AN EXPLORATION OF THE VALUE OF SPIRITUALITY IN
THE FIELD OF MENTAL HEALTH

by

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Summary

The subject of spirituality is growing in popularity within the field of mental health. A major aspect of our human experience includes striving for meaning, hopefulness and purpose – this process can be understood as a *spiritual* experience. Another aspect of our shared human experience includes psychological distress and alienation. This is understood in most contemporary mental health literature as mental disorders. In our contemporary era mental health has addressed the latter. Spirituality, as an integral component of human experience, involves tapping into the innate need for integration while paving the way forward towards a *transformative* experience. The present research explores important interpretive issues related to spirituality and mental health from within a historical perspective. The present research suggests that holistic trends in mental health cohere with contemporary, phenomenologically rooted trends in spirituality.

10 Key Words

Spirituality, mental health, mysticism, psychosis, psychology, neuro-psychiatry, religion, phenomenology, ethics, holism

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

I felt a cleavage in my mind
As if my brain had split;
I tried to match it, seam by seam,
But could not make them fit.

The thought behind I strove to join
Unto the thought before,
But sequence raveled out of reach
Like balls upon a floor

Dickinson [1894]/1993:38[1]

1.0 NATURE AND AIM OF THE RESEARCH

With increasing strides being made in the technology of pharmacology within mental health, as well as disenchantment with many psychoanalytical theories, many professionals are increasingly concerned that mental health is in danger of losing its identity as the most humanistic of the medical specialties. As technology advances there is concern that the human *spirit* is being eclipsed. One notes very public and increasing acknowledgement among both professionals and recipients of mental health services that an integral component of care is missing. That component is often referred to as spirituality (Nolan and Crawford 1997, Koenig 2001, Haug 1998). Culliford (2002:250) cites the *World Health's Organization's* (1998:7) 'WHOQOL and Spirituality, Religiousness and Personal Beliefs: Report on WHO Consultation' which says

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[1] The reader will note that above each chapter, including this one, a poem or segment of a poem by Emily Dickinson (d. 1886) that corresponds and summarizes the essential themes of the chapters. The poem preceding this chapter articulates well the experience of descending into a form of madness. Dickinson, a nineteenth century American poet, lived and died an obscure and quiet life. Her poetry was not publicized until after her death. Since then she has been acknowledged as one of America's premier poets. Dickinson typifies someone who experienced both profound spiritual experience as well as forms of what we would today call a mood disorder. Nonetheless, she was able to transform this experience into metaphor for transcendent hopefulness fully grounded in the reality of psychological suffering. McDermott (2001:690) writes 'if Emily Dickinson was indeed the victim of the well-known Faustian bargain between affective illness and creative genius, it was her courage and imagination that enabled her to rise above the former and use the latter to transform powerful affects into metaphor'. That metaphor continues to resonate with a contemporary audience. Dickinson's poetry describes well a contemporary understanding of spirituality in the area of mental health. With remarkable insight and a genteel manner, Dickinson's poetry discloses both the peculiar nature of mental illness and life giving spirituality which reflects the impact of spirituality on mental health.

> Until recently the health professions have largely followed a medical model, which seeks to treat patients by focusing on medicines and surgery, and gives less importance to beliefs and to faith – in healing, in the physician and in the doctor–patient relationship. This reductionism or mechanistic view of patients as being only a material body is no longer satisfactory. Patients and physicians have begun to realise the value of elements such as faith, hope and compassion in the healing process. The value of such 'spiritual' elements in health and quality of life has led to research in this field in an attempt to move towards a more holistic view of health that includes a non-material dimension (emphasizing the seamless connections between mind and body).

These ideas, adds Culliford (2002:251), are supported by a clear and persuasive trend in the nursing literature (Narayanasamy 1993; Ross 1994, 1996; McSherry 1998; Draper 1997; Nolan & Crawford 1997; Greasley *et al*, 2001). A strong suggestion emerges that spiritual care and mental health treatment must, of necessity, go together.

While spirituality is popular within mental health the term is ambiguous. The question often posed is how is spirituality understood scientifically and clinically within mental health? Researchers in the field of mental health such as Cornah (2006) have undertaken significant literature reviews on behalf of mental health foundations to study specifically the impact of spirituality on mental health. Other researchers such as Helminiak (1996) have argued that spirituality qualifies as a science within the spectrum of mental health.

