SPIRITUALITY AND SUBJECTIVITY

The Ways of Spirituality

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Abstract

The fact that we are that spiritual being seeking to know itself clouds the meaning of spirituality. Thus, the study of spirituality is in part autobiography. Spirituality is the 'inside' world of psyche trying to make sense of the 'outside' world. To be more precise, since I am not a dualist, spirituality is the subjective correlate of consciousness seeking to make sense of its objective correlate. Spirituality triggers existential restlessness in the human pursuit of happiness. Aquinas's vision of perfect happiness explains our existential restlessness (*ST* 1.11:3:8) "Final and perfect happiness can consist in nothing else than the vision of the Divine Essence." Spirituality is an ongoing struggle to discover the Divine Essence within the folds of consciousness.

Introduction

The fact that we are that spiritual being seeking to know itself clouds the meaning of spirituality. Thus, the study of spirituality is in part autobiography. Spirituality is the 'inside' world of psyche trying to make sense of the 'outside' world. To be more precise, since I am not a dualist, spirituality is the subjective correlate of consciousness seeking to make sense of its objective correlate. Spirituality triggers existential restlessness in the human pursuit of happiness. Aquinas's vision of perfect happiness explains our existential restlessness (*ST* 1.11:3:8) "Final and perfect happiness can consist in nothing else than the vision of the Divine Essence." Spirituality is an ongoing struggle to discover the Divine Essence within the folds of consciousness, but spiritual energies plug into negative sockets and positive outlets depending on human choices.

Spirituality is not religion. All persons are spiritual, but not necessarily religious. Spirituality is a necessary condition in the absence of

which religion cannot occur, but not a sufficient condition, that is in the presence of which religious belief must follow. The innate character of spirituality suggests that human moral experience is filtered *a priori* through spiritual lenses, however. But our spiritual core remains intact even when human nature appears to run amuck (addictions, hate literature, negative emotion). Spirituality and experience are interconnected in our moral decisions. Finally, my views on spirituality are anchored in a metaphysics of persons. Everyone is human but humans are not equally personal. This fact opens the door to different views on spirituality.

The Structure of Spirituality

Spirituality presents as a movement towards the discovery of sacred values such as the good. A study by Hamlin, Wynn, and Bloom (2007)[1] found that preverbal infants can assess individuals based on their behavior towards others. These infants show a marked preference for individuals who help others to one who hinders another. A CBC television production by David Suzuki (*The Nature of Things*, 2013)[2] provides empirical evidence that babies are innately attracted to the good they see in others. This suggests that the spiritual thirst for sacred meaning is at the core of our loving relations. The drive towards the good extends to the environment and to our own psyche (contentment) as well as to other persons. The negative experience we have of other persons can shift our spiritual tendency towards immoral behavior (evil). Since no amount of finite good or evil can ever completely satisfy the spiritual appetite, the behavioral drive towards good and evil is ongoing. The tendency towards the good is part of the structure of human understanding along with other innate characteristics of reasoning such as the need to discover sufficient reasons and identities whenever we think. The Suzuki study, and studies in psychology before Suzuki, provide empirical evidence of the innate origin of spirituality. As we mature, the role of reason and will in pursuit of the good is filtered by cultural, so-

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[1] Hamlin, K., Wynn, K., Bloom, P. 2007. "Social Evaluation by Preverbal Infants." Nature 450 (7169), 557-559.

[2] Suzuki, D. (July 4, 2013). Babies Born to be Good." *The Nature of Things*. *CBC Television*. http://www.cbc.ca/natureofthings/episode/born-to-be-good-1.html. Accessed September 21, 2016.

cietal, economic, political, ethical, and past moral choices. While infants are genetically programmed to pursue the good, they are born in a contingent world marked by the possibility of negative influences and the luxury of making bad choices. Children learn that selfishness and dishonesty appear to pay off now and then.

The distinction between secular and sacred spirituality introduces two aspects of the good. The innate drive towards spiritual good is framed from the point of view of compassion, love, nurturing, and acts of kindness towards persons, and the environment. This paper argues that we become more personal through relationships with other persons, the environment, and the self. Therefore, sacred spirituality is based on a dynamic vision of personal growth. This view does not preclude the pursuit and enjoyment of secular spirituality (material goods), although the exclusive pursuit of secular goods often frustrates the spirituality principle. The ongoing character of the spiritual tendency explains how our affective and cognitive processes raise the sacred spirituality bar beyond the level of disease and disunity. To illustrate the difference between the role of sacred and secular spirituality I invite my students to reflect on the possibility of personal death. To this end, I sentence them to die in 12 hours. To make the prospects of personal death vivid, I ask them to write their personal obituary and recount what they do with the remaining few hours of life, and provide details on the manner of their death. The realization of looming personal death makes the point that spirituality's search for sacred meaning trumps the search for secular meaning. No one worries about buying new boots when life is at an end. We continue the exercise with a reading of the usual suspects—Leo Tolstoy's (1828-1910) novel *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*,[3] and Martin Heidegger's writing on human death (*Being and Time,* 1962),[4] along with Raymond Moody's books on the near-death experience to bring the point to a head. The acceptance of personal death functions as a source of inspiration to make the best of the now because it focuses on sacred good. Visions of death are peace seeking moments imbedded in us from birth. But why wait for a crisis to direct spirituality towards sacred outcomes? Some individuals focus spirituality towards religion but not everyone. A

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[3] Tolstoy, L. 1981. *The Death of Ivan Ilyich.* New York: Bantam Books.

[4] Heidegger, M. 1962. *Being and Time*. Translated by Macquarrie J. and Robinson J. New York: Harper and Row, 279-311.

recent tweet by Bishop Robert Barron claims that for the first time in its history, Harvard University admitted a Freshman class in which atheists and agnostics outnumbered professed Christians and Jews.[5] A debate between Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins in 2013 on the value of religion concluded that we are better off without religion.[6] Perhaps the conclusion is a reflection of debating skills but the looming question remains: if spirituality does not plug into religion or the God socket where does it go?

Spirituality and religion

Spirituality as an embedded part of human nature is factual rather than normative. The study of how this concept has been used since mid-1980s reveals its great flexibility. The most frequent use of spirituality is in its connection to religion, including Satanism. The three main characteristics of religion are (1) a focus towards the good (2) a belief in God (or Higher Power), and (3) a belief in the existence of an afterlife state. Does sacred spirituality connect with all three characteristics? It does. The research of Hill, Pargament, Hood, McCullough, Swyers, Larson, and Zinnbauer (2000)[7] among others threads the connection between the understanding of the ultimate good as perceived by the individual with religious agreement on the use of prescribed behaviors "that receive validation and support from within an identifiable group of people."[8] Sharing in the rituals of a religious community leads to the feeling of belonging to a group of like-minded individuals. The attraction between spirituality and religion is therapeutic. Religion feeds the need to be part of an identifiable group perhaps as a coping mechanism for stress. We do not always intend the good, however. The Abraham religions equate the fallen human condition with the existence of evil. Religion also an-

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[5] Barron, R. 2015. "Your Life Does Not Belong to You." https://twitter.com/downloads?s=13 accessed October 2, 2015.

[6] Hitchens, C. and R. Dawkins, 2013. "We'd be Better Off Without Religion." https://www.youtube.com accessed October 2, 2015.

