of the visionary experience is being re-evaluated and rediscovered; honour is being given in the contemporary world to the meaning given to the experience by the visionary themself. This development has been fuelled by an increasing interest in medieval visionaries like Julian of Norwich, Margery Kemp and Hildegard of Bingen. Women, in particular seek the validation of their own visionary experiences through the lens of these visionary women from the past. This has helped to redress the oppression of the intuitive response by the tools of the Enlightenment objectivity project. Although it is important to remember that Descartes was in favour of angels and thought one had inspired him, what Descartes did was to eliminate the soul from the medieval model of body, soul and spirit. He retained human intellect, angels and God in the spiritual realm and placed the body in a separate sphere like an inanimate machine (Fox and Sheldrake 1996 p95). This simplified the Aquinas model we shall explore below. From an encounter with the spiritualities of the so-called New Age (Boyce-Tillman 2000a p53-166) comes a rediscovery of a working spirituality of angels redressing their status as dusty relics of a bygone irrational age. So the challenging of the rational leads us inevitably to a re-evaluation of the mystical. The restoration of the notion of a God who is unknown is a necessary rebalancing of the rationalism of fundamentalism with all its rational answers and its confident security. Perhaps a significant part of the angels' functions in our society is to restore a link between the known and the unknown – the re-establishment of the mystical or the enchanted as a valid way of knowing and to ask such questions about the relationship between fact and faith, the various cultural shapings of angels, and the effect of experiences of angels have on the lives of experiencers. It asks whether the experience is pathological or mystical and how angelic experiences have been validated in history and are validated now.

Thomas Aquinas

In the area of theology, the first person who tried to bring angels under the scrutiny of reason in the later Middle Ages was Thomas Aquinas (1225-74). The awed contemplation of the early Middle Ages gives way to a sense of mastery by means of reason. It was the beginning of the age of disenchantment. Aquinas strove to Christianise philosophy through the development of a systematic theology as a way of distinguishing between the true and the false. His great unfinished work *The Summa Theologica* included a treatise on angels whom he did not reject as products of superstition and included such chapter titles as Of *the Substance of the Angels Absolutely Considered and Of the Knowledge of the Angels.*

Here[4] he develops a theory of angels at the extreme end of reason, all the time keeping his thinking within the confines of Church doctrine. Angels become purely intellectual beings; God's act of creation involves knowing the universe and then loving it into being. Therefore, thinking must be part of the creation and as it cannot be corporeal, it requires the existence of non-corporeal beings. So Aquinas accepts that angels exist and then sets about applying logic to their existence. They become creatures of pure spirit who speak to one another as spirit to spirit and also communicate with God. He subscribes to the Church's teaching on a hierarchy of angels with upper, middle

[4] http://www.ccel.org/a/aquinas/summa/FP.html#TOC03 Contacted May 18th 2015

and lower orders, the upper ones having a higher gift of grace. There are in total twelve orders which appear to parallel the aristocracy, the middle classes and the common people in the culture of his day. From the lower orders he postulates the existence of guardian angels for each person. Angels have pure knowledge; they can, however, acquire bodies from time to time to undertake acts like the Annunciation when they may be seen by human beings in bodily form. This counterbalances those who would see phenomena like the appearances to Abraham and Tobias as purely imaginative acts for 'angels do not need bodies for their own sake but ours' (Aquinas quoted in Fox and Sheldrake 1996 p 87).

The purpose of angels is to enable people to commune with the other world and lead people into deeper understandings. Angels have a function in governing the universe, celebrating God's glory and distributing his goodness. Some Angels have executive powers in governing the universe, namely the Virtues, Powers and Principalities. Angels can operate at a macrocosmic and microcosmic level:

> [Angels] can be operating in small individual situations, as in the tradition of guardian angels, or in terms of nations, continents, planets, solar systems and galactic systems. (Fox and Sheldrake 1996 p76)

Interestingly it is from this desire for mastery and intellectual control that the first numerical or maybe even quantitative methodology possibly emerges. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries we see in Europe the rise of an interest in Arabian Aristotelianism, which, in the new universities, was developing an antagonism towards what was seen as superstitious. The study of Aristotelian Physics was forbidden by the Church and there was a need for a bridging of the gap between the burgeoning natural sciences and theology. This was started by Albertus Magnus, teacher of Aquinas, who does ask whether several angels can be in the same place at the same time or be in more than one place simultaneously. Here we have parallels with some of the current debates in quantum physics. [5] It is from these ponderings that the satirical question came about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin; this was a way of making fun of the scholasticism of the thirteenth century. This is still being carried on today in internet blogs.[6] Dorothy Sayers joined the debate (see *The Zeal of thy house,* later). Still influenced by Aquinas she likens it to how many thoughts can be concentrated by a group of people on a particular pin at any given time. She draws on the concept of infinity for angels as they occupy no space.[7]

There are shades of sacred geometry around the numerical sequences allocated by various writers to angels. Dionysius and St Ambrose, St Hildegard, St Gregory the great, St Isidore of Seville, Thomas Aquinas and the poet Dante have nine orders. St Jerome has seven and Moses Maimonides in the Middle Ages has ten. Matthew Fox

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[5] *In Search of the medieval mind* BBY TV 4 May 18th 7-8pm

[6] http://everything2.com/title/How+many+angels+can+dance+on+the+head+of+a+pin%253F. Contacted May 18th 2015

[7] http://www.straightdope.com/columns/read/1008/did-medieval-scholars-argue-over-how-many-angels-could-dance-on-the-head-of-a-pin May 18th 2018 which also includes the following
Various calculations have been carried by satirists such as the magazine *Annals of Improbable Research*, where Anders Sandberg has presented a calculation based on theories of information physics and quantum gravity, establishing an upper bound of 8.6766×10^{49} angels.[13]
The comic *Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal* poses an answer derived from physics to this question, i.e. between one and 30 vigintillion angels.

links these with the nine spheres of the universe – seven planets plus the earth's sphere and the sphere of the fixed stars (Fox and Sheldrake 1996 p54). In this way he links the macrocosm of the cosmos with the microcosm of the chakras in the person:

> So we have the macrocosm of the celestial spheres and the microcosm of the human sphere. The angels are connectors, administrators, messengers that touch and connect the microcosm, the human being and integrate us with the sphere of cosmic forces. (Fox and Sheldrake 1996 p55)

Another numerical relation is suggested by Rupert Sheldrake, although not linked with particular numbers:

> The gods of polytheistic traditions are assimilated into monotheism by being treated as angels. (Fox and Sheldrake 1996 p66)

The Texts

Texts like Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* and Dionysus' *Celestial Hierarchies* provide a valuable source for evidence that can be analysed using methods of textual analysis and theological reflection. However, the bulk of this material exploring the concept of angels comes from outside the orthodox texts of the religions. Many of these texts have been declared heretical, pseudepigraphical or apocryphal, like the Chronicles of Enoch, although some of Enoch's thinking infused the New Testament. The story of the Annunciation has been subject to much scrutiny from many different perspectives. Several pictures show Mary being drawn away from the ordinary world with its sewing and reading into an upper realm of pure spirit as we saw in Aquinas. Others see it as a much more ordinary event with Gabriel appearing in an almost human form. These texts can be subjected to hermeneutical scrutiny as well of debates over authenticity. It is from them, however, that various tables of angel hierarchies and the various concepts of angelic purpose have been drawn – as much within popular or folk religion as in academic contexts.

Hildegard of Bingen

For many of the images of angels we do not have words to describe them, leaving us dependent on methods of pictorial analysis. However, in the work of Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) we not only have the images of her visions but also her theological exploration of them. There is a real dilemma here for those who wish to see the mystical experience as ineffable (James 1902); for Hildegard on the one hand trusts the intuitive visionary experience from which she draws her theology and authority, but on the other hand is prepared to interpret her visionary images in words. She struggles and wrestles with interpreting her visions for she saw them as given to her not as a private experience but for the meaning they had for the world of her day, particularly the church. Madeline Caviness highlights how difficult it is for our age to recognise visual perception as a cognitive activity. She identifies how the Renaissance:

> Excluded from the curriculum the "mechanical" arts (that is, the practices of making art, as opposed to the study of the "fine arts" as a branch of history) and gave primacy to verbal skills and textual study. (Caviness 1998 p110-1)

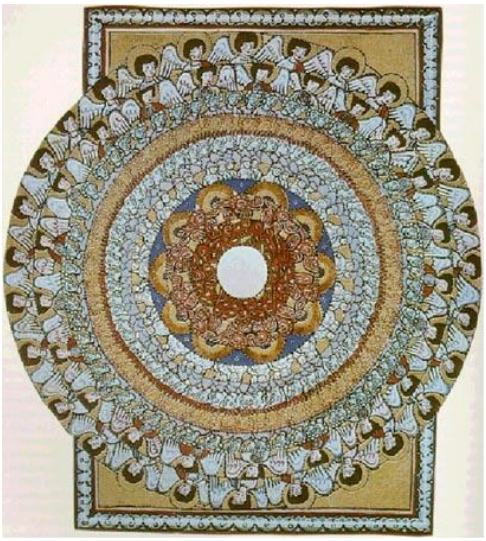
There is a fundamental problem in pursuing this relationship in Hildegard's thinking further. The pictures go with two of the texts – *Scivias* and *The Book of Divine Works.* The problem relates to the loss of the manuscript of Rupertsberg *Scivias* which disappeared from Dresden during World War II. Contemporary work can only be done from black and white photographs of this MS and a handmade copy in full colour in the Abtei St Hildegard at Eibingen. It means we do not have any access to Hildegard's original paintings. But even here there is an area of mystery. It is not clear what part Hildegard had in the production of the illuminations. It is likely that they were painted by her nuns in the scriptorium under her direction.

Her use of concentric circles for angels rather than the traditional ladder image links with the thinking of Fox and Sheldrake. They want to see the traditional hierarchy of angels as a nested hierarchy or, to use Koestler's term, a holarchy (Fox and Sheldrake 1996 p37). They go on to link them with morphic fields:

> The same goes for the electromagnetic fields within a crystal; within the crystal field are the molecular fields; within those, the atomic fields, the fields of electrons, and the atomic nucleus. These are not only electromagnetic fields but quantum–matter fields. (Fox and Sheldrake 1996 p39)

This gives a far greater sense of angels as process - activity flowing from participation in God's beauty and grace, drawing on ideas from Dionysius the Areopagite. Hildegard encapsulates this in her antiphon *Laus Trinitatis:*

> Praise the Trinity
> Our life-giving music.
> She is creating all things.
> Life itself is giving birth.
> And she is an angel chorus praising
> And the splendour of arcane mysteries,
> Which are too difficult to understand.
> Also from her true life springs for all.
> (Hildegard translated June Boyce-Tillman, Boyce-Tillman, June, 2000b p130)



So the singing of the angel choirs permeates the universe. It transforms the angels' traditional role as messengers – gives them a cosmic role of interconnectivity. [8]

Her amazing picture of the armies of angels, centring around the mystery of God, shows one of the main characteristics of her work – the blending of the radical with the conservative. Here it is seen in the expansion of the image outside the frame in which sit relatively archaic images. We also have from her descriptions of the experience which gave her these images. She received the first visions at three years of age;

[8] This image is considered to be out of copyright.

they appear to be colourful moving images with sound and speech (Bowie and Davies 1990 p20). In *The Life of Hildegard,* she describes how she saw these things deep in her soul but still retained her outer sight and blushed profusely and said unfathomable things (Bowie and Davies 1990 pp 63-5). It is the quality of living light that pervades all her visions, which perhaps reflects the new quality of knowing that they give her – a sense of seeing clearly for the first time. In the visions she sees and she knows simultaneously:

> But I do not hear these things with my outer ears, nor do I perceive them with the rational parts of my mind, nor with any combination of my five senses; but only in my soul, with my outer eyes open, so that I never suffer in them any unconsciousness induced by ecstasy, but I see them when I am awake, by day and by night. (Bowie and Davies 1990 pp143-7)

There is also a conservativism in the way she shapes her angels:

> Before Hildegard's death a changed attitude to naturalism had begun to transform the art of the region, as elsewhere in northern Europe. Often ascribed to Byzantine influence, draperies began to cling to limbs that were modelled to look three dimensional, and the movement of figures as well as their interactions looked more natural. (Caviness 1998 p116)

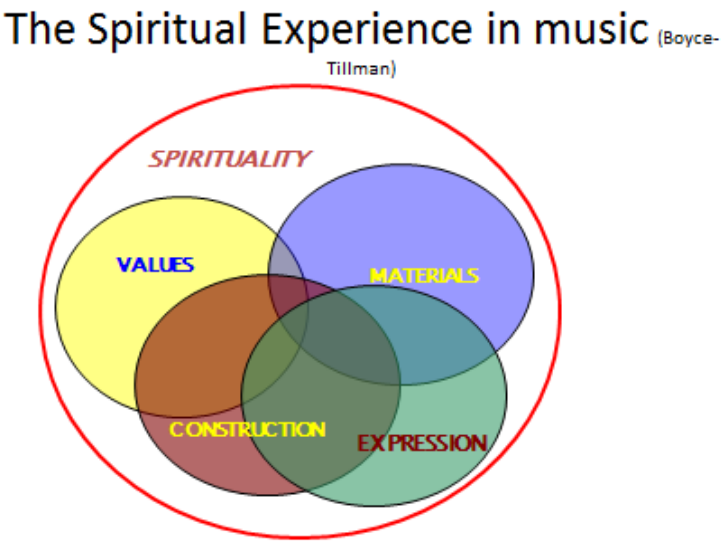
At the Enlightenment the production of texts concerning angels stopped, as Protestantism developed and problematised the mystical area:

> With the Reformation in Europe the mighty angels of the old Christian world became charming cherubs…. Scientific rationalism abandoned angels, and so reduced religion to a private matter, severing the ancient link between human beings and the wider cosmos…Great fragmentation [was] presented as freedom, and [there was] no sense of belonging or of personhood, beyond that of producing and consuming. Despite all this, the great thinkers and innovators continued to recognise that the source of their creativity, their inspiration, lay outside themselves. They did not use the word angels – but they entertained angels unawares. (Barker 2004 p411)

In this context, Godwin sees the concept of the angel as re-emerging in popular figures, such as *Superman* in the 1940s; a cloak replaces angelic wings, but like Archangel Michael the figure is portrayed as battling evil. *Batman* takes on the same function in the 1980s (Godwin 1993 p207).

A Phenomenographic Map for the Analysis of the Arts

If we turn to the area of artistic representation of the angels, this map (explained fully in Boyce-Tillman 2016) shows us the variety of methodologies necessary, especially when we have no help of accompanying explanatory text:



To take Allegri's choral piece *Miserere* from sixteenth Italy, as an example, in the domain of Materials it consists of a choir. In the domain of Expression, it is peaceful with fluctuations as the plainchant verse come in. In the domain of Construction, it is an alternating psalm with full harmonic verses and plainchant alternating verses. This is intimately related to its role as a psalm liturgically. In the domain of Value, it is held as a masterpiece within the western canon of music and is frequently recorded and achieved a place in classical music charts; it represents an important statement about the Christian's attitude to penitence based on a Jewish psalm, especially as expressed at the beginning of the penitential season of Lent. It has a declared Spiritual intention.

So, if we apply this form of phenomenographic analysis to the arts we will need methodologies from engineering to look at the Materials dolman in the plastic arts or from semantics in verbal arts. Expression takes us into the realms of psychological and therapy. Construction takes us into the academic disciplines that have developed around artistic analysis such as musicology whereas Values takes us into cultural studies and anthropology.

Visual Images

One of our main evidence sources for a theory of angels is visual art. Here one methodology concentrates on the facts – the paintings; It concerns the Materials used and the use of such devices as perspective – the technical aspects of the images. This can be combined with the information from contemporary texts to build up an angelic theology. The other is concerned with the cultural context including the faith tradition; it is this methodology that is more useful in this context. It is well illustrated in Malcolm Godwin's *Angels: An endangered species* (1993). He describes how the Church did not allow images of angels until the second council of Nicaea in 787 and these initial figures were ethereal figures with no gender. As the natural sciences progressed (as we saw above in the work of Aquinas) the angels acquired more flesh and sexual characteristics; these were sometimes painted out by the Church authorities. Aquinas does not mention angels as having wings but the contemporary visual art suggests archetypal beings capable of powerful movement and soaring high.

Hildegard's images represent an astonishing blend of the vernacular of the period and her own unique personality. In the domain of Materials, the unique features concern the use of burnished gold and the amount of silver which she uses to represent the living light that characterised her visions. It was a risky technique because silver tarnishes. The other colours referred to in the text are blue, green, purple, red and the colour of iron. To these were added 'subdued colours' - soft pinks and beige, orange and ochre. In the domain of Expression, they are often considered deeply moving with a variety of interpretations possible of their complex imagery. In the domain of Construction, they reflect the orderliness of the period; however, the figures are often too large to fit the drawn frames. Large figures are juxtaposed with tiny ones and some images are upside down or sideways (Caviness 1998 pp110-12).

Later the development of science saw the design of the angel wings adapted to reflect the technology of flying. However, in the 15th century the designs stop developing and they are reduced to round cherubic figures used that are to fill small architectural spaces. Godwin links this with the disillusionment with religion around the Great

Plague. The development of an interest in Hell and fallen angels he links with the rise of the Inquisition and burning of witches. Angel images re-emerged in the images of the Pre-Raphaelites which were popular in the late Victorian era and popularised through the development of the religious postcard and illustrated religious texts.

So we can see that the designs of the representation of angels changed as the cultural context changed. In the twentieth century, Paul Klee[9] completed a dramatic set of angel paintings associated with the onset of scleroderma in the 1930s and reflecting a new approach. They have a variety of characteristics both whimsical and anxious and sometimes even malicious. Christine Hopfengart sees them as personifications of part of Klee whom she describes as a loner who 'though estranged from the church nonetheless harboured a devout Protestant heart' (Hopfengart 2013 p111). This she links in a secularising Europe with the development of a 'quasi-religion of art':

> The art of Paul Klee… seeks, with dialectical consistency, to be a quasi-religion itself – as art. It embodies a striving for the absolute on the foundation of a secular concept of art. Its basic dogma – that the absolute is unattainable and that art is a medium of longing – is placed beyond doubt and its validity extended to every area of life. (Hopfengart 2013 p111)

This quasi-religion is centred on what it is to be human:

> In them [the angel pictures] we recognise ourselves, since they both represent the "human, all too human" and satisfy an existential need for reflection on the hereafter, on life after death. Their petty inadequacies bring heaven and earth closer together and turn them into congenial helpers. (Hopfengart 2013 p111)

These images and commentary reflect the new location of the sacred in the twentieth century using the development of psycho-analytic techniques within the human personality (Boyce-Tillman 2016 pp103-5).

Music

Angels have been associated with music-making since the Middle Ages as part of a conceptual frame that includes the music of the spheres (Boyce-Tillman 2000a pp71, 107); but in the literature on music it is in the accounts of composers' inspiration that they play the clearest part. Handel's *Messiah* was written when the composer was at a low ebb, physically and financially and he may even have had a stroke disabling his right hand. After receiving the commission, he remained in seclusion for three weeks; his servants heard him crying and moaning and he barely ate anything. He himself talked of visions:

> I did think I did see all Heaven before me, and God Himself seated on his throne, with his company of angels. [10]

If the angels figure in composers' accounts, they also feature in musical works. Musical analyses of the movements involving angels in *Messiah* - which occur around the experience of the shepherds - have commented on the semiquavers in the

[9] https://web-2.theartstack.com/artist/paul-klee/angelus-militans-1940. Contacted November 9th 2016
[10] http://supernalliving.com/2012/12/24/legend-of-the-angelic-inspiration-of-handels-messiah/ Contacted June 14th 2015

orchestral part as signifying their fluttering wings. The representation is bright and in a major key - F major leading to a much sharper D major. The discipline of musicology will also apply itself to critiquing editions and examining different versions of the text. It will produce new critical editions like the revolutionary one by Watkins Shaw in 1992.

There are many pieces of music including angels; perhaps the best known is Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* (1898). Here we have Cardinal Newman's view of angels interpreted by Elgar. Again methodologies can concentrate on the musical structures or on the cultural interpretation of angels. The poem sets out the theology of the passage of the soul after death with a significant part for the choir of angels as well as the angel of death which draws on the concept of a guardian angel who is taking the Soul home. The Soul describes the angel as 'a member of that family of wondrous beings' who stand around the throne of God. The whole event is portrayed against the backdrop of the angel choir continuously singing *Praise to the Holiest in the height.* A new angel (the Angel of the Agony) appears as the Soul approaches judgement; this angel draws on the concept of purgatory to receive the Soul's response in *Take me away, and in the lowest deep let me be*. This leads to the most famous piece from the work – the so-called *Angel's Farewell*. Here Newman and Elgar draw heavily on Aquinas who saw people as terrified in the presence of the dazzling light of God.

A methodology in musical analysis would include how these ideas are transferred into sound:

> At the words 'Go in the name of Angels and Archangels,' the chorus joins in, building to a triple forte on the words 'Go forth.' The Priest sings a second benediction, the accompaniment softens to a single melody for the first violins, and then one last, gentle swell of orchestra and voices on the words 'through Christ our Lord' brings the movement to an end in D major.[11]

A musical analysis of *The Angel's Farewell* would look at its D major start and then its chromaticism and the way in which themes from earlier in the work are integrated into the accompaniment. The use of many of the musical themes in *The Angel's Farewell* is in tune with Aquinas's notion that angels have direct complete knowledge synthesising human knowing processes which are often fragmentary and disconnected. The instability of the key structure towards the end could be seen as expressively reflecting the insecurity of the soul. The ¾ time signature could be seen perhaps as reflecting the fact that three is a holy number.

Such a musicological methodology would see the centrality of the musical notes themselves and their effective performance. However, John Dewey's *Art as Experience* (1934) would see it necessary to include the total experience the perception by the audience (Boyce-Tillman 2016). Here interviews and maybe questionnaires could well be used especially about the regular use of *The Angel's Farewell* in funeral ceremonies.

Poetry and intercultural dialogue

If we turn to poetry, we find at the beginning of the twentieth century, new concepts emerging as the nature of religion/spirituality changes. In the work of Rilke (1875-

[11] http://www.elgar.org/3gerontt.htm. Contacted May 25th 2015

1926) the angel is part of a visionary experience but is now terrifying rather than comforting, as the growth of secularisation starts to problematise the visionary experience. Rilke was climbing on the cliffs at Duino when he hears a voice saying:

> "Who, if I cried out, would hear me among the angelic orders?" (Wer, wenn ich schriee, hörte mich denn aus der Engel Ordnungen?)

This inspires him to take his notebook and write the words down together where a few more lines of his subsequent elegies were (started 1902 and published 1922). Writing about it in 1925 he warns a friend not to think that it is Christian angel, declaring it to be an Islamic angel. He describes how he had visited Spain and been overwhelmed by the Qur'an and the Prophet. Here he had met articles of the Islamic faith which include angels. Here they are light beings which can assume any form and travel at the speed of light or faster. They are associated with fire - a significant motif in the *Elegies*. The angels' task is to move between the two worlds. A cultural analysis of the poem would see him expressing Islamic ideas through a European/Christian poetic form; this could be seen as expressing his dissatisfaction with European attitudes to Islam:

> But the poet is also very concerned about cultural reconciliation and is stirred by a very troubled vision of the struggle that Europe and the world have ahead of themselves. These qualities make for a work which is more modern than romantic. This poem is an ultimate act of transcendence. [12]

The angel here is a way of reconciling two cultures, which is to become a trope in twentieth century thought (Illman 2010 p192-3, Boyce-Tillman 2013). He uses the poetic image of the angel to deal with the issues of a troubled Europe:

> ***The First Elegy***
> Who, if I cried out, would hear me among the angels' hierarchies?
> and even if one of them pressed me suddenly against his heart:
> I would be consumed in that overwhelming existence.
> For beauty is nothing but the beginning of terror, which we are still just able to endure,
> and we are so awed because it serenely disdains to annihilate us.
> Every angel is terrifying. (Rilke 1992)

Rilke's angelic concept becomes an expression beyond the Christian frame that had been the generating frame for much of European history.

Drama

Behind Hildegard's great musical play *The Play of the Powers of the Virtues – Ordo Virtutum* – lies her theology of angels (as we shall see in Dorothy Sayers below). The Virtues/Powers are those angels that order the universe and in the play they give the soul the robe of faith; this she abandons to go away with the Devil. Eventually the Powers get the soul back and chain the Devil. This – the earliest European musical play – sets out in great detail the ideas of the angels as carrying out the governance of the world. She calls her collection of songs *Symphoniae* and for her that meant living a virtuous life in tune with the choirs of angels.

[12] http://www.goodreads.com/topic/show/78258-rilke-s-angels Contacted May 25th 2015

Dorothy Sayers in her play *The Zeal of Thy House* draws clearly on Aquinas with angels as the governing power of the universe. Here the construction work on Canterbury cathedral is paralleled by the angels whose world is interfacing with that of the earthly builders:

> Avoiding sham archaism and the fusty language which is too often expected and provided in plays of period, it presents the Middle Ages as being very little removed in essentials from our own. Petrol and patent medicines have taken the place of the windlass and the faith-healing of the pilgrims, but human fallibility and the inspiration of the artist remain constant. The Archangels who from time to time descend into the arena and direct the destinies of the groundlings need not bewilder the reader or the spectator. They represent the Will of God, Fate, Providence, Accident or what you will and, in the final scene, that bright flash of Intuition which occasionally illuminates even the most clouded conscience.[13]

Here we see the critic equating the angels with functions rather than leaving them as real players in the human game, as Sayers sees them. At the end of the play Sayers puts into the mouth of Archangel Michael her most concentrated statement about the creativity of God:

> Praise Him that He hath made man in His own image, a maker and craftsman like Himself, a little mirror of His triune majesty.
>
> For every work of creation is threefold, an earthly trinity to match the heavenly.
>
> First: there is the Creative Idea; passionless, timeless, beholding the whole work complete at one, the end in the beginning, and this is the image of the Father.
>
> Second: there is the Creative Energy, begotten of that Idea, working in time from the beginning to the end, with sweat and passion, being, incarnate in the bonds of matter; and this is the image of the Word.
>
> Third: there is the Creative Power, the meaning of the work and its response in the lovely soul; and this is the image of the indwelling Spirit.
>
> And these three are one, each equally in itself the whole work, whereof none can exist without other and this is the image of the Trinity. (Sayers quoted in Brabazon 1981 p206)

Literature: Philip Pullman

Interestingly this contemporary atheist writes of a similar approach to angels which appear in his books as crystallisations of something called Dust:

> I was uneasy about the notion of using angels at all, until I realised that I could take a hint from *Paradise Lost* and view them not as actual beings but as analogue of states of mind. (Barker 2004 p236)

Such an approach to angels leads straight to a methodology drawn from psychology. In his cosmic scene 'the liberating angels continue to work in secret' challenging the

[13] Laurence Irving http://archive.org/stream/zealofthyhouse012297mbp/zealofthyhouse012297mbp_djvu.txt May 18th 2015

Church which is an organisation 'that seeks only to perpetuate its own power' (Barker 2004 p237). Here we are drawn into a cultural studies methodology, in the context of secularism and post secularism (Boyce-Tillman 2016 pp28-9).

Sculptures

Three dimensional representations of angels reveal the cutting down of the majesty of the cherubim into the chubby children that were used to fill in architectural corners in the European Baroque. They become very common in Victorian graveyards. In these, the images are usually feminine and quite large. Their shape and form are often shaped by pre-Raphaelite visual art.

In the late twentieth century Marit Benthe Norheim's concrete rolling angels[14] reveal a new turn in angelic images with their immensely varied faces and shapes. They are strong figures on rollers so that it is possible to dance with them as people did in Salisbury Cathedral and Trafalgar Square. Here we have new concept of angels as heavy and willing to dance with humans.

The Angel of the North by Anthony Gormley shows an industrial angel presiding over a motorway. Both it and Norheim's angels demonstrate new methods of construction and have been the subject of explorations of their technical excellence in construction. Again, however, as with the music there is a fertile field of interviews with people who have encountered them.

Angels, Fairies and the New Age

In the so-called New Age (Boyce-Tillman 2000a p53-166), we encounter again a merger of pagan and Christian images; this is similar to the beginning of angelic representation when the gods Cupid and Nike formed the basis of many of the earlier angelic pictures. Cecily Mary Barker (1896-1973)[15] produced both popular books of Flower Fairies as well as illustrations for Christian texts[16], including postcards and birthday cards. This is taken up by Hannah Wave Karma Hardy (2014) in her book entitled *Where the Fairies, Angels and Goddesses Hide.* Here chapters on becoming an angel are placed in the context of Flower Power and Paradise.

Personal Accounts

If all of the art works constitute the facts about angels and reveal the faith of their time, the other source is people's accounts of angelic encounters. These stretch through history including Ezekiel seeing the wheel, the Annunciation and Hildegard's visions

[14] www.norheim.dk. Contacted June 12th 2015
[15] https://uk.pinterest.com/explore/cicely-mary-barker/. Contacted November 9th 2016
[16] http://www.printspast.com/pwap1004010009.htm. Contacted November 8th 2016

and going on through mystics like Swedenborg anxious to validate his experience in the face of a dominant culture that would deny it:

> I am well aware that many will say that no-one can speak to spirits and angels so long as he is living in the body; many say it is all fancy, others that I recount such things to win credence, while others will make other kinds of objection. But I am deterred by none of these: for I have seen, I have heard, I have felt. (Swedenborg quoted in Godwin 1993 p8)

As a performance-as-research project I prepared a one woman show about Bernadette of Lourdes entitled *A Crack in the Cosmos.* The performances were often followed by discussions of people's visionary experiences which often involved angels. In one situation a profound experience of pink angels was nearly ridiculed by another member of the congregation on the grounds that angels were not pink and that the experience could not be validated by any evidence.