The central aim of this research is to explore the value of spirituality in the field of mental health in a manner congruent with emerging research in the disciplines of both mental health and spirituality. In doing so, two core problems present themselves. The first problem is that the interpretation of each of these terms (spirituality and mental health) is wide and varied. In order for meaningful exploration to occur there needs to be clarity as to what these broad terms refer to. Consequently, clarifying the interpretive issues related to spirituality and mental health will be the first goal of the research. The second goal will be to then address the question of how spirituality expresses itself in contemporary

mental health. As a means of humanizing mental health practice the term spirituality is being used to denote a more organic and holistic understanding of the human person in contrast to the mechanistic and technological emphases that have been a dominant aspect of many psychoanalytic and psychiatric theories in recent history. Additionally, neuro-psychiatric researchers are exploring the effects of spirituality by researching the spiritual experience as it affects brain chemistry. Each of these approaches will be discussed and elaborated upon in this dissertation. Finally, an important contribution of spirituality to the dialogue is that it draws on the wisdom of mystics of the past to provide a contextual framework and language to articulate the mysterious depths of human and divine consciousness that is currently being explored by researchers within mental health.

1.1 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

While spirituality and mental health are treated as distinct domains, in practice each are concerned with questions concerning the human person and the development of a body of knowledge to describe and help understand the human person's experience in life. Nonetheless, each has their own distinct histories and terminologies. Consequently there will be significant and sustained inter-disciplinary dialogue. Mental health is a broad category that includes diverse specialities such as psychiatry, psychology, sociology, social work, and neurology. In this research, spirituality will be engaged in a dialogue with each of these areas.

A useful way to ensure that the necessary distinction between spirituality and mental health is maintained is by juxtaposing spirituality and mental health in terms of lived experience. A major aspect of our human experience includes striving for meaning, hopefulness and purpose – this process can be understood as a *spiritual* experience. Another aspect of our shared human experience includes the experience of psychological distress and alienation from our selves

and the community. This can be understood as madness[2]. In our contemporary era mental health has addressed the latter. Spirituality, as an integral component of human experience, involves tapping into a person's innate need for integration while paving the way forward towards a *transformative* experience – sometimes rendered in traditional Christian theological vocabulary as salvation. Each experience carries with it its own history and language. The transformative experience, for example, has been described as mystical. The experience of madness or psychological dissolution has been described as psychotic. It will be important therefore to engage in analysis of how spirituality and mental health have been interpreted historically in order to grasp more clearly how spirituality expresses itself in contemporary mental health.

The goal of the research is to understand the phenomenon of spirituality on its own terms, that is, as it is actually experienced in this historic moment. Social science researchers in the field of mental health have undertaken studies to determine the frequency of one aspect of spirituality – namely mystical experience. To avoid ambiguity with respect to what is meant by a mystical experience, researchers have studied whether people can knowledgably identify, through structured questionnaires that describe acknowledged psychological dynamics associated with mystical experience, if they have ever had one. Additionally, psychologists and psychiatrists have explored clinical criteria by which the mystical and psychotic experience can be differentiated. These criteria assist with facilitating the growth potential of the mystical experience. This research, in addition to scientific study on the effects that certain forms of mystical practice have on the brain, will be discussed.

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[2] The reader will notice the broad term 'madness' used in this research. It is not intended to be pejorative. The reason for selecting this term is because historically the term madness has been the description that has been given to what we refer to medically in our time as mental illness.

There is some dispute concerning the methods that can adequately be used by mental health to study mysticism. Kelley (1977:206) writes that considering the methods used by psychology which are those of observation and evaluation, psychology is, as a science, incapable of going beyond its objective, which is exclusively the study of mental phenomena and behavioural patterns in direct relation to those particular phenomena. Since its objective is strictly confined to a small portion of the domain of individuality, the mystical state necessarily and completely transcends its study.

Lancaster (2000:53) retorts that aside from the issue of psychology's status as a science, the rejection of observation and evaluation as valid approaches to the study of the mystical state could, for example, be challenged if we accept the value of the phenomenological enquiry.

From a methodological perspective, phenomenology takes as its starting point primary experience prior to its secondary reflection which observes and categorizes the experience according to a particular social or intellectual construction. The primary experiences of madness and mysticism have been an aspect of human consciousness from our earliest recorded history. How it has been described has differed throughout millennia depending on the constructs that have developed to address the phenomenon. From a phenomenological perspective, therefore the science of spirituality and psychiatry that develops to interpret primary experience is *descriptive* not *prescriptive*.