[7] Hill, P. C., Pargament, K. I., Hood, R. W. Jr., McCullough, M. E., Swyers, J. P., Larson, D. B., and B.J. Zinnbauer. 2001. "Conceptualizing Religion and Spirituality: Points of Commonality, Points of Departure." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour.* 30 (1), 51-77.

[8] Ibid., 66.

swers the fear of personal extinction by providing hope for salvation and the existence of a pleasurable afterlife state.

The etymology of religion is from the Latin *religare* which means to reconnect with the Transcendent to be healed or become whole. The process of relationship with the Sacred takes place through the practice of cherished symbols and rituals. The word spiritual is from the Latin word *spiritus* which means breath or life. The sense of breath includes moving towards an intended end such as God. But we never fully connect with God. Spirituality's unending quest for the good explains existential restlessness as we press onwards in search of that ultimate connection. Kant argues that It legitimates the belief in the existence of the afterlife state as a place to attain holiness. John Daniel Wild (1962)[9] also argues that restlessness provides an argument for the existence of God. His explanation is that we are restless because no finite good completely satisfies our appetite for meaning. It continues until we discover God as the source of infinite love. Viktor Frankl's classic work *Man's Search for Meaning* (1985)[10] suggests that the love of others is the apex of human experience. Frankl's experiences in an Auschwitz concentration camp during World War II taught him a lesson in spiritual survival through the visualization of his wife and the love he felt for her. Religion equates infinite love with God. Moments of intense pressure bring the ongoing search for ultimate meaning into clear light because an existential crisis (disease, divorce, death, Auschwitz) brings spirituality completely out of the closet! The pursuit of meaning is an ongoing reclamation of what is best about the human condition. Healthy individuals strive to be more loving, compassionate, caring, forgiving, and tolerant in all their associations—qualities we usually associate with spirituality and religion. But the same spiritual search for ultimate meaning can also be directed towards the worst destructive elements of human nature or quite simply the pursuit of disempowering relationships through religious wars. The fact that our relationships never completely satisfy us provides insight into the dynamic character of spirituality, in its victories and failures. My desire for a new bookcase or laptop is not a significant

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[9] Wild, John. 1962. "An Existential Argument for the Divine Transcendence." *Journal of Bible and Religion.* 1 October, Vol. 30 (4), 269-277.

[10] Frankl, Viktor. 1985. *Man's Search for Meaning.* New York: Washington Square Press.

spiritual ambition but it can turn sour if I steal a laptop or seek to disempower other persons and the environment. The will to enter relationship with God is more promising of authentic meaning. Spirituality is connected more with religion and healing outcomes than with a furniture store. But the search for the good, the bad, God and immortality takes a turn as it becomes clouded with the goals of secular spirituality and the focus on economic development rather than human development; on the use of persons as a means for self-development; on shopping at Walmart in search of the good life; and on pollution of the environment for economic gain. We frame the meaning of life in ways that reflects the best and worst of what it means to be a person.

A Person is The Output of Relationships: Metaphysics of Spirituality

No one acts in a vacuum. Therefore, the view of spirituality found in the literature is based on the pursuit of the good through the operational relationships that define persons. We are equally human beings but we are not equally persons because we experience different sorts of relationships. Spilka (1993) focuses on the multidimensional character of spirituality and religion.[11] My interpretation of multidimensionality is that we become persons through three main clusters of associations or relationship streams. Our most basic spiritual relationship exists at the level of our carbon origin as the output of matter and energy. The strings of relationships that take place at this level include our genetic structure and the whole of the environment (Bryson, 2010).[12] We are carbon atoms along with other carbon atoms eating them and being eaten in turn. The second stream of relationships to individuate persons is the social or

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[11] Spilka, B. (August 1993). "Spirituality: Problems and Directions in Operationalizing a Fuzzy Concept." Paper read at the meeting of the American Psychological Association. Toronto, Ontario. Cited in Hill, P. C., Pargament, K. I., Hood, R. W. Jr., McCullough, M. E., Swyers, J. P., Larson, D. B., and B. J. Zinnbauer. 2001. "Conceptualizing Religion and Spirituality: Points of Commonality, Points of Departure." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 30 (1), 51-77.

[12] Bryson, K. 2010. "Person as Verb." Augustine Perumalil (ed.), *Satya Nilayam Journal of Intercultural Philosophy*. Special Issue on Human Person: Various Perspectives, 17, 65-95.

interpersonal perspective. The social-self cluster of associations includes all person based associations, as well as associations with pets and all other living things. A person is the output of a social network consisting of parents, siblings, relatives, friends, neighbors, strangers, the global society-at-large, animals, and other living things such as trees, and plants. The third layer of person-making process takes place in the internal processes of consciousness, and the unconscious. Self-awareness characterizes this area of associations, although the unconscious operates mainly in the dark. The mind is aware of itself as it identifies and processes, restores, and replaces lost or broken sources of meaning. The psychological-self is the clearinghouse of meaning; the place where old sources of meaning are varied and new relationships formed, including the attempt to heal broken relationships as they arise in the string of associations that populate the psyche or internal-self, the social-self and the carbon-self.

The theology of spirituality is based on the metaphysics: In my opinion, the clearest personal expression of religion and the view of God as Trinity exists in the relations that make us persons. The connection with religion as per the Second Vatican Council (Flannery, 1988)[13] is that the search for meaning in Christian spirituality is enacted primarily by entering relationship with Christ and the Blessed Trinity.[14] The following begins to make sense of the Blessed Trinity: God the Father corresponds to our carbon relations because the Father is the creator of the carbon universe. Pope Francis's focus on the sanctity of the environment illustrates how the relation with God the Father is evolving. On the other hand, God as Christ is found in the relation that exists between persons. The belief in the existence of an afterlife state in Christian theology is based on the death and resurrection of God the Son, while God the Holy Spirit is expressed through the wisdom and insight required to guide sacred spirituality towards the ultimate good of human existence. My view of spirituality is more intimately connected with the Blessed Trinity and Christianity than might be the case in non-biblical ethics. The elements that populate sacred spirituality are gleaned from the Old Testament as

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[13] Flannery, A. 1988. *Vatican Council 11*. Northport New York: Costello Publishing Company, 769-772.

[14] Bryson, K. 2011. "An interpretation of Genesis 1:26." *Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 23:2, 187-213.

well as from the New Testament Bible in their historical setting. The spiritual history of Judaism is told through the cultural, societal, political, economic, and ethical setting of the Old Testament as a religious paradigm. Thus, this spiritual voice is heard primarily through relationship with God the Father. In Hebrew Scripture, God the Father, YAHWEH, and Creator of the world is imagined through the arm of the carbon-self set of relationships. The absence of an explicit reference to the social and/or internal self in the Old Testament explains in part why not all Jews believe in Christ as God or accept the existence of an afterlife state of existence. The focus on personal relation with the divine is absent in Buddhism and therefore Buddhism is not a religion per Western criteria, although the Buddhist spirituality of enlightenment mirrors the panentheistic character of God the Father found in Western religions;

The vision: The spirituality of the carbon-self seeks the attainment of a peace that exists beyond survival, disease, destruction, and death. The goal of the spiritual tendency as it manifests itself in our carbon relationships is the production of a world where nothing needs to survive because disease, destruction, and death threaten nothing. My spiritual vision of the realization of the religious world is one in which the cold, the hurricanes, the waters, the fire, and gravity exist side by side in peace with all living things. This is a world where the coyote and the lamb, the lion and the rabbit exist in peace with all things. This is a world where you go naked into the cold of winter without freezing to death, or plumb the depths of the ocean floor without fear of drowning or of being crushed by water pressure; this is a world where no carbon atom threatens any other carbon atom. The spiritual tendency at the level of carbon relationships contains an implicit promise of immortality. This non-destructive environment is what spirituality strives to attain in all things that are a product of gravity. And this is what religion promises at the level of the carbon-self. This is the carbon-self vision of sacred spirituality and an essential aspect of the ultimate good promised in the innate quest for sacred meaning.