What often becomes clear, in accounts that I have heard and read, is that, for many people, angels appear in desperate situations. For example, a seven-year-old child being abused by an older relative sees an angel appear the corner of the room to keep her safe. This is well illustrated by a shout-type North American spiritual called *If-a you can't come Lord, send-a one angel down,* where God is asked to "Send him in a hurry, send him for to win me." If I use an auto-ethnographic perspective here, as a practising Christian, I am not surprised that God might use angelic beings when no human beings are at hand nor that a generation brought up on Cecily Mary Barker's illustrations and concepts of a guardian angel should find these reflected in difficult times.

Psychoanalysis and the positioning of angels

With the advent of psychoanalysis in the 20th century the location of angels changed for the dominant society but not in the minds of all believers especially those of a Roman Catholic upbringing. We saw above how interest gradually moved from good angels to bad angels or demons at the time of the Inquisitions and the burning of witches. This started the pathologisation of angelic visions be they good or bad. In the nineteenth century Nietzsche declared God dead and the world - that had once been conceived as existing outside of human beings - a cosmos made up of Heaven, Earth and Hell in a three tier universe - became located within the self as the superego, ego and id (Boyce-Tillman 2016 pp103-5).

In Europe the angels found a new place in the developing field of psychoanalysis (Muir 2000 pp237-8). Angels fitted well into the notion of a collective unconscious. Composers' accounts of their inspiration become located in the unconscious (Harvey 1999 p71) rather than in some in a divine realm (Berendt, Joachim Ernst quoted Hamel, Peter 1978 pp134-5).

There is a fine cultural/anthropological project here in exploring the shifting of this landscape from without to within the human being. This gave scope for seeing all these creatures as products of the human imagination. There is scope for much interview and questionnaire data to be collected here to see where contemporary people locate these experiences.

It was a short step from this position to the pathologisation of the visionary experience including that of angels. However, there is a rising tide at present of people both patients and therapists who would wish to revisit this relocation and contemplate a wider world beyond human beings of which angels are important mediators. In this role angels often survive when a belief in God has disintegrated, as the world becomes re-enchanted, a re-emergence of magic (White 2015). Here the notion of a guardian angel remains as a profoundly comforting image. This is particularly true around death.

In dealing with accounts of angelic experiences a variety of methodologies can be used. I have already demonstrated the auto-ethnographic approach, keeping journals of one's work and regarding them as a self-interview. The accounts also lend themselves to qualitative analysis such as a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967) where various themes are identified and searched for in the transcribed data. There are now programmes which will help this process like ATLAS.ti and N6. These can produce detailed interconnected maps of themes and enable qualitative researchers to handle larger quantities of material. Various themes have already been suggested by this article:

- Beings of light
- Within or without the person
- The effect of the experience on their lives
- The appearance of the angel and its relationship with images of angels that they have seen in artistic works
- Any artistic expressions of the encounter
- Strength to cope with/accept terminal illness
- Visitations in dreams
- Helping out in a practical hour of need
- Preventing an accident
- Companionship when afraid
- Guardian angels
- Angel experiences around a church

Here quantitative methods have their place. The analytical programmes do, to some extent, convert interview data into quantitative data. Questionnaires have been designed to explore people's belief around angels. For example, a Gallup poll in the US in 1978, for example, found that over half the subjects believed in angels and demons. All of these themes could be addressed in a well-judged questionnaire based on preliminary interviews.

Conclusions

The notion of angels has proved a remarkably resilient motif in Western culture. It has proved itself able to change in the light of surrounding culture especially faith and cultural traditions. Since the Enlightenment, the Church has aligned itself in its theology with the notions of objective truth arrived at by rational thought. The work of

feminist theologians has been to redress the necessary balance in a methodology that validates lived experience as a valid source of truth. Today it is possible to summarise the various aspects of this paper under the headings of a study of the landscape of contemporary spirituality (Boyce-Tillman 2016 pp25-79). The exploration of each of these strands is amenable to a different methodology.

The Metaphysical strand concerns the nature of the experience from both contemporary and historical accounts which can be analysed using a grounded theory methodology or narrative analysis, or expressed through performance-as-research projects.

The Narrative strand concerns the doctrines, stories and creeds underpinning different faith traditions. It is covered by theological methodologies and the interpretation of the associated texts, supported by images. It concerns the dilemma of defining the Divine and the place of figures associated with the Divine (particularly in a post secular age). It explores different religions 'positions. The use of quantitative methodologies in this area has been satirised and lampooned following Aquinas but may be supported by contemporary quantum physics (Clarke 2002).

The Intrapersonal strand concerns the experience of the experiencer. It will examine where the vision is perceived as originating and how it relates to personal faith; it is therefore amenable to auto-ethnography in which the following themes may emerge: the transformative effects of the experience, the role of the psyche in it and the place of angels in meaning-making. It can be explored qualitatively by narrative analysis and quantitatively by questionnaires. It will examine the place of the pathologisation of experiences in the contemporary world.

The Interpersonal strand is concerned with relationship of some kind. This enables the examination of experiences where the angel is perceived as coming from an outer rather than an inner world. Here also the metaphor of the angel is regularly used in popular material for the beloved or a close friend; cultural studies type analysis of song texts would serve well here. It also relates to an angelic communion as a remedy for loneliness and figures like the guardian angel.

The Extrapersonal strand is concerned with morality and ethics. A hierarchical theology of the Divine links back with the time when angels were perceived as having a role in the governance of the world; it would look at possible angelic interventions in world affairs with such figures as aliens and extra-terrestrials, explored using cultural studies methodology. It can be examined in a variety of media.

The InterGaian strand concerns our relationship with the natural world and the interconnectedness of creation. Here angels have traditionally played a significant part. It has been seen emerging in the relationship with the fairies in contemporary pagan traditions and traditional angelic images.

This article has set out the complexity of the phenomenon of angels. It is this complexity that has led academe to be wary of it. However, the role of the Academy is to enable people to make sense of their lives. As there can be little doubt that angels still play a part in people's thinking, it is important that the Academy engage with it. The development of the crystallisation methodology in academe would enable a study embracing both qualitative and quantitative strategies. It does therefore involve

challenging the traditional divisions within the academic world. It would bring together diverse areas of human experience but would necessarily see an inextricable relationship between the human being and the surrounding culture. It would see a profound relationship between the mystical and the everyday in the spirit of writers like William James (1902).

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Toward a Proper Phenomenology of Religious Experience

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The purpose of this article is to highlight the difference between two "phenomenological" accounts of what it means to discuss "religious experience" in terms of how they understand "altered states of consciousness". It aims to move away from "the phenomenology of religion" of Ninian Smart which would categorise religious experience as something "special", promoting an ecumenical theological agenda, toward a "deflated" account of philosophical phenomenology. While not popular among academics, the basic structure of Smart's position can still be identified in more recent scholarship. By mundanising what it means to talk of "altered states" in the phenomenologically reduced sense—i.e. as a scholarly, analytic concept—this article proposes grounds upon which we should re-evaluate what it means to describe particular experiences as "religious".

Keywords: Ninian Smart; Religious Experience; Altered States of Consciousness; Alfred Schutz; Phenomenology

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to explicate what it is to use "altered states of consciousness" in the properly phenomenologically reduced sense. By the use of "proper" here I mean the phenomenology of Husserl's Phenomenological Movement, rather than the (invented) monolithic tradition "the phenomenology of religion". Speaking of a phenomenologically reduced sense of "altered states of conscious", then, is more than a simple matter of bracketing out the question of the (non-)existence of the object of experience, it is to analyse the viability of the term as a scholarly, analytic category. How "believers" use the phrase will only be touched upon in a secondary manner. I am concerned here to uncover the potentially unrealised consequences of the term as used by scholars. Brutely put, in the phenomenologically reduced account of philosophical phenomenology, to speak of "altered states" is to say nothing very distinctive or "special" about a particular experience. In explicating this, philosophical phenomenology provides the grounds for calling into question what it is to talk about "religious experience".

For the purposes of this article I will focus on "religious experience" as it is discussed by Ninian Smart who describes it in terms of "altered" or "higher states of consciousness". Smart is a "typical" representative of "phenomenology of religion"

primarily because his own phenomenology involves the synthesis of several older inventions. As I will argue, Smart's discussion of religious experience is predicated on the metaphysical commitment to religion as *sui generis*. Moreover, the position that Smart presents is propaedeutic to "post-phenomenological" scholarship. More exactly, the claim to the *sui generis* status of religion is founded upon the Cartesian dualism of Nature (as a mathematical manifold) and Spirit (as an autonomous realm). While this *sui generis* claim, and the associated "essentialism", may be rejected nowadays, scholarship still tends to be predicated on this Dualism. Even naturalistic scholars of religion "resolve" the dualism (by denying the existence of Spirit), rather than question it. But this means framing the debate in the same way: "reductionism" is "essentialism" by another name. That is, what it means to use "altered states of consciousness" is not put into question, rather the definition (in terms of causes) is merely altered. Thus, while I may be taking Smart as my main target, the underlying emphasis here is a greater reflexivity on how *scholars* use their terminology. My concern is an assumption, found readily in Smart, that it is possible to speak of "altered states of consciousness" without value implication—an assumption which carries forth to this day—and is just that—an assumption, and therefore in need of philosophical analysis.[1]

With this article, then, I intend to distance from the "phenomenology of religion" and instead associate with philosophical phenomenology and Husserl's Phenomenological Movement in section 2. This process will also highlight how philosophical phenomenology has historically shown little interest in the topic of "religion". I will conclude this paper in section 3 with some comments as to why this is the case and, as such, why philosophical phenomenology commends itself to the current critical trends in the study of "religion". Initially, though, the reason for this lack of interested can be seen in how the understanding of "altered states of consciousness" does not involve a commitment to the "specialness" of religion characteristic of "the phenomenology of religion".

1. Religious Experience as "special"

In this section I will provide a variation of Timothy Fitzgerald's (1997, 2000: 54-71) critique of Ninian Smart's work as a form of ecumenical theology. For Fitzgerald, the main point of this critique stems from Smart's failure to adequately formulate "religion" as a cross-cultural category; the emphasis for which has been Smart's "Dimensions of Religion" (1968, 1969, 1973a, 1973b, 1989, 1996). Smart, of course, would not see himself as promoting a theological agenda (particularly in these works). But the point of Fitzgerald's argument is that the very language of Smart is loaded with "theological" connotations which cannot simply be got rid of by claiming not be theological. In a similar vein, Tim Murphy (2010) has also pointed out how "the phenomenology of religion" is ironically Hegelian by extensive rejection of Hegel, taking up the same terminology and not critically reflecting enough to instantiate a new meaning other than the Hegelian one.

For my purposes here I shift emphasis more specifically onto Smart's understanding of "religious experience", drawing on material to be found in the two volumes of Smart's

[1] Following Alfred Schutz, I take it to be the task of philosophy (particularly philosophy of social science) to uncover and clarify certain foundational concepts which may have been overlooked by other scholars (Schutz 2011: 75).

papers edited by John Shepherd (2009a, 2009b). What I wish to show here is that Smart's ecumenical theology stems from a metaphysical commitment to the distinction between Nature and Spirit and the presumed superiority of the latter. This can be identified through Smart's assumption of the possibility of a "pure experience" accessible through "higher" or "altered states" of consciousness. If nothing else, scholars should also be aware that the terminology they use may assume, without prior reflection, this same Nature/Spirit dichotomy (though not necessarily with the same consequences).

1.1 Experience then interpretation

In "Understanding Religious Experience" (1978/2009a) Smart is concerned with the possibility of having an adequate theoretical understanding without existential understanding. As he defines these terms (2009a: 39), theoretical understanding provides an explanation—Y happened because X—and existential understanding is concerned with what it is like to feel that experience. In turning to the phrase "religious experience", Smart goes on to note that it is useful to distinguish between 'religion and religions, or … between religion and a religion' (2009a: 40). Such a distinction is maintained because there are certain experiences which can strike "out of the blue" which though religious are not necessarily tied to a specific tradition. This becomes a distinction, then, between *dramatic experiences* and *interpreted experiences*. Of the latter Smart further explains that 'there are experiences which may have religious significance, but which are not *necessarily* religious in character' (2009a: 41). This involves what Smart calls "superimposition". Smart is primarily concerned with the dramatic kind: 'when writers' and here he means scholars of religion 'speak of religious experience they use it in a special sense, meaning something like a vision or an intuition' (2009a: 42). Contained here is the germ of his entire position: there is a class of experience which may be labelled "religious" (*R*eligion) based on the content of that experience. What are commonly called "*r*eligions" then superimpose further content onto this base experience.

From this base, Smart divides dramatic experience into two, potentially three, varieties: first, there are mystical experiences which are inner visions or practices that are effectively contemplative; second, there is the thunderous numinous experience as described by Otto; third, there is a possible panenhenic experience involving an identification with nature. What is made clear is that in the case of a "dramatic experience", as opposed to "interpreted experience", there is a "special" occurrence different from normal experience. What it means to say that such experiences are "special" is made slightly clearer in Smart's discussion of the ritual dimension in *Dimensions of the Sacred* (1996). Seemingly building off his typology of religious experience he explicates two types of ritual: focused and harnessing. In the case of harnessing rituals he has the following to say: 'patterns of behaviour are used as part of a process of self-control that seeks attainment of higher states of consciousness' (1996: 72). To these harnessing rituals are later applied the terms "*dhyana*" or "contemplation" which 'essentially involves a purification of consciousness' (1996: 97). Other references in this context include the claims: that a contemplative life is a 'sort of pure consciousness in which recognisable attributes are absent' (1996: 43); that contemplation involves the quelling of the discursive mode (1996: 97); that meditation 'is an activity intended to produce ultimately advanced states of consciousness' (1996: 104); and, *dhyana* 'causes the individual to rise higher in the hierarchy of inner

consciousness in order to achieve a purification' (1996: 123). To these ideas of "higher states" and "pure states" we can also add "altered states" and "transcendent states" (2009b: 41).

In the context of "Understanding Religious Experience", however, Smart comes upon a challenge to what will later be referred to as "higher" or "pure states" in the distinction between 'actual experience and doctrinal interpretation'. The problem here is that 'experiences are always in some degree interpreted: they as it were contain the interpretation within them. No perception can be quite neutral' (2009a: 43). That is, how can we be sure that a dramatic experience is not always an interpreted experience? The issue, however, is summarily brushed aside: 'To this I would reply that there are differing degrees of interpretation, and the distinction being made is heuristically useful in providing a directive to be as phenomenological as possible about the experiences being reported' (2009a: 430). The remainder of the article consequently becomes concerned with the issue of existential understanding, dealing with statements regarding the ineffability of mystical experience and the transcendence of numinous ones. While problematic also, I want here to focus on what Smart means by "being phenomenological as possible", as implicit in the current account is the presumed possibility of a "pure" description devoid of doctrinal interpretation.

In particular, what needs to be highlighted is that Smart's position is Kantian-cum-Hegelian. Specifically, what I mean by this is that Smart is committed to a metaphysical distinction between the "natural" and "supernatural" as two distinct, non-overlapping, realms of reality. This would be the Kantian aspect of his thinking and can also be found in the more recent *phenomenology-of-religion* of James Cox's (2010: 16) postulated non-falsifiable alternate realities: 'When communities speak about their alternate realities, they refer to something like a spirit, a god, a power, or force that, although clearly occurring in this world and within consciousness, denotes something quite identifiably different from ordinary experience and consciousness'. Meanwhile, the Hegelian aspect of Smart's thinking comes from the distinction between a "pure" dramatic experience and "doctrinal" interpreted experience. This relates to Tim Murphy's (2010) criticisms of "the phenomenology of religion"; though presenting a monolithic tradition, what Murphy is really targeting is *phenomenological history-of-religion* (see Tuckett 2016).[2] Smart draws from this tradition of phenomenology through a Hegelian commitment to an "essence" in the form of *R*eligion which "manifests" itself as various *r*eligions. Implicit in such an account, as highlighted by Murphy in the case of others, is a form of evaluative comparison in which the various religions can be judged according to how much of this "essence" they have then manifested.

Smart displays his connection to phenomenological history-of-religion most clearly in his discussions of religious experience. As already noted, Smart's typology of religious experience includes the numinous as one of its constitutive parts. And, as Otto (a member of this tradition) describes the numinous experience: 'It is through this positive feeling-content that the concepts of the "transcendent" and "supernatural" become forthwith designations for a unique "wholly other" reality and quality, something of whose special character we can *feel,* without being able to give it clear conceptual

[2] And erroneously attributing certain names to that tradition.

expression' (1923: 30)—i.e. an "essence" (the transcendent") which as "wholly other" is only partly manifested in conceptual expression. Note here, of course, the claim that the numinous may never be fully described, though in fact Smart notes Otto does by use of analogies (Smart 2009a: 45). However, although highlighting the "special character" of such experience, Otto does not necessarily indicate here the superiority of such an experience which is the distinctive marker of phenomenological history-of-religion. This point is more forcefully expressed by Mircea Eliade (1987: 17) and his concept of hierophanies: 'When the sacred manifests itself in any hierophany, there is not only a break in the homogeneity of space; there is also revelation of an absolute reality, opposed to the nonreality of the vast surrounding expanse'. In conferring the status of the "real" ("essence") onto religious experience and "unreal" ("manifestation") onto ordinary experience, Eliade makes quite clear the superiority of the former over the latter. A point which also finds expression in Wilfred Cantwell Smith's (1963: x) distinction between faith ("essence") and cumulative tradition ("manifestation"): 'Faith in this sense includes religious experience, the sense of the numinous, religious emotions of love and awe, hope and fear, the disposition to worship, and the commitment of the will to service of the higher reality and value'. Although Smart does not make any explicit claims to this effect—in places he tries to distance himself from Eliade (Smart 1978)—he nonetheless adopts the same position by his distinction between "pure" (real, superior, higher, essence) dramatic experience and "doctrinal" (unreal, inferior, lower, manifestation) interpreted experience.

In the case of all these "phenomenologies of religion" there is a dichotomous relationship between the ordinary world and the *R*eligious world, and that access into the latter requires some form of altered or higher states of consciousness. The problem of such a dualism is made rather apparent in Smart's own attempts to conceptualise it, here he flounders over the "phenomenological" aim of getting at the "pure" or "actual" experience and those experiences being confounded by "doctrinal interpretation". This is played out in another of his essays, "Interpretation and Mystical Experience" (1965/2009a: 56) where he overtly states 'that some distinction must be made between experience and interpretation'. This is so, he explains, because 'it is recognised that a mystic of one religion and some mystic of another faith can have what is substantially a similar experience' (2009a: 56). Difference occurs when interpretations are applied to experiences of the same type.

In order to understand this point Smart discusses the notion of "ramifications" (i.e. superimposition). By ramification Smart means a part of the description of the experience that is not proved by the experience itself. Interpretation "ramifies" experience by adding propositions to that experience. To understand this he provides two examples: first, from Henry Suso: 'In this merging of itself in God the spirit passes away' (2009a: 57); second, from an unidentified author: 'When the spirit by the loss of its self-consciousness has in very truth established its abode in this glorious and dazzling obscurity' (2009a: 57). In the case of Suso there is a high degree of ramifications involved, the experience is described by a recourse to a notion of God which is "presupposed" in the description. Specifically, this is to say ramifications involve propositions whose truth is not dependent upon the experience in question (2009a: 58). By contrast, the other experience has less ramifications because it has less presupposed notions in the description. Importantly, Smart indicates that "spirit" has a different sense in each case.

Thus, when describing mystical experiences Smart warns that we need to be on the lookout for ramifications. Further to this we must be aware of where these ramifications have come from:

> There is the description given by the man himself, in terms of his own tradition. There is the description which others of his own tradition may give. Also, men of another tradition may describe his experience in terms of *their* tradition or standpoint … We crucially, then, should distinguish between a mystic's interpretation of his own experience and the interpretation which may be placed upon it from a different point of view. (2009a: 58)

These are formally divided into *auto*-interpretation and *hetero*-interpretation. The difference between the two, we are told, will depend on the degree of ramifications involved and the presupposed truths of those ramifications. For instance:

> the Christian evaluation of the Buddha's Enlightenment-experience posited above uses the concept of *God* in the Christian sense. The Buddhist description on the other hand does not. Thus the Christian hetero-interpretation presupposes such propositions as that God created the world, God was in Christ, etc., and these propositions are not accepted in the Buddhist auto-interpretation. (2009a: 58-59)

Smart then distinguishes between interpretations which involve low degrees of ramifications and those with high degrees of ramifications. As such, a high hetero-interpretation of a particular experience (*e*) will entail the falsity of that experience's high auto-interpretation. As in the case above, the Christian makes appeal to various propositions, not to be found in the experience itself, which contradict the Buddhist's own propositions. Conversely, Smart suggests that if we seek both low hetero-interpretations and low auto-interpretations then 'an agreed phenomenological account of (*e*) will be arrived at, and this will facilitate the attempt to distinguish experience from interpretation' (2009a: 59). On this basis he goes on to reject Zaehner's distinction between monistic and theistic mystical experience on the grounds that the distinction is dependent on a high hetero-interpretation—Zaehner incorporates several Christian doctrines that are not part of the experiences themselves.

Smart concludes by providing three theses:

> (1) Phenomenologically, mysticism is everywhere the same.
> (2) Different flavours, however, accrue to the experience of mystics because of their ways of life and modes of auto-interpretation.
> (3) The truth of interpretation depends in large measure on factors extrinsic to the mystical experience itself. (2009a: 65)

Laid out in such a fashion Smart makes clear his commitment to the notion of a "pure" experience (essence) which is then "flavoured" by doctrinal content (manifestation) through the subsequent process of interpretation. In principle though, it should be possible to supply a description of this pure experience in a way that does not add ramifications. This, seemingly, is the purpose of "phenomenology" as Smart deploys it here: *to offer as low an hetero-interpretation as possible to supply a pure description of the mystical experience*—i.e. a phenomenologically reduced account of "altered states of consciousness".

The obvious question is what does a low hetero-interpretation look like? The answer to this is found in Smart's commitment to typological phenomenology's notion of "neutrality". Specifically, this is borne out in instances like *Beyond Ideology* (1981: 47) where he claims that 'Brede Kristensen said that the believer is always right'. Following this misquotation of Kristensen,[3] one would presume that this phenomenologically reduced description is one that all believers could assent to as correct. Based on his explication, a low auto-interpretation and a low hetero-interpretation have a better chance of not contradicting one another than their high counterparts. This can also be found in the more recent case of Cox (2010: 57-58): 'the student of religion can follow Kristensen's ideal of endeavouring to make descriptions consistent with the perspective of believers and then devise ways to test the descriptions among believing communities'. It is this commitment to the "neutrality" of typological phenomenology which means that Smart's "phenomenology" is ostensibly not the phenomenological history-of-religion of Otto and Eliade, but rather *phenomenology-of-religion*. Although speaking of "the phenomenology of religion", Penner's definition summarises this tradition well:

> 1. Religion is a sui generis reality, and, therefore, the study of religion requires its own unique methodology. But, the essence of religion never manifests itself in a naked and unaccommodated form. 2. Because of the unique nature of religion all "reductions" must be avoided. 3. The ultimate aim of a phenomenology of religion is the formulation of the essence of religion. 4. Phenomenology of religion is free from value judgements; it is an objective account of religion. It can teach us to recognise what is genuine and what is spurious in religion. 5. By using Husserl's notion of the "epoche," phenomenologists of are able to suspend the question of the truth of religion. 6. Guided by the principle of "epoche" the phenomenologist of religion does not use the term "revelation" but substitutes the concept of "hierophany" in its place. (Penner 1987: 43)

1-3 and 6 can be seen to come from phenomenological history-of-religion and 4-5 from typological phenomenology. However, it is worth noting that how the "epoche" is understood in this context actually differs from its understanding in philosophical phenomenology. Aside from the stalled attempts by van der leeuw (see Tuckett 2015b), the actual connection to Husserl's understanding of the "epoche" (and the connection to wider philosophical phenomenology) were stymied by Juoco Bleeker who set in motion the transition of this typological phenomenology into phenomenology-of-religion. Meanwhile, through Eliade, phenomenological history-of-religion would incorporate an ostensive rejection of philosophical phenomenology. As a result, the phenomenology-of-religion has, in the eyes of Capps (1995: 109), had little association and little in common with the philosophical movement. More significant for phenomenology-of-religion has been the task of reconciling the methodological commitment of typological phenomenology with the metaphysical commitment of phenomenological history-of-religion.

1.2 Smart's metaphysical commitments

That the metaphysical commitment and methodological commitment cannot be, or at least are not, reconciled in the case of Smart can be seen if we press the original

[3] Kristensen actually claimed that 'the believers were completely right' (1960: 14). The plural and past tense actually leads to different connotations. Nevertheless, later "phenomenologists" such as Cox (2010: 70) have taken up the more individualistic version: 'believers are always right'.

question: what does a low hetero-/auto-interpretation of "mystical experience" look like? There are three potential answers to this: first, in his opening comments in "Interpretation and Mystical Experience" he suggests mystical experience to be 'an interior or introvertive quest, culminating in certain interior experiences which are not described in terms of sense-experience or of mental images, etc.' (2009a: 53); second, in *The Religious Experience of Mankind* (1969: 28) he defines "religious experience"—of which mystical experience is one of two types—as: 'A religious experience involves some kind of "perception" of the *invisible* world, or involves a perception that some visible person or thing is a manifestation of the invisible world' (1969: 28); third, in *Dimensions of the Sacred* (1996: 72) he describes as mystical experience as: 'patterns of behaviour are used as part of a process of self-control that seeks attainment of higher states of consciousness'.

If we begin by focusing on the use of "higher state of consciousness" in *Dimensions of the Sacred* as a low hetero-interpretation, this could be read into the two main examples from "Interpretation and Mystical Experience": Henry Suso: 'In this merging of itself in God the spirit passes away' (2009a: 57); and the unidentified author: 'When the spirit by the loss of its self-consciousness has in very truth established its abode in this glorious and dazzling obscurity' (2009a: 57). As mentioned, Smart perceives the former to be a high auto-interpretation and the latter a low one. But the question that must be now raised of this is whether Suso could reduce his high auto-interpretation to a low variant equivocal to Smart's without losing the sense of his own position? I suspect not, because to adopt Smart's low hetero-interpretation would be to accept the claim that mysticism is everywhere the same, including non-Christian mysticism. As such the low hetero-interpretation of the "phenomenologist" would in fact fail to be "neutral" to Suso.

Smart, of course, could not raise such an issue himself because to do so would undermine the implicit ecumenical theological agenda of his account; an agenda which is rendered more explicit in "The Analogy of Meaning and the Task of Comparative Philosophy" (1988/2009b: 49): 'the central issue of a transcendent-oriented world view is whether we are justified in claiming at all that some experiences can give insight into what lies beyond'. His considerations in this essay are:

> mere hints about ways in which a religious philosophy may be excogitated combining both Indian and western resources. In an important sense this type of speculation is not comparative philosophy but cross-cultural [transcendent-oriented] world-view construction. Unless of course that is what comparative philosophy really is. (2009b: 49)

In Smart's terminology "comparative philosophy" would become "phenomenology" and the task of cross-cultural comparison is underwrit with the attempt to develop a transcendent-oriented world-view. And in a conclusion reminiscent of Eliade's opening to *The Quest* (1984: 3), Smart goes on to say:

> In the global context we can practice a new kind of *pramānavidyā* [science of the sources of knowledge], that is, examining the consequences of alternative world views and the way they regard each other. It may prove irresistible beyond this stage to indulge in more than analytical global *darśanavidyā*: in a word, *sarvadarśanavidyā*. There may be the call to begin to fashion world views that arise from the situation of today and the suggestive resources from the various cultures now at our disposal. And now who would *we* be? No longer adherents of one tradition, but human

> intellectuals in a pregnant sense: belonging to the new para-tribe, Humanity. (2009b: 50)

With Smart's agenda rendered explicit (in his own words) we can turn back to his consideration of mysticism and, turning Smart against himself, recognise that both "pure description" and "higher states" are ramifications. That is, the appeal to the possibility of pure description as something not tainted by "doctrine" is itself a doctrinal commitment. A "pure experience" is a ramification belonging to "Religion" (as the name for this transcendent-oriented world-view). In fact, we can literally catch him in the act of this ramifying. Going back to the quotation by the unidentified author above, it turns out that the author is in fact Suso and the quote is from an earlier passage in the same source. In full it actually reads as follows:

> When the spirit by the loss of its self-consciousness has in very truth established its abode in this glorious and dazzling obscurity, it is set free from every obstacle to union and from all its individual properties, as St. Bernard says; and this takes place less or more according as the spirit remains in the body or goes out of it when it passes away out of itself into God. (Suso 2015)

Thus, despite Smart's imposition, the "spirit" of both experiences is in fact identical. What is telling about this rather blatant abstraction is that Smart clearly struggled to find a description of a mystical experience that was without "ramification" that would justify his own ramification of the possibility of a "pure experience".