Two of the pioneers of the phenomenological method are Heidegger (d. 1976) and Husserl (d. 1938). A phenomenon is simply something that is presented to consciousness. *Phenomenon,* the showing-itself-in-itself, signifies a distinct way in which something can be encountered (Heidegger [1926]/1962:55). The encounter of consciousness with a particular phenomenon requires a rigorous scientific approach. For the present research, Husserl's criterion in the phenomenological method is a useful way to proceed.

Mathematics influenced Husserl's thinking, and thus, he sought a logical method to gain understanding of the experience of human consciousness (Byrne 2001:1). According to Husserl there are the two poles of experience, *noema* and *noesis. Noesis* is the act of perceiving, while *noema* is that which is perceived. *Noema* can be reduced to their essential form or 'essence'. Phenomenology aims at discovering the essential form (or *eideia*). To arrive at the *eideia* phenomenology engages in a process known as *epoche* in which the 'natural attitude' is placed aside so that the researcher may begin with 'the things themselves,' as Husserl said — or, in other words, in the phenomena as they show themselves in experience (*eideia).* Husserl contends that bracketing (ie, setting aside preconceived notions as well as cultural constructions developed from secondary reflection) enables one to objectively describe the phenomena under study. For Husserl *all* experiences inasmuch as they are presented to consciousness can be investigated according to this clear methodological framework. Robbins (2000:1) observes that phenomenology, beginning with Husserl, urges that the world of immediate or lived experience takes precedence over the objectified and abstract world of the 'natural attitude' of natural science. Science as such, thus, is secondary to the world of concrete, lived experience.

From a phenomenological perspective, science is not a fixed entity. It is constantly shifting as history and interpretive models change. What is constant, however, is human experience. This is not to suggest that science itself is not meaningful. It is meaningful as an intellectual construct for human experience that allows for further study, research and dialogue. As noted above, science is constantly taking new forms through history as dominant paradigms and interpretations emerge. Consequently, science needs always to be understood in its historical and social context.

1.2. DELINEATION OF HISTORICAL TERMS

The terms *premodern*, *modern* and *postmodern* are conceptual ways to delineate different horizons out of which our culture in the Western world began to conceive of science, politics, philosophy and religion. Bottum (1994:31) notes that with reference to the history of ideas, *premodern* refers to the long historical period before the Enlightenment while *modern* refers to the period of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment is broadly co-extensive with the eighteenth century, beginning with the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and the writings of Locke (d. 1704) and Bayle (d. 1706). According to Pappe (2003) unlike earlier periods, which affected particular aspects of life or certain classes of the population, the Enlightenment witnessed and heralded sweeping social change. Its thought is basically a social philosophy, starting from social premises, concerned with social ends, and viewing even religion and art in social terms. It is also characterized by a strong emphasis on rationalism and empiricism.

Postmodern refers to critical anti-Modernist thought that emerged post-World War II. Postmodernity had its genesis in the literary community as a method of critique but quickly spread from there to include philosophical approaches which tend to emphasize subjectivity, plurality and difference. *Postmodernity* is typified as a mistrust of grand systems that can explain every phenomenon. In recent times it has found expression in philosophers such as Levinas (d. 1995) and Lyotard (d. 1998) as well as historians such as Foucault (d.1984). Aspects of postmodernity can be found in the work of psychiatrists such as Jaspers (d. 1969). Jaspers and psychotherapists such as Frankl (d. 1997) support a holistic and transcendental understanding of the human person that coheres well with phenomenologically rooted trends in contemporary spirituality. Additionally, aspects of what is now termed philosophically as postmodernity may be found in the thought of the Modernist theologian Tyrrell (d. 1909) as well as the existentialists Kierkegaard (d. 1855) and Nietzsche (d.1900).

1.3 DEMARCATION OF CHAPTERS

The research is divided up into six main chapters. The present chapter deals with the introductory questions and literature survey.

Chapter two critically examines how and why Christian spirituality is often understood in a phenomenological or existential context. By way of articulation of a contemporary understanding of spirituality, attention will be paid, *inter alia,* to the currents of Catholic Modernism in the early twentieth century, its antecedents in the currents of nineteenth century existentialism, as articulated by Nietzsche (d. 1900) and Kierkegaard (d. 1855), culminating in the contemporary currents of postmodernity as articulated by Levinas (d.1995).