On the other hand, the highest aspirations of social spirituality are expressed in the discovery of a personal absolute, one that is imbedded in a spirituality of love and compassion for all our peace-making relationships. The spiritual tendency moves us towards the discovery of a good that exist beyond selfish love to the discovery of a gentle letting be of the other. To love the other is to help them nurture their person-

making relationships. The spirituality of the social-self begins with the awareness of our embodiment. The human body is the product of loving relationships between persons. Thus, we do not have bodies any more than to love is to possess the other. We are incarnate consciousness in the world along with others and share with them the responsibility of civilization and the production of a better world (historicity). But our world is laced with violence, war, and the destruction of other human beings. How is the religious social promise possible?

The vision: The vision of the spiritual social self begins within the family unit and moves on to extend this loving relationship to include other persons. The spirituality of a peaceful social-self is attained by seeing other living things as an extension of our own social-self relationships, as Gabriel Marcel details in his works. The goodness of the mother-son-daughter-spousal relationship brings on the realization of a world in which each person is an extension of the other. Thus, the spiritual drive leads me to honor you as I honor myself; to love you as I love myself. The spiritual tendency directs us towards the attainment of a loving world that shares in the loving peace of Jesus Christ.

The associations that generate the internal-self take place in the realm of mind rather than brain since the latter is the output of carbon relationships. The nature of the internal self is elusive because the mind exists as embedded in carbon atoms. It corresponds to what some pre-Cartesian philosophers (Aquinas) called the soul. The soul appears to 'lie in wait for data' to move into the operations of knowledge. Jacques Maritain suggests that only God knows us the way we seek to know our self. Jungian psychology plumbs the contents of the obscure by peeling away progressive layers of insight into the nature of the affective self through 'individuation' or the process of integrating the contents of the unconscious into consciousness. The nature of the epistemic self remains elusive because of a false start. In my opinion, no I, ego or self exists outside of relationships. The internal-self is but one of three main streams of person-making relationships. This is the place where new relationships are formed; a place where the person institutes and varies relationships between means and ends in the attainment of a perceived ultimate good. The internal-self relationships are not material or carbon-based although they take place in the company of those associations. The mind needs the carbon-self (brain) to operate but what it produces is not reducible to the activities of the carbon-self. This view is based on

the distinction between mind and brain. The contents of the mind are dependent and independent of the carbon-self. They are dependent on it because in the world of gravity, space, and matter we cannot think without the carbon-self but at the same time, the contents of mind are not reducible to the activity taking place in the brain. The spiritual addiction to the ultimate good violates the laws of the irreversibility of space and time which no carbon-based relationship (brain) can produce on its own. The contents of thought cannot be expressed through the properties of carbon relationships (what color is love, how much does honesty weigh…) or exhausted by concrete art; no painting ever catches the full expression of love, motherhood, dignity; the spiritual imperative to draw one more painting or write one more love (or hate) song, or produce one more play is ongoing.

The vision: The fulfillment of the spirituality of the internal-self is based on divine wisdom—the provenance of God the Holy Spirit—and the realization that all things are interconnected. The immaterial character of mind, thought, beauty and love is evidence of the Holy Spirit in the world. It moves towards the (Buddhist) view where all things exist in relationship. The ego disappears because nothing exists in-itself. The act of thought provides an instance of unity as it becomes one with its object. The ultimate unity of all things shall generate a Kantian reversal where the carbon-self will depend on the mind for its existence, while the global self transforms into a dynamic unity of social-selves. The spiritual reality of love and compassion shall light up the other in luminous insight. This is the ultimate realization of our innate addiction to the Sacred in all things; a vision that carries us to a place where the word is more easily expressed by the arts than by language as divine ubiquity overcomes the illusion of separation (Hinduism) to reveal the three faces of persons in the one God.

Blaise Pascal develops an interesting argument that the non-believer can use to wager on the existence of God (Brown, 1984).[15] He claims that the benefits of wagering on the side of God's existence outweigh the loss sustained if we happen to be wrong; winning the wager places us in good stead about eternal life. On the other hand, losing the

[15] Brown, G. 1984. "A Defence of Pascal's Wager." *Religious Studies* 20 (3), 465-479.

wager costs us very little—perhaps a few hours in prayer. Even if evidential reason is not on the side of God's existence, prudential reason suggests that Pascal's wager is a safe bet. Further, Pascal's belief in the existence of the Christian God of love allows us to build better relationships with other persons and with the spirituality of the environment than would otherwise be the case. The sceptic can play along without loss and perhaps the illusion that God exists will create the reality? At the end of the day, if not God (and religion), then we need to find an alternative conduit to appease the nagging promise contained within our spiritual tendency.

The Application of Spirituality to Alcohol Use Disorder: The Psychology of Recovery

Alcohol abuse is an obstacle to positive spiritual growth in depth psychology. The literature on the treatment of alcohol use disorder falls into three broad complementary areas. The first is based on total abstinence and traces its origin to Bill W (*Anonymous*, 1935).[16] The question whether *Anonymous* is a program that focuses on living sober rather than on recovery from addiction is a moot point because the literature on the success of controlled drinking is mixed. The second treatment modality is based on the (carbon-self) scientific study of brain chemistry and dopamine receptor cells, while the third approach to alcohol use disorder is based on clinical psychology, namely positive reinforcement, and behavior modification. The second and third approaches seek to promote problem-free moderation, although abstinence from alcohol is necessary for those individuals with more severe symptoms. While total abstinence could be a desirable condition of recovery, the success of treatment does not depend on it. D. L. Davies in the early 60s and Mark and Linda Sobell in the early 70s pioneered the behavioral treatment of alcohol use disorder. Although the debate about the possibility of alcoholic's ability to drink in moderation is far from settled, their research prepared the way for the ongoing study of addiction. In our day, Keith Humphrey, Professor of Psychiatry at Stanford University School of Medicine, and Robert Miller, psychologist and Distinguished Professor

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[16] *A.A World Services Inc*. 1976. *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Third Edition. New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing.

Emeritus of psychology and psychiatry at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, are spearheading fresh approaches to the study of alcoholism. Dr. Miller is the author of numerous studies on alcohol and drug abuse including 'Integrating spirituality into treatment,' and 'Controlling your drinking.' He developed a 'Feeling-State' protocol that is open to the ways of AA while making room for other harm reduction treatment modalities such as CRA and CRAFT (community reinforcement and family training). Dr. Miller suggests that the solution to alcohol and drug abuse should come from the client rather than the counselor. He says that the job of the counselor is to help people find the motivation for change. The CRA method developed by Robert Meyers also suggests that the client must decide whether sobriety is more rewarding than drug use. CRA makes drug use less rewarding by allowing its negative consequences to occur. The focus is on helping a client find positive reinforcement for not drinking, or using substances in moderation. Whether the client's treatment focus shifts to abstinence or moderate drinking depends on the severity of use. In an interview conducted by W. White, Dr. Miller reports that individuals who have a less severe problem appear to be more successful in controlling their drinking than others with more severe symptoms as they often had more success with abstinence rather than moderation, "not because they tried moderation and failed but they found it difficult or not worth it."[17] Dr. Miller developed CRAFT as an extension of CRA to include community reinforcement and family training in helping a client discover the rewards of moderation or total abstinence depending on the distinction between problem use and dependence.