And although scholars today may avoid talk of "pure experiences" and the associated terminology of "essences", this does not prevent another essentialising of a different sort. For instance, Thomas Metzinger's (2009: 97-98) observations into out-of-body experiences may be seen to find the neurological or biological essence behind a variety of experiences (manifestations). To say that there is no metaphysical commitment behind these studies is to grossly ignore how such analyses regularly deny the interpretations of the experiencer themselves. One of Metzinger's out-of-body examples describes the experience in terms of a "soul" (quoted in Metzinger 2009: 91), yet the entire premise of Metzinger's argument is that there is not such thing as the soul.[4] Or—rather ironically—there is Michael Winkelman (2010) who has recently proposed to the justify Eliade's claims that shamanism is a cross-cultural phenomenon (and basis of religions) using a biogenetic framework. Indeed, Winkelman claims to be validating that there is 'a cross-culturally valid pattern of religious practices [essence] corresponding to the subjective concepts [manifestation] of the shaman' (2010: 163-164). But this is to make a claim no different from Smart's that mysticism is everywhere the same. Where there is any difference is in the source (essence) of this "pure experience". The Cartesian Dualism is presumed still, but now supremacy has been changed: Nature (in the form of neurophysiological characteristics) is superior to (non-existent) Spirit.

As it happens, Smart argues himself into the impossibility of speaking about mystical experience without ramification in the following passage:

[4] I should add that Metzinger's "phenomenology" bears little to no resemblance to the phenomenology being advocated here. In his usage, rather than an exploration of the structure of consciousness, "phenomenology" refers to a description of the feeling of an experience.

> It is to be noted that ramifications may enter into the descriptions either because of the intentional nature of the experience or through reflection upon it. Thus a person brought up in a Christian environment and strenuously practising the Christian life may have a contemplative experience which see *as* a union with God. The whole spirit of his interior quest will affect the way he sees his experience; or, put it another way, the whole spirit of his quest will enter into the experience. On the other hand, a person might only come to see the experience in this way after the event, as it were: upon reflection he interprets his experience in theological categories. (2009a: 57)

What *should* be taken from this is the following: if there is a "pure experience", getting at it is impossible: either the experience is pre-interpreted by the person who tries to induce such an experience; or, if it is not induced, the person can only interpret the experience after the fact by their already available "ramifications". This would be the properly Kantian position on the matter. The logical conclusion in this case can only be that experiences are necessarily interpreted and the very idea of a "pure experience" is itself an empty one.

This, in fact, is the position of Kristensen (1960: 18): 'Following [the phenomenological] approach, we shall become acquainted with more and more different expressions of the holy, but we shall never arrive at the definition of the holy'. For Kristensen there is no such thing as an experience which is not interpreted and so a metaphysical commitment is subordinated to the methodological commitment.[5] Smart shies away from this conclusion because his methodological commitment to the distinction between "experience" and "interpretation" is predicated on the deeper metaphysical commitment to a distinction between Nature and Spirit with the assumed superiority of the latter. We can see this twisting of Kant in the following passage:

> if we maintain the Kantian distinction between the noumenal reality and the phenomenal world presented by it, how does this distinction relate to the parallel but quite different distinction between the nondual and duality-drenched realms of experience and truth? There is the strange but persuasive, thought that there is something noumenal behind the nondual experience, which suggests a tripartite God: the noumenal *X*, the nondual Brahman, the duality-drenched Creator. (2009b: 49)

By a "phenomenological" "de-ramification" Smart commits to the idea that all these different systems are really just manifestations (interpretations) of some transcendent reality (experience).

The superiority of this transcendent reality is emphasised in his treatment of Maoism. Following his own "phenomenological dimensional" approach, Smart (2009b: 84-87) observes that Maoism fits all the dimensions he prescribes as the formal characteristics of "religion". Yet ultimately Maoism is an "ideology" rather than "religion" and the justification, though never stated as such, rests upon on a brand of definition—the existential—which Smart denied as useful for defining "religion" (2009b: 84). On the one hand he effectively admits that Mao qualifies for a content-style definition on the grounds that he 'is looking for his own kind of *spiritual* transformation of the Middle Kingdom' (emphasis added, 2009b: 87). But in doing so 'Maoism can never unlock the enigmas of death and human suffering, some of which cannot got away, even in an approach to an earthly paradise' (2009b: 88). Similarly with Marxism: 'it is unrealistic to treat Marxism as a religion: though it possesses doctrines, symbols, a moral code,

[5] That Kristensen continued to maintain certain metaphysical commitments nonetheless meant that in certain places he too tripped over his own position.

and even sometimes rituals, it denies the possibility of an experience of the invisible world' (1969: 22). A "this-worldly" metaphysics (2009b: 95) cannot provide the resolution for such enigmas; for this we would need a "proper" religion such as Christianity, presumably because it can better handle such enigmas through an appeal to a transcendent (spiritual) reality (see Fitzgerald 2000: 58-59).

Thus, Smart's proper "low hetero interpretation" of "religious experience"—of which mystical experience is one of two types—is: 'A religious experience involves some kind of "perception" of the *invisible* world, or involves a perception that some visible person or thing is a manifestation of the invisible world' (1969: 28). This "perception" is then achieved through "altered" and "higher states of consciousness". To speak of altered states of consciousness in this sense—as a phenomenologically reduced sense—is to demonstrate a commitment to a particular form of metaphysics. But this is clearly the metaphysics of an ecumenical theology because as Smart's attempts above indicate, not all traditions auto-interpret themselves as having a similar metaphysics. Thus, he engages in the cognitive colonialism of "de-ramification" to fit their metaphysics into his own.[6]

2. The proper phenomenological approach

Does this mean we, as scholars, should abandon "altered" and "higher" states entirely as formal analytic terms for categories of describing experiences? Of the latter I will say yes, of the former no. However, although we can use "altered states of consciousness" in a phenomenologically reduced sense when referring to "religious experience" there is very little benefit in doing so. That is, within the context of philosophical phenomenology, speaking about "altered states of consciousness" makes sense and does not indicate an ecumenical theological project as in Smart's phenomenology. However, the reason it does this is because "altered states" operates in a *deflated* sense, by which I mean that to refer to an experience as involving an "altered state" is to say nothing distinctive about that experience as that experience. In the proper phenomenological sense, there is no necessary or specific connection between "altered states" and "religious experiences". In point of fact, by drawing on the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz and his notion of provinces of meaning, "altered states" in the phenomenologically reduced sense are in fact positively mundane, regular occurrences.

2.1 The intentionality of consciousness

In order to understand how it is that philosophical phenomenology can speak of altered states of consciousness in a deflationary sense, we need to first understand the core principle of Husserl's Phenomenological Movement—consciousness is *intentional*. As Husserl explains in *Crisis of European Science* (1936/1970: 109):

> [consciousness] is in constant motion; we are conscious of the world always in terms of some object-content or other, in the alteration of the different ways of being conscious (intuitive, nonintuitive, determined, undetermined, etc.) and also in the

[6] The naturalistic scholars above are no different in this regard. In the case of naturalism this cognitive colonialism can be seen especially in the way such scholars treat "non-ordinary beings" (See Tuckett 2015a).

> alteration of affection and action, in such a way that there is always a total sphere of affection and such that the affecting objects are now thematic, now unthematic.

To speak of the intentionality of consciousness is to suggest that in order for consciousness to be consciousness it must be consciousness-of. I am conscious-of this particular (thematic) object to which other (unthematic) objects are oriented in their relation to it.

In Sartre's (2003: 18) understanding this is to say that consciousness is always positional, it always sits in relation to some object. Consciousness is not only conscious-of, it is conscious-of something which it is *not*. Of course, more is meant by this than simply saying that I am at co-ordinates XY and the object of which I am conscious of is at MN. Positionality entails that consciousness takes up a stance towards the objects it is conscious-of. Lester Embree (2001: 7) has introduced the helpful term "encountering" in this regard: objects never and nowhere just sit there, they are encountered—they are engaged with in some way. Take the example of the chair upon which you sit to read this article. The chair is not simply there, it is related to you in terms of what Heidegger (2010: 72-73) referred to its "being-useful-for". When you perceive (i.e. direct consciousness toward) the chair, you perceive it in terms of its ready-to-handness, its usefulness as a tool for your current activities (reading this article). To perceive the chair as a collection of wood and cushions you must take a "step back" to perceive the chair in its present-to-handness.

The full significance of this Intentional Theory of Mind is the realisation of an "I am"/"I am not" dualism which is *prior* to the Cartesian Nature/Spirit dualism. Indeed, rather than formulating a response to this dualism in which one of the pair is taken as primary, from which interpretation than proceeds (as Smart's phenomenology does), philosophical phenomenology undercuts it entirely. That is, both "Nature" and "Spirit" are interpretations (or ramifications on Smart's terminology). Or, in the framework of Sartre, to categorise something as Nature or Spirit is take up a certain positionality toward that thing.

The positionality of consciousness entails that by definition experiences are interpreted. In this first very basic point we can see a stark difference between the Movement and "the phenomenology of religion". The notion of a "pure experience"—i.e. an experience that is not interpreted—is something that makes no sense. It would require an experience in which consciousness does not take a position. To remove positionality from the discussion requires an "abstraction" which itself is another form of interpretation; an abstraction of the sort which Smart perpetrates above.

2.2 The horizons of consciousness

So, how do "altered states" fit into this? Simply put, although "conscious" remains persistent throughout, its necessary link to an "-of" indicates that a change of this "-of" will alter "conscious". Each new thematic object changes consciousness. However, it is possible to refine this understanding further. In order to do this we need to draw on the following comment by Husserl: 'The world is pregiven to us, the waking, always somehow practically interested subjects, not occasionally but always and necessarily as the universal field of all actual and possible praxis, as horizon' (1970: 142). The two key terms in this passage are "waking" and "horizon". I will deal with the latter first

because it is here that “alteration” takes place. But more accurately I also need to introduce the notion of “ulteration” in order to properly understand what is meant by “horizon”.

For Husserl consciousness is kinaesthetic, consciousness is never static; even if standing still, the world about us is in constant flux so that new objects are constantly brought before consciousness—each one demanding a new conscious-of. And conversely, even if we allow ourselves the ability to move but focus on a single object we undergo various new conscious-of’s. However, we find that in our everyday attitude ‘our gaze passes through the appearances toward what continuously appears through to the continuous unification: the object, with the ontic validity of the mode “itself present”’ (1970: 105). Take a cube for example. When I look at a cube I have an awareness of more than just the sides I currently see. This is so because there are phases of “seeing” which build up to complete the thing cube: ‘In the continuous alteration of seeing, the side just seen ceases being actually still seen, it is “retained” and “taken” together with those retained from before and thus I “get to know” the thing’ (1970: 158). Consciousness is constantly undergoing these phases of seeing and so is under constant alteration, each new phase entails a new conscious-of. But to know this involves stepping into the reflective attitude, different to the natural attitude of simply encountering the thing. In this natural attitude I am not aware of a series of successive phases, but the thing present through all these phases. Heidegger perhaps gives a more intuitive account of this through his example of tools. He explains, that the hammer, for example, is never brought to present-at-handness—i.e. perceived as a configuration of metal and wood—because we are too caught up in the use of the hammer.

For Husserl the reason we don’t pay attention to the transition from one conscious-of to the next is due to the notion of *horizon*: within each perception is contained an anticipation of what will be in the next perception. An example of this would be, to borrow from Sartre (2003: 40-43), meeting Pierre at the café. Imagine an experiential sequence in which Pierre performs a number of discrete actions each one requiring an individual conscious-of. If I am with Pierre in a café each of these actions has a horizon into which other actions may or may not fall. So, Pierre may perform the following actions: order himself a latte but doesn’t get me anything, stares at pretty girls rather than listen to me, takes a long time to drink his latte to avoid work, etc. Each action involves a new conscious-of and thus involves an alteration of my consciousness, but as each action occurs within the horizon of “Pierre” they do not as such “stand out”. We may suggest that so long as the successive actions occur within the horizon of the previous, the experiential series I am presented with is a single thing: meeting-Pierre-at-the-café.

Although my consciousness undergoes many alterations in this series, because the series does not break it would not necessarily be appropriate to speak of “altering consciousness”. To this end I recommend the term “ulter”.[7] We may write this experiential series in the following manner:

Conscious-of *a* (then) conscious-of *b* (then) conscious-of *c*.

[7] To my knowledge, no one in philosophical phenomenology speaks of the changes in consciousness in terms of “alter” or “ulter”.

A, *b*, and *c* are all actions of Pierre. Each "then" is placed in brackets because I am not really concerned about the shift from one conscious-of to another because *b* is within the horizon of *a* and *c* in the horizon of *b*. Ultering consciousness therefore refers to those alterations that occur within an individual series.

If, however, we choose to speak instead of altering consciousness we refer to a break in the experiential series. More specifically, the new object of consciousness is out of the *horizon* of the previous object. Say, Pierre does something unexpected such as put his feet up on the table; this example allows us to qualify a difference between inner and outer horizon. By the *inner horizon* is meant all those possibilities within the thematic object of consciousness—everything that this object can do. The *outer horizon* refers to the unthematic objects that surround the thematic object. Sartre calls the totality of these unthematic objects the "ground": 'the necessary condition for the appearance of the principal figure, which is here the person of Pierre' (2003: 41). The ground determines the contextual constraints of our thematic object. In this example of Pierre, it may be that it is within his inner horizon to put his feet on the table, but the café as the ground presents an outer horizon which constrains such actions.

In our experiential sequence above we may insert *n* as this break so that:

> Conscious-of *a* then conscious-of *n*.

This new "then" is not placed in brackets because *n* is out of the horizon of *a*; I am aware of the shift from one conscious-of to another. It is important to bear in mind on this point that the ascription of alter *only* applies with this move from *a* to *n*. If we extend this particular experiential series to include *m* we would then revert back to ultered consciousness if *m* is within *n*'s horizon. But the shift from *m* to *b* would require another altered consciousness. Thus the experiential series in full would be:

> Conscious-of *a* then conscious-of *n* (then) conscious-of *m* then conscious-of *b* (then) conscious-of *c*.

What needs to be taken from this so far is that whether consciousness goes through alterations or ulterations is dependent upon the constitution of the objects of which we are conscious-of and their associated horizons. Alterations and ulterations refer more specifically to the transition from one conscious-of to another.

2.3 Provinces of meaning

Although we can now talk of altering and ultering consciousness, the question that hangs over this is what does it mean to say that consciousness has a "state"? In order to answer this we need to turn back to Husserl's comments about the *wakefulness* of consciousness by drawing on the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz.

It is Husserl's suggestion that when in the natural attitude—the day-to-day processes of simply living in the world—consciousness is "wide awake". This idea is further developed by Schutz who prefers to speak of the tension of consciousness. In his essay "On Multiple Realities" (1945/1962), Schutz introduces the notion of *finite*

provinces of meaning to explain this. A province involves a particular "cognitive style" which entails:

> a specific tension of consciousness in which the person has a specific attentional focus or interest; this is brought about by a specific *epoché* which brackets out other interests; a prevalent form of spontaneity – specific mode of acting based on this tension; a specific form of self-experience; a specific form of sociality; and a specific time perspective. (1962: 232)

Everything that is "discovered" by this particular cognitive style then forms a stock of knowledge that constitutes that province of meaning. The province thus contains not only a particular way of thinking, but also all that has been discovered by that way of thinking. Of interest here is the use of the *epoché* which is not necessarily used in the technical sense of Husserl—or for that matter its use by "the phenomenology of religion".[8] For Schutz, we can only successfully utilise a cognitive style one at time, and this *epoché* involves placing other cognitive styles "out of play" so that they do not get in the way. Each *epoché*, therefore, involves the changing of the tension of consciousness to adopt a particular cognitive style (and reject others).

What I suggest is that what Schutz calls a cognitive style we may refer to as the state of consciousness. If we take the idea of a cognitive style to be a state of consciousness the question that presents itself is how we shift from one cognitive style to another. Speaking of the natural attitude as the primary cognitive style, Schutz suggests that we do not readily abandon it unless we experience 'a specific *shock* which compels us to break through the limits of this "finite" province of meaning and to shift the accent of reality to another one' (1962: 231). At this point we could suggest that a religious experience is such a "shock" bringing about an "altered state of consciousness". And while this is perfectly legitimate, it does not thereby entail that such an experience is "special" *per se*. Schutz goes on to inform us that 'experiences of shock befall me frequently amidst my daily life… there are as many innumerable kinds of different shock experiences as there are different finite provinces of meaning' (1962: 231). And within "On Multiple Realities" alone Schutz discusses such provinces as Daydreaming, Phantasy, Work, and Science all of which then require this "shock" in order to be entered into. Indeed, Science and Religion are compared in this very regard: 'religious experiences in all their varieties – for instance, Kierkegaard's experience of the "instant" as the leap into the religious sphere – are examples of such a shock, as well as the decision of the scientist to replace all passionate participation in the affairs of "this world" by a disinterested contemplative attitude' (1962: 231).

Now, Schutz does not suggest if there is a difference between "leap" and "shock", but I would infer there is. Specifically, "leaps" refer to those instances where the person enters a province by their own volition whereas "shocks" occur when they are forced into a province. This differs from Berger and Luckmann's (1966: 39) interpretation of provinces of meaning where they claim that: 'While there are, of course, shifts in attention *within* everyday life, the shift to a finite province of meaning is of a much more radical kind'. In their conception, "everyday life" is surrounded by provinces of meaning which implies these leaps are "unnatural" or disturbing. Sebald (2011) has suggested something similar in claiming that moving through provinces is never easy. I regard it as more accurate to say that everyday life is constituted by the totality of various

[8] Nor is Husserl's use the same as "the phenomenology of religion's".

provinces of meaning all arranged around the primary province of the natural attitude as the "lodestone". Thus, while the movement from province to province involves "leaps" and "shocks", these are by no means disturbing as implied by Berger and Luckmann. In either case, each "leap" or "shock" entails an altered state of consciousness as it adopts a new cognitive style for engaging with its thematic objects. All conscious-of within a province of meaning, by contrast, involves ultered states of consciousness.

From the perspective of philosophical phenomenology to deploy the phrase "altered states of consciousness" in the phenomenologically reduced sense means just this: *"altered states of consciousness" refer to those transitions from one province of meaning to another*. Or: *how I am engaging with an object now differs from how I was engaging with objects previously*. But this renders the phrase somewhat mundane.

DRAGONS

This seemingly random insertion has likely altered your consciousness, the word "dragons" is not something one would expect to be in the horizon of an article discussing the different phenomenologies' interpretation of "religious experience". In point of fact, the size of the font would likely have drawn the attention long before you had actually reached this part simply because the size is outside the horizon of a normally presented journal article. And as mundane and facetious as this may seem, in the phenomenologically reduced sense of philosophical phenomenology this counts as an altered state of consciousness. To emphasise, to say that religious experience involves an "altered state of consciousness" is to say nothing distinctive about that experience whatsoever.

3. What does "religious experience" mean?

There is, therefore, nothing special about altered or ultered states of consciousness because the consciousness that goes through these alterations and ulterations is the same throughout. What changes is not consciousness itself, but its "state"—"wakefulness" in the terminology of Husserl or "positionality" in the terminology of Sartre. All that "altered" indicates in the phenomenologically reduced sense is that the object which consciousness is now conscious-of requires a style of engagement different to the one previously being utilised. To ask questions of whether consciousness does indeed change in these situations is to fall down the Cartesian path of Nature vs Spirit that philosophical phenomenology steadfastly tried to avoid—that is, it is to start making certain metaphysical commitments. This raises two questions about "religious experience" more generally, however:

> First, what are we to say when the phrase "higher state" or "altered state" is used by the everyday "believer" to describe a particular experience? Have we now denied their accounts on the basis of this phenomenologically reduced understanding of "altered states"? Indeed, many of the contributors to this journal will no doubt detail numerous people using this very language. Certainly the quick impression could be that philosophical phenomenology would declare the falsity of such positions—marking a very stark contrast from the proclaimed "neutrality" of "the phenomenology of religion" indeed.

This is not necessarily the case, however. From the perspective of philosophical phenomenology when people use such language this says less about the thing experienced and more about the experiencer. More specifically, in using such language as "higher state" and "altered state" the speaker is doing two things: First, by the very fact of talking about a particular experience they are indicating that there is something worth mentioning—it *stands out* from the norm. However, we must be clear that the experience does not stand out because it involves a "higher state" and "altered state" *per se*. That is, all sorts of experiences stand out and therefore are worth mentioning. Rather, in certain cases, in order to convey to an Other why the experience stands out, the experiencer resorts to the language of "higher state" and "altered state". It is the fact that it stands out from the norm that makes it "dramatic", to use Smart's term. Take, for example two people who have identical visions of the god Lugus commanding them to lead the people to the Promised Land. The first person—a Lugite—will find this experience worth mentioning and may describe it as a "higher state of consciousness": "I was able to see Lugus by entering a higher state". The second person—a non-Lugite—however, may still mention this experience as it stands out, but offer a different perspective: "I got so drunk last night I thought saw Lugus" or "I think I may have had some sort of epileptic fit". For both, the experience is dramatic. From the perspective of philosophical phenomenology though, which account is the "true" one isn't at stake, nor are the metaphysical presuppositions behind either statement particularly important. Rather, the importance lies in how the experience is interpreted in the sense of the *meaning* it has for the experiencer.[9] This means that, second, by using the language of "altered" or "higher states", the experiencer is ascribing a particular *value* to that meaning. Specifically, it is an experience whose meaning is to be *valued*. This, in fact, would also lead to a far better use of Smart's notion of "ramifications": a "ramified" experience is one which is *valued* over others.

In this regard, the approach of philosophical phenomenology has some affinity with Ann Taves in that the focus is on 'the processes whereby people sometimes ascribe the special characteristics to things that we (as scholars) associate with terms such as "religious," "magical," "mystical," "spiritual"' (Taves 2009: 8). This would give some more sense to Schutz's own scant references to "religious experience" in his discussions of provinces of meaning. Except when it is merely listed alongside that of daydreaming, work, etc., the only other reference to "religious experience" is in another essay "Symbol, Reality, and Society" (1955/1962). Here Schutz's concern is to discuss whether finite provinces of meaning can be socialised. That is, can they be intersubjectively shared? Of provinces such as daydreams, Schutz says they cannot, but in the case of religious experiences there is 'on the one hand, the lonely vision of the mystic or of the prophet and, on the other hand, the community service – there are lonely prayers and prayers offered by the congregation' (1962: 342). As such it can be shared, and by extension it would seem that "religion" refers to a type of province of meaning. Insofar as the phrase "religious experience" does occur in Schutz's work it is clear that it means nothing "special" as Smart would have. Rather, in its phenomenologically reduced sense: *religious experience means that the person is encountering objects utilising a religious cognitive style*. And the use of such phrases

[9] Knowing the metaphysical presuppositions of the person only helps us work out how this meaning was ascribed to the experience.

as “higher” or “altered state” are an indicator of this. But such encountering is no different than encountering another object utilising a political cognitive style.

Following Taves further this also means that, described so, to speak of “religious experience” means only to ‘focus on things deemed religious’ (2009: 9). In this manner we could just as easily speak of “political experience”, “scientific experience”, all of which would involve an altered state of consciousness. Nothing “special” has been added to the discourse on religions by the phrase. But this leads to the second question: what does it mean to describe a particular experience as “religious”? Or, for that matter, what does it mean to describe an experience as “political” or “scientific”? For the last, at least, I do have an answer which involved identifying the constituents that constitute the province of meaning that we call “social science” (Tuckett 2014). What, then, would be the constituents of “religion”? On this score, philosophical phenomenology has been rather quiet. As noted above, “religion” was rather infrequently mentioned by Schutz, and Embree (2015: 8) has pointed out that it is not clear what Schutz’s “science of myth and religion” would look like.[10]

This stance happens to be indicative of many phenomenologists from the Movement. Perhaps the only phenomenologist to show a real interest in a phenomenology of religion was Max Scheler whose most consistent work on this matter was *On the Eternal in Man* (1921/2010), but even he lost interest in the topic almost immediately after this. There are several reasons for this but one that seems to stand out in the current context is that Scheler realised that his phenomenology of religion was more an apologetic for religion—a stance which he had since lost. In another instance, Husserl originally intended Heidegger to undertake a “phenomenology of religion” until he decided that Heidegger had more potential. This lack of interest I suggest—though it is only stipulation here—is because many of these early phenomenologists equated “religion” with “belief in God” which, with the Movement’s primary emphasis on intersubjectivity and how to resolve the problems of the Other’s existence, made it a topic of little use/interest. This point is well articulated in the case of Sartre. In rejecting Idealist (re. Spirit) and Realist (re. Nature) accounts for proof of the Other’s existence, Sartre sees the challenge of philosophical phenomenology to provide a positive theory of the Other’s existence that does not fall into solipsism or recourse to God (2003: 256).

The reader may object that I have summarily dismissed the works of other later phenomenologists such as Paul Ricoeur and Emmanuel Levinas who most certainly did express an interest in “religion”. The issue with these “phenomenologists” is that their status within the Movement is in some dispute. More properly they appear to belong to “the theological turn” in French phenomenology during the 1980s-1990s which was criticised by Dominique Janicaud (1991/2000) as perverting the principles of philosophical phenomenology by introducing a (biblical) God which does not belong. Now represented by the likes of Jean-Luc Marion, Jean-Louis Chrétien and Michel Henry it may be more accurate to describe this as a new invention of “phenomenology”—*phenomenological theology*.

It would seem that there has not been a serious attempt at a philosophical phenomenology of religion of late. Indeed, it currently sits on the agenda of what

[10] Though that he referred to a science of myth *and* religion might be telling in itself.

Embree (2001: 8; Moran and Embree 2004: 1-2) calls Cultural Phenomenology as a sub branch within the Movement. Thus, by way of conclusion, although there are significant grounds for taking issue with Smart's "phenomenological" account of "religious experience"—at brute an exercise in ecumenical theology—there is no full content to what an alternative philosophical phenomenological account of "religious experience" might provide, especially if speaking in terms of "altered states of consciousness" contributes nothing to it.

Initially, based on what has been discussed above regarding "altered states of consciousness" and provinces of meaning, the task of such a proper phenomenology of religion would be to determine the constituents of the "religious cognitive style". However, here a lesson should be learned from "the phenomenologies of religion" and Smart's phenomenology-of-religion. In his discussions of "higher states" and "altered states" of consciousness, Smart reveals his commitment to a metaphysical framework in which Nature and Spirit represent two separate realms, of which the latter is superior. This takes shape as the Hegelian "essence and manifestation" of "Religion and religions". The risk of speaking of a "religious cognitive style" is to fall into the same pitfall as Smart: the philosophical phenomenologist runs the risk of valorising this religious cognitive style as an essence which is manifested to varying degrees by the "concrete religions". A byproduct of such an approach is to then judge how well these religions have manifested this essence—something extraneous to aims of philosophical phenomenology. But, Taves (who happens to associate with naturalism) would be just as at risk in this regard. Indeed, precisely because she is a naturalist she happens to assume the superiority of Nature (like Metzinger)[11] and ends up just as prone to "essentialising" by the name of "reductionism".

In the light of the critical studies of Fitzgerald and Murphy, it is evident this would be the wrong approach and likely to validate the suspicions of all "phenomenologies" that I highlighted in my opening comments. As hinted at the end of section 1.2, the problem here is that if we assume the Nature/Spirit dualism, then metaphysical commitments will ensue. If, as I suggested, in the previous section that philosophical phenomenology undercuts this with the "I am"/"I am not" dualism, then a different approach is required. Building off what has been said above in regard to "higher state" or "altered states of consciousness", the principle emphasis should be on *meaning*. That is, in speaking of "things deemed religious", the emphasis on "things" by Taves makes "religion" a phenomenon: some content, some constituent of the object of experience (e.g. Lugus of the vision) makes it "religious". Remove that content/constituent and the object in question would, presumably, lose its "religious" character. In contrast to this, "Religion" in the properly phenomenologically reduced sense, I hazard, is not a phenomenon, but a *meaning* and it is the continuing task of philosophical phenomenology to analyse what that is. At the least, what this entails is that, as scholars, we should not be focusing on "things deemed religious" but on *people* deemed religious. That is, to describe an experience as a "religious experience" is to ramify it. And thus to say of someone that they had a religious experience is to ascribe that person a particular *value*—it is to ramify *them*. "Religiousness", then, is not about the Nature/Spirit dichotomy, but the "I am"/"I am not". The scholar if not careful of what this value might actually be, is at full risk of

[11] Both happen to draw on the work of Olaf Blanke (e.g. 2004; 2005) in their understanding of "altered states".

engaging the same cognitive colonialism as Ninian Smart (and Metzinger and Winkelman) when describing an experience as “religious”.

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‘Seeing One Tree Can Make a Person Smile Forever’: Research into Children’s Spirituality and Silence

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The study investigated the impact of opportunities for, and attitudes towards, silence and solitude on children’s spirituality. The researcher hypothesised that the paucity of opportunities for children to find silence would negatively affect any expressions of spirituality, with important social implications.

The research adopted a largely qualitative methodology using an initial questionnaire with 26 children aged 12-13 from a West Midlands Secondary school. This explored daily life, attitudes towards silence and meaningful experiences. The subsequent videotaped, individual 2 half-hour interviews with 10, largely self-selecting, children were informed by the children’s responses to the questionnaire though were predominantly child-led.