Chapter three critically examines the social history of madness. Indeed, the designation of madness as mental illness is itself a product of the modern period. In order to interpret the phenomena of madness, it is helpful to describe its social history by examining cultural attitudes towards madness and subsequently some of the social policies towards those labeled as mad in the premodern, modern and finally postmodern period. Critically examining the interpretations of madness that surfaced in these historical periods is helpful so as to more clearly grasp its elusive character.

Chapter four discusses contemporary trends, challenges and crises within mental health and how a holistic understanding of the human person can lead to a more human treatment of people experiencing mental illness. This chapter offers as an antidote to the dehumanizing technology of modern bio-psychiatry the insights of Frankl (d. 1997), the father of logotherapy and Jaspers (d. 1969) the influential existential psychiatrist and philosopher. Both of these psychotherapists support a holistic and transcendental understanding of the human person that coheres well with contemporary, phenomenologically rooted trends in spirituality.

Chapter five illuminates the nature of mysticism and its role in facilitating a mentally healthy life. Here, how mysticism has historically played, and can continue to play, an important role in shaping a wholesome, life-giving, religious consciousness is discussed. Current research in mysticism by neuro-psychiatrists will be explored. Additionally clinical criteria for addressing the differences between mental illness and mysticism will be presented.

Chapter six will bring the divergent themes discussed in the dissertation together in order to assess the issues raised in addressing the value of spirituality in the field of mental health.

1.4. LITERATURE SURVEY

The literature survey locates the present research within the body of existing research in the area of spirituality and mental health. As the present research is located in a Christian context, certain primary literature sources which are foundational to Christian spirituality will be explored. The literature relating to the history and interpretation of mental health will also be reviewed.

Finally, since the present research addresses the question of how spirituality expresses itself in contemporary mental health, a review of the literature related to mental health, spirituality and mysticism will be conducted.

1.4.1 EARLY SOURCES OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

The earliest records of Christian spirituality come from the New Testament. All of the books of the New Testament were composed in the first and early part of the second century. No aspect of Christian spirituality can be understood apart from them. The early Christian community, through the teaching of the apostles, recorded the life of Jesus and the meaning this had for them in the form of gospels and letters.

From its earliest moments the early Christian community found itself in diverse settings. As a consequence, we begin to see differing spiritualities emerge based on differing sensitivities and approaches to the meaning of Jesus life, death and resurrection. This diversity is reflected in the four canonical gospels as well as the Pauline letters. The writers of the New Testament were steeped primarily in Hebrew culture although Greek culture exerted a strong intellectual influence. The influence of Greek culture on Hebrew culture is known as Hellenization. The extent to which Hellenziation is inherently part of the fabric of the New Testament scripture is debated, Nonetheless, in many important respects early Christian spirituality was steeped in Hebrew culture.

For example, early Christian spirituality was heavily influenced by Hebrew understanding of history and one's purpose within that history. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the world is presented as the field of humankind's experience, the stage on which one's work and destiny are played out. History is the major theme of Hebrew literature. History is not, as in Greek literature, the scientific study of the past as a means of finding out the eternal laws which govern all events. Rather, it looks toward the future, to a divinely appointed goal (Bultmann [1956]/1966:21). For Hebrew culture the culmination of human history rests in the notion of a messiah. Messianism is of ancient Hebrew origin and is the contribution of the Hebrew people to world history. The early Christians, who were steeped in Hebrew culture, saw in the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth's life, death and resurrection the final historical act of God in their history. This conviction became the source of their spirituality. This conviction is reflected in the New Testament. The decisive battle against the powers of evil had been won by Jesus and the final destiny of the world, a destiny of unceasing abundant life (John 10:10), of light (Matt 4:16), of justice (2 Peter 3:13), and of joy (Luke 2:10) had been granted to humanity and the entire creation in the person of the risen Christ (Zizioulas 2000:25). Humanity's relationship with God is thus marked by the celebration of the risen Christ's victory over evil and death.