Other researchers in the alcohol field include Dr. Humphrey, who is policy advisor to the White House on the prevention and treatment of addictive disorders, and Andrew J. Saxon M.D. an academic with numerous publications in the field of addiction. Dr. Saxon is Director of the addiction psychiatry residency program at the University of Washington where he teaches in the department of Psychiatry and Behavioral

[17] White, W. 2012. "The Psychology of Addiction Recovery; An Interview with William R. Miller Ph.D." Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry. Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Addiction (CASA). The University of New Mexico. www.williamwhitepapers.com accessed March 9, 2016, 13-14.

Sciences. His research focus is on the brain's reward circuitry and offers an alternative to the *Anonymous* program. The approach seeks to develop a treatment of alcohol use disorders that centers on the role of the brain's dopamine receptors, and the genetic characteristics of alcoholics such as impulsiveness. The medical model is meeting with some success because the total abstinence from alcohol use advocated by *Anonymous* is not for everyone, or even the best course of action to follow in all cases. Statistics from AA world headquarters in New York City reveal that approximately 27% of individuals that seek help in AA are sober at the end of the first year, but this implies that 73% of addicts fail to find sobriety in 12-Step programs. This is not to suggest that alcoholics fail to find sobriety in *Anonymous* after a relapse but the point is that the medical model offers an alternative for the segment of the population that does not immediately return to *Anonymous* after a relapse or maintain total abstinence from alcohol use. A program on alcohol-drug misuse that aired recently (2016)[18] on CBC television suggests that 87% of individuals that cannot maintain abstinence from alcohol beyond the first year in *Anonymous* can nonetheless achieve some degree of sobriety through medical intervention and therefore will reduce the risk of harming themselves if they seek that help. Suzuki borrows the title *Wasted* for his program from a book written by Pond and Palmer (2013).[19] In that book, Michael Pond, a self-proclaimed alcoholic therapist, promotes harm reduction as the method of choice for the treatment of alcohol use disorder. Pond expresses strong, personal dissatisfaction with the *Anonymous* program, in part because of its alleged focus on the negative emotions of guilt and shame associated with 'relapse.' He suggests that the experience of shame following relapse leads some individuals to suicide. In my opinion, the problem appears to arise because the term relapse lacks specificity. For instance, Dr. Miller's tongue-in-cheek assessment of the issue is on how many drinks and what length of time between drinks constitutes a relapse?[20]

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[18] Suzuki, D. (Jan. 20, 2016). *Wasted*. The Nature of Things. CBC television.

[19] Pond, M., and M. Palmer. 2013. *Wasted*. *An Alcoholic Therapist's Fight for Recovery in a Flawed Treatment System*. Toronto, Ont.: Greystone Books Ltd. University of Toronto Press.

[20] White, W. 2012. "The Psychology of Addiction Recovery; An Interview with

Miller's view is entirely consistent with the goal of harm reduction but not with *Anonymous*' focus on abstinence. As if to settle matters, the scientific community claims that alcoholics inherit genetic traits that make them more susceptible to impulsiveness. The explanation proffered on *Wasted* is that alcoholics have fewer dopamine receptors than non-alcoholics and presumably fail to activate the brain's reward circuitry in the usual way. The detoxification process puts alcoholics at risk because the brain rewires itself to depend more on itself and less on alcohol. Several drugs such as Ativan (Benzodiazepine) are used to treat anxiety disorder during this period of transition. Medicine provides anticonvulsant medication such as gabapentin to reduce the risk of dying from rapid convulsions (DTs). The narcotic antagonists Naloxone (NLX) and Naltrexone (NTX) reverse the effects of an overdose of heroin or some other types of pain killers. Naltrexone blocks dopamine receptor cells and its slow release effect reduces the craving for alcohol for a period lasting up to 30 days. Naltrexone is available in liquid injectable form in the U.S. (Vivitrol) but is only available in capsule form in Canada. Naltrexone acts directly on the brain's reward pathway and reduces the addict's impulsive behavior. In *Anonymous*, the impulsive behavior of addiction is attenuated somewhat by practicing a series of 12 behavioral steps towards a renewed sense of spiritual awareness.

It seems possible for drug counselors to recommend the use of whatever model works best for a client. This choice depends on a cost/benefit ratio in which a client weighs the negative consequences of alcohol use against the benefits of reducing consumption, or in some cases total abstinence from alcohol. Following Dr. Miller's experience in the alcohol field, the client decides the best course of action rather than a counselor or other experts in the field of alcohol addiction. One major difference between the *Anonymous* program and the cost/benefit model is that *Anonymous* is based on a Higher Power centered spiritual recovery, that is, on the addict's willingness to enter relationship with a Higher Power such as God. This point is not to be missed. Miller finds that spirituality is hardly possible during the first year because the indi-

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William R. Miller Ph.D." Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry. Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Addiction (CASA). The University of New Mexico. www.williamwhitepapers.com accessed March 9, 2016.

vidual must first attend to higher needs such as health and employment. This point, it seems to me, misses the connection between the carbon-self and spirituality. Medicine focuses on controlling disease and therefore on controlling a patient's health outcome. However, a patient's spiritual energies can be redirected towards healthier 'carbon capping' outcomes. The focus on redirecting spirituality is urgent in the *Anonymous* program and indeed functions as the necessary condition of recovery. The individuals that seek help from AA do so because the severity of symptoms undermines the autonomy and consent required to redirect spiritual energies. The AA claim "We were powerless over alcohol…" presents as a blockage to personal growth. The program of *Alcoholics Anonymous* is spiritual to the core. The focus on recovery from negative emotions is based on the change in personality that arises out of practicing a 12-Step program. Abstinence from alcohol use is but a means to that end. On the other hand, *the medical and clinical models focus on harm reduction rather than recovery.*

An in-depth study of the spiritual character of the *Anonymous* program: Some of the beliefs expressed by self-declared alcoholics such as Bill W. fit Herbert Spencer's definition of spirituality as 'God-consciousness' (*Anonymous*, 1976).[21] But God-consciousness is open to a variety of meanings to enable the spiritual awakening promised in the *Anonymous* program. The way in which spirituality connects with a 12-Step program is different from the connection between spirituality and other threads because the type of spirituality practiced in AA is tailored to the special needs characterized by substance or behavioral dependency (addiction). The parameters of recovery from alcohol dependency bring out an essential characteristic of spiritual growth. While this application extends to other dependencies whether behavioral such as sex or gambling dependencies, or substance based as in dependency on narcotics, the use of a 12-Step method to overcome addiction is historically first in line since it was introduced in 1935 by Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith. Based on the metaphysical structure of spirituality the essential character of the *Anonymous* program clusters about the arms of a person-making process, namely the carbon-self, the social-self, and the

[21] Spencer, H. 1976. *A.A World Services Inc. Alcoholics Anonymous*. Third Edition. New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing, 570.

psychological-self. The spiritual imperative finds meaning in those three areas of personal growth.