In both the interviews and the questionnaire approaches to silence were varied and often contradictory. Many children associated silence negatively with bereavement, and opportunities for seeking silence were often rare and seen as challenging in the context of the time pressures of a personal and societal achievement agenda. Yet despite this, many expressed a desire to find silence, with few completely averse.

Without exception the children interviewed exhibited a frequent and wide variety of those forms of spirituality already identified by previous researchers, including a sense of connectedness or relationship with the world as identified by Hay and Nye peak experiences and flow, and the expressing of life as a mystery. The children manifested profound spirituality irrespective of their access or desire for silence and often in the context of busyness or noise. This suggests that they are accessing and able to live within a non-binary, inner silence. The initial hypothesis of the research was, therefore, not proven, though whether increased access to silence might intensify such spirituality remains unanswered.

Key words: children; spirituality; silence; solitude; connectedness.

The Impetus

When the geodesic ‘*Silent Dome’* [1] arrived for the first time at a Midlands Secondary School for one week in 2005, the students were invited to come and sit among the cushions for up to 30 minutes in total silence. The response of the student body was bemusement, some derision, curiosity and not a small amount of trepidation. But still

[1] This was a freestanding geodesic tent–like structure. It had been normally used for public astronomy purposes.

they came, some to avoid lessons, one to catch up on sleep and yet others who came to think, pray, reflect, dream or listen. Invited to write of their experiences in the visitors' book they wrote of their fear of silence, boredom, and of their wonder and pleasure at being exposed to such quiet for the first time, many living in busy households with shared bedrooms. They wrote of feelings of calm and peace and, though expressed in their own words, of transcendence. This was the generation of children accustomed to being surrounded by electronic gadgets and digital media, ever in communication with their peers, and experiencing an educational context emphasising personal targets and constant progress both within lessons and throughout their time in school. Opportunities, and a desire, for 'silence' are, for the majority, rare, possibly intimidating or seen as unproductive, yet it might be in such 'silence' that 'spirituality' may be deemed to flourish.

Having been a secondary headteacher and educationalist (German and History) for a period of over 38 years, I was occasionally taken aback or at least intrigued, on taking 'cover' for absent RE teachers, at the sudden eagerness displayed in classrooms when we strayed from the designated-by-the-curriculum lesson plan (usually facts about world religions) into deeper topics involving questions such as "Why *are* we here? What is love? What happens when we die? What is spirit?", usually prompted by the children. At such times the energy in the classroom crackled with vibrancy and classroom assistants vied with children to be heard. Where, usually, was the space in children's lives for such things to be discussed; was it legitimate/helpful/productive for them to ask those questions in an educational setting? I was particularly aware of my prejudices borne of a Catholic early upbringing, my training and interest in Transcendental Meditation and Buddhism, and my long-standing membership of a Julian meditation group[2], all with an emphasis on silence. Unsurprisingly, the introduction of 'The Dome' led by a practising Buddhist teacher was catalysed by all the above experiences.

The positive responses in the classroom and the impact of this 'Silent Dome' prompted the desire to explore, by research, any connection between a child's 'spirituality' and the available opportunities (or lack of them) for silence and solitude; and, in truth, the rare and privileged opportunity to listen at length to children talking of their lives and possibly their spirituality was irresistible.

This article describes a pilot study and one leading to further, wider research. It does not, therefore, present a generalised view on children and silence. A brief overview of the influential literature in respect of silence and of children's spirituality is provided, followed by an explanation of the organisation of the interviews and the background of the cohort. Details, transcripts and analysis of the interviews under key headings already identified by previous researchers in the field are followed by an assessment of the importance, contingency and impact of silence for the children in respect of their spirituality. Finally, future research imperatives are suggested.

Interest and research into both child spirituality and into the relevance of silence in general have intensified over the last few decades, in particular due to the debate

[2] A Julian meditation group is a group of 6-15 people who meet for contemplative prayer in the Christian tradition. There is no special method of meditation and the group comprises both church members and those with no formal links. The meetings are inspired by the work of Julian of Norwich (1342-*ca*1416), anchorite, and her 'shewings', printed as *Revelations of Divine Love.*

around secularisation, its impact and concerns, and the perceived raised level of the problems of adolescent alienation and poor mental health in Western and Antipodean developed nations and also, increasingly, in the Far East.[3]

William James' (1842-1910) work on Religious Experience (James 1982, first published 1902)), here equated with spirituality, suggesting that such experiences might be the subject of scientific analysis, provided a foundation for later work on spirituality in the 20th and 21st centuries. Alistair Hardy's (1896-1985) subsequent foundation of The Religious Experience Research Centre in Oxford in 1969 and his collection of data prompted his analysis that spirituality was a fundamental human trait and an evolutionary survival mechanism. His successor, Edward Robinson's (1921-2013) methodology (Robinson 1977) of in-depth interviews with children led to a challenging of the dominant current view of the linear and chronological development of childhood itself, suggesting instead that these experiences are best described as an element of the whole person, independent of any chronological stage.

Key studies involving large -scale interviews with children were undertaken in the mid and late 20th century. Robert Coles' (Coles 1977: xvi) taped research with 500 children across a broad international base determined that the children were indeed 'seekers' and work with 3,000 children in Finland by Kalevi Tamminen (Tamminen 1994:62) concluded that religious experience was relatively general among children, though decreasing nearer adolescence. Such views were concomitant with Thun's findings of the capacity for wonder in children from the early primary stage, though vanishing by adolescence. (Thun 1964)

The expression of this spirituality was not unproblematic, with the knowledge gained often varying from previously taught truths and a trope of the taboo of expression and listeners' doubt leading to suppression, repression (Hart 2003) and depression (Farmer 1992, Scott 2004), or a culturally mediated 'blotting out' (Hay and Nye 2008:57).

The last decade of the 20th century saw a major and pivotal piece of research by David Hay and Rebecca Nye (Hay and Nye 2008) Also cognizant of the paucity of research into the spirituality of children, in contrast to many other areas, especially the cognitive, and countering the work of the Piagetian Ronald Goldman – who describes mystics as rare and almost unknown amongst children – and with a strong belief in the reality of children's spirituality, often hidden due to 'the culturally constructed forgetfulness' (Hay and Nye 2008:9) and social pressure earlier recognized by Lorelie Farmer (Farmer 1992: 267), they sought to examine how this spirituality might present itself. They noted that following the 1944 Education Act and the 1988 Education reform Act, the word 'spirituality' was increasingly publicly acceptable, though usually linked with religion and religious terminology. Although accepting that all human experience is at least partly culturally created, Hay insisted on the biological contribution to spirituality, regarding this as our inheritance, which permitted us to transcend culture and indeed religions, a view supported by Champagne (Champagne 2003:56)) whose 3 modes of spirituality: sensitive, relational and existential, reflected a concept of the intrinsic

[3] Janet Seden, Dept. of Social Work at the Open University 2004 'Childhood', Open Learning, suggests that neglecting children's sense of truth, justice or mystery may leave them expressing their terror and pain in ways which society might find unacceptable, and that it is important to respect spiritual values.

nature of spirituality. Hay went further, however, regarding Religious Experience as a *perception* of an objective reality and not just a subjective experience.

Hay posited the need for a more holistic shift in the understanding of children's spirituality, a move away from the previously prevalent 'god talk' of earlier research, with a focus, rather, on the responses of children to every-day and ordinary activities. This theme was underlined by psychiatrists Houskamp, Fisher and Stuber (Houskamp, Fisher and Stuber 2004: 221-230)) and researcher Janet Seden (Seden 2004) in their emphasis on the therapeutic importance of relating to children as spiritual beings.

Hay and Nye's interviews resulted in the identification of 3 key categories for the discerning of spirituality: awareness sensing (heightened awareness and flow, including a felt sense and reflecting the work of Gendlin and Csikszentmihalyi), mystery sensing, and value sensing (the search for ultimate meaning and purpose). A signature phenomenon was perceived: that of relational consciousness[4] – an unusual consciousness or perceptions relative to other passages of conversation spoken by the child expressing how the child related to things/ people and herself or himself or God – a meta-cognition by children of themselves as subjects in certain contexts and a possible model for adult spirituality.

Noting Zohar and Marshall's (Zohar and Marshall 2001) assertion of a neurological basis for spirituality[5] and the theory of spiritual intelligence, Australian educationalist Brendan Hyde's (Hyde 2008) work with catholic primary children prompted a view beyond that of David Hay - that spirituality was concerned with more than connectedness and relationality - it was concerned with ultimate unity and transcendence of the ego. His identification of 4 key characteristics: Felt sense, Integrating Awareness, Weaving the Threads of Meaning (responding to the question - *I wonder what you think really, really matters*) and Spiritual Questing were felt to be particularly acute when traditional forms of reference were diminishing. (Hyde 2008(b): 117) His view was that such characteristics could be nurtured, with important pedagogic implications.

This approach reflected and found resonance with the work of Clive Erricker, the founder in the 1990s of *The International Journal for Children's Spirituality*, whose listening to children with 'an open ear' catalysed much research in the 21st century. Educational Psychologists Anna Lipscomb and Irvine Gersch (Lipscomb and Gersch 2012) and their interviews with 20 children (aged 10-11) using 6 core listening concepts, reframed spirituality within a philosophical rather than a religious context, examining the meanings children attach to their lives, motives, drives and desires. Importantly, they averred that the concrete and metaphysical aspects of a child's search for meaning could be perceived as a relationship between their visible manifestations (behaviour and learning) and the *root* of these (spiritual and

[4] Hay questioned in 2010 whether in fact this were the right phrase, suggesting Heidegger's 'Dasein's comportment towards', though he continued to use the term relational consciousness. 'Spirituality versus Individualism; Why We Should Nurture Relational Consciousness', an article based on the Roehampton Conference of June 1998.*ICJS* 5 Vol.1 (2010), 37-48 p.40.

[5] In this the idea of Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) was introduced, extending the work of Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences. This SQ was based on the brain's 3rd. neural system, the synchronous oscillation that unifies data across the whole brain; often referred to as the 'god spot'.

philosophical beliefs), the connections between which a child might usefully be supported to discover.

The interrelationship of aspects of spirituality was posited by the Australian educationalist Micheline Moriarty (Moriarty 2011) following research with 24 Primary-age children, using Champagne's 'spiritual modes of being' methodology. She also noted the importance of a 'felt sense' and the meaning-making shaped by community values, the mass media, and their own sensory and imaginative experiences. Although she noted a progression across her four stages – Consciousness, Relationality, Identity and Roadmap – she then modified her model to a more dialectical conceptualisation, envisaging a circular or spiral mode, a process, rather than a state of being, with external circumstance affecting spirituality at any stage, a model supported by the work of Tobin Hart (Hart 2003) and Tony Eaude [6](Eaude 2003). Later work focusing particularly on the development of an age-appropriate measure for spiritual sensitivity – *The Spiritual Sensitivity Scale for Children (SSSC)* – was undertaken by Stoyles *et al*, using questionnaires with 118 children reflecting 4 domains of spiritual sensitivity (Stoyles, Stanford, Caputi, Keating and Hyde 2012). In seeking this, however, they did not wish to dilute the concept of 'the unique signature phenomenon' noted by Hay and Nye. They acknowledged previous research findings which noted a child's ability to express wonder and fascination about experiences and sharing 'special moments with others', and also being able to reflect and be lost in an activity, both of which might correspond to Hay and Nye's Relational Consciousness analysis. Their caveats of the use of this scale included stressing that SSSC did not measure spirituality per se, but provided a measure of the sensitivity founded within the child's spirituality, that any religious experience may be variously interpreted, and that children (in particular in a therapeutic context) should be made comfortable with the uniqueness of their own spirituality, valuing it independently of any external valuation – a recurrent research finding.

Connections between emotions and spirituality were particularly explored by UK educationalist Ron Best (Best 2011) who advocated looking at the feeling of an event, and the transcending of emotion, and that a holistic approach to children's spirituality with schools providing opportunities to experience '*the dance'* and restoring emotions, as Scheindlin had already suggested, to their proper place.

The by now rich research and scholarship into children's spirituality has concentrated thus far on the definition, identification and acceptance of the critical importance of this for children in terms of mental welfare, social stability, personal development, fulfilment and happiness. In contrast there has been far less research into the possible contexts for the nurturing of such spirituality and the importance and power of 'silence' in this respect has been powerfully advocated rather than extensively researched.

The teaching of silence, immobility and a 'conquering of the self' for children were notably emphasized by Maria Montessori (1870-1952) (Montessori 2004, first published 1948) whose definition of silence related to that which detaches us from the noise of everyday life, isolating the mind and 'a call upon their souls'. Theophil Thun's

[6] Eaude also challenged the concept of EQ, believing it to be unhelpful, as if spirituality could be measured like cognitive intelligence.

(Thun 1964) introduction in Germany of *eine regelmaessige Denkstunde*[7] into the curriculum and Karen Marie Yust's (Yust 2008:4) work with 5-6 year olds during 15 minutes of silence, suggested that children not only have the ability to sit in silence but desire it, and noted, too, by Brendan Hyde (Hyde 2008(a): Chapter 4) who comments that children seemed to need to honour the quiet and the sacredness that the activity required.

Work in China by Margaret Taplin (Taplin 2011) on silent sitting identified the positive effect of this on children's well-being and Rachel Kessler's (Kessler 2000) work in the USA proposing 7 pathways for feeding the spirit, included silence and solitude, noted the hostility of contemporary culture to this and the process of tactile *defensiveness* where children envelop themselves in, for example, blanket due to overstimulation. This work was mirrored by Julian Stern's advocacy of enstatic schools (Stern 2013) supporting ' being contented in the self alone' and making time for quiet contemplation in busy lessons.

A more nuanced approach to the understanding of silence was provided by Helen Lees (Lees 2012). Lees differentiates between 'strong' silence, silence which delivers positive effects and benefits, and 'weak' silence which is negative in effect and often externally imposed- a 'silencing'. She stresses the non-binary nature of 'positive' silence, as a silence, which is not in contradistinction to noise, and, importantly, she describes states of mind such as hypersynchrony, (Lees 2012 referencing Siegel) a meditative state, which is by its very nature silent. Referring to Sikszentmihalyi's concept of the state of '*flow*' when the mind is concentrated on a task she stresses that this is not a 'techniqued silence' but rather coherence, a natural part of human experience, occurring often spontaneously and repeatedly and is a non-dualistic state of mind. (Lees 2012: 7)

This reflects the work of Dauenhauer (Dauenhauer 1979: 437) whose definition of silence stressed the 'yielding to a power beyond our control following upon an awareness of finitude and awe'. Though the yielding in silence binds and joins. The latter two approaches to silence had particular resonance in this research, suggesting as they do active states that are inner, ever accessible and not contingent on the external provision of 'non-noise'.

The context

The defining of 'Spirituality' is fraught with difficulty. For the purpose of the research, therefore, 'spirituality' – a 'not observable reality' (Moriarty 2011: 276) – was understood to include a broad spectrum of definition including relational consciousness (Hay and Nye 2008) the search for meaning and purpose in life (Bussing, Foller-Mancini, Gidley and Heusser 2010: 28) the transcendence of the ego, connectedness, and the experience of something greater than the self, including the sacred (Lipscomb and Gersch 2012:8 referencing Benson Roehlkepartain and Rude). Silence, too, may be variously interpreted and in the early stages I chose an inclusive definition to incorporate stillness and solitude as well as an absence of sound. A more complex understanding of silence, however, emerged during the process of research.

[7] Literally a regular thinking session.

The research undertaken had several aims: to examine the daily life of the child in order to establish the frequency of, or potential for, silent episodes; to establish whether the child manifested any aspects of spirituality and to analyse the nature of any such occasions where this was the case; to determine whether silence was a *sine qua non* or precipitant of these manifestations; to examine the attitudes of children towards solitude and silence in general.

It focused on a single class of 26 school students from a West Midlands Comprehensive school with a cohort deemed average, 18 girls and 8 boys, aged 12-13 years. The age group had been selected partly for organisational and partly for child developmental reasons. This age group was unlikely to be adversely affected by any removal from timetabled lessons, being pre-GCSE and they are still organised as mixed ability groups. They are mostly in early puberty and so potentially less inhibited than a post-pubescent child and marginally less driven to the social conformity so strongly evident in a young teenage population. This class was selected from 7 similar classes of mixed ability, ethnicity, religious affiliation and family size, to suit the convenience, and following the judgment of, the Head of Religious Education, who supported the research.

Following completion of the initial questionnaire, containing questions and a prose section, the dynamic of the subsequent interviews was affected.

The unanticipated emphasis on death, grief and silence prompted a shift in the questions to be asked in the in-depth interviews, particularly in the second set of interviews. Here a photograph was introduced of a child alone by the sea and in silence. The researcher then offered a series of questions examining the emotions of being in silence and its associations, including the question: *Is it scary for you*? The apparent frequent association of silence with negative life events merited deeper exploration.

'It's just like a place of happiness' – The Spirituality of Peak Experience and 'Flow'

Two occasions stood out in the interviews. They indicate what Ron Best describes as 'affects'. (Best 2008a: 80) when he cautioned against the over-inclusive nature of definitions of spiritual experience, leading to 'just about everything' being so defined, he advised instead that we examine what the experience felt like from the inside, beyond emotion: 'I am the recipient or object of an unexpected, unpredictable affect, which happened *to* and *in me'.*

Penny[8], a very intense 13 year old, leant forward smiling and, speaking quickly and volubly, despite her self-declared shyness, regaled the researcher with her views on what mattered in life. When asked, towards the end of the first interview, about a moment of joy in her life, however, the atmosphere changed.

> *R: (Researcher) When were you happiest? (**pause**) Can you think of a moment when you were really, really full of joy?*

[8] All names have been changed to preserve anonymity

*P: (Penny) Yeah. (**Quietly and clearly moved**)*

R: Can you share it with me?

*P**:(slowly**) I remember... 'cos I felt real happiness when I reflect back on it. One time I was truly happy was when I was out with my friends and we were just walking and talking about nothing and...crazy, pretty much...and we went into McDonalds and we were talking so loudly you could feel everyone staring at us while we were just being these crazy people...even though I knew they were watching us I didn't feel self-conscious like I usually would. I was just laughing and naturally trying to be happy. That's when I had a revelation (**voice breaking**)... and I decided that... I tried to be a happier person in my life. (very **moved**)*

Pause

R: How did it feel?

*P: I don't really know, (**small voice**) I think I really let myself go and just.....not had all these thoughts about ...everything, and just let myself go really. That's it.*

Penny is very tearful as she recalls this moment. She went on to describe how her negative thoughts which always floated around her brain were '*finally let go'*, how much being with other people had helped and when prompted by the researcher with '*It's something we feel*...?' She responded: '...*We should keep to ourselves*.' She then added that she had never shared it with another person.

A similar moment of release was described by the self-described 'quirky' Sandra, who lives with her mother during the week, going to her father's at weekends, says she has trouble concentrating, thinks about religion 'a great deal' and who stated that she '*has her own thing going on'*, which includes the burning of incense sticks to help her relax and think. The year before she was interviewed she went with her father's adopted children to the hospital to see her newborn sibling and their mother, her stepmother. When asked about a moment of joy she responded:

*I liked going to the hospital in the car with my other brothers because we were all getting excited, and we had, like, some crisps and sweets in the back of the car, because it was a long journey to the hospital. And when we got there, it was like we were running and someone was saying 'Don't run!' but we just didn't care about the other person saying 'Don't run!' because we were so excited. And we had to run up, like, four flights of stairs and we seemed to get just so much energy from being just so excited. It was **really** good.*

Both of these peak experiences stood out for these girls, not just because of the emotions involved, it was beyond emotion, but because the experiences were transformative and physical. Both girls were beyond caring about normal conventions, being transported by happiness. In these experiences both were in relationship to others, whether friends or a baby, achieving the I-thou relationship that is achieved by

the letting go to receive another subject. As Ron Best describes, 'In letting go of the self we allow the other to fill our world and in a sense be completed by them'.

These experiences are also an example of 'flow' identified by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (Csikszentmihalyi 2008) where an experience, providing unique and memorable moments, changed a person's perspective. Such 'flow' during periods of very intense concentration, where the activity is so totally absorbing that all outside stimuli seem to disappear, was readily experienced by many of the children. The 'point mode', a 'heightened awareness of the here and now' and single-pointedness were repeatedly exhibited.

Rosie, who has 'little time for reflection' described her experience of playing an on-line game:

> *R: Have you ever been so involved in what you're doing that everything goes?*
>
> *Ro: Yeah. Maybe like when I'm playing a game or something that I'm really interested in and like it's full-screen and I lose track of time and it just flies by, then I just turn round and it's like ten o'clock already! And I forget about everything else and just concentrate on that.*
>
> *R: And what's that like when you're in that state?*
>
> *Ro: Mmm... It's a good place to be, I guess. 'Cos then that means you're enjoying it and that you're involved and it's good for you and it's.....*
>
> *R: Are you still there? Is Rosie still there or are you in a different place?*
>
> *Ro: **Thinking hard**. I guess I'm like 'in' the game sort of thing. Like involved. Mmm... I don't really know how to explain it. .:I guess....I am.....sort of **in** the game. I'm just sort of playing it and my mind is fully on the game and it's just playing along, I guess**. (very quiet now**)*
>
> *R: Stay there. Stay where you are right now, because you're thinking about you and the game... right...(**Rosie is focused and smiling**) hang on... **pause**. We're just trying to get you to describe what that is like 'Time goes...'. **Pause**. What does that feel like?*
>
> *Ro: **Long pause**. Rosie smiles. I dunno. It's hard. It's just like a place of happiness. So like I'm fully involved and it just feels good. It's interesting...pause....., you can get into it and ... shrugs. That's it really.*
>
> *R: What's interesting is that you've used the word 'in' and 'into' twice. You said, 'I'm **in** the game, I'm **in** it. Is it Rosie who is in the game?*
>
> *Ro: Yeah.*
>
> *R: Where is Rosie at this point?*

Ro: I'm still like outside but my mind is in the game **(smiles***). My mind is, like, involved. I'm still like outside but my mind is like in the game (**This was said twice**). Involved.*

R: So...is that Rosie's body is kind of outside there?

Ro: Yeah

R: But the mind is somewhere else?

Ro: Like the mind is in focus and inside the game.

R: And that makes you happy?

Ro: Yeah

This detailed questioning method was deeply influenced by the research of Claire Petitmengin [9]who describes a form of questioning which might require 30 minutes of questioning to probe 1-2 seconds of experience. She describes the evoking of a past experience as a very specific act and the type of memory is a passive memory. A detailed series of questions, with each answer determining the next, may help to evoke things that were possibly unknown or unnoticed at the point of experience. Petitmengin describes the process as 'Loosening our grasp on the 'what' in order to let the 'how' appear' – an invisible microgenesis. She describes this process as 'an underground universe' and it is this universe that some apparently persistent questioning in these interviews is seeking to explore.

Penny, describing this absorption, declares herself to be surprised:

R: Have you ever been absorbed in something so totally that you don't know what on earth is going on? And you kind of come out of it?

*P: (**Laughs**) Yes!*

R: Have you?

*P: Oh yes! I definitely have been like that. 'Cos I was walking one time and got absorbed in my thoughts and suddenly I looked up and I've no clue where I am (**laughte**r) and I found myself just lost, 'cos I actually just got myself lost in thought.*

R: Gosh.

P: And I had to find my way back home. That was definitely when I completely lost myself .I just didn't realize I was still walking. I didn't know where I was going. I was just following the route...

[9] Presentation of a paper 'Researching the Dynamics of Lived Experience' Boston 2014 at The International Symposium for Contemplative Studies, Mind and Life Institute.

R: So, who was doing the walking, Penny?

P: What do you mean?

R: Well, you lost yourself.

P: In thought

R: In thought, and yet you were walking, so...what was happening there I wonder.

*P: You just do it subconsciously. I feel like you have certain reactions, like it feels ... (**inaudible as she is covering her face)***

R: Did you enjoy that?

P: Yeah! It surprises me but I really love how you can be thinking about something but still acting like you would in the normal world and you just like....it's really weird, it's just like, you're thinking about one thing but you're doing something else fine and normal and you just come out and think how have you done it.

This surprise at the experience of absorption was a common theme in the interviews. Karl describes deep absorption so that he doesn't notice the passing of time when playing at a school concert:

R: So, What's it like when you're in that space?

K: It's... er... I don't know it just happens.

R: But it's different from other times when time is moving dud u dud u..

K: Yes. You've got... it's just a rush where you're so excited and energetic and it just goes and you just do it

R: And are you in your own body? Or are you outside it, or where are you?

*K: I'm **in** but yeah, I'm in.*

R: You said I'm in but....

K: Aargh!!

*R: You knew I wouldn't let you get away with that! (**Laughte**r)*

*K: (**Long pause for thinking)** But I think er... I don't know...I'm in, like playing or whatever but then I'm out, taking everything in, just experiencing it...even more.*

Penny shook her head in wonder as she described her utter focus in an Art lesson whilst drawing a human eye:

> *P: I just started drawing and I just completely involved myself in this 'cos we were drawing eyes-I just love drawing eyes, 'cos many people say it's hard but I love the complexity of them... and suddenly it's like... Oh the lesson's over and I just look at them and say 'Huh?' And I look at my piece and realize that I've done so much. And I didn't realize because it felt like I'd done barely anything. ....*
>
> *R: So what just happened?*
>
> *P: I'd done it and I'd lost myself in the thought of Art and imagining the different details...and I barely noticed that it had already come together. It's really strange. (**Covers her mouth. She seems to do this at key moments.)...(Thinking)** In a way it feels like your mind is empty. Like when you're focused on one thing, you're completely focused **on** it, usually like you can have a few thoughts floating round then they suddenly vanish and...it's almost like you're clearing your mind... All this thought, you just go, and you just focus on it and you're just completely unaware of your surroundings, like, for example, you may not feel thirsty and this is a strange thing because now, when I'm talking, I'm just drinking and drinking, but when you're focused you just sometimes forget the normal things you'd do, like you forget you're blinking, you forget you're blinking completely...all the things that you normally think about just disappear and your mind is really empty apart from that one thought.*
>
> *R: Why do they disappear I wonder*
>
> *P:I have no idea... 'cos it's almost like you can be thinking about almost everything and anything, but then you're only focusing on one minute thing, like almost like a speck of dust... 'cos your mind's endless in a way and you can think about almost anything.*

Asked whether this experience was pleasurable, Penny explained that it was good in a way 'being lost' as she just wanted to be hidden.

> *P: It feels like it's me when I'm completely lost. I feel like the true me, the one that nobody really knows, 'cos that's the 'me' that's hidden.*

She expands on this when asked which 'you' was there when she is absorbed.

> *P: It's kind of like hard to explain. It feels like there's one me there but it's almost like a me that I don't know fully myself...so, in a way, it's a 'you' but you don't know who they are. And in theory then, they're truly lost in a way.*

This graphic description of a developing self-transcendence in which 'the self is embedded in something greater than the self ' underlines the view that spirit is not

simply a part of religiosity but rather a central part of human nature (Lipsom and Gersch 2012) It corresponds to the relational consciousness identified by Hay and Nye by virtue of its particularly high level of perceptiveness in contrast to other parts of the conversation. Furthermore, this distinctive and highly significant mode of speech, frequently signalled by a shift in voice quality, for example a reduction in volume and pace, and accompanied by a palpable alteration of atmosphere and vibration, increasingly emotional, highlighted an important, memorable and seemingly ineffable event. Hay and Nye noted that such consciousness reflects an awareness of the child of themselves as subjects: a reflective consciousness and a form of spirituality. Spirituality in children has many manifestations. In examining the forms of spirituality that should be looked for when talking to children, Hay and Nye referenced Alfred Schultz' description of a raised awareness described as 'tuning' as a sense of unity, for example when listening to music or at family celebration. (Hay and Nye 2008: 68) This was strongly evident in the children interviewed.

Describing himself as 'more philosophical than religious', sportsman Karl describes a period of happiness in Kenya:

> *R: Why were you happy then?*
>
> *K: Because we were just out... together!... and looking at stuff, stuff that you wouldn't normally find anywhere else, like elephants and cheetahs and stuff. But I felt we were all together and looking at like... the wonders... if you want... of the world. That's what made me happiest*.

Karl explained that his parents worked long hours in demanding jobs and his two siblings were either at university or with a girlfriend.

> *R: What is it about that that was really special then?*
>
> *K: It was just sharing the experience. .. I think that sharing makes it bigger, so... 'Cos if you feel happy, but you're on your own, you can't express it to anybody, so when there's other people around you can express it, and then you can be happier... and then people will then be happy as well.*

'*It's an infectious thing'*– Children in Relationship with Others, God and the World

This desire for and joy in connectedness, illustrated by Karl proved a common theme amongst the children interviewed, whether a connectedness with others, animals or nature. Described by Hay and Nye as 'one of the core motifs of spirituality' (Hay and Nye 2008: 109, 141) and one, which has specific societal and individual benefits, the children repeatedly described their belief in its importance.

When Carla stated her belief in a God, and one who created us to be happy, she stresses that such happiness is when:

> *Not only you're happy, but the people around you are happy as well.*

When asked how that worked, and after a long pause to consider the question, she stated that when someone else had done something, (and this was presumably something positive)... you felt happy inside for them. In a later interview she expanded on this to suggest:

> *When you're close to people...I think anything that makes **them** happy touches you inside as well.... it's an infectious thing.*

Sadness, too, was infectious for her.