Spirituality, for the early Christians, also involved interior renewal and transformation. We see in some of the letters of Paul that spirituality is interpreted as a personal and subjective transformation, an interior renewal and a change in being. For example in Romans 12:2, the apostle Paul exhorts the community not to be conformed to this world; this world meaning the prevailing customs and conventions of the society in which they find themselves. They should instead be transformed by the renewing of the *mind.* Additionally, in one of the letters to the community in Corinth (1 Cor. 2:14-15) Paul contrasts the 'spiritual person' (*pneumatikos anthropos*) with the 'natural person' (*psychikos anthropos*). This duality between the spiritual person and the natural person is a unique departure from traditional Jewish and Hebrew anthropology. According to Schneiders (1999:258), Paul's usage makes it clear that he is not contrasting a person with a human spirit in the sense of a soul, that is, a living person, with one who lacks a soul that is, a dead person. Both are alive. The spiritual person, however is qualitatively different than the natural person. The spiritual person is one who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. The consequence of this is that there is an ontological change of being in the spiritual person. The spiritual person is a *new* creature with a *new* relationship with God.

Paul departed from Jewish tradition in that he did not exhort the new followers of Christianity to observe the law as outlined in the early sources of Jewish scripture and tradition. In a further departure from Hebrew culture Paul emphasized the importance of freedom and love (1 Cor. 13:13) over the law and regulation. The spiritual freedom given under grace and freedom from the law should not become a pretext for self-indulgence but should instead be directed towards the building up of the community through love for one another (cf. Gal 5:13). Paul did set out criteria by which one can know the fruits of the Spirit versus what he termed the 'desires of the flesh'. Of the latter he notes, fornication, impurity, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrelling, and envy. Of the gifts of the Spirit he includes, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self control (Gal 5:16-24).

The New Testament continues to be the primary source of Christian spirituality. Interpreting the meaning of New Testament texts is known as exegesis. Not surprisingly, considerable exegetical debate emerged historically. Schneiders contributes a chapter on 'Scripture and Spirituality' in *Christian Spirituality – Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Mcginn, B Meyendorff & Leclercq J 2000). In it she outlines the various methods of Scriptural exegesis that have influenced Christian spirituality to this day. In particular Schneiders notes that in the twentieth century the limitations of the scientific method of exegesis characteristic of the modern period is being acknowledged. The rediscovery of the power of symbolism, the ubiquity of metaphorical thinking and the development of a more adequate understanding of the constitutive function of imagination is assisting us in appreciating anew the ancient biblical exegesis of the patristic period. This is not to say that a simple return to the methods of the patristic period is the way to proceed. However, a renewed appreciation of the reflections from this period reveals important insights.

The historical period following the development of Biblical texts is known the Patristic period. Richardson's (2002) work on the early fathers of the Church, *Early Christian Fathers,* outlines some of the pivotal figures of post-Biblical, second and third century Christianity who were influential in the approach of the Christian Church to questions of faith and spirituality. There emerged with the early Church fathers two distinct schools of theology to address spiritual questions. These schools are referred to as the Alexandrian and Antiochene schools based on their geographical and intellectual differences. The Alexandrian and Antiochene schools reflect convergent intellectual themes and approaches across geographical contexts.

From the Antiochene school emerged early church fathers such as Ignatius of Antioch (d. 117) and Irenaeus (d. 202). The writers of the Antiochene School disliked the allegorical method, and sought almost exclusively the literal, primary,

or historical sense of Holy Scripture. The other school was the Alexandrian school. It was much more open to Hellenistic thought and the allegorical method of exegesis. The Alexandrian school is characterized by a much more cosmological approach to spirituality. One of the most influential representatives of this school is Origen (d. 254). The Alexandrian school also rooted itself in scripture but interpreted scripture much more allegorically; within a cosmic Platonic philosophical paradigm.

In addition to the Alexandrian and Antioch school which were well established within the ambit of orthodox Christianity, there emerged another group known collectively as the Gnostics. Aside from the polemics against them from figures such as Irenaeus, little was known about the Gnostic's doctrine, as they themselves interpreted it, until 1945 when the *Nag Hammadi* texts were discovered. The collected works can be found in a compilation edited by James Robinson and translated by members of the Coptic Gnostic Library Project of the *Institute for Anitquity and Christianity* in Claremont California. This work is entitled the *Nag Hammadi Library – The definitive new translation of the Gnostic scriptures complete in one volume* (Robinson 1988). It is a useful source in that we now have the complete texts that a particular community was using to understand spirituality. The Gnostic texts themselves have a certain neo-Platonic philosophical quality to them. The emphasis on interior illumination is ever present. The texts are marked by a non-historical, allegorical approach. Frequently Biblical figures important to the early Christian community such as Mary of Magdalene are juxtaposed against other figures such as Peter. The confrontation between Mary and Peter in gospels such as the Gospel of Mary is a symbolic representation of the confrontation between Church authority and the individual's own mystical truth. There is little to support the historicity of texts such as the Gospel of Mary as they were written some time well into the second century (Robinson 1988:524). Nonetheless these texts illustrate the tensions that existed in early Christianity and shed light on the diversity and range of spiritual expression that existed in the early years of Christianity.