12-Step programs have no explicit connection to organized religion, although the spiritual thread is present in both. Spencer's descriptive 'God-consciousness' is sufficiently vague to incorporate both camps. The visualization of God by individuals in recovery provides insight into the non-religious aspect of spirituality. The alcoholic expresses a need to find the meaning of life but uses alcohol to fix negative emotions. Thus, 12-Step spirituality opens as an attempt to reverse false spiritual starts or non-life giving spiritual connections. Too much dependency on a 'Higher Power' can also be a source of sour spirituality. It can become addictive. Leo Booth (1991) claims that "Religious addiction does exist; it is a disease like any other addiction; and it can and should be treated by the same methods used to treat other addictions."[22] No point going from the frying pan to the fire; while religious spirituality plays a negative role in freeing the faithful from sin and guilt, it can play an equally negative role if God becomes a scapegoat for the inability to take personal responsibility for a wrongful course of action.

The first introduction of a 12-Step program intended for personal recovery from substance and/or behavioral dependency is found in the Twelve Steps of *Alcoholics Anonymous* (1935). While the Oxford Group's focus on spirituality and recovery predates *Anonymous*, and influences its development, the Oxford Group's intent is primarily to provide a religious experience rather than a spiritual recovery. This fact points to an important distinction between spirituality and religion. Furthermore, AA's spirituality arises out of deflation of the ego at depth rather than in the practice of the Oxford Group's precepts of absolute purity, honesty, unselfishness, and love. Dr. Silkworth, one of Bill W.'s early mentors gave him solid advice (A.A. World Services Inc. 2005)[23] when he told him not to focus on the Oxford Group's four absolutes—purity, unselfishness, honesty, and love—when dealing with alcoholics because their spirituality is not of an evangelical type. Rather the focus must shift to the consequences that arise from a deflation of the alcoholic's ego; "deflation at depth is the foundation of

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[22] Booth, L. Fr. 1991. *When God Becomes a Drug*. New York, N.Y.: Penguin Putnam Inc., 38.

[23] Silkworth, W. 2005. *A.A World Services Inc. Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age; A Brief History of A.A.* N.Y.: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing, 68.

most spiritual experiences." Without that bit of advice, the AA program might not have come to light. The alcoholic's willingness to search for a power higher than self (Second Step) depends on the admissibility of a First Step, namely the admission of personal powerlessness and unmanageability. Carl Jung, a spiritually minded analytical psychologist, recognized the spiritual role of ego deflation when he directed a patient (Roland H.) that was experiencing problems with alcohol use to meet with Bill W's group of friends in recovery.[24] The alcoholic, it seems is seeking sacred meaning and therefore is spiritual, but the search for meaning using alcohol results in misdirected spirituality. Jung's referral is highlighted in a letter he sent to Bill W. (William G. Wilson) on January 30, 1961: "Dear Mr. Wilson, I had no news from Roland H. anymore and often wondered what had been his fate…alcohol in Latin is 'spiritus' and you can use the same word for the highest religious experience as well as for the most depraving poison." The spirituality that animates recovery appears to emanate out of the Jungian imagery of the 'wounded healer,' a spirituality that exists deep within the realm of personal pain. In Jungian analysis spirituality arises out of the integration of the contents of the unconscious into consciousness (individuation) rather than in the outward pursuit of perfection. The depths of personal failure serve as a source of strength as illustrated through the immortal lyrics of Leonard Cohen:[25]

> Ring the bells that still can ring
> Forget your perfect offering
> There is a crack, a crack in everything
> That's how the light gets in.

That view aligns with *Anonymous*' focus on five personal 'inventory' Steps because recovery from substance dependency is contingent on self-awareness. That belief is consonant with the experience of Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and William James (1842-1910) as they both appear to draw spiritual strength from their personal struggles with depression. The focus on personal brokenness marks a significant departure from the spirituality of the Oxford group.

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[24] Jung, C. (Jan. 30, 1961). *Letter to Bill W*. http://www.silkworth.net/aahistory. Accessed August 20, 2015.

[25] Cohen, L. Anthem. Lyrics. http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/leonardcohen/anthem.html Accessed March 3, 2016.

The clearest expression of the central role of spirituality in recovery is expressed in *Anonymous' 12th Step;* "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps…" Thus, a 'spiritual awakening' implies that the alcoholic had otherwise misdirected spirituality until that point. This is to say that the individual in recovery becomes aware of the need to redirect spiritual energies after the fact of the previous eleven Steps. Adherence to the Twelve Steps is prescribed as a necessary condition of recovery from dependency. Further, the 11th step's suggestion that the need to 'improve conscious contact with God' is integral to righting spirituality, signals the pivotal role of God or a Higher Power in personal recovery. The word 'recovering' might be a more appropriate characteristic of the spiritual awakening than 'recovered'; the A.A. program promises 'spiritual progress' rather than 'spiritual perfection.'[26] Thus, 'spiritual awareness' refers to an ongoing process of recovering from alcohol dependency rather than a cure for a medical condition. This marks a clear break from the medical and psychological models.

The study of these steps reveals that recovery is contingent on the discovery of a Higher Power (Step 2) and the willingness to turn 'will and life' over to the care of that Power (Step 3). The nature of the Higher Power is unspecified, as expected from a non-religious movement. Members will take from this concept what they need to recover from dependency. The only requirement for membership in *Anonymous* is the Third Tradition: a 'desire to stop drinking.'[27] The 12-Steps are suggested as a necessary condition of recovery. While the nature and function of the Higher Power is unspecified, the individual is invited to enter relationship with it or turn control over to God so that God can do for the individual what was otherwise unattainable. The action of Steps 2 and 3 is presented as a necessary condition of recovery. This is the first indication that spirituality could have a transcendental character but not necessarily so. The *Anonymous* program is designed for atheists as well as theists. It arises out of the individual's relationship with whatever Power the individual identifies as being 'greater than self.' No reference to the God of religion is made or intended. The ongoing process

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[26] A.A. World Services Inc. 1976. *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Third Edition. New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing, 60.

[27] A.A. World Services, Inc. 2006. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. New York N.Y.: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing, 139.

of spiritual awakening (steps 4 through 11) subsequently appears to be contingent on the ongoing effort to remove whatever obstacles stand in the way of relationship with a Higher Power. The insight into the nature and function of the Higher Power changes in recovery.