Such connectedness was echoed by Sangeeta, who was asked when she had been most happy:

> *When I just make someone else happy, that makes you feel happy... I feel good about myself 'cos I've made someone feel good that I care about... Ooh, when there's someone really, really, really old (**an appreciated diplomacy**) and they're walking past and you smile, and they smile back – that's one of the nicest feelings ever, because it's a stranger and we know nothing about them, we're going to never see each other, but we smile and say 'hello' – like people are caring.*

Karl went further, declaring that although he didn't think there was a God, that: *as a unit, the whole race, we are like one big God... together we can do stuff... that we just couldn't do on our own.* He expressed the importance of sharing experiences: ***You're** feeling that and then you feel that **they** feel what you feel, which is... happiness or something. And then it just makes you feel better.* Screwing up his face in his efforts to convey this more accurately, he described this form of happiness experienced by him at a live Rugby match where his team won, though stressing that had they failed the feeling would have been the same: *Because you know that you're not the only one who feels it.*

According to Stephen, all beings have a role-as part of the 'team': *cos if there wasn't a spider for flies, then flies would be everywhere. So it's like everyone has a job to do*. Being part of 'the collective' was crucial for Stephen and he, too, stressed that when everyone around you was happy, then it made **you** happy as well.

Though these children had little opportunity to experience nature daily, living in an urban environment, the impact was often profound when the opportunity did occur. Susan, describing walking under a canopy of trees, described it as: *Like being blocked from the rest of the world in a way.* She went on to express her joy at being able to converse with her family, away from the distraction of iPads, and was clear in her concern for nature: *Because nature made us... and stuff like the crops and water comes (sic) from nature... like, all the stuff in the rainforests, like, helps cure, like, medicines and stuff... like, we need it, so we shouldn't bring it down*. She then extended this duty of care to animals.

When examining the proffered photograph of a girl looking out to sea, Sandra was emphatic about wanting to be there, for the beauty. Describing walking alone and the very brief interludes of silence following a rare lull in road traffic she lowers her voice:

> *You can just finally hear the trees... I always just smile to myself, 'cos you just hear nature itself and hear the birds and see the trees... and it's really beautiful... and it's just the hint of nature, almost like a speck of dust in the universe. Like seeing just one tree can just make a person smile forever... if you look at it truly and just think about it, 'cos nature is giving you life, with oxygen and it's working its whole life to preserve nature in a way... I almost feel that every part of nature and every single plant, kind of has a mind of its own... and helps us live, as a sacrifice of their own life.*

This connectivity – joy and relationship with nature and others – was often expressed by the children in suddenly quiet voices, and, as they appeared to go inwards, they manifested pleasure, fascination and wonder. This corresponds to the *mysterium tremendum* identified by Rudolf Otto, manifesting as 'supreme fascination, and that which cannot be 'unfolded'. (Otto 1958:41)

'The key in the engine that makes it start' – Life as Mystery with Meaning

When asked by the researcher 'Why are we here?' few of the children said that they didn't know. Instead their responses often showed a sense of purpose in a world, which had meaning, though they struggled to find words to convey their comprehension of it. David Hay suggests that such responses are often 'the secondary products of spiritual stirrings' and thus the comments were particularly pertinent to this research. (Hay and Nye 2008:77)

Catholic Carla, stressing the importance of happiness, believed that God created us to be happy, that we go to heaven after dying where there was a better life and where we would all be happy. After pausing at length for thought, she declared that if the world were a bit more like heaven... it would be better for everyone. Describing the intense pressure of homework, activities and sport and describing her weekends and holidays as 'almost like a school day' she explained:

> *Because you don't want to let anyone down... I just think that sometimes it can get too much... everything, with the homework and netball and everything. Because I think in 200 years, I don't think it's going to be that important... I don't know how to describe it really.*

Sangeeta, a devout Muslim, talking of death and the purpose of life, laughed as she explained that at death it was like results day in school and that life was a test of faith and the ability to show strength in weak times. She '*tried to be good*' and believed herself to be religious but not really spiritual, though she would like to be.

> *I would like to think that being spiritual means 'in peace and calm' and just being connected... I don't really know... connected to like... God? Or things you believe in.*

The non-theist Karl pondered much on the free will of the human species - the prime species. Asked whether being the prime species was important he quickly retorted:

> *Yeah, I don't think about me being whole. I think about me being inside this body and making it work and stuff, like...yeah...like my personality was chosen to be inside this body. I kind of believe that if we die, we don't just die... our personality, we all get consciousness inside another body or something.*

This view was echoed by Susan, an only child, who believed in reincarnation and a soul. Attempting to explain why we are here she posited:

> *I'd probably just say normal evolution, but for some reason we just got an extra thing and we just started sharpening things, to, like, make weapons and how we made this all happen I don't really understand how... I don't really know if there's something out there, but I believe in reincarnation, because (*otherwise*) it would be like so many souls gone...*

When asked how she would describe a soul she was very clear:

> *Like something within you that makes everything work; like the key in the engine that makes it start. I don't particularly believe in heaven-I just believe you're put back into use, like, on earth. And I think it's got your characteristics as well, like, and your genes, but that's just how you look, but also your characteristics, like who you really are, like inside.*

The children needed time to express themselves and such descriptions were almost always punctuated with pauses for concentrated thought. Once again it was these pauses that were often the indicator of an imminent expression of wonder about life. Penny asked herself whether life weren't some big experiment and wondered often why we were here. Her voice broke as she manifested a completely different persona:

> *Sometimes I think... we're just living to try to expand on... this big challenge... and to live through all these ages and to develop more... a goal... and to try to build up to it.*

She had already engaged with such questions and was envious of others who had a faith. Following a lengthy discussion about reincarnation, she concluded:

> *I think that it would actually be quite bad if we found out. It would go into chaos for some reason and it's like if we knew what happened when you die it would just change everything; it would affect your whole life. I mean, if you knew you were going to be reborn, you would think 'Oh, it doesn't matter what I do in life and I can risk everything'... but when you're about to die you make one final choice whether you'll be a bad person or a good person in this next one* (**meaning 'life'**)... *so I kind of feel that there is an earthly or godly presence, but I still stick to my scientific facts.*

Sandra also stressed her belief in a strong external control, prompting much laughter:

> *Maybe just like a larger game of SIMS*.[10]

One of the most joyful interviews expounding a clear view of the meaning of life was with Greg. For him heaven was rather like earth, though everyone was nice and it felt like your best day, but every day. He believed himself to be quite spiritual:

> *Because I think I'm lucky to be who I am... I'm lucky to be alive. I believe in Science as well. I believe that God made Science.*

Greg prayed to God in whom he had a strong belief when he was quiet and believed that God was very near him, not judging. When he described his own happiness, particularly when achieving at sport, he insisted:

> *It makes me feel that I'm kind of in heaven, 'cos I'm really happy. It makes me feel out of this world...it feels like God's sort of thanking me, or God, like, appreciating me and giving me the joy of being happy.... I feel like he's on my side.*

These children's thoughts were prompted both by a range of questions and by none: Why are we here? What do you think happens when we die? What makes you happy? What is the meaning of life? However, sometimes they arose impromptu. Though their backgrounds differed in respect of religiosity, from the deeply and actively religious to avowed scientific approaches, their search for meaning did not. This concurs with the findings by Bussing (Bussing, Foller Mancini and Heusser 2010) from research with 254 adolescents where meaning in life, rather than religiosity, mattered to the teenagers. This was reiterated by the educationalist Marian de Souza who, citing Eckersley describes well-being as derived, amongst other causes, from' a belief that we are part of something bigger than ourselves', the awareness of a transcendent dimension. (De Souza 2009) This awareness was most clearly expressed when the children discussed the 'going beyond everyday things', questioning who they were.

What am I doing here? – Who Am I?

Carla, almost whispering, asked about times when she might be going beyond everyday things, answered:

> *I don't know when it happens but I actually...I go a bit, like, blank I suppose...and I sort of, it's really weird, I go blank and then I sort of question where I am and like 'who are we?'...and it's really weird.... It feels a bit scary and it only takes a couple of minutes and then I suddenly go back to.... just as if I sort of think like 'How am I here?' and 'And how is this? What am I doing here?'*

Of particular pertinence to the research was her response when asked if this were experienced alone or in silence:

[10] An interactive computer game, popular with teenagers and some adults, where whole towns are created and populated and lives are determined by the player.

> *Not always. Sometimes at home, I might be sitting at a table and suddenly.... it's very strange.*

Penny, asked to explain what spirituality meant to her, was very clear in her intense and tremulous response:

> *I think that spirituality to me, in my opinion, is where you reflect on life and see the decisions you have made, you can see how they made an impact on it.... you just, like, let everything out and you just have a moment to just be yourself. That's what I feel spirituality is about: trying to figure out your own person, even though you really can't.*

Stephen's confident belief in reincarnation and its *sort of continuous cycle* was just part of his regular conjecture about humanity and its purpose:

> *I just sort of think. Whenever I'm just walking down the road my mind will be on something. Sort of thinking about various questions I ask myself like: Why did this happen? Isn't it weird that that happened?*

Sandra's view of life was unequivocal:

> *Don't take it for granted, don't do things that you'll regret, 'cos you know, you're going to regret them but you're going to make a few mistakes along the way to learn about people and yourself...I think that we'll evolve into something better.*

The ever-grateful Greg, reflecting on the world and on his own self ponders on how lucky he is to be himself:

> *And I'm really lucky that I'm myself and I'm living when I am, and I'm having a really nice life. I feel happy just thinking about who I am and how lucky I am to be me... Sometimes I keep it to myself... most of the time I just smile.*

In many cases the children would not have described these experiences or views as spiritual; for them it was just a part of who they were and part of the mystery of life. Nevertheless, and within the context of the definition of Spirituality already outlined, these children manifested manifold examples of those forms of spirituality most associated with children. The question to be answered is whether such forms are contingent on or affected by access to and attitudes towards silence and solitude.

'I think it would be a bit weird' **– Attitudes towards, and Opportunities for, Silence**

Following the results of the questionnaire, where attitudes towards silence were seen to be often ambivalent and associated with loneliness and negative life events, both sets of interviews sought to explore these themes either by direct questioning or through a picture prompt of a girl staring out to sea. Similar tropes emerged of thoughts of bereavement and funerals, loneliness, being viewed as a 'loner' and, emphatically,

fear of non-productivity in the context of a school and social environment dedicated to achievement.

When Rosie described obtaining silence between gaps in homework, she then continued:

> *I always have to be, like, doing something. So, if I'm not doing anything, like anything at all, then I feel that I've wasted that time... 'cos I wouldn't really be doing anything, like,...productive...even though I don't really do much productive anyway!*

In contrast, the active Muslim Sangeeta, in a household of 8, many having left home or working, feels comfortable with silence:

> *I think it's peaceful... everyone needs space... and time when they can reflect... and let just... because you need to keep that composure... because without that you'd just fall apart and you'd be depressed.*

She went on to explain that when you were happy, you tended to be silent, just to think about it.

Karl felt differently. When viewing the photograph, he explained that this was something he would like to do, if stressed, but not if happy. Being alone was the worst thing. Asked why he felt that he replied:

> *No-one is like experiencing with....when you experience something you like, I think it's best to share it with other people....because that amplifies the feeling...because when **you** feel something and you share it with someone else, that feeling, like, grows between you...and it just feels better.*

He reiterated that being alone was the worst thing. When this was pursued by an imaginary offering of 10 minutes silence, Karl became very serious and, clearly thinking very deeply, he pondered whether, after all, such a silence might be less stressful:

> *There wouldn't be so much stuff on your mind...like homework or whatever. Or like worrying what other people think about you and stuff.*

This drive to be social and 'get the best friends' was a theme in his conversation.
Susan, still grieving from the loss of grandparents two years before, certainly did not want silence. Having revealed in her questionnaire that it made her 'feel bare', she repeated that she didn't like silence and that she didn't like thinking about 'stuff' as it made her depressed. She did, however, appreciate the silence available to her during her grandparents' funerals:

> *I needed silence to, like, just think about that and to think about them not being there any more.*

Her associations were, nevertheless, negative:

> *Like loss, or having something really deeply (sic) or having to, like, concentrate really hard. I don't like being quiet, otherwise my mind drifts to things I don't really want to think about.*

Peter, however, actively wanted silence at the funerals of his grandparents, both to pray and as a way of remembering. He felt that the period of time available to him at this time was healing and particularly important lest his grieving disrupt 'schoolwork or normal life'. Silence was also available to him during his fortnightly visits to church and on other occasions:

> *If I'm not in the mood to go on anything electronic, that's when I've time to reflect on everything that's happened or on... life itself.*

Saying he would 'crack up' if denied silence, he took a pragmatic stance as it gave him time:

> *To think of new skills; the lack of it would take away imagination, maybe...people have come up with ideas when they're just thinking about everything-their ideas have been evolutionary for the world.*
>
> *Sometimes in darkest or horriblest times, it can be an idea to pray, such as...if there's so many tests going on* ***(laughs****) and sometimes, if I'm run down, or if I've done so much, that's when I just go on my bed for a bit, staring through the window... and... Yeah!*

His views of the offered picture were mixed. When asked what was good, he suggested that it would probably just relieve you of all anger and emotions and also allow you to just feel better about yourself. When asked what might be bad, he was very open:

> *It could also waste time, a bit of your personal time .It could also be perceived by others that you're... they could try to make fun of you in some way, maybe some people would think you were some kind of soppy person. Another thing... it might show that you're quite alone; it can make others think that that you've not got many friends or something.*

Describing an issue with daydreaming in Year 3 (8 years old), he records that his teacher had asked him whether he had gone into 'Peter-land' when he had been staring out of the window. In a reassuring manner he reported that he now had control of this issue, as at end points it had disrupted his work. Nevertheless, he described, nostalgically, a small game where a ball is hit back and forth repeatedly and he, staring for hours, loved this feeling of peacefulness.

Penny, when looking at the picture, felt that the girl would be really relaxed and completely free:

> *It's not like anyone's restricting you. You can just look out into the sunset and it's just inspiring you in a way, and think about what's out there and beauty.*

Penny stood out amongst all the children in her relish of quiet and reflective moments. Her love of nature and the contrast with a busy city, the commotion of cars and even the neighbours talking loudly, prompted her to indicate her deep pleasure in silence and a silence which she would welcome:

> *Not every day but maybe 3 times a week. And when I've finished all the work in class, I go' Aah, I can finally think to myself and just go off in my daydreams or stuff like that'.... that would be really nice.*

The scientific thinker Stephen found quiet when reading, an hour on most days. Once again Stephen felt that the picture represented calm and peace and that it was good in that it was time away from normal life and not having to worry about much. When asked about these worries, he highlighted schoolwork and projects. Despite this, being alone for him would precipitate boredom: *not scary – just dull.*

Artistic and quirky Sandra liked to burn incense sticks that *made her think*, and loved the scents, which put her in a calm, calm place:

> *And I just think, like, deeper inside.... inside my mind, inside, you know, my heart. It's almost like absence.*

She explained that seizures were familiar to her from family illness and that the absences she described might be similar:

> *Almost like you're not aware of your surroundings. You're just thinking about...more in your imagination.*

She disliked coming back from this as it was calming and reassuring:

> *Though what the reassurance was, was unclear, I don't actually know. That's the one question I can't answer. I don't really know what is so fascinating to me, like, finding that so great. It's just the way it is really!*

She went on to suggest that the girl in the photograph might be thinking about how beautiful the world was, or how the earth was made. She went on to express a liminality prompted by her senses:

> *If it was me, I'd feel quite safe in the situation because it's nice and there's warm colours around and that would make me feel safe... and you've got the sound of the sea, and all the colours... and all your senses are, like, awake if you like.*

Despite having given this positive response to a girl sitting in silence, she exhibited the contradiction shown by several children, saying she would be incapable of sitting still:

> *I have to have a kind of constant excitement, you know, to keep me entertained.*

Clearly boredom was for her a major antipathetic factor, yet she described, vividly, that she often went deep within herself, even staring at a candle flame for up to 10 minutes:

> *Anything could happen around me. Me and my dad can just look at something and not think anything. It's quite cleansing actually. I like to do it .I can't really choose exactly when I'm going to do it...I have to be nice and calm you know and have done everything that I can, homework and things like that... but if I want to do it, then I can, you know. I can clear my mind.*

Greg, too, having been adamant that he always liked to be active, engaged in competitive sport and busy, identified positively with the photograph:

> *It would be nice and peaceful getting away from like everything noisy and work for a while, and relaxing.*

Asked whether he would like to be there he admitted:

> *Yes sometimes I would. I always like to be around people, quite noisy, but I always like sort of being quiet sometimes... where I can relax rather than always... stuff like getting away from homework or badminton or being...doing that sort of thing... there's quite a lot of homework and if I'm not doing that I'm normally doing badminton... about 2 hours a day. Yes, I appreciate silence, like not all the time but sometimes just to get away from work and just relax and have time to yourself.*

Carla, who attended mass weekly, described how there was very little silence available to her then, perhaps before people arrive, or if they stayed to pray afterwards. Silence was available to her just before sleep:

> *I think it's good to have silence, 'cos you can reflect on maybe everything really. You can think about anything you want to whether it was last week or five years ago or yesterday.*

She engaged strongly with the picture, saying she would love to be there, to escape all the busyness, give herself time to think and to take everything in. Yet, when offered the chance to sit for 10 minutes during the day, she squirmed slightly:

> *I think I'd want to do something like. I don't know... I just... I think it would be a bit weird almost being...silent for that time when you've got other stuff to do. It's like every spare minute of the day you want to be doing something so it's out of the way.*

With a pronounced worried expression, she explained that every day she had things to do; then there were clubs, homework and things outside school. She had a little notice board with a 'to-do' list and ticked completed tasks off each day. Imagining what it would be like to be in a room in silence, she stressed that worry about the list would stop her enjoying it. Asked if she might enjoy silence if there were no list, no homework, she nodded emphatically, and with a deep sigh and a smile, said she definitely would. Asked if she could see a time when that might happen, she replied, after a very long

pause, *perhaps when I'm old*. She thought we shouldn't have to worry about deadlines and homework. Instead, *people* were a compensation and a solace:

> *I don't think I'd like to be on my own at all. I think I'd be very scared being on my own. I just think it's very reassuring to have people around you that care for you and love you and that even if you don't have free time and you don't have space, at least you know that you've got people around you. So it sort of makes it worth it I suppose...all the work.*

In summary, only 2 of the children (Susan and Stephen) were averse to finding silence, with Susan's view changing over time to express that it might be calming. Stephen, as we have read, ultimately would find much boredom in silence. 4 children (Sangeeta, Penny, Sandra and Peter) were particularly positive about its benefits and sought it, in Peter's case irrespective of its associations with mourning. The remaining 4 showed strong ambivalence and, whilst not completely rejecting the idea of, for example, being offered 10 minutes silence, they felt that the lack of productivity inherent in this and the subsequent stress of failed deadlines (and in Carla's case fewer ticks off her 'to-do' list) meant that it might create more stress for them. We have also seen that social considerations, peer pressure and the children's individual personalities and time-consuming hobbies played a part.

Nevertheless, in this group there was a yearning to be alone and quiet - work pressures notwithstanding, even if, as in Carla's case, you might have to wait until you are old to achieve it. The conflicting views shown by some were particularly apparent when offered the pictures. It was here that positive aspects of silence were expressed, albethey prompted, though being alone was a negative, and understandable aspect, cited by many.

Approaches to silence were varied, often contradictory, and sometimes vehement. The researcher was also aware that the children, knowing the focus of the research, sought to please her and may have skewed their preferences accordingly. Given this variation and as all the children showed aspects of spirituality in their lives, the question remained whether such spirituality usually manifested in silent moments and, indeed, whether those children with positive feelings about silence presented with more, or more intense, forms of spirituality.

Manifestations of Spirituality within Silence

Without exception the individual children's expressions and experiences of spirituality were seen both in the context of quiet and solitude, and also in the context of general busyness and life. Key moments described by the children of 'letting go' and instances of peak joy, absorption and even 'absence' as described by Sandra, all within a social or school context or even around a dinner table, were evident. Some children have stressed that being with others actually precipitated and amplified the experience and changes of state and the point mode, a 'here and now' awareness.[11], believed to be available to all children were frequently experienced when surrounded by others.

[11] Penny with friends in McDonalds, Sandra with siblings in the hospital, Karl on safari with his family. Rosie in a game, Penny when drawing the human eye or lost in conversation, or Greg getting lost deep within even when watching television.

Other major aspects of child spirituality including mystery sensing, value sensing and awareness sensing referred to by Hay and Nye as well as meta-cognition, were evidenced in both silent contexts and in social. This conforms with the view taken by Alistair Hardy- that Spirituality is a fundamental human trait, and is perfectly consistent with the comments by Jane Hallowell, Robert Coles' wife and collaborator, that children were on a road with some purpose in mind.

Of the 3 children who actively sought silence (Penny, Sandra and Sangeeta), Penny and Sandra both described themselves as 'lost in nature' or conversation, and both had notable experiences of joy and transcendence yet with others and in a noisy public environment. Sangeeta spoke passionately about her need for silence, regarded herself as religious and not really spiritual, and described key moments of connection (with a 'really old person') during her walk to school. Even for these children, silence was not the precipitant of all manifestations of their spirituality, nor were their experiences more obviously acute.

Several children (Susan, Penny, Sandra, Peter) described a reverence for and a connectivity with nature and the joy this brought them, often in silence, yet this was an aspect of their spirituality rather than the whole of what they expressed in the interviews.

Helen Lees' (Lees 2012: 4) view of silence not being a state of audible quiet, but rather a meditative state of mind, using the natural resources of the body- not the absence of something but a positive 'something', found correspondence in this research. As has been seen, the children provided many examples of this state. Surrounded by others, in the middle of a classroom, within the family or in a public place they described, movingly, the 'yielding' noted by Dauenhauer (Dauenhauer 1979:437) and referred to earlier, underlining Montessori's view that silence was not an absence of noise, but rather an isolation of the mind. (Montessori 2004:115)

The children exhibited, and without exception, a range of those aspects of children's spirituality identified by key researchers in the field. The analysis of approaches to and opportunities for silence indicated a range of responses including antipathy, negative associations and those actively seeking such silence and these within an educational and social context of achievement, pressure and productivity. They manifested spirituality irrespective of access to or desire for silence, an outcome contradicting the expectations of the researcher and more consistent with a non-binary understanding of silence, as a space within which children live. This was, therefore, a different silence, an inner silence, not one which could be offered or obtained, because it always 'is'- 'the basic dimension of being' identified by Champagne. (Champagne 2003:46)

Though one of the initial prompts for this work was the concern shown in many western societies and some eastern, for the mental health and stability of its young, the children in this survey afforded an optimism that the human spirit cannot but be made manifest. Whether this might be strengthened through increased access to silence and solitude and, indeed, through a greater recognition and acceptance of its existence, remains unanswered in this research.

Finally, the children selected were interviewed at the age of 12-14, during early puberty. Further research might fruitfully focus on the same children at a later

developmental stage, 16-18, comparing attitudes and experiences during early and post-puberty, examining Tamminen's noted decline in religious experience post 13. A comparative study of children in educational centres where no formal opportunities for silence are offered with children in centres where silence, even meditation, is the norm, would also offer future research potential.

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Religious Experience and Ritualisation

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In Christian theology, the word 'conversion' refers to a religious experience that causes a life-changing transformation. This understanding, applied by Evangelical Christians for several centuries, fits within the Pauline paradigm associated with Paul's vision on the road to Damascus (Rambo, 2003:213). However, Hindu traditions understand conversion differently, for they think it is often the ritual practice that affects people. In the same vein, my work demonstrates the transformative power of ritualisation on individuals, a power very different from Paul's sudden conversion experience. In this article, I seek to examine the relationship between ritualisation and conversion and will propose an analytical framework that may be useful for identifying the powers of ritualisation that influence an individual's entry into groups that are rooted in everyday rituals. To analyse the observations emerging from my fieldwork in European centres of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) from 2011 to 2013, I mainly draw upon C. Bell's theory of ritualisation and P. Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*.

Keywords: ritual; ritualisation; conversion; rites: ISKCON;

This study is concerned with the processes by which individuals from a Western background enter the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), a transnational religious movement with its roots in Chaitanya Vaishnavism, a Hindu tradition originating in India. Ritual practice plays a crucial role in conversion experiences that facilitate entry into Hindu traditions rooted in everyday rituals. These conversion experiences are often quite different from religious experiences in Christianity. R. Robinson and S. Clarke (2003:1-18) turn to religious conversion in India and explore the diversity of religious practice in India, including conversions to Islam, Jainism, Christianity, and a number of Hindu denominations. They conclude that changes of religious identity, especially those outside Christianity, are often incompatible with the Pauline paradigm. In keeping with Robinson and Clarke, my work suggests that the Christian model is only one option. In the following paragraphs, I explain ISKCON's background and its ritual practice, which is rooted in the Chaitanya tradition. Furthermore, my overview of the everyday rituals as practised by ISKCON adherents offers a basic understanding of the practices that inform the case studies and dynamics associated with the dimensions of ritual power.

My research, a study of 'conversion' to ISKCON, examines the role of ritual within the processes of entry into groups in which everyday ritual practice plays a central role. Daily rites in the ISKCON context facilitate the internalisation of ISKCON's central values and worldviews. This is made possible through the entrant's initial exposure to its rituals, his/her search for meaning behind these rituals, gradual acceptance of ISKCON's schemes of ritualisation, and over the long-term, acquisition of ritual mastery.

My work suggests a distinction between two categories of rituals: rites of passage performed to celebrate life changing events, and everyday ritual practice. Contemporary scholarship on conversion focuses mainly on the first category, which Van Gennep (1960:10) classifies as 'rites of passage'. In Christianity, baptism, marriage, and funerals are typical 'rites of passage'. The most important rites of passage in an ISKCON context are the initiation rituals. Apart from initiation, however, the daily ritual performance of ISKCON adherents involves ritual chanting, *prasadam* rites, and deity worship; these belong to a very different category of ritual. Ritual is both a doorway for coming in contact with ISKCON and a crucial practice for entrants to make progress from the status of neophyte to novice and to qualify for successive initiation rituals. The rituals, enacted on a daily basis, pervade the entire existence of the performer. Contrary to the limited role of sacraments in Christian and *samskaras* in Hindu traditions, the daily ritual practice performed in ISKCON plays a crucial role in directing the entry process.

Chaitanya Vaishnavism and ISKCON

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), known in the West as the Hare Krishna movement, is a branch of the Chaitanya Vaishnava tradition within Hinduism. Its theology is based on doctrines derived from the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Bhagavata Purana*, and the tradition's essential practice, among several other forms of *bhakti* (a religious path of devotion), involves the chanting of God's holy names. The tradition believes that Chaitanya, understood to be an incarnation of Krishna, appeared over five hundred years ago in the form of a devotee of Krishna to propagate the chanting of God's holy names. ISKCON claims continuity with the main branch of Chaitanya's mission, a connection established through a preceptorial line of spiritual masters coming down from Chaitanya to A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami (the founder of ISKCON) and which continues through his disciples and grand-disciples. It is, therefore, ISKCON's primary aim to further Chaitanya's mission by spreading the congregational chanting (*sankirtana*) of the holy names of God as the easiest and most sublime spiritual practice for developing love for God.

From its inception in New York in 1966 to the present day, ISKCON spans nearly half a century of growth and worldwide expansion. It all began in 1965 with the arrival of Bhaktivedanta, the founder of ISKCON, at Boston harbour on board a cargo ship from India. At seventy years of age, with forty Indian rupees in his possession, he attempted to carry out the request of his guru to teach Krishna consciousness to the English-speaking world.[1] After a stay in the small town of Butler, at the home of an acquaintance's son, he moved to New York, where he attracted followers by his

[1] 'Krishna consciousness' refers to offering all one's activities to the deity Krishna with devotion.

presentation of Vaishnavism, a branch of Hinduism that centres on worship of Vishnu, or Krishna.[2] These followers opened a second centre in San Francisco. Soon after that, centres in Montreal, Boston, Santa Fe, and London were opened. From 1969 to 1973, temples were established in North America, Europe, South America, Mexico, Africa, and India. The seventies were characterized by an exponential growth of the movement.[3] It was a time of establishing temples worldwide and recruiting new members.[4] The acquisition of Bhaktivedanta Manor in London (a property donated by George Harrison) and the making of an LP record with the Beatles, were events that boosted the spread of the movement in Great Britain. From 1970 to 1977, major temples were constructed at the pilgrimage sites of Mayapur and Vrindavana in India, and a big temple in Bombay (now Mumbai) was built at Juhu Beach. At the time of Bhaktivedanta's demise in 1977, more than one hundred ISKCON centres were started, about five thousand disciples were initiated, and millions of copies of the *Bhagavad Gita* and sets of the first nine cantos of the *Bhagavata Purana* were printed and distributed. The expansion of the movement, although less exponential than during the 1970s, continued in the following decades. While ISKCON has never conducted a statistical survey of its membership numbers and profiles, it is noteworthy that the ISKCON temple directory presently (early 2015) lists more than four hundred temples worldwide.[5] Thousands of congregation members conduct regular meetings in their homes.

Every Day Rituals

When newcomers enter ISKCON, they learn the daily ritual practices such as the chanting of God's names. They also learn to respect ISKCON's dietary restrictions and taboos. They attempt to adhere to the regulations that are strictly followed by ISKCON initiates. Initiates are required to chant a minimum of sixteen rounds daily without fail, and are strictly prohibited from (1) meat consumption, (2) illicit sex, (3) the use of intoxicants, and (4) gambling, or in ISKCON parlance, 'the four regulated principles'. Newcomers drawn to ISKCON's way of life seek to adhere to these regulations.

The tradition's essential practices involve chanting God's holy names: *Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare* and making food offerings to the Hindu deity Krishna (these are referred to as *prasadam* rites). G. Beck (1995:9) notes that sacred sound in Hindu-related traditions, in whichever form or name, is almost always involved in the 'salvific' process to attain liberation, or release, known as *moksha*. In particular Gaudiya theology is concerned with the 'theology of sound' and relies on the Hindu conception that 'speech

[2] At odds with many Hindu traditions who commonly believe Krishna to be incarnation of Vishnu, the Chaitanya tradition considers Krishna to be the origin of Vishnu and all his further incarnations.
[3] Cole (2007:30-35) offers an account of the first Hare Krishnas entering the UK and gives a summary of the history in the 1970s.
[4] In 1970 new temples were opened in Tokyo, Sydney, Hamburg, Honolulu and Paris. In 1973 preaching started in Nairobi in Africa. 1973 was a year of expansion of centres all over the world. This list is based on information gathered from the biography of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami compiled by Goswami (1980; 1987).
[5] Source: http://www.krishna.com/how-many-people-follow-krishna-consciousness Accessed on: 20 May 2016.

is an act of power' (1995:205).[6] Sacred sound in the form of the chanting of the holy names of Krishna is the core spiritual practice of the Hare Krishna movement. It is based on the idea that the chanting of the names of God, i.e. 'Hare', 'Krishna', and 'Rama', are full of unlimited spiritual potency and that chanting them will purify the mind of all impurities such as envy, greed, anger, madness, illusion, and fear, and will help the practitioner to develop devotion.[7]

The tradition explains the purifying power of the mantra in theological terms. Verse *Adi-lila* 17.22 of *Chaitanya Charitamrita* (Bhaktivedanta, 2012c) declares that in this iron age of Kali, the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* (great mantra) is an incarnation of Krishna, and that simply by chanting this mantra one associates directly with Krishna, and will be liberated. It is, however, understood that the chanting will only have a transformational effect if done with due care and attention,[8] in an attitude of humble and selfless service. In addition one has to guard against numerous offences (*aparadhas*), or unfavourable mental attitudes. Therefore the correct performance of the chanting ritual depends not only on correct pronunciation of the mantra but also, and more importantly, on maintaining an appropriate attitude of submissive humility, an inner disposition believed to be critical to the efficacy of the rite. The ultimate purpose of the chanting is to achieve love of Krishna. It is maintained that this aim will only be achieved if one chants the holy names in a pure state of consciousness (*suddha-nama*). To attain this purity of consciousness, one needs to be first cleansed of the karmic 'dirt' accumulated over countless lifetimes. Offences to the name (*nama-aparadha)* must be avoided before one can chant in a purified state of consciousness.[9]

The chanting takes mainly two forms. The first form of chanting is *japa*, and relates to the individual chanting of the Hare Krishna *mantra*. The Sanskrit word *man-tra* refers, according to the tradition, to a prayer that delivers the mind from materialistic attitudes. Olivelle (2003:478) notes that *mantra* is used as a tool for meditation and for salvation. Lipner (1994:52) explains the meaning of *mantra* as follows: 'It is a characteristic belief of religious Hindus that the power of the Sanskrit Word is encapsulated in the *mantra*... The term is often explained as deriving from some word meaning to save, e.g. *tri*, to pass over, float, and *trai*, to protect, rescue. *Man* has to do with the mind, so laconically the *man-tra* is a rescuing or protecting mental instrument of some kind.'

Initiated devotees take a vow to chant the Hare Krishna *mantra* at least 1,728 times (16 rounds counted on a 108-bead rosary called *japamala*) each day. The chanting is done using beads kept in a (bead-) bag that has a little hole in it to stick out the index

[6] Beck (1995:9) points out that the explication of the structures and semantics of sacred prescribed sounds within Hindu religious thought has not yet been thoroughly explored.
[7] Tambiah (1968:85-188), argues that ritual words are different from ordinary speech: 'The difference was that magical utterances were believed to produce supernatural effects which they did not expect ordinary speech to produce' (1968:186).
[8] This is in keeping with Smith's (2005:33) observation that 'ritual is, first and foremost a mode of paying attention. Attention is the most fundamental component of ritual'.
[9] These offences are: (1) blaspheming against devotees of Krishna, (2) considering Lord Krishna to be on par with (rather than superior to) other divinities, and believing that there are gods other than Krishna, (3) neglecting the orders of the spiritual master, (4) minimising the authority of the scriptures (the Vedas), (5) interpreting the holy names of God, (6) committing sins on the strength of chanting, (7) instructing the glories of the Lord's names to the unfaithful, (8) chanting of the holy names to fulfil desires for sense enjoyment, (9) being inattentive while chanting the holy name, (10) not having complete faith in the chanting of the holy names and remaining attached to physical and mental enjoyment (Bhaktivedanta, 2012k).

finger. In this way the index finger, which remains unused, supports the bead-bag. The middle finger and thumb are used to finger through the rosary a hundred and eight times. The beads are usually made of neem-wood or the wood of the *tulasi* (holy basil) plant.

Japa, is a simple form of meditation based on repeating the mantra silently. The mantra is pronounced just loud enough to allow the speaker to hear the mantra clearly. During the individual mantra meditation the person focuses the mind on the mantra while simultaneously removing or ignoring any other thoughts that enter the mind. After the recitation of each mantra, the chanter moves his finger to the next bead of the rosary, which contains 108 beads in total. When s/he reaches the 108th bead, then the chanter moves up a bead on a separate 'counting rosary'. The counting rosary, compared to the 108-bead 'chanting rosary', comprises generally only sixteen beads representing the minimum of sixteen rounds that initiated ISKCON adherents vow to chant daily. Once the individual has acquired the ability to chant and repeat the mantra quickly, then the chanting of sixteen rounds usually takes less than two hours.

In temples, the *japa* chanting is usually done collectively between five and seven in the morning. The activity of combined *japa*-chanting produces a sound resembling the noise of a beehive. It creates a particular atmosphere. Some chant while seated cross-legged in the yogic lotus pose, and others walk up and down. At home, the chanting is done before a shrine or in one's private quarters. Sometimes, individuals chant *japa* outdoors, while going for a walk. The '*japa*-chanting' is a ritual with a repetitive character, which, if done in a group, creates also a social dimension. ISKCON adherents in temples often claim that *japa*-chanting in the association of many is more inspiring than chanting alone. In addition, it is an opportunity to show others the seriousness of one's vow to chant the maha-mantra for up to sixteen rounds daily.

The second form of the chanting is *sankirtan* or the congregational chanting of the holy names. This *sankirtan* (sometimes also called *harinama*) was introduced by Chaitanya (1486-1534), who required his followers to go into the streets and collectively sing their praises of Krishna. When the movement started in America, *sankirtan* in the form of chanting the holy names in public and book distribution (also called *sankirtan*) became the main methods of promoting the Hare Krishna movement (Rochford, 1985:11-12).

Sankirtan (or *kirtan* in brief) is often one of the first things that individuals encounter when they visit an ISKCON centre. During *kirtan*, many sing the mantra accompanied by traditional Indian musical instruments such as *mridanga* (an Indian percussion instrument), *kartalas* (small cymbals), and harmonium, a hand-powered organ. The singing of the holy names involves a number of people. One individual leads the singing by chanting the mantra in a melodious tune, and the audience responds by repeating the mantra in the same melody. This form of singing is often combined with singing *bhajans* or devotional songs. *Kirtan*, as well as *prasadam*, are the hallmarks of all ISKCON temple programmes and ISKCON organised events. As noted previously, when Bhaktivedanta introduced this chanting in America in 1965 and 1966, Allen Ginsberg helped to popularise the chanting. As a result the chanting became

popular among psychedelic bands in California, and in 1968 the mantra was also sung in the Broadway musical *Hair* and in George Harrison's hit, 'My Sweet Lord'.[10]

In brief, it is a core belief of the tradition that Krishna's name and Krishna are non-different. The deity in the form of his names is believed to purify the chanter by removing negative thoughts and emotions such as lust, anger, and greed from his or her mind.

A second daily ritual performed by ISKCON adherents is the worship of the deity also referred to as *archa-vigraha*. Bhaktivedanta, in his commentary on the eight mantra of *Sri Isopanisad,*[11] explains that Krishna and other deities 'visibly materialise as *archa-avatara*, images which are expanded forms of Krishna that are non-different from him' (Bhaktivedanta, 2012e). In ISKCON temples, every morning around 4:30 a.m., the deity is worshiped in a ceremony called *mangala arotika*, or the daily auspicious pre-dawn worship honouring the deity. For thirty minutes, *Brahmin* priests offer incense, ghee lamps, water, flowers, and other articles to the deities while the devotees sing songs in praise of the deity and the guru. The adoration of the image is a form of *bhakti* or devotion in which one delights in ritual worship (puja) of the deity, through various practices of honouring and serving the image, such as bathing it, dressing it, offering food, and singing and dancing before it (Lipner, 1994:278).

The ritual worship of deities is more than the mere following of a set of rules. The worshiper interacts with the deity's images (understood to be no different than the deity), and develops attachment to them. It is a meditative process. Contemplation of the image is especially cultivated through techniques of mental visualisation (Lipner, 1994:314). Interaction with the deity is subtle and takes place in the mind. The devotees offer warm or light clothes to the deities according to the season, they pray to them, and perceive their smiles. The purpose of the practice is to remember Krishna by experiencing the purifying presence of the deity mentally and visually.

Central to rituals of image worship is the offering of food to the deity, which is then distributed among devotees, and consumed as *prasadam*. Fuller (1992:74) explains *prasadam* as the symbol of the deity's power and grace. During *puja*, the food offering is understood to be consumed by the deity in its image form. The 'leftovers' are understood to have been ritually transmuted to become *prasadam* imbued with divine power. The *prasadam* is distributed among devotees, who, by ingesting this food, partake of the deity's bounty and grace.

ISKCON is famous for its *prasadam*, sanctified food offered to Krishna. The lacto-vegetarian food of the Hare Krishna movement, prepared with great care and skill, is famous all over the world and available in its temples as well as in the worldwide network of Govinda's restaurants. ISKCON also runs free food distribution

[10] Even at George Harrison's death, the news media continued to associate him with Krishna's name, playing 'My Sweet Lord', which ends with the *mahamantra* (Goswami, 2012:180).
[11] The Upanisads form the fourth constituent group of texts related to each of the four Vedas *Rig, Sama, Yajur,* and *Atharva*. *Sri Isopanisad* is related to the *Yajur Veda*. Upanisads were composed between about 600 and 300 BCE. They evaluate the nature of the rituals related to each Veda, seeing its internalisation within the individual as its highest meaning, and subordinating ritual action to knowledge (Flood, 1996:36, 40,75).

programmes, 'Food for Life', in many countries.[12] Individuals also come in contact with ISKCON through vegetarian cooking courses organised in centres all over the world.

The prepared food belongs mainly to the category of *sattvik* foods and includes butter, milk, rice, chickpeas, lentils, beans, fruits and vegetables.[13] Cooking for the pleasure of Krishna, offering prepared food to the deity, and engaging in the meditative activity of eating, are all aimed at purifying the practitioners and making them conscious of Krishna, an activity conducive for developing love of Krishna, the ultimate purpose of all pursuits of the Hare Krishna movement.[14] Following is a summary of Caroline's interview, s story representing the most common pattern of 'conversion' into ISKCON – a gradual entry guided by increasing levels of social interaction with ISKCON adherents.

Case Study

Caroline (Swiss, aged 38) was in her mid-twenties and was studying law at a university in Switzerland. She was on a search for what she thought to be 'genuine spirituality'. In 1998, she decided to quit her studies and go to India to search for the truths which she expected to find in Buddhism. In India she came in contact with ISKCON devotees. During that journey, Caroline visited ISKCON temples in Bangalore (Karnataka), and Vrindavana (Uttar Pradesh).[15] While travelling through India, Caroline arrived in Bangalore and bought, from a bookstore of the ISKCON temple, the book *Krishna, The Supreme Personality of Godhead*, a work describing Krishna's earthly pastimes. A few days later she also bought a copy of *Bhagavad Gita As It Is* from the bookstand in the ISKCON temple in Vrindavana.[16]

After her first visit to India, in 1999, Caroline felt inspired to study theology at university. It was during that time that she decided to knock on the door of the Hare Krishna temple in Zurich. With the *Bhagavad Gita* in her hand she asked if someone could explain its meaning to her. The ISKCON devotee who opened the door invited her in and discussed with her the contents of the *Bhagavad Gita*. He also introduced her to the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra with chanting beads (*japa-mala*). Newcomers become quickly introduced to the power of the chanting, which is believed to purify or destroy one's karmic burden. Often during the first contact, the chanting is explained

[12] ISKCON's free vegetarian food programme for the homeless and disadvantaged, called 'Food for Life', served at least 900 million meals between 1966-95 in 60 countries (Cole, 2007:47).
[13] *Sattvik* food is described in *Bhagavad Gita*, verse 17.8 as food dear to those who are good and pure. According to Bhaktivedanta, it increases the duration of life, purifies one's existence and gives strength, happiness and satisfaction. Such foods are juicy, fatty, wholesome, and pleasing to the heart (Bhaktivedanta, 2012a).
[14] For Vaishnavas, to eat *prasadam* is to recognize one's position as a servant of Krishna. It is believed that *prasadam* is '*contaminated*' with Krishna's saliva and that it 'contaminates the eater in a positive way with divine qualities' (Broo, 2003:252).
[15] Vrindavana is a sacred Vaishnava pilgrimage site. It was in the ISKCON temple in Vrindavana that Caroline became attracted to the chanting of the holy names of Krishna and felt inspired to follow the simple life of the personalities living there. She acquired a taste for the regulated daily morning temple programme, including the hearing of lectures and discussions of the scriptures.
[16] Books are often one of the first items of newcomers' contact with ISKCON. Caroline read them and became intrigued by the philosophy.

simply in terms of the purifying nature of the ritual.[17] The negative rites in the form of taboos and restrictions are often explained later.

Soon after that conversation, Caroline started to regularly attend the Sunday programme at the temple in Zurich. She was gradually introduced to ISKCON practices through socialisation with ISKCON devotees. A devotee gave her a present, a *japa-mala* (a loop of chanting beads) and a bead-bag in which to keep them, at a Sunday programme at the Zurich temple. Caroline was overjoyed to receive the gift, but the devotee was too busy with other visitors to explain how she should chant using her new beads. Thus, she approached a *brahmacari* (celibate monk) who explained the art of individual meditation through chanting with beads. Notwithstanding Caroline's introduction to the practical aspects of the chanting and the counting on beads, she did not take up the practice wholeheartedly until a few months later in India.

During these first contacts, Caroline not only asked practical questions, but also philosophical ones. Having studied at university, Caroline was acquainted with philosophers such as Voltaire, Nietzsche, Tolstoy, and Emerson. She was convinced that the ability to think was the essence of the individual being, *cogito ergo sum*. When, however, the devotee who gave her the chanting beads told her about a book *Sri Manah-siksha*, Caroline became confused as the book narrates a story of the *atman* preaching to the mind. She felt strange – as if it was schizophrenic: 'How can I preach to my mind? I am the mind!' After her study of *Bhagavad Gita*, she gradually accepted the tradition's theological ideas claiming the existence of a metaphysical self capable of directing the mind through intelligence. *Sri Manah-siksha* is a book written by Raghunatha dasa Goswami, one of the six Goswamis of Vrindavana, all direct followers of Chaitanya. It is a prayer urging the mind to always focus its attention on Krishna. This quotation is cited in *Chaitanya Charitamrita*, verse 2.8.63 (Bhaktivedanta, 2012c).

While attending the ISKCON Sunday programmes in Zurich, Caroline continued to study theology at the university. One day she learnt that her professor was an atheist. This fact upset her so much that, in the year 2000, she decided to quit her studies and go back to Vrindavana where she took up the study of ISKCON Chaitanya Vaishnava scriptures at the Vrindavana Institute for Higher Education (VIHE).

During her earlier visit to India, Caroline had joined a group of ISKCON devotees on a pilgrimage tour to Badrinath, Kedarnath and Vrindavana. She had arrived in Vrindavana during the month of *Kartika* (October-November), where she had taken courses on the *Bhagavad Gita* presented by senior spiritual instructors. [18] These courses were so appealing to her that during her subsequent visit in 2000, she decided to follow a complete four-month *bhakti-sastri* course, a programme of study focused on the study of *Bhagavad Gita* and three other major books discussing the theology of the Chaitanya Vaishnava tradition. Caroline describes her study experiences during the *bhakti-sastri* course in India in the following words:

[17] Newcomers' first experience with the chanting could be compared to the daily ritual cleansing of the temple by the members of the Japanese Tenrikyo Buddhist tradition, a ritual practice representing an internal process of sweeping dust from the mind. Ian Reader (2005:93-96) claims that the Tenrikyo cleaning rite also serves to generate a sense of community.

[18] *Kartik:* a holy period during which many Vaishnava celebrations take place, and during which ISKCON organizes special courses and seminars in Vrindavana (Uttar Pradesh, India).

> During the *bhakti-sastri* course in Vrindavana, I was a complete newcomer. I had still the prefix *bhaktin* before my first name indicating that I had no spiritual master yet. Yet I was allowed to follow the course in the association of many advanced Vaisnavis (female devotees). Also following the regulated daily worship programme starting with *mangala-arotika*—the early morning ceremony held in front of the deities Sri-Sri-Radha-Syamasundara—for four months, touched my heart and gave me the desire to follow that process with all seriousness.

Caroline's passage from novitiate to initiated member is marked by a series of developments. These include following daily schemes of ritual practice, completing an introductory course, adopting Vaishnava dress, and accepting the guidance of an ISKCON guru. The schemes of ritual practice involve the following of the morning and evening temple programmes, (a schedule of different ritual practices including greeting of the deities, *puja*, *japa*, *kirtan*, recitation of the scriptures, the ritual offering and the eating of sacrificed food, and *guru puja)*, all of which comprise a chain of daily rites preparing the practitioner for high levels of ritual mastery.[19]

In Zurich, Caroline followed a *bhakta*-course, an introductory course for new entrants to Krishna consciousness. Such an introductory course educates the novice in aspects of philosophy and practice. The seminar addresses five major elements of philosophy discussed in *Bhagavad Gita* (*jiva* [the living entity]; *prakriti* [nature]; *kala* [time]; *isvara* [God as controller]; and *karma* [the work and the reaction of work]) and the practice in terms of positive and negative rites and life-style (the daily schedule; the principles behind the four regulative principles; the four regulated principles analysed in detail; the practice of hearing and chanting; the principles of deity worship; the festivals; the rites in relation to *prasadam*; the missionary activities; and the etiquette in relationships).The Chaitanya Vaishnava tradition explains the ideas behind the practice of the four prohibitive principles as being based on 'four pillars of religion: austerity, cleanliness, mercy, and truthfulness.' Bhaktivedanta (2012d) explains these principles in his commentary to *Bhagavata Purana* 1.17.45.

The seminar was presented by the same person who gave Caroline her first set of chanting beads, organised the pilgrimage in India, and encouraged her to follow the course in Vrindavana. After her participation in the introductory course she decided to remain in ISKCON. When she decided to move into the temple, she voluntarily distanced herself from her former circles.

After joining the temple, Caroline started to wear saris and put on *tilaka* marks on her forehead and other parts of the body (belly, chest, shoulders, arms, neck, upper-back, and lower-back) – things that she formerly objected to.[20] Yet, it was during her visit to Vrindavana that the adoption of this culture became natural and a strong desire developed in her to enter a monastic life of study and meditation. This development

[19] Bell (1992:107) uses the term 'ritual mastery' to indicate that ritual can only exist in 'specific cultural schemes and strategies for ritualisation'. Bourdieu (1977:87-95, 118-120, 123-124) speaks of 'practical mastery' to indicate 'the systems of classifying schemes that act as instruments for ordering the world that every successfully socialised agent possesses'.

[20] Protective marks made with clay collected from the banks of the Yamuna River, and applied on certain parts of the body along with the recitation of names of Vishnu; a practice meant to remind oneself and others that everyone is a servant of Krishna.

shows the importance of social interaction in terms of acculturation into the Vaishnava way of life.

When attending the introductory (*bhakta*) course while living in the Zurich temple, Caroline would repeatedly hear devotional songs (*bhajans*) from a tape recorder. She felt greatly inspired by the songs, especially because the singer's voice evoked a particular mood and longing. Later on, she found out that the singer was Bhakti Prema Ananda Tirtha Swami, the spiritual master of the very devotee who gave her the chanting beads, took her on the pilgrimage tour, and later on became her introductory course teacher. Caroline wanted to meet Bhakti Prema Ananda Tirtha Swami personally, so a meeting was arranged on the Swami's next visit to Zurich. The first question she asked him was: 'How can I accelerate the process to become Krishna conscious?' Bhakti Prema Ananda Tirtha Swami smiled and replied: 'Before you can become Krishna conscious you have to become conscious. This is what I can tell you today, and later I will tell you more about it'. It is not uncommon that graduates from the *bhakta* course aspire to establish a relationship with an ISKCON guru. While firmly fixed in the vows of strictly practising the daily rites and respecting the taboos and restrictions, the novice aspires to undergo the initiation ritual.

Each time Caroline met Bhakti Prema Ananda Tirtha Swami, she would ask questions. Caroline started to hear the swami's lectures and read his book elaborating on the art of chanting the holy names of Krishna. She felt that due to her attraction to Bhakti Prema Ananda Tirtha Swami's personality, and her interest in the topics of his lectures, it was natural for her to approach him as guru and seek to become his disciple. Two years after their first contact, Bhakti Prema Ananda Tirtha Swami accepted Caroline as his disciple, and another two years later, in 2003, she received *harinama* initiation or initiation into the chanting of the holy names of Krishna. In 2005 she received *brahminical* initiation, admittance to the priestly worship of the deity. At the time of her first initiation in 2003, she received the name Krishna Kumari Dasi. This name change is significant as the individual is now officially recognised as a disciple connected with the chain of spiritual masters coming down from Krishna. The name refers to a name of Krishna or a name of a great Vaishnava saint. Caroline received first (*harinama*) and second (*brahminical*) initiation at Goloka Dhama,[21] one of ISKCON's main temples in Germany, where she arrived right after the introductory *bhakta* course in Zurich. The incorporation rites or initiations took place after Caroline passed the ISKCON exam for first initiation, and received recommendation for initiation from her local authorities. The ceremony of first initiation represents for Caroline the end of her novitiate or transition period, and formal incorporation into ISKCON.

Caroline's journey represents a two-phased pattern of entry. The first phase, from 1998 to 2001, is characterized by a steady growth of regular social interaction with ISKCON adherents and a process of acculturation into a way of life dominated by the daily practice of rites, and the respecting of taboos. The second stage, late 2000 to early 2001, was a period of constant and intense socialisation that started when Caroline went back to Vrindavana to study Vaishnava scriptures – an experience

[21] This temple is situated in Abentheuer, a village near to Birkenfeld in the county Rhineland-Palatinate in Germany. She moved from the city temple in Zurich to the countryside of Abentheuer because she felt more at home in a village.

involving intensive association with senior ISKCON teachers and the establishing of a relationship with an ISKCON guru.

Dimensions of Ritual Power

Using examples from Caroline's story and other interviewees, I will demonstrate that 'conversion' to ISKCON involves exposure to the power of ritualisation working through five dimensions: (1) the effects of ritual practice on socialisation and vice versa; (2) the role of ritual specialists; (3) ritualisation facilitating the reinterpretation of reality; (4) the forms of misrecognition and blindness resulting from ritual practice; and (5) the influence of ritualisation on the agency of entrants.

The first dimension of ritual power relevant here relates to Bell's point that ritualisation is a means of social control. Her observation is based on the understanding that the effectiveness of formalisation is determined by prescribed norms of behaviour and by the constraints associated with ritual practice (Bell, 1992:106). The constraints influence an individual in his or her choice of social interaction. The extent to which the required ritual milieu is compatible or incompatible with a/n entrant's previous sociocultural environment determines his or her relationship with that environment.

Examining interviewee narratives like those of Caroline, it becomes clear that there is a clear stage of growing alienation from former social circles at the beginning of the entry or *conversion* process. When in 1999 Caroline began to visit the ISKCON temple in Zurich, she gradually started to avoid engagements contrary to, or not belonging to the culture of, Krishna-centred devotion. This resulted in her avoiding all literature – except that related to Chaitanya Vaishnavism – and in avoiding contact with her previous friends and acquaintances. In addition, she started cooking her own food at home. Her mother, ignorant about the meaning and origin of the daughter's new orientation and practice, was shocked and became afraid that she had got affiliated with a dangerous cult. Caroline's friends tried to keep her away from contact with ISKCON, but with little success.

A deeper understanding of Caroline's behaviour requires insight into the dynamics governing ISKCON's daily ritual practice. Ritualisation is a set of strategies specific to the particular culture in which certain activities are set off from others because they are deemed sacred, whereas all others are considered profane. It entails generating schemes of opposition and hierarchy (Bell, 1992:105-106). Based on polarities, such as purity/pollution, body/soul and higher/lower, ritualisation creates a distinction between the sacred (pure/higher) and the profane (polluted/low). It sacralises the activity by means of attributing a transcendental reality to each specific element of practice.

By enabling an individual's continuous absorption in these schemes as a transformed 'reality', ritual gains the power to do what it does. Horizontal schemes of opposition are concerned with polarities between, for example, principles of purity (sacred) and pollution (mundane), and vertical schemes of oppositions distinguish between inferiors and superiors, or neophytes and ritual specialists (Bell, 1992:124-125). Both the acceptance of and absorption in horizontal and vertical schemes of oppositions can produce significant social effects for participants in ritual-centred social organisations

or movements, for such acceptance and absorption can lead to alienation from the outside world, integration in the ritual community, and social advancement and promotion within that community. The results of ritual action based on these schemes of polarities are often attributed to the powers of a divine authority.

By socialising with ISKCON adherents Caroline became gradually acquainted with the concept of 'spiritual food' or *prasadam*, and learns how to prepare lacto-vegetarian food and offer it to the deity. She was informed that *prasadam* is 'karma-free food'. In that way, she became gradually acquainted with the concept of karma and the principle that every action is the cause of a reaction to be received in present or future lives. The *prasadam* experience, associated with the concept of karma, is a matter of 'programmed learning', involving the assimilation of the laws of karma and the principle of making food 'karma-free' through its being ritually offered to Krishna.[22] As a result of internalizing the concept of *prasadam* as pure and karma-free food, adherents consider food not offered to the deity as polluted, and, when eaten, is a cause of suffering in this life and/or the next. Thus, Caroline, afraid of her consciousness becoming polluted, avoided eating anything not ritually offered to the deity. The non-sharing of food with her own family members was a consequence of perceived incompatibility with ritual dominated ISKCON environment.

While immersion in horizontal schemes of ritualisation based on principles of purity and pollution may cause alienation from former circles, ritual experiences shared among group members may also increase social solidarity which in turn supports a growing sense of integration. Social interaction also affects an entrant's immersion in ritual activity. It is often a source of empowerment for ritual activity. Interaction between group members may help the individual to internalise the concepts of the belief system supporting the practice, and by sharing positive ritual experience with others, he or she may become inspired to enthusiastically perform the rites. Involvement in ritual is intensified when adherents share beliefs in, and experiences of, the power of ritual. The following experience of Tibor (Czech, aged 52, and an ISKCON devotee for over twenty years) demonstrates this. What attracted Tibor most was his experience of attending a concert of the *Gauranga Bhajan Band*, a group of mainly Serbian ISKCON adherents who, during the early 1990s, performed concerts all over Europe and became famous for that. When Tibor attended such a concert in Prague and experienced the chanting of the Hare Krishna *kirtan* together with more than five hundred people, he wished it would never stop. The experiences shared by Tibor seem to support the idea that ritual is 'a relative straightforward mechanism for social solidarity' (Kertzer, 1988:95). Kertzer notes that ritual has a social function with regard to the inculcating of belief. It is plausible to accept that the engagement in *kirtan*, done by persons who share the belief in the power of the chanting, encourages participants to accept the purifying power of the chanting as a fact. P. Berger (1967:45-51), in this regard, makes an attempt to explain how group experiences influence individual participants to accept the power of rituals. He argues that the relation between the 'plausibility structure' and the 'social world' is dialectical, with each affecting and reinforcing the other.[23] In ISKCON communities, this dialectic is fortified by the

[22] This is in keeping with Bell (1992:111), who claims that ritual practice often is a matter of 'programmed learning that involves perception and reproduction of concepts or principles'.
[23] Merquior, Thompson and Bourdieu similarly relate this to ideology, which they view AS a 'strategy of power and legitimation', a process whereby certain practices are depicted to be 'natural' and 'right' (Bell: 1992:191).

tradition's epistemological approach wherein both the ritual experience and scriptural learning are means of receiving 'true knowledge'.