Five blockages to ongoing recovery and spiritual awakening (personal deficiencies, defects of character and shortcomings) are addressed from Steps 4 through 5-6-7, and 10, while two other impediments to spiritual growth are found in blocked relationships with other persons (steps 8 and 9). Shaming others who do not or cannot maintain sobriety is not part of steps 8 and 9. On the contrary, the *Anonymous* program is based on the resonance and identification between alcoholics, not on shaming others but on accepting others as they present themselves. The AA slogan 'live and let live' captures the essence of the relationship with others. Further, the other in recovery is a portal to God. The 11th Step provides an opportunity to deepen the relationship with a Higher Power. The focus of the 'inventory steps' is on inner work as the release from the bondage of substance and/or behavioral dependence progressively gives way to the discovery of an alternate source of sacred meaning. The net effect is a 'spiritual awakening' and the realization of several promises. While the promises contained in *Anonymous* are expressed throughout its pages, the greatest concentration of promises is found on two pages of that volume. The promises arise as the beneficial outcome of cultivating the spirituality found in the teachings of this program. The emotional benefits of 12-Step spirituality include the discovery of a new sense of freedom, happiness, and serenity; "that feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear…Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us…We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us."[28]

These emotional changes happen because of the connection between spirituality, the Higher Power, and mental states. *Anonymous* promises recovering addicts that the negative emotions of the past such as the fears, insecurity, and guilt that arise out of mishandling spirituality and past emotional challenges will give way to a new sense of belonging. The belief in the existence of a Higher Power and the individ-

[28] A.A World Services Inc. 1976. *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Third Edition. New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing, 83-84.

ual's willingness to change provide a promised map to recovery. The act of entering personal relationship with a Higher Power—usually expressed through other persons in recovery—puts life's issues into clearer perspective. That outcome is promised in the *Anonymous* fellowship; "Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize *if we work for them.*" (italics added)[29]

It seems possible to affirm that spirituality plays a dual role in the Anonymous programs; not only as a tendency towards meaning but also a tendency to unmask what stands in the way of sacred meaning: "We recovered alcoholics are not so much brothers in virtue as we are brothers in our defects, and in our common striving to overcome them."[30] The spirituality of *Anonymous* is characterized by a process that begins with the recognition and admission of failure. This is an explanation of how an emotional blockage provides a spiritual opportunity for personal growth. The experience of ego deflation and failure prompts some addicts to seek out a source of sacred power outside the self. The Higher Power morphs into a God of their understanding. The process of recovery leads to a spiritual awakening. This sets the stage for an alternate substance free search for meaning. Spirituality in this instance is the awareness that the promise of a meaningful life is at hand without the use of alcohol (or any other minds altering substance or behavior). The spiritual awakening and the ensuing physical sobriety ushers in a new era of personal growth otherwise beyond the reach of the individual. The process paves the way for a spirituality now unblocked from dependency to step into the light of recovery to the discovery of new meaning in life. Bill Wilson says: "sobriety is only a bare beginning; it is only the first gift of the first awakening."[31] The published stories of alcoholics in recovery confirm that promise.[32]

The distinction between God's nature and God's attributes highlights a main difference between the spiritual character of 12-Step pro-

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[29] Ibid., 84.

[30] A.A. World Services, Inc., 1998. *As Bill sees It*. New York: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing, 167.

[31] Ibid., 8.

[32] A.A World Services Inc.1976. *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Third Edition. (1976). New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing, 453-561.

grams and the spiritual character of religious beliefs. It seems possible to suggest that the addict's first introduction to a 12-Step program should focus on the existence of God as such (Higher Power) rather than on divine attributes. The reason for this suggestion is that the addict's experience of what God does is generally negative. Perhaps the Augustinian religious tradition carries the same negativity as a spiritual weakness that turns into a source of grace? Spiritual maturity is required to enter a positive relationship with God. The addict's God consciousness is laced with negative emotion because the relationship with God does not appear to produce a plan that includes ongoing use of the drug of choice. God does not provide the peace required to maintain an addict's status quo. The movement towards recovery calls for a revolutionary change of relationship with God. The addict that seeks recovery must first learn to accept that a life without substance use is possible, and second that this is carried through by developing a challenging relation with a seemingly uncaring God. The recovering addict gradually develops a clearer vision of God as ultimate good. At the end of the day, the suspension of belief in the attributes of God followed by a belief in the pure existence of God generates a rich source of spiritual insight. At some point in recovery the individual's willingness to trust this unknown source of power is filled with glimpses of God's attributes as God fulfills the spiritual promise of recovery found in the AA program. At that point the addict might be ready to raise spirituality to the next level by seeing God at work in the person-making process. The spirituality of an addict in recovery whether from substance dependence or a negative religious experience is purer than unblemished religious spirituality because it emerges out of the depths of a personal hell.

While the view of alcoholism as disease finds its explanation in the brain's dopamine receptors and the brain's reward circuitry, it seems that the higher road to mental health is integrative. For instance, the Mayo clinic's successful approach to alcoholism includes a focus on the spiritual.[33] The success of the medical model depends on the view of the patient as disease but perhaps medicine can attain greater success by reclaiming its foundational roots in the ancient art of healing.

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[33] Mayo clinic. 2014. See http://www.mayoclinic.org/disease-conditions. Accessed June 28, 2015.

The Application of Spirituality to Medicine: Spiritual Welding

In 2004, I coined the term 'spiritual welding' as a guide to making spiritual connections in medicine. Spiritual welding is a process of restoring meaning loss in the life of a person through disease, divorce, addiction, unemployment, aging. Meaning loss arises on the cluster of associations that populate the arms of the person-making process.[34] The connection between finding meaning in suffering and healing is undisputed, but does medicine pay more than lip service to healing? The primary focus of medicine is to cure disease, not to heal illness. But I think that this focus is changing. Marilyn Gladu's Bill-C277 passed with unanimous support in the House of Commons (March 2017) and is currently awaiting review by the health committee. The Bill introduces parameters for palliative care and a subset of 'healing' services for acute care, home care, crisis care, spiritual and psychological counseling. The key to its success lies in the provision of a distinct budget line for holistic care so that the competition between allocating funds for curing or for healing ends. At the end of the day, funding will be available for the treatment of depression and other psychological ills, not only at end-of-life but **hopefully** as an integral part of all medical coverage. The PMB has garnered unanimous support from the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Nursing Association, the Quality end-of-life coalition, including 38 stakeholder organizations.[35] Adding the focus of political or legalized spirituality to medicine provides holistic care that is especially significant in the face of a terminal illness when all attempts to cure disease fails but also as a treatment modality for patients suffering from stress, anxiety, depression, and other psychological problems. Hopefully this will put an end to cases of individuals committing suicide after being turned down by a hospital because of an underfunded mental-health system and the unavailability of spiritual help.

Ironically the explanation for the relatively recent focus on holistic care in medicine is due in part to the success of medical technology. With each technological breakthrough medicine became more success-

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[34] Bryson, K. 2004. "Spiritual Welding 101." *The Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine* (YJHM).

[35] For a complete listing of stakeholder organizations see http://www. marilyngladu.com/pmb-c-277

ful in eliminating disease but unfortunately it also became more impersonal. The goal of spiritual healing is to find personal meaning in face of the suffering, discomfort, costs, and all the negativities usually associated with a serious disease. While personal healing can only be accomplished by the patient, the staff's compassionate care provides the appropriate framework required for this process to take place. A patient is more than a disease. The idea is not entirely new because approximately 85% of our training facilities across the US and Canada since 1985 include courses on spirituality and health in the medical curriculum. But the strands have yet to come together to provide a level of holistic care that includes treatment for all the relationships that individuate a patient—carbon based, interpersonal, and psychological. This includes the (carbon based) focus on curing as well as the willingness to treat the whole person. We can begin with something as simple as personalizing the patient's hospital room by inviting some aspect of a home environment into it. The proposed treatment plan must include a focus on helping a patient find fresh meaning in the face of meaning loss. We need to address all three streams of relationships found in the person-making process. Attention is given to the patient's social-self dimension by ensuring that the patient's cultural perspective is incorporated into the treatment plan. The focus includes a patient's religious life. Kirkwood's hospital handbook contains a useful breakdown of the various religious traditions that surround patient care.[36] Spiritual counseling includes a focus on family as well as on all the patient's person-making relationships.[37] The psyche can be a hotbed of negative emotions at time of disease when life loses meaning. A patient is vulnerable in times of crisis. How can the healthcare team help a patient find meaning in personal suffering? Why couldn't our hospitals enlist aid from volunteers to augment their scarce economic resources? To borrow from the 12-Step model, holistic recovery begins with resonance and identification with the suffering of the other. This is compassion at-work. For instance, in addition to compassionate nursing care we can enlist the help of patients in remission from cancer to meet with patients that have cancer, or con-

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[36] Kirkwood, N., 2005. *A Hospital Handbook on Multiculturalism and Religion*. New York: Morehouse Publishing.