The second dimension of ritual power central to analysing the influence of ritualisation on 'conversion' relates to ritual specialists and their roles. Spiritual leaders, gurus, renunciants, or other types of overseers may function as ritual experts. Ritual specialists usually help novices to embrace the worldviews central to the ritual practice and to internalise them. They exercise authority over ritual practice by setting standards and evaluating the performance of adherents. They also guide neophytes and often decide whether neophytes are ready for initiation. Ritual experts are usually considered to have attained ritual 'purity' (as in the case of ISKCON), or they are examples for others who want to improve their ritual expertise. Their impact on social and hierarchical promotion and gaining access to higher positions of ritual expertise are important factors in furthering incorporation. Ritual specialists are often a source of inspiration for neophytes, and this inspiration empowers neophytes to raise their level of ritual mastery and become a qualified member of the group.

The guru plays a central role in guiding novices to achieve promotion within ISKCON's social hierarchy. According to J. Richardson and M. Stewart (1978:33-34), conversion will always occur when there are positive affective ties with members of the religious group. This may take different forms, varying from a relationship with a congregational group of adherents, with one or more specific individuals, with a guru or senior guide, or any combination of these. Yet without positive affective ties with a guru who orders, guides, and evaluates the disciples' daily ritual practice, individuals cannot climb the rungs of ISKCON's social hierarchy, nor attain permission and eligibility for undergoing the initiation ritual. Bourdieu (1977:41) and 184) declares that those 'who control ritualisation are in command of a particularly powerful form of objectification.' He maintains that this is especially relevant to cultures where there are few or no other institutionalised structures to rival it. This is especially true for an ISKCON guru functioning solely within the boundaries of ISKCON's social and institutional body.

ISKCON's hierarchy is based on group differentiation centred on individuals' level of 'ritual mastery'. Valeri (1985:109-129, 172-88, and 134) claims that hierarchy is intrinsic to ritual and that it often functions as a process of differentiation that establishes social positions. A Brahmin's level of devotional absorption in ritual practice is considered to be more immersing than that of a first initiate or a novice. It is, however, the guru who observes and evaluates the novice or first initiate, and decides whether the disciple has progressed sufficiently to undergo the initiation ritual. The guru guides the disciple in the correct performance of ritual practice, and his or her guidance is believed to be critical to its efficacy. This is in keeping with Bell (1992:134), who concludes that correct performance of the ritual is crucial to the promotion and maintenance of ritual mastery.

Bell (1992:130) notes how the presence of specialists affects ritual practice. The guru in ISKCON is a ritual specialist who commands authority by dint of his or her proficiency in ritual performance. An ISKCON guru, if perceived within the framework of Geertz's (1973:113) theory, is a person who, through ritual practice, has successfully fused the world as lived and the world as seen through the lens of Chaitanya Vaishnava theology. The guru practices Chaitanya Vaishnava ideals within the boundaries of an institutionalised social and hierarchical structure. Gurus can be

compared to engines propelling the novice to a steady level of ritual mastery and instilling in the person the desire to become an initiated member of ISKCON. The guru symbolises the perfection of a person who has internalized ISKCON's worldviews, attained absolute mastery in ritual practice, and is fully committed to serving ISKCON's missions within the limits of the institution. As a result the guru reproduces the devotional environment by perceiving it through 'Krishna consciousness' or seeing the hand of God everywhere, at any time. Establishing a guru-disciple relationship is an indispensable linking factor enabling the practitioner of daily rites to rise to the level of ritual mastery to qualify for undergoing the initiation rites. Positive ties with both individual ISKCON adherents and gurus are of crucial importance for novices desiring to become initiated members of ISKCON. They offer gateways of communication with the newly encountered tradition, and enable increased social interaction.

We see an example of an evolving disciple-guru relationship in the case of Victor. Victor first met Krishna-kumar Das, an ISKCON guru, during a public ISKCON programme in Belgrade. Victor was attracted by Krishna-kumar Das's peaceful and sober demeanour, his deep knowledge and realisation of the philosophy, and his attractive chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra and other Vaishnava songs. His first meeting with Krishna-kumar Das inspired Victor to take up the ritual practice, engage with the beliefs, intensify his social interaction with adherents, commit to the chanting, and respect the prohibitions. His bond of friendship with Krishna-kumar Das also inspired him to approach other senior ISKCON adherents and *sannyasis*. This led Victor to take guidance from Hare Krishna Swami, who in due course of time accepted him as his disciple. Becoming a disciple of an ISKCON guru opens the possibility of receiving initiation after a period of practising the daily rites and observing the taboos for at least one full year without interruption. In addition to the institutional rules dictating eligibility for initiation, and despite the recommendation by local and regional ISKCON authorities, it remains the ISKCON guru who has the final word in deeming the aspiring or first-initiated disciple fit for either *harinama* or Brahmin initiation.

The development of Victor's affective relationship with an ISKCON adherent is representative of the early stages of entry described by the majority of interviewees. Caroline, for instance, had multiple contacts with Vrindavanacandra Das, a *brahmacari* (celibate monk) who organised Caroline's first tourist trip from Switzerland to India, a journey during which – while visiting various ISKCON temples in India – she came in contact with ISKCON's beliefs and practices. It was also Vrindavanacandra Das who gave her chanting beads, who answered many of her questions, who was her teacher during an introductory course, who gave her a *bhajan* tape sung by her future guru, and who introduced her to Bhakti Prema Ananda Swami. After her first meetings with Bhakti Prema Ananda Swami, Caroline developed a close bond with him, which led her to accept the swami as her guru and become his disciple. Developing bonds of affection with senior adherents, especially with an ISKCON guru, is a common feature in the journey taken by most novices.

The third dimension of ritual power is that ritualisation facilitates the interpretation of reality. This is best illustrated by explaining Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus'. Bourdieu (1977, 1992, 1997) looks at the transformative powers of ritual. His approach to ritual, labeled as 'practice theory', is concerned with the relationship between ritual and the cultural context in which people live and conduct their lives. He looks at ritual in relation to the ability to reproduce the practitioner's social cultural environment into an order in

which the tradition's views are experienced as reality. According to Bourdieu, this transformed sense of reality is a result of *habitus*, an instance of practice embedded in a set of structured dispositions, proclivities crucial to reinterpretation of reality. This *instance of practice* in the context of groups rooted in ritual may refer to the practice of the everyday rites, and the 'structured dispositions' to the tradition's worldview, values, moral principles, and beliefs. Bourdieu's thesis is that 'ritual mastery' cannot be isolated from the support it derives from a set of structured (cultural) dispositions. Such structured dispositions are often internalised through the adoption of worldview, ethos, traditional values, and moral principles. *Habitus* refers to an action that is based on accepting internalised dispositions as reality. Bourdieu (1977:87-95, 118-200, 124) maintains that in the end absorption in such a projected form of reality leads to the formation of a 'ritualised body'. Such a 'ritualised body' is a body invested with a 'sense of ritual', which exists as 'an implicit variety of schemes whose deployment works to produce socio-cultural situations that the ritualised body can dominate in some way.' Bourdieu (1977:163) claims that the process of ritualising bodies is a strategy of 'integration through division' and as such is a means for hierarchisation, or, within the context of ISKCON, a set of successive social promotions, moving the entrant from the status of novice to that of Brahmin. Bourdieu's theory is helpful in analysing the interrelation between the ritual practice and its environment.

The series of events emerging from Caroline's story help to clarify how a set of dispositions are generated, creating an environment for the 'habitus' to reinterpret an individual's sense of reality. Her decision to live in the temple led her to engage in ritual temple worship and to interact more closely with residents. These experiences further led her to change her Western style of clothing for saris and to decorate her forehead with Vaishnava *tilaka*[24]. Her social interaction with temple residents not only had a profound effect on Caroline's cultural dispositions, but also changed her worldviews. Her changed conceptions of life were reinforced through her training and her completion of ISKCON's educational courses. In addition, the guidance of her ISKCON guru increased her enthusiasm to follow the Chaitanya Vaishnava moral codes that sustain the restrictions and taboos that are considered a prerequisite for ritual efficacy. All these events assisted in creating a set of structured dispositions, which through ritual practice and social interaction with ISKCON adherents, led Caroline to experience the tradition's worldviews as a reality. This corroborates Bell's (1992:140) conclusion that 'ritual mastery' is 'an internalisation of schemes with which agents are capable of reinterpreting reality in such a way as to afford perceptions and experiences of a redemptive hegemonic order.'

The fourth dimension of ritual power has to do with forms of misrecognition and blindness associated with ritual practice. Ascertaining forms of misrecognition associated with ritual practice helps to uncover the dynamics of ritual control and their impact on individuals entering the organisation. Ritualisation results in participants internalising the principles of the environment being delineated. In ISKCON's case, these principles relate to the dispositions or theological, philosophical, moral, and ethical considerations that support rules of sets of oppositions concerning purity and pollution. They form what is hereafter referred to as a 'structured and structuring

[24] Protective marks made with clay collected from the banks of the Yamuna River, and applied on certain parts of the body along with the recitation of names of Vishnu; a practice meant to remind oneself and others that everyone is a servant of Krishna.

environment'. The rule-governed character of daily ritual practice in ISKCON is embedded in schemes of ritualisation that use polarities of purity and pollution, set the individual apart from the non-ISKCON world, and deploy oppositions of superior and inferior to hierarchise between neophytes and advanced practitioners. By adopting these strategies and through rules of differentiation, ISKCON entrants internalise values, reinterpret reality and become 'ritualised bodies'.

The internalisation methods, Bell (1992:99) argues, involve a circular process that tends to be misrecognized. Within the ISKCON framework this circular process relates to the constant projection of ritual schemes on oneself and by one individual on another. This implies that devotional practices, such as chanting and *prasadam* rituals, are performed within a reality structured by the above-mentioned principles and considerations. Therefore, there is first the formation of an ethical, moral and ritual environment that empowers the ritual practice to impress the schemes of ritualisation upon participants.[25] The influence of these schemes induces adherents to perceive the structured environment as reality. Because of this circular process, the ritual practitioner deeply identifies him- or herself with the principles of that structured environment. This identification often deepens to such an extent that individuals disconnect this structured reality from the elements that initially formed the structuring environment.

Practitioners internalise different principles of the environment through varying schemes. These schemes may be based on (any combination of) ideological concepts, projected values, social and hierarchical elements, and conversion strategies. By 'ideological schemes', especially in reference to the following examples, I mean schemes that project the principles of Chaitanya Vaishnava philosophy and its practical theology as explained by Bhaktivedanta in ISKCON's books. Ideology-based schemes are often related to concepts, such as karma, rebirth, and liberation. They form basic principles sustaining the construction of Chaitanya Vaishnava views. It is within the scope of these views that the chanting and *prasadam* rites are practised and internalised. The following excerpts show how interviewees project ideology-based schemes:

> The law of karma and the theological understandings surrounding the transmigration of the soul through the cycle of birth and death gave me a broader understanding of the meaning of spiritual life. Additionally, it gave me also a deeper understanding of the issues concerned with ethics and morality. That image of reality became supported by personal experiences of a 'spiritual nature' perceived while chanting *Hare Krishna*. The *bhakti* concept is the essential element of every religion. There are no religions or faiths, which are devoid of *bhakti*. Chaitanya Vaishnava philosophy deals exactly with the essence of all religions and therefore it is universally applicable. By chanting *Hare Krsna* and practicing *bhakti*, devotional service, I am in contact with spirituality of the first grade. I felt all of them are included in the simple forms of *bhakti-yoga* (Bartek).

[25] Ritualisation produces a ritualised person through the interaction of the body (or person) with a structured and structuring environment. In Bourdieu's (1977:89) words: 'It is the dialectal relationship between the body and a space structured according to mythico-ritual oppositions that one finds the form par excellence of the structural apprenticeship which leads to the embodying of the structures of the world, that is, the appropriating by the world of a body thus enable to appropriate the world'.

> I became convinced by the law of karma; in particular the ideas that your thoughts at the time of death will determine your future. As such you cannot do anything you want and have a good result in the next life. If you have the mentality of a dog, you will be a dog in the next life. So I try to do these activities which will not degrade me. All opportunities are there. Both elevation and degradation are there for human beings. The simple fact that people are unequal at birth, and that some are rich and others are poor and live in bad conditions is reconciled by the doctrine of rebirth. Reincarnation helped me to understand this injustice. People in their former birth have done bad activities and now reap the consequences and suffer. From that time I accepted reincarnation (Rafael).

> I am convinced that ISKCON's Chaitanya Vaishnava philosophy and practice are universally applicable; not only for humans, but for other species as well. It has been proven in Vaishnava history that even animals benefited from devotional service. The soul's spiritual advancement is not restricted by any type of body. Spiritual advancement, which is a product of strict observance of Vaishnava philosophy, is rather a matter of consciousness. How ironic it is that the vast majority of humans are disqualified for reaping benefits of Vaishnava philosophy simply because their consciousness is less than animalistic (Victor).

Bartek's idea that '*bhakti* is the essential element of every religion' and is 'universally applicable' borrows directly from Bhaktivedanta's teachings, e.g. as reflected in Bhaktivedanta words (2012b): 'Every religion teaches how to love God more or less. That is the only aim' (Lecture in London, August 27, 1971). And Bhaktivedanta (2012a): 'No one can be barred from Krishna consciousness because it is universal'. (*Bhagavad-gita*, commentary on verse 9.26.) The analogy of the dog, used by Rafael, is also derived from Bhaktivedanta (2012a): 'At the time of death, the consciousness he has created will carry him on to the next type of body. If he has made his consciousness like that of a cat or dog, he is sure to change to a cat's or dog's body' (*Bhagavad Gita*, commentary on verse 15.8.). Victor's criticism declaring that the majority of humans have an animalistic consciousness comes straight from Bhaktivedanta's (2012d) commentaries: 'The specific utterance of *Srimad Bhagavatam* in regard to 'other animals' means that persons who are simply engaged in planning a better type of animal life consisting of eating, breathing and mating are also animals in the shape of human beings' (Commentary on *Bhagavata Purana* 2.3.18).

Directly or indirectly, in these excerpts from their interviews, Bartek, Rafael and Victor project the teachings of Bhaktivedanta onto their own realities. However, they do not refer to Bhaktivedanta as the source of their ideas. Rather, they present Bhaktivedanta's teachings as their own vision and realisation. This occurs because of their constant projection of the ideology-based structured dispositions through ritual practice. By repeatedly projecting mainly ideology-based schemes, adherents construct an environment in which their experience is transformed into what they believe is the 'really real'. Because of that absorption, adherents identify with the projected environment to such an extent that they see the knowledge received from Bhaktivedanta as a universal reality. Indeed, interviewees do not consider it necessary to refer to Bhaktivedanta, or ISKCON's particular historical and social background, as the source of their experience and perception of reality. This apparent blindness to ideological source-recognition is true with respect to almost all the interviewees.

The fifth and last dimension of ritual power, that is, the influence of ritualisation on the agency of entrants, concerns the relationship between ritual practice and the dynamics of agency. Examining the effects of ritual practice on agency first of all requires identifying the prevailing forms of passivity and/or active agency that emerge from a study of the entry process in a particular organisation. Scanning fieldwork results through the stages of extant conversion models is often helpful to determine elements of agency. Active agency usually relates to forms of seekership, commitment, and voluntary engagement in social interaction. Passivity can result from submission to social pressure or blindly following the organisation's norms. Once identified, it is important to understand how these elements of agency and/or passivity are linked with ritual practice. A search for meaning, for instance, may give rise to a quest for understanding the meaning of the ritual or may give rise to questions about the experience of ritual action. The choice of social interaction may be controlled by principles governing the schemes of ritualisation. Commitment to ritual practice may result from having received satisfactory answers to questions emerging from a search for meaning, or growing ritual expertise may inspire new entrants to try and qualify for an initiation ritual. It is important to examine the extent to which daily ritual practice governs the development of seekership, commitment, choice of social contacts, etc., and the extent to which it facilitates or hinders the active agency of entrants.

The following is an example of how commitment to ritual practice results from a search of the meaning and how a search for meaning emerges from ritual experience. Tony (Finish, aged 49) joined ISKCON Helsinki in 1987 and throughout his entire journey, a steady search for meaning continuously unfolded. Tony contacted ISKCON adherents in Helsinki and went back and forth to the temple with questions. This went on for almost a year. It was a period of learning through regular social interaction, an experience confirming Shinn's observation (1989:130) that the process that provides answers to questions feeds into a renewed and constant search for meaning. Tony gradually developed the desire to associate with people living the philosophy.

When Tony moved into the ISKCON Helsinki temple, he entered a period of intense social interaction with ISKCON adherents, a period that nurtured his growing sense of meaning. When he became acquainted with the law of karma, Tony believed he had found an accurate explanation for the cause of the pleasure and suffering of individuals in this world. He therefore wanted to participate in the spiritual practices, which are understood to be karma-free, and to enable the elimination of all one's past karma. In this way, he became involved in the ritual practice and gradually accepted the principles that sustain the sets of oppositions regarding purity and pollution. The combination of *accepting* these principles and *acting* accordingly changed Tony's views on reality. As a result he integrated the concepts of karma, reincarnation, etc., into his perception of the real world. Tony said:

> The law of karma obviously explains the cause for suffering. The ultimate reason is that we suffer because of our previous actions. We come into a room, and what we will do in the room is up to us. Yet what we can do in a certain situation is due to our previous karma.

This change in worldview is indicative of the attainment of a deeper level of incorporation. Serving as a *brahmacari* or monk, strictly adhering to the regulative

principles and the daily practice of chanting, Tony engaged in the missionary activity of book distribution. But despite his strict daily ritual practice and engagement, Tony felt the need for further inquiry. However, the nature of his search for meaning altered significantly. Due to his absorption in the ritual schemes, he experienced improved mental control. Moreover, he developed an increased level of endurance in coping with distress. Hence, he felt the need to further inquire into the cause of his increased mind-control, endurance and determination. He also wanted to better understand how he had become more detached and aloof from worldly activities, and how his feelings of detachment would advance further. Of course, he was aware that these qualities had something to do with his steady ritual practice. Tony expressed his experience as follows:

> In the beginning I was reading and going back and forth with questions. However, later on, through the chanting and following the 'regulative principles', I became more sober and detached.

It was at that time that Tony met Siddhartha Swami, who eventually accepted him as his disciple. From his guru Tony received further insights into the relationship between the principles explained in Chaitanya Vaishnava theology and his own experiences. Yet his thirst for meaning never became fully satiated. His journey has been characterized by a persistent inquisitiveness, which led him through two levels of seekership. In the first, he sought the meaning of the ritual practice; in the second, he sought an explanation for what he experienced as an improvement in his mental capabilities resulting from his spiritual practice.

Conclusions

This framework of analysis of the power of ritualisation enables the identification of major elements of daily ritual practice, which may influence entry processes and 'conversion'. The framework proposed here takes into consideration the ways in which ritualisation facilitates the process of incorporation by strategically internalising values, worldviews, moral principles, ethics and beliefs, and how ritual practice achieves its ends. Insights into how ritualisation facilitates incorporation, is helpful in gaining an understanding of the powers of ritual practice and its role in the entry process. Such an understanding, in turn, facilitates the construction of a model of entry applicable to the particular circumstances of the case study.

Entry into ISKCON is an ongoing, gradual process of transformation — a process rather different from Paul's experience on the road of Damascus. Without an in-depth study of the dynamics associated with the dimensions of power that govern the everyday ritual practice, the correlation between ritual and conversion remains concealed. Whereas the Christian viewpoint focuses on religious experience and conversion, entry into Hindu traditions rooted in daily rituals requires an understanding of the relationship between ritual practice and the conversion process.

Discussions of the study of ritual in relation to theories of conversion are important. Rather than proposing a standard model, conversion theories could offer guidelines for creating a model that accurately accounts for the specifics of ritual action inherent in every religious organisation which consider ritual a crucial practice. These themes,

inevitably, are of immediate relevance to other religious movements rooted in the performance of everyday rituals. The practice of daily rituals as performed by ISKCON adherents is not unique. There are numerous examples of other traditions whose meditation rites, for instance, are very similar to the daily chanting ritual practised by ISKCON adherents. Examples are the Transcendental Meditation (TM) movement inaugurated in 1958 by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as the Spiritual Regeneration Movement and the Soka Gakkai is a branch of Nichiren Buddhism (Japan) with a significant international outreach.

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The Place of Identity Dissonance and Emotional Motivations in Bio-Cultural Models of Religious Experience: A Report from the 19th Century

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Durham University's 'Hearing the Voice' project involves a multi-disciplinary exploration of hallucinatory-type phenomena in an attempt to revaluate and reframe discussions of these experiences. As part of this project, contemporaneous religious experiences (supernatural voices and visions) in the United States from the first half of the nineteenth century have been analysed, shedding light on the value and applicability of contemporary bio-cultural models of religious experience for such historical cases. In particular, this essay outlines four historical cases, seeking to utilise and to refine four theoretical models, including anthropologist Tanya Luhrmann's 'absorption hypothesis', by returning to something like William James' concern with 'discordant personalities'. Ultimately, the paper argues that emphasis on the role of identity dissonance must not be omitted from the analytical tools applied to these nineteenth-century examples, and perhaps should be retained for any study of religious experience generally.

Keywords: bio-cultural model; identity; nineteenth century; voices and visions; emotional motivations

1. Introduction

Recent historical analysis of religious experience in the nineteenth century, carried out under the auspices of the 'Hearing the Voice' project and seeking to illuminate the multi-modal and bio-cultural nature of those experiences, indicates that existing theoretical models for the study of religious experience may lack a crucial component. Bio-cultural theories, due to their inherent balance of culture versus cognition, are the best-equipped models for any exploration of the causes and contexts of religious experience. Nevertheless, the present study draws from four nineteenth-century cases studies to shed light on the relative shortcoming of some of these frameworks, ultimately arguing that they have unnecessarily abandoned or de-emphasised the role of personal emotional and psychological conflict for individuals eliciting or recurrently experiencing supernatural voices and visions.

Of course, establishing the phenomenology of such historical cases is necessary and presents a number of significant challenges. This sort of social-scientific analysis of the past suffers from the impossibility of ethnographic field work in the traditional

sense; the subjects cannot be interviewed, and the analyst cannot engage in participant observation. Likewise, it is impossible to use psychological/neurological tools to clarify distinctions between self-report (or indeed collective memory) on the one hand and measurable traits (e.g., levels of psychosis or areas of brain activity) on the other hand. Indeed, there is a unique sample bias at work in which the most robust and accessible case studies are those attached to historical figures whose experiences and biographical events were preserved because of their role in establishing various social movements – whether political, religious, or otherwise.

Whilst those limitations temper the following essay, research into the various socio-cultural and potential neuro-cognitive aspects of the nineteenth-century experiences outlined below does seem to be uncovering a number of significant patterns, cutting across demographic dimensions such as race and gender. Specifically, a number of key cases of religious visionaries from America's Second Great Awakening (roughly 1800 – 1850) describe the experiences in such a way that, whatever else may be happening culturally and cognitively to facilitate them, issues of personal psychological wellbeing and continuity emerge as likely motivators driving the individual toward his or her religious experiences. In fact, there seems to be something here related to the ego, the sense of self in relation to both greater society and the supernatural. William James was perhaps the first to highlight this, famously outlining his notion of the 'divided self' as a 'certain discordancy or heterogeneity in the native temperament of the subject' (2004: 152). For James, this discord was often resolved by religious experience, and he provided many examples such as that of Stephen H. Bradley's 1829 theophanic experience in which the young man sees Jesus and subsequently asks for happiness which the deity gave to him 'as quick as thought' (ibid.: 171-174).

More recently, Ann Taves, whose 'building block' approach to religious experience combines various theoretical approaches including a sort of Durkheimian sociology as well as elements of event cognition to attempt historical reconstructions (2009; 2017), seems to recognise the part played by ones sense of self when she brings the notion of supernatural agents into her discussion of social identity and the 'revelatory events' of various historical actors (2016: 237-239, 290-295). As is mentioned below, other theorists appear to make less of this. However, our research indicates that in a number of nineteenth-century cases, the individuals who report encountering divine visions, voices, dreams, et cetera not only exhibit an apparently acute drive to reconcile their own personal backgrounds with socio-religious options but also go on to have recurring experiences as they establish, join, leave, and re-join more than one of those options. The available primary sources, particularly personal journals and autobiographical accounts, suggests that the repetition of their experiences seemed to coincide with a personal yearning for stable identity – a search for harmony and consonance between their private and public expectations as well as between their psychological, social, and economic needs.

2. Nineteenth-Century Religious Experience

The following accounts, then, serve as examples of this preliminary finding in which a struggle for continuity acts as part of the impetus behind religious experiences. This

is not simply a longing for stability *qua* stability,[1] but for the sort of stability that results from harmony between socio-religious needs/expectations and religious options/experiences. In each of the four cases below, an initial internal tension exists and builds until the individual experiences one or more supernatural events which reportedly resolve that tension. Whilst demographic variables – race and gender – are controlled by the selection of these four figures, I cannot at this point exclude the possibility that similarities in their experiences as recorded and disseminated in the nineteenth century are due to factors such as the salience of particular culturally-transmitted symbols and linguistic forms as well as commonly rehearsed religious tropes rather than a felt sense of existential strain. Even so, whether as a cultural artefact indicative of those sorts of broader social trends and forces or as insight into a recurring pattern of individual psychological consequence for the religious visionaries of the period, the narratives of Isabella Baumfree (Sojourner Truth), Nat Turner, Joseph Smith, and Ellen White underscore the integrative function of religious experience during the first half of the nineteenth century in America.

2.1 Isabella Baumfree (Sojourner Truth)

Born around 1797, Isabella Baumfree was a slave in New York until just before the abrogation of slavery in that state in 1827. Much of what we know of Baumfree – who later changed her name to Sojourner Truth – comes from an 1850 publication, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, dictated by Truth but recorded by Olive Gilbert. This account offers, among other things, a description of the early adulthood of Baumfree as she comes to serve a kind master/household, gains her freedom, and has a number of formative religious experiences. Indeed, much of the narrative is interspersed with allusions and interjections of an overtly religious sort. By 1850, of course, Sojourner Truth was emerging as an outspoken proponent of women's rights and had spent a number of years as an itinerant religious figure as well as briefly associating with numerous religious movements of the period.

Here, our concern is simply with recounting the portions of this narrative dealing with her state of mind before and during her initial religious experience. Baumfree was exposed to religious (loosely Protestant Christian) ideas during childhood; the narrative states that 'her mother…talked to her of God [and] from these conversations, her incipient mind drew the conclusion, that God was a "great man"; greatly superior to other men in power; and being located "high in the sky", could see all that transpired on the earth.' Baumfree seems to have carried this basic theological notion with her into early adulthood, and it influenced her form of prayer as well as her spiritual expectations: 'She at first commenced promising God, that if he would help her out of all her difficulties, she would pay him by being very good…and this she soon found much more easily promised than performed.' Indeed, after repeatedly feeling that she had not kept her promises to God, 'the mortifying reflection weighed on her mind, and blunted her enjoyment.' However, she eventually came to serve a different slaveholding family, this one being very kind and providing Baumfree with 'a place where she had literally nothing to complain of, and where, for a time, she was more happy than she could well express.'

[1] Thus, not quite like the general notion of identity offered by sociologist Hans Mol as 'a stable niche in a predictable environment' (1976: 55).

Yet, this happiness appears to have been short-lived, for Baumfree not only realised that she had ceased to pray or engage in other religious practices since becoming much more content, but she also began to experience internal conflict related to her separation from the friends and family who were still the slaves of her previous master. Baumfree does not explicitly refer to this in terms of guilt, a natural assumption given that her new circumstances were much more pleasant than those of the fellow slaves she had left behind, but instead her editor describes a moment when Baumfree 'saw in prospect' an upcoming holiday in which she could imagine 'her former companions enjoying their freedom for at least a little space, as well as their wonted convivialities, and in her heart she longed to be with them.' In fact, 'with this picture before her mind's eye, she contrasted the quiet, peaceful life she was living with the excellent people of [her previous home], and it seemed so dull and void of incident, that the very contrast served but to heighten her desire to return…' That same day, her old master visited, and Baumfree told him of her eagerness to accompany him back to his home.

At this point, Baumfree's narrative shifts to a focus on religious experience and its relationship to her internal dilemmas. Her old master refused her request to return with him, but Baumfree prepared herself and her child for the journey anyway. However, as she approached the carriage to leave, 'God revealed himself to her, with all the suddenness of a flash of lightning, showing her, "in the twinkling of an eye, that he was all over…and that there was no place where God was not."' This sudden epiphanic event caused Baumfree to be 'instantly conscious of her great sin in forgetting her almighty Friend.' Her 'unfulfilled promises arose before her…and her soul, which seemed but one mass of lies, shrunk back aghast from the "awful look" of him whom she had formerly talked to…a dire dread of annihilation now seized her, and she waited to see if, by "another look", she was to be stricken from existence.' The editor does not indicate what Baumfree means by 'looks' from God, whether this was a visual hallucinatory-like experience or not, but the narrative reveals that a second 'look' did not come and that Baumfree attempted to resume her work in the house after realising that the carriage had already left during her experience.

Even so, this initial experience did not resolve her conflictual thoughts regarding her own inner character and moral worth, even if it does seem to have quelled her yearning to return to her previous master. In the end, Baumfree's plans of the latter were thwarted by divine intervention, but she remained troubled and found it a challenge to focus on her duties. That state of mind then initiated or facilitated a more immersive religious experience:

> But the workings of the inward [wo]man were too absorbing to admit of much attention to her avocations. She desired to talk to God, but her vileness utterly forbade it…She could not; and now she began to wish for someone to speak to God for her. Then a space seemed opening between her and God, and she felt that if someone, *who was worthy in the sight of heaven*, would but plead for her in their own name, and not let God know it came from her, *who was so unworthy*, God might grant it. At length a friend appeared to stand between herself and an insulted Deity; and she felt as sensibly refreshed as when, on a hot day, an umbrella had been interposed between her scorching head and a burning sun. But who was this friend? became the next inquiry. Was it Deencia [an old friend of Baumfree], who had so often befriended her? She looked at her, with her new power of sight–and, lo! she, too, seemed all 'bruises and putrifying sores,' like herself. No, it was someone very different from Deencia.

> 'Who are you?' she exclaimed, as the vision brightened into a form distinct, beaming with the beauty of holiness, and radiant with love. She then said, …'I know you, and I don't know you.' Meaning, 'You seem perfectly familiar; I feel that you not only love me, but that you always have loved me–yet I know you not–I cannot call you by name.' When she said, 'I know you,' the subject of the vision remained distinct and quiet. When she said, 'I don't know you,' it moved restlessly about, like agitated waters. So while she repeated… 'I know you, I know you,' that the vision might remain–'Who are you?' was the cry of her heart, and her whole soul was in one deep prayer that this heavenly personage might be revealed to her, and remain with her. At length, *after bending both soul and body with the intensity of this desire*, till breath and strength seemed failing, and she could maintain her position no longer, an answer came to her, saying distinctly, 'It is Jesus.' 'Yes,' she responded, 'it is Jesus.' (emphasis added)

After this experience, Baumfree's narrative recounts again that her foregoing concept of God was as 'an eminent man, like a Washington' but that 'now he appeared to her delighted mental vision as so mild, so good, and so every way lovely' that she concluded that God 'had always loved her, and she had never known it.' From this episode onward, Baumfree's life is related as being more directly pervaded by religion. She eventually joins the religious movement of Robert Matthews, himself a quintessential religious figure of the time, and later associated with the Adventist movement. Those later religious forays, however, seem to have been fuelled by the events just provided, and whilst the narrative certainly discusses Baumfree's gradually complexifying views of the divine, the internal questions of her moral adequacy and the discomfort with her having escaped the hardships of her previous slavery-related circumstances are not mentioned again.

2.2 Nat Turner

Unfortunately, not all of Baumfree's fellow slaves were so lucky. Nat Turner, born into slavery around 1800 in Virginia, never received his freedom in the way that Baumfree did. However, at the age of approximately 31, Turner lead a slave rebellion in which both slaves and white slaveholders, as well as their families, were killed. When Turner was subsequently captured and awaiting punishment in jail, he dictated an autobiographical narrative to Thomas Gray, the latter recording the account and publishing it in the first-person voice of Turner as *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1831). Just as Truth found an audience for her life story due to her eventual esteem as a political activist, so Turner's narrative was sought, preserved, and disseminated because of the extraordinary nature of his decision to organise a revolt. The following material comes from these confessions and has been chosen to highlight the particular contours of Turner's progressive alignment of expectations, needs, and religious experiences.

In fact, Turner's account is written as a linear, chronological narrative and, thus, affords an easier reconstruction of the events prior to the onset of his religious experiences. Like Baumfree, Turner's encounter with a basic, but diverse, range of theological ideas began in childhood. From the outset, he was frequently told of the unique events of his earliest years, events taken to be of a religious nature by his family and friends: '…when three or four years old, I was telling [other children] something, which my mother overhearing, said it happened before I was born – I stuck to my story, however.' This confident knowledge of things from before his birth caused those present to predict that Turner would be a 'prophet' because he had been shown this information by 'the Lord'.

It is particularly interesting to note that Turner then speaks of the way in which this special religious significance was legitimated and perpetuated by his family and others, often connected to the high level of intelligence that others perceived in him and influencing not only his expectations of greatness but his religious practice:

> And my father and mother strengthened me in this my first impression, saying in my presence, I was intended for some great purpose…My grandmother, who was very religious, and to whom I was much attached – my master, who belonged to the church, and other religious persons who visited the house…remarked I had too much sense to be raised, and if I was, I would never be of any service to anyone as a slave – to a mind like mine..it is easy to suppose that religion was the subject to which it would be directed.
>
> Growing up among them, with this confidence in my superior judgment, and when this, in their opinions, was perfected by Divine inspiration…and which belief was ever afterwards zealously inculcated by the austerity of my life and manners…Having soon discovered to be great, I must appear so, and therefore studiously avoided mixing in society, and wrapped myself in mystery, devoting my time to fasting and prayer…

It is not clear whether Turner chose to 'wrap himself in mystery' as a way of fulfilling what he understood to be the hopeful desires others had for his life or whether he also believed himself bound for a future of divinely-chosen significance. Either way, his prayer intensified after encountering the biblical verse, 'Seek ye the kingdom of Heaven and all things shall be added unto you' (Matthew 6:33). This led him to 'reflect much on this passage, and pray daily for light on this subject.' During one of these prayers, Turner recalls that 'the spirit' spoke to him, repeating the same verse from the book of Matthew. The voice of 'the spirit' excited Turner and resulted in two years during which he 'prayed continually' whenever he found time. Again, this entity spoke to him with the words of the same verse. This time, Turner felt 'confirmed' that he was 'ordained for some great purpose'. He recalls, 'Several years rolled round, in which many events occurred to strengthen me in this belief.'

With retrospection concerning the events of his childhood and a faith freshly bolstered by the repeated encounters with 'the spirit', Turner then focused on the reason for his chosenness: 'I began to direct my attention to this great object, to fulfil the purpose for which, by this time, I felt assured I was intended.' Yet, Turner was then appointed to work under a different, and apparently less agreeable, 'overseer'. To avoid this, Turner ran away for approximately one month. He returned, however, after experiencing a vision of 'the spirit' who chastised Turner for being focused on worldly issues rather than on 'the kingdom of Heaven'. Furthermore, the spiritual entity warned of punishment for those who do not serve their earthly masters. Although, Turner offers no comments on the relationship of this tense and potentially conflictual message, it is perhaps significant that the special spiritual self-understanding of Turner was at odds with his inclination to flee from threatening, physical circumstances. As will be seen, the case of Joseph Smith presents a similar tension between more mundane exigencies and the perceived spiritual chosenness of the individual – with another example of a theophanic vision reprimanding the visionary for moral inadequacy and misaligned priorities.

For Turner, this experience, with its stern prompting to focus on the spiritual rather than the material, certainly seems to have refocused his energy and behaviour. He

experienced another vision in which 'white spirits and black spirits engaged in battle, and the sun was darkened'. This inspired Turner to withdraw as much as possible from his duties and to commit himself as completely as possible to 'serving the spirit'. Indeed, as years passed Turner was visited by this spirit, saw secret symbols displayed on leaves and grass, and witnessed the healing of a skin lesion. He became increasingly convinced of an ultimate and imminent 'day of judgment' that would be brought on by god. Then, in 1828, many past elements were integrated into a single whole as a vision informed Turner that 'the Serpent was loosened, and Christ has laid down the yoke he had borne for the sins of men, and that [Turner] should take it on and fight against the Serpent'. Turner understood this fight against 'the Serpent' as the special purpose predicted in his youth and, when an 1831 solar eclipse triggered a memory of his earlier vision of white and black spirits battling under a darkened sun, he organised a rebellion to kill local white slaveholders and their families.

In the light of our emphasis on identity and emotional motivations, Turner's story is interesting in that he represents a strong sense of personal identity tied to both the expectation of religiously-significant future actions and the expectation of continued guidance and communication from the spiritual entities of his visionary experiences. Although it may be too strong to suggest that his visions directly resolved specific psychological tensions, it is important to note the strong influence that others had on Turner's own self-understanding, including the early assumption that he may possess a prophetic gift.

2.3 Joseph Smith

Of course, Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, is one of the most notable of nineteenth-century America's visionary prophets. Born in 1805 in Vermont, thus a direct contemporary of both Baumfree and Turner, Smith eventually produced a sacred text (*The Book of Mormon*) and a church. Both those scriptures and that religious organisation were rooted in the religious experiences reported by Smith. Numerous accounts of Smith's earliest religious experiences exist from the 1830s and 40s, with many of the details appearing inconsistent. Even so, the basic timeline as well as the details of most relevance for this essay remain quite constant. Thus, a November, 1835 entry from Smith's journal – actually recorded by one of his associates, Warren Parrish – has been chosen to recount the events leading up to Smith's first and second visionary experiences, the encounters with supernatural agents that gave birth to Mormonism. The journal entry, written from Smith's point of view, describes a conversation between Smith and a visitor who was curious about the foundational events of Mormonism. The following quotes, therefore, are those in which Smith is describing his earliest religious experiences to his guest.

Space does not allow for a thorough explication of Smith's backstory, one which has been mined repeatedly for precisely the sort of motivations or psychological unrest with which we are concerned. For example, a number of scholars have pointed to a traumatic childhood leg operation as a possible influence on Smith's drive to overcome suffering/death/opposition in his religious experiences and pronouncements (Davies 2000: vi; 2010: 110; Morain 1998: 7), whilst others are convinced that the tension between his involvement in treasure-seeking/magic (an activity shared with his father) on the one hand and the Protestant Christian revivalism of the area (of which his Mother was a part) on the other hand played a primary role in determining the shape

and function of his religious experiences and objectives (Bushman 2005: 26-27, 46; Taves 2016: 283). As will be seen, the latter claim appears quite harmonious with Smith's own reflections, even if we are required to extrapolate a general division in his family from his own personal anxiety over truth and righteousness among the various religious options of his day and to speculate a bit as to the degree of distress caused by it all.

In his own words, at the age of about fourteen, Smith was 'wrought up in [his] mind, respecting the subject of religion and looking at the different systems taught the children of men'. He was 'perplexed in mind' at this time because he 'knew not who was right or who was wrong'. In this anxious state, teenage Smith went to a 'silent grove' to pray and ask for wisdom for, as he says, 'Information was what I most desired at this time, and with a fixed determination to obtain it, I called upon the Lord.' However, Smith's resolve was lacking, and his effort to pray was 'fruitless' because his 'tongue seemed to be swollen in [his] mouth'. Then, as he struggled to speak his desire for knowledge, Smith felt a troubling presence:

> I heard a noise behind me like some person walking towards me, I strove again to pray, but could not, the noise of walking seemed to draw nearer, I sprung up on my feet, and looked around, but saw no person or thing that was calculated to produce the noise of walking, I kneeled again my mouth was opened and my tongue liberated, and I called on the Lord in mighty prayer…

At that moment, 'a pillar of fire' appeared and 'rested' on Smith's head, offering comfort and restoration by filling him 'with joy unspeakable'. Two 'personages' then appeared to Smith, the second communicating that Smith's sins were forgiven and proclaiming that 'Jesus Christ is the son of God.' Although the text reproduced here does not, it is important to recognise that other versions of this narrative describe the felt presence as an oppressive darkness and recount the 'personage' explicitly telling Smith that all Christian denominations are flawed and that he should resist joining any of them. In this 1835 account, Smith recalls the supernatural entity simply absolving his sins and testifying to the divine status of Jesus as was just seen, but this version also includes a brief description of Smith's second religious experience.

This second experience is of central importance, not because it is the vision in which Smith is told by an angel that there are golden plates buried in the earth and that Smith will be granted the power to translate them (thus producing the *Book of Mormon*) but because of the way in which it illuminates the state of Smith's mind between the first and second visions as well as just following the second. Having told his guest of the first experience, Smith continues:

> When I was 17 years old I saw another vision of angels, in the night season after I had retired to bed I had not been asleep, *but was meditating upon my past life and experience, I was very conscious that I had not kept the commandments, and I repented heartily for all my sins and transgression, and humbled myself before Him; (whose eyes are over all things)*, all at once the room was illuminated above the brightness of the sun an angel appeared before me… (emphasis added)

This echoes Baumfree's seeming disquiet concerning her inability to maintain an acceptable degree of faithfulness or commitment to what she took to be her half of a moral contract with the divine. Similarly, Smith is uncertain of the truthfulness of his religious options, is visited by a 'personage' who assures him of his virtue, but then in

a moment of reflection concludes that he is in fact once again sinful and in need of forgiveness. This time, an angel appears and exhorts Smith to 'be faithful and keep [God's] commandments in all things' before revealing that an ancient text is hidden nearby and that Smith will soon be able to translate it. That same night, the angel returns two more times, reiterating the same message during each visit.

The next day, as Smith recalls, he was working in the fields of the family farm when his father asked him if he was sick (the account does not explain what caused his father to ask this). Smith responded that he 'had but little strength' to which his father responded by insisting that Smith return home. On his way back to the house, Smith lost his strength completely and fell to the ground. Whilst apparently unconscious, or semi-conscious, and on the ground, the angel reappeared to Smith. It explained that Smith should return to his father and report the previous night's visions. He followed these instructions, and his father responded by weeping and confirming that the visions were 'from God'.

In the following months and years, Smith experienced recurring visions, including many of the same angel who often dealt with Smith regarding the hidden scriptures and how to recover them from their location buried in a nearby hill. We note these recurrent visions to direct attention to the relationship that they had with Smith's own unresolved religious and psychological angst. For four years after his visions at 17 years old, Smith attempted to locate the buried golden plates and reported frequently that the angel told him that he was not yet permitted to see them because of his concern with worldly possessions rather than spiritual matters. This is an echo of Turner's chastisement from 'the spirit' for not focusing on the 'kingdom of Heaven' and also suggests that Smith continued to struggle with his faith and – again, like Turner – with his new awareness of the special role (translator of the hidden text) that he was to play in a divine plan. Likewise, turning to secondary sources for a moment, Taves argues quite compellingly that Smith emerged from the night of his angelic visitations at 17 years old with a degree of scepticism concerning whether or not they were a dream or a truly unique supernatural event (2016: 55). If true, Smith's earliest religious experiences seem to have coincided with the presence of a number of conflicting forces. He was interested in the irreconcilable truth-claims of religious competitors in his context, and it seems likely that a secure sense of virtue or pardoned sin also eluded him. Furthermore, his blossoming sense of self during his teenage years was likely a factor, as the gradually evolving notion of his own special religious significance coalesced with supernatural reassurances of his worthiness from the angel and (perhaps) validation from his father.

2.4 Ellen White

Indeed, if religious experiences are in any sense linked to a discordant identity, it may be unsurprising to find them intertwined with the formative teen years. For another of Smith's fellow religious visionaries, this was certainly the case. Ellen Harmon (later, White) is one of the central figures in the history and nascent stages of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a Protestant denomination/sect officially formed in the 1860s. However, many years before, in 1840, at the age of thirteen, White first encountered the Adventist teachings of William Miller. Her own recollection of those teachings and the subsequent supernatural events that she experienced were first published in 1851 as *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White*; although later

editions were printed with the slightly revised title, *Christian Experience and teachings of Ellen G. White* (1922). This first-person account affords a close look at White's state of mind just prior to the onset of her religious dreams and visions, thus the following material is taken from that source alone.

William Miller, an itinerant preacher who predicted the return of Christ to the earth as an event to happen in 1844, visited White's town in Maine when she was just thirteen years old. She notes that Miller's gatherings were pervaded by 'a deep solemnity' but that his prophecies caused 'terror and conviction to spread through the entire city' with no one completely escaping the 'influence that proceeded from the teaching of the near coming of Christ.' In this context, White sought salvation and pushed through a crowd to receive prayer at the front of the venue when she attended one of Miller's 'lectures'. However, White recalls feeling that she would never be worthy of being called a 'child of God' and states that 'a terrible sadness rested on my heart'. In the midst of her despondency she could not think of anything that she had done to cause such an emotional state, but she reports 'a lack of confidence in [herself], and a conviction that it would be impossible to make anyone understand [her] feelings.'

A year later, White attended a Methodist revival, and her account emphasises that she still felt herself an outsider to Christianity (despite seeking salvation at the Millerite meeting one year earlier) and longed for Christian 'hope and peace'. Here, White listened to a sermon which was comforting and filled her with a sense that 'the darkness began to pass away.' Once again, however, White recalls an internal struggle following the sermon: 'But my mind was often in great distress, because I did not experience the spiritual ecstasy that I considered would be the evidence of my acceptance with God, and I dared not believe myself converted without it.' White then engaged in intense prayer at the meeting, an effort that was rewarded when she felt her 'burden lift'. Yet, this too was overcome by her sense that she 'had no right to feel joyous and happy'. Indeed, she asked herself, '"Can this be religion? Am I not mistaken?" It seemed too much for me to claim, too exalted a privilege.'

In the days following the Methodist meeting, White reports that she began to feel that 'the rays of the Sun of Righteousness [had] penetrated the clouds and darkness of my mind, and dispelled its gloom.' This state of mind remained for a year or two; White was baptised and entered a women's seminary. During her courses at the seminary, however, her 'health rapidly failed' which caused 'great sadness…feelings of discouragement…[and] great anxiety of mind.' White left the seminary and, in 1842, attended another of Miller's public events. This renewed her desire to experience some supernatural assurance of her faith, some feeling that she 'was entirely accepted of God.' Instead, White's anxiety over praying in public, an act that she seems to have associated with confident Christian faith, caused her to fall deeper into depression. In her words, 'Despair overwhelmed me, and for three long weeks no ray of light pierced the gloom that encompassed me.' Her 'sufferings of mind were intense', with a mental image of 'eternally burning in hell' always present. Doubt and dejection combined, apparently exacerbating one another until she was in a state of 'inexpressible anguish'. At this point, White's narrative recounts her first religiously-themed dream:

> While in this state of despondency, I had a dream that made a deep impression upon my mind. I dreamed of seeing a temple, to which many persons were flocking. Only those who took refuge in that temple would be saved when time should close…The multitudes without who were going about their various ways, derided and ridiculed

> those who were entering the temple, and told them that this plan of safety was a cunning deception, that in fact there was no danger whatever to avoid…Fearful of being ridiculed, I thought best to wait until the multitude dispersed, or until I could enter unobserved by them. But the numbers increased instead of diminishing, and fearful of being too late, I hastily left my home and pressed through the crowd. In my anxiety to reach the temple I did not notice or care for the throng that surrounded me.
>
> On entering the building, I saw that the vast temple was supported by one immense pillar, and to this was tied a lamb all mangled and bleeding…All who entered the temple must come before it and confess their sins. Just before the lamb were elevated seats, upon which sat a company looking very happy…These were they who had come before the lamb, confessed their sins, received pardon, and were now waiting in glad expectation of some joyful event.
>
> Even after I had entered the building, a fear came over me, and a sense of shame that I must humble myself before these people; but I seemed compelled to move forward, and was slowly making my way around the pillar in order to face the lamb, when a trumpet sounded, the temple shook, shouts of triumph arose from the assembled saints, an awful brightness illuminated the building, then all was intense darkness. The happy people had all disappeared with the brightness, and I was left alone in the silent horror of night.
>
> I awoke in agony of mind, and could hardly convince myself that I had been dreaming. It seemed to me that my doom was fixed…

Again, White's story suggests an enduring anxiety related to her own religious fears, particularly a sort of guilt over her reluctant faith. Even so, this initial dream was followed by another. This time, White dreamed that she was 'sitting in abject despair, with [her] face in [her] hands' when a 'person of beautiful form' opened a door and asked White if she would like to see Jesus. This being led White up a stairway, encouraging her to leave her possessions behind and to focus upward, as many present were breaking their upward gaze and falling from the stairs. Soon, White was standing in front of Jesus, and the latter spoke only two words: 'Fear not'. In the dream, the sound of those words 'thrilled [her] heart with a happiness it had never before experienced'. The guiding led her back down the stairs, and she 'descended…praising the Lord, and telling all whom [she] met where they could find Jesus.'

White recalls that this second dream provided a strong sense of hope. Thus bolstered, she sought the advice of an Adventist minister, Elder Stockman. As she reports it, 'Upon hearing my story…[Stockman] said with tears in his eyes, "…Jesus must be preparing you for some special work."' Indeed, as White disclosed her struggles with depression and doubt to Stockman, he responded by asserting that God had 'never been withdrawn' and that White would begin to see 'the wisdom of the providence which had seemed so cruel and mysterious' now that 'the mist that then darkened my mind had vanished'. Shortly after, White maintains that she was part of a prayer meeting in her uncle's home. There, as she prayed, 'the burden and agony of soul that [White] had so long endured, left [her], and the blessing of the Lord descended upon [her] like the gentle dew.' Finally, after years of unresolved religious, perhaps psychological, doubts, White was irreversibly affected. Her future would be one filled with many more 'visions', often coming to her in moments of trance-like states amidst gatherings of fellow Christians. Whilst the religious experiences would recur many times, her faith would not exhibit the same anxiety and indecision.

In fact, White's case is striking in that she reports mental despair of a physically-debilitating magnitude, accompanying her religious uncertainties and causing her to drop out of seminary. Yet, for White, the process of resolving these crises began when the dream figure of Jesus said, 'fear not'. Whilst, in that sense, it seems White may have possessed a particularly despair-inducing preoccupation with Christian notions of the certainty of salvation (thus, her worthiness to belong), the interlacing of anxiety, religious conviction, and personal identity was shared by her contemporaries. Furthermore, just as a teenage Smith had two major visionary experiences prior to receiving validation and encouragement from his father, so White had two remarkable dreams before receiving social validation and support from minister Stockman. Likewise, the latter's assurance that White was set apart for 'special work' calls to mind Turner's determined fate as a 'prophet' in the first few years of his life. For each of these cases, including that of Baumfree, the commencement of extraordinary religious experiences was preceded by marked psychological tensions as well as a set of religio-spiritual expectations rooted in the socially-acquired, but rather inchoate, religious ideas of their contexts.

3. Assessing Existing Models: Emotional Motivations and Identity Dissonance

Those needs and expectations, of course, may simply be described as emotional or personal motivations. In fact, two noteworthy theoretical models useful for analysing religious experience include motivations among their key components. We have already mentioned the work of Taves above. In her recent book, *Revelatory Events*, she investigates the various processes at work whereby unusual religious experiences ultimately engender 'new spiritual paths'. In doing so, she dedicates an entire chapter to discussing the role of motivation for three nascent spiritual movements in America's history (Mormonism, Alcoholics Anonymous, and *A Course in Miracles*)[2] – paying close attention to apparent individual and collective needs that may have propelled the emergence of so-called supernatural entities seen or heard by the founders of these movements (Taves 2016: 270-289). Indeed, it is arguably the aforementioned cross-disciplinary character of Taves' work that permits her to include social-psychological aspects in her analysis.

Accordingly, much of the progress in this area of religious studies since James' ground-breaking *The Varieties of Religious Experience* has come in the form of increasingly broad (in disciplinary terms) frameworks for investigating such phenomena. As Armin Geertz notes, these 'bio-cultural' models blend 'neurobiology, social psychology, anthropology, cognitive science, archaeology, and comparative religion' because 'nothing else can do the job' (2010: 313). It is Geertz's own model, then, that joins with Taves' in suggesting a central role for what he calls 'emotional motivations' as a component of the cognitive-psychological dimension of religion. It must be said, of course, that whereas Taves is primarily focused on a way forward for the study of religious experience particularly, Geertz is interested in offering a general framework for religion as a whole (although presumably with experience/practice as primary lines of inquiry). For both, however, affective and psychological issues must be integrated into the theoretical account.

[2] It should be noted, therefore, that Taves observes a similar role for personal and collective motivations in both the nineteenth-century case (Mormonism) and the twentieth-century cases (AA and *ACIM*).

Yet, it is less clear how such motivations operate in, or on, religious experiences such as those recounted in America's Second Great Awakening, and both Taves and Geertz – to varying degrees – leave James behind by setting aside his observations concerning the resolution of the 'discordant personality'. Indeed, although Taves and Geertz (via Jeppe Sinding Jensen) include 'motivations' in their theoretical models and approaches to religious experience and to religion, respectively, there is little to no mention of affinities at work between individuals (as 'embodied' and 'embrained', in Geertz's terms) and religious systems, one of sociologist Max Weber's lasting contributions to the study of religion.[3] Here, it is useful to turn to the anthropologically-grounded frameworks of Douglas Davies and Tanya Luhrmann.

Again, both Davies and Luhrmann offer bio-cultural approaches, aware of the interplay between cognition, embodied actions, and cultural constructions. Whilst Luhrmann's well-known work focuses attention on contemporary religious experiences, such as hearing a supernatural voice, Davies invokes 'bio-cultural' to describe his exploration of the somatics of religious emotion – often in the context of a particular religious experience – as a window onto the connection between an individual and his or her social world (2011: 29). This approach notably leads Davies to a discussion of identity as that affective intersection of person and place. What is more, he describes 'identity depletion' as those 'negative emotional experience[s] within social contexts when people sense a relative loss of meaning and hope in life' with 'salvation' referring to 'the human drive to survive and flourish amid these constraints' (2011: 67, 72). For our purposes, this helpfully links emotions with identity as well as with an individual's drive for meaning in the face of 'identity-depleting' influences, and sheds considerable light on, for example, the apparent affinity that figures like Turner and White had with notions of purpose, salvation, and hope which propelled them through a series of extraordinary religious experiences. This elision of emotion, identity, and experience is something of a return to both James and Weber, and it is abetted by Luhrmann's influential 'absorption hypothesis'.

In Luhrmann's numerous studies, both experimental and ethnographic, religious experiences seem to follow certain patterns (2010; 2012; 2013). With her colleagues Howard Nusbaum and Ronald Thisted, Luhrmann offers a theory of 'absorption' which suggests that modern-day conservative evangelical Christians not only learn *to expect* but also actually learn *to have* religious experiences like hearing God's voice (2010: 74), with the outcome of such learning (frequency and nature of religious experiences) modulated by a sort of predilection for 'absorption', a 'willingness to be caught up in [one's] imaginative experience, and in nature and music' which is measured by the Tellegen Absorption Scale (2012: 195). This 'willingness' to enter an imaginative state of mind could be a measurable variable directly related to that which manifests as a sort of affinity. In other words, when culture supplies the symbols and expectations, cognitive predispositions may help determine which individuals have the most vivid and frequent religious experiences (Luhrman, et al. 2010: 73). If, then, identity exists

[3] Weber highlighted 'elective affinities' (a term borrowed from Goethe, who in turn borrowed from the Swedish chemist Bergman) between, for example, Puritans and a certain work ethic (1905: 54). These 'elective affinities' were natural attractions between people, classes, meaning systems, economic structures, etc. For more on Weber's use of this term, see Richard Howe, 'Max Weber's Elective Affinities: Sociology within the Bounds of Pure Reason,' *American Journal of Sociology* 84/2 (1978): 366-385.

at the nexus of emotions and context – and if emotional motivations are integral to religious experience and practice – then 'absorption' may complete the model, predicting that some individuals with a greater imaginative ability/inclination will be able to harmonise their emotional needs, religious expectations, and cultural options through their religious experiences.

This could be expressed in terms of identity conferral/resolution (the outcome) or identity dissonance (the 'motivation'). The latter seems potentially apropos, for it calls to mind psychologist Leon Festinger's well-known concept of 'cognitive dissonance' as the considerable mental unrest resulting from holding two contradictory beliefs or ideas (1956: 25) and, in doing so, highlights the anguish and instability of the nineteenth-century subjects included above as they sought resolution for their inner conflicts. Furthermore, it is worth recognising that recent neuroscientific research not only corroborates the concept of cognitive dissonance by showing increased activity in the amygdalae (largely responsible for regulating fear and anxiety) of religious believers who are confronted with claims contrary to their previously-held religious beliefs (and no such response for counterevidence of non-religious beliefs) but also rightly notes a likely connection, therefore, between challenges to identity and increased fear/anxiety responses (Harris 2009: 6).[4] With such a connection between religion and identity in mind – noting the interplay between brain activity, emotions, and culturally-transmitted beliefs – it is interesting to observe that the nineteenth-century cases discussed earlier tended to have (in psychological terms) egosyntonic religious experiences. That is, their visions, dreams, and other revelatory supernatural experiences did not so much contradict or disrupt their sense of self, but rather settled or affirmed their sense of self.

4. Conclusion

Interdisciplinary bio-cultural models of religious experience, if they are to be valid beyond the historical context of their own inception, ought not to leave out this element of identity dissonance. For example, Geertz – perhaps with something like Luhrmann's 'absorbed' religionists in mind – rightly locates 'emotional motivations' in the category of religion's 'functions' but then asserts that 'it is evident that there is a great deal of brain-body manipulation at play [within religious systems] which ultimately is meant to emotionally motivate individuals cognitively and psychologically' (2010: 316) without noting the reverse. In our investigations into nineteenth century accounts of religious experiences, the emotional motivations often seem prior to, or interwoven with, the 'brain-body' manipulations involved in visions and other spiritual experiences. At the same time, the nineteenth-century visionary prophet can be viewed as, itself, a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy, having much in common with that age-old anthropological favourite: the shaman. To be associated with supernatural religious experiences is to be marked for prophecy/shamanism; to be a prophet/shaman is to be associated with supernatural religious experiences. As analysts of such experiences, we must ask about this association – about the role of personal and collective affinities rooted in particular cultural contexts and serving to prime an individual with specific religious

[4] Similar findings have also been found with regards to political beliefs (Kanai, et al. 2011; Kaplan, et al. 2016) and may be taken as a small part of a larger discussion of the 'neuroscience of identity' which uses neuroimaging and other experimental findings to hypothesise about the mental structure and origin of individual identity (Greenfield 2011).

expectations and an unresolved sense of self. At least for historical cases such as those listed above, any model that ignores these elements or presupposes their causal direction seems unnecessarily limited.

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