[37] Burkhart, M.A., Nagai-Jacobson, M.G. 2002. *Spirituality: Living our Connectedness*. Albany, NY: Delmar.

nect patients struggling with depression with others successfully living with the tragedy of depression. Spiritual growth happens when like-minded friends share their personal stories of tragedy and triumph with each other. Perhaps a compassionate patient will use his/her story of suffering as a gateway to the pain of the other. But nurses/patients must first be aware of their own search for meaning and need for healing before they can help anyone. Part of that learning process takes place in the classroom. Identification with the suffering of the other is the true test of compassionate care. The patient/nurse resonates and identifies with the pain of the other to find spiritual meaning in his/her personal suffering. In Christian faith, for instance, the faithful identify with the suffering and courage of Christ, left to hang and dry on a wooden cross. My nursing students are introduced to holistic pain management by learning to keep a log on how they find meaning each day. Journaling is an aid to the development of spiritual growth; a prelude to social action as they use their own search for meaning, often in the face of personal stress and meaning loss, as a gateway to the suffering of others in the hospital environment.

The Application of Spirituality to Social Work: Healing-at-Large

The spiritual character of social work is based on the sacred structure of the person as a tendency towards good. The social worker's motivation to help others is effective because it grounds this 'Elan Vital,' as Bergson might have it, in human rights and social justice. Sociology is the technology of choice to deliver compassionate care to persons in need beyond the medical model. While Auguste Comte overstates the might of sociology, he understates the role of structure or the metaphysical root of the possibility of social work. The sense that Comte assigns to the word 'positive' in his 'Cours de philosophie positive,' is that of data purified from metaphysical speculation. The work of Emile Meyerson raises serious doubts about that possibility. His comprehensive review of the whole of scientific thought—from its earliest beginnings to its latest developments—argues that science is not now or ever was free from metaphysical speculation about the structure of data (Bryson, IEP).[38] Meyerson's study of the psychological principles that ac-

[38] Bryson, K. 2004. "Emile Meyerson (1859-1933)." *Internet Encyclopedia of*

company reasoning in science (and common sense) finds that a concern for the structure of the phenomena of observation is an integral part of scientific inquiry. That metaphysical structure is the glue that holds science together. Description is not now or ever could be the only business of science. The metaphysical focus on the core of being personal is therefore an essential aspect of social work.

Social work is a profession concerned with helping people to ensure their individual and collective well-being:

> It aims to help people develop their skills and their ability to use their own resources and those of the community to resolve problems. Social work is concerned with individual and personal problems but also with broader social issues such as poverty, unemployment and domestic violence.[39]

The ethical underpinning of social work is contained in the structure of being a person, enshrined through the *Charter of Human Rights* and the principle of social justice. The principles of social work focus on the dignity and respect of individuals along with the promise to treat each person equally "without unfair discrimination on the basis of disability, color, social class, race, religion, language, political beliefs, sex or sexual orientation."[40] The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) share this common objective and have signed a bicameral Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to a collaborative relationship to advance social work in North America and internationally.[41]

Nowhere is spirituality more in evidence than in the application of the ethical principles of social work to serve the best interest of at-risk individuals. The person-making process provides the metaphysical foundation for a model we can use to monitor the application of the principles of social work to the constructivist needs of the individual in a community setting. The following distribution is based on the linkage to practice principles identified in the CASW Social Policy Principles pa-

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Philosophy.

[39] Canadian Association of Social Workers. 2003. http://www.casw-acts.ca accessed December 29, 2015.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Canadian Association of Social Workers. 2012. http://www.casw-acts.ca accessed December 29, 2015.

per (2003). These principles can be downloaded onto the three types of relationships that constitute the human structure:

(A) Internal-self: *dignity and respect*; "commitment to the values of acceptance, self-determination and respect for clients."[42]

(B) Social-self: because of A: *equality*, "Affirmation of the importance of equal opportunity for clients to reach their full potential"; *equity*, "Recognition of the need of affirmative action and targeting for some clients in order to minimize social exclusion"; *comprehensiveness*, "recognition that solidarity in society is a fundamental basis of cooperation with and among clients and significant others"; *social dialogue,* "Recognition of the right, and obligation, of social workers to participate in professional and community associations in order to influence the development of social policies".[43]

(C) Carbon-self: because of B and A: *quality services*, "Empowerment of the client through excellence in the work place and involvement of the client in administrative decision-making"; *constitutional integrity*, Recognition of the regional and linguistic diversity of the country in the delivery of social services to clients"; *subsidiarity*, "Insuring that decisions and the delivery of social services, are made as close as possible to the client."[44]

The fairness of the linkage between principle and a case can be assessed based on the distribution of the principles of social work on the arms of the person-making process. The linkage between the needs of a client and the services provided by a social worker can be expressed mathematically along the arms of the person-making process. The appearance of a broken string of associations on any of these arms suggests that a basic client need and right linkage is yet unmet. This is a call for spiritual welding. The allocation of scarce social work resources can be prioritized along lines that set out to meet the needs of the most vulnerable clients such as children and the elderly, taking care that the process is holistic, that is ensuring that the mathematical linkage between resource and client need is grounded in the structure of being human rather than in the quasi metaphysically neutral mathematical rela-

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[42] Canadian Association of Social Workers 2003. http://www.casw-acts.ca accessed December 29, 2015.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

tionship between resource and need. Social work is religion's healing dimension at-large.

The Application of Spirituality to the Arts: The Golden Road to Wellness

Art reaches the human structure at the core of personhood. If the following appears as an ode to the majesty and centrality of the healing role of the arts in a human life, then this is as it should be. Otherwise the word is at fault. The word is a pale conveyor of meaning in comparison to art. The arts have a special capacity that we need to celebrate because they move us into spontaneous consonance with the whole of reality. The healing role of the arts owes its success in part to the fact that it moves us to a level of personal insight that exists beyond the limitations of logic and language; art shifts the focus away from the piecemeal world of linear logic and moves its object into the realm of forms and figures to experience relationship between all things. Art feeds language.

The genealogy of art: In Thomistic metaphysics the primacy of *esse* underlies the claim to objective knowledge and the possibility of art. In the primary operation of knowledge, the mind connects with the being of things through the concept. The concept is the means or process to knowledge that carries being's intelligibility to the senses as to the understanding. The idea or term of knowledge arises in a subsequent movement as the mind examines this conceptual becoming of the other to produce something to its likeness and express it through language or art. Being's unconcealment provides the metaphysical foundation of art. The Greek word *ousias* and Heidegger's *Unverborgenheit* suggest that being's self-disclosure provides the metaphysical foundation for the possibility of logical truth and artistic truth (*alętheia*) as being's unconcealment sends us on an errand to discover and represent the nature of things as they speak to us. The experience of standing in the presence of the beauty of being's unconcealment can move us beyond language, however.

How do the arts serve as a conduit for spirituality? In the same way that beauty attracts attention. Thomas Aquinas's definition of beauty is "that which gives pleasure when seen."[45] An artist can arouse the sense

[45] Aquinas, T. 1952. *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Domini-

of awe in the human condition by drawing attention to the mystery of life, love, compassion, suffering, and joy through art. The possibility of entering spiritual communion with art exists because the work of art rises above the limitations of matter. Aquinas says that immateriality is at the root of all knowledge, practical as well as speculative; the knower can enter union with the form of the other because of a freedom from the limiting conditions of matter.[46] But the appreciation of beauty through the union of forms is contemplative rather than discursive. In this sense, it can be argued that beauty is a transcendental property of being, that is it applies to everything that exists, though not everyone would agree with the claim. The reason is that not everyone is able to perceive the beauty that is in all things because of excessive mind-flapping. How, for instance, can someone appreciate the beauty of cancer? While the beauty of cancer is not evident in its relation to the individual with cancer, it must be recognized that it has beauty as a cancer that is best expressed through art. The view that beauty is a transcendental property of being is shared by Koren (1955) as he cites with approval a text of Aquinas on Dionysius: "There is nothing that does not participate of the beautiful and the good; for everything is beautiful and good according to its own form."[47] The whole of existence has beauty. Jacques Maritain (1954)[48] shares the view that beauty is a transcendental property of being although the interpretation of beauty is subjective and therefore admits of degrees. Not all things are of equal beauty. Other transcendental properties of being include unity, truth, and goodness. All things express unity in that they resist destruction. Reality clings to existence and therefore the parts of a being cling to themselves by acting primarily for the good of the whole. The transcendental truth is also interchangeable with being because the whole of reality exists in conformity with the divine mind, that is in harmony with the divine plan for creation. And the

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can Province. Chicago Ill.: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1a, q.5, a.4, ad 1.

[46] Aquinas, T. 1953. *The Division and Methods of the Sciences* (Questions V and VI, Commentary on Boethius's De Trinitate.) Maurer, A. trans. Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies. q.v. a 2, 17.

[47] Koren, H., 1955. *Dionysium de Divinis Nominibus*, c.4, lect. 5. *An Introduction to the Science of Metaphysics*. New York: Herder Books Co. 99.

[48] Maritain, J. 1954. *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books Inc.

whole of reality is good because being is pleasing to our appetite for goodness. The whole of reality acts towards the attainment of the good. In a sense beauty expresses all the transcendental properties of being; because being has unity, truth, and goodness, it has beauty. While Aquinas did not develop a system of aesthetics, he leaves no doubt that beauty is perceived through an intellectual intuition and that art is a conduit to personal healing through the integrity, clarity, and harmony found in the object of art. Art makes us whole.

The individual at peace sees the beauty of dying. No one wants to die, but the clarity (truth), integrity (unity), and harmony (goodness) that can come from dying is indisputable. Art, poetry, music, and the beauty of nature play an important role in helping a patient find peace in the face of a terminal illness. Art and music also play an important role in Church history as primers for a relationship with God. The role of Chaplains and pastoral counselors is to help patients blend their experiences of religious connections into the arms of the person-making process. The existential feeling of hopelessness in the face of death provides evidence of a frustrated spiritual drive. The role of Chaplain is to assist the patient's desire to find the fresh meaning needed to repair broken associations. Art serves as a healing conduit between broken spaces. A life-threatening illness affect all aspects of personal relationships. Anger and depression are not unusual outcomes of dying. The spiritual rewards of the religious connection are found in the psychological benefits that arise out of being with like-minded friends in time of need. Music is useful because it can cut through the dark of disease and the separation between persons.

Major poets often draw on the inspirational character of their works to provoke action (Ponomareff C. and K. Bryson, 2006).[49] T. S. Elliot's *The Wasteland* reads like a religious poem that takes Western European civilization to task for its spiritual bankruptcy, while Musorgsky knew that he had been touched by the sacred when he wrote his poem *Night on Bald Mountain*. Albert Camus (1955) also claims to have a sense of God, though he does not believe in personal immortality; "Yes. I have a sense

[49] Ponomareff, C. and K. Bryson. 2006. "Part One: Spirituality from the Perspective of the Humanities Tradition." *The Curve of the Sacred: An Exploration of Human Spirituality.* Amsterdam-New York: Editions Rodopi. B.V.,5-67.

of the sacred and I don't believe in a future life, that's all."[50]

According to Maritain, the arts provide a profound medium to express spiritual insight. He discusses the connection between art and poetry in the A. W. Mellon lectures he gave at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. in the summer of 1952, published as *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* as we saw above. This volume of six lectures provides a seminal introduction to the role of art and poetry in the life of a person. The spontaneous, sensed, consonance that arises between the artist and the object of beauty generates a spiritual awakening that is filtered through the medium of reason and emotion. The product of art arises as an expression of that encounter as the artist seeks to express the wonders and inexhaustible richness of spiritual insight. No single work of art ever completely succeeds in expressing the rich totality of a poetic experience, however. The awakening of artistic spirituality opens into a lifelong project to deliver through canvas, poetry, music or some other medium the sensed insight that the soul knows spontaneously and that our sensibilities can only approach awkwardly through the geometrical medium of logic. No series of paintings or poem can completely catch the rumblings of an artist filled with the beauty of a landscape, seascape, or presence of the beloved. The progress of healing is always ongoing. No human tear can hope to catch the turmoil of a patient dying from cancer, but the beauty is in the expression of pain and anguish, not in the victory dance of disease. Each act of painting, each stroke of the brush prepares the way for the artist's urgent and impatient expression of spirituality on fire. The artist becomes the landscape or seascape that reason seeks to replicate through art. Each success is also a payment of rent on the triumph and futility of trying to capture the whole of the sensed objective correlate of beauty. Each note I write is a payment of rent in making peace with the world I leave behind. To catch it all would be to extinguish it; to recognize that reason has impoverished it, lost it, by reducing it to the mathematical and sterile expressions of quantitative analysis. Thus, the spiritual is sensed rather than constructed; it's an awakening rather than the fruits of discursive reasoning; an act of faith rather than an act of reason; an awareness of the good and evil that exists in the human condition; a cry and a sob; a laughter and a tear; a moment of denial and

[50] Camus A. 1955. *The Myth of Sisyphus*. New York N.Y.: Random House.

acceptance; a moment of life and healing in the face of disintegration and death. A world without art is spiritless and as good as dead.

Conclusion

It seems possible to conclude from this essay that the spiritual thrust towards the Divine Essence manifests itself in many colors. Spirituality builds bridges to healing. Our world is laced with discord and violence, disease, death, and broken relationships. Spirituality strives to weld fresh associations on the metaphysical arms of the person-making process. It provides the invitation to practice compassion and kindness towards other persons, the environment, and self. We fail as often as we succeed. Our spiritual direction depends on person-making choices and Divine grace.

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