The importance of the various schools such as the Alexandrian and Antiochene as well as the presence of Gnostic sects is that they demonstrate that Christian spirituality has never been one single monolithic entity. While the main historical foundations from Scripture and the Patristic period assist in guiding interpretation, Christian spirituality is constantly evolving through interaction with various intellectual and cultural contexts. This dimension of spirituality is outlined in an important work that explores the historical evolution of Christian spirituality in an encyclopedic format. It is entitled *Christian Spirituality – Origins to the Twelfth Century – Volume I* (Mcginn, B Meyendorff & Leclercq J 2000), Christian *Spirituality – High Middle Ages and Reformation – Volume II* (Raitt, J ed.2000) and *Christian Spirituality – Post-Reformation and Modern – Volume III* (Dupre, L & Saliers, D. 2000). The collection is primarily a reflection upon the historical manifestations of Christian experience, namely Christian spirituality as an academic discipline. In the introduction, McGinn (2000:xvi) notes that traditional Roman Catholic ascetical or mystical theology covered much, but by no means all, of what is intended by the term spirituality. Spirituality, both as a lived experience and as reflections on experience is a broader and more inclusive terms than either asceticism or mysticism. Although spirituality is intimately tied to theology, particularly to what many today are calling practical theology, spirituality has an identity of its own.

Spirituality is a relatively new area of speciality. Since the 1970's, it is not unusual to find postgraduate specialties in spirituality at most theological schools. Spirituality favours an ecumenical and multi-disciplinary approach. It has become a specialty in its own right with many scholars developing the contours of this discipline for continuing researchers in the area.

1.4.2 *SPIRITUALITY AS ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE*

In her paper *Theology and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals or Partners?* Schneiders (1986:270) notes that there has been a historic shift from the medieval synthesis

achieved by Aquinas (d.1274) when he placed what would later be called 'spirituality' as a subdivision of moral theology. This medieval synthesis was maintained well until the middle of the twentieth century. The world-shattering events of two world wars, the technological revolution, liberation movements of all kinds, and rapid developments in philosophy, the humanities, and social sciences brought Aquinas' comprehensive medieval synthesis hold on the Christian imagination to an end. Aquinas' synthesis has been replaced by a holistic orientation. The holistic approach makes the study of spirituality infinitely more complex. From a holistic perspective, it is no longer possible for us to fragment the human person into parts and faculties, into inner and outer, into personal and social. The academic task of spirituality consists in bringing this rich multi-facetedness into unity. Schneiders notes that spirituality has dominated the Catholic consciousness since the 1970's. Since spirituality is a relatively new discipline, Schneiders concludes that spirituality must make its own alliances but that it deserves to belong in the household of theology in the broad sense of that term.

As a distinct specialty of study, most scholars acknowledge the challenge that exists in developing spirituality as a distinct discipline. Cousins (2000:xiii), in *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century,* a series of essays on the subject of spirituality as it has been expressed in the Christian tradition notes that in the context of modern scholarship, spirituality has not been extricated from the history of religions, and the philosophy of religion and theology. Its central focus, its categories and concepts, and its methodology have not been established to the point of being commonly accepted as conventions. Aware that interest in spirituality is growing, additional research in spirituality is emerging within the academic community much as psychology and sociology emerged as distinct disciplines with specific methods at the turn of the last century. It would be hasty therefore to conclude that spirituality does not have a rigorous, scholarly, methodological approach for students and scholars.

Waaijman (2002) for example in *Spirituality - Forms, Foundations, Methods* demonstrates methods to describe and analyze different spiritualities. Additionally, he draws out certain themes within spirituality and suggests ways in which they can be distinguished to allow for meaningful study and engagement. Waaijman engages in substantive discussion of method in spirituality. He suggests that the preferred method for spirituality is the phenomenological approach derived from Husserl. Additionally he supports the dialogical style of Buber (d. 1965). Waaijman combines the 'I-Thou' approach of Buber with Husserl's method suggesting that a foundational description for spirituality is the divine-human relational process as personal transformation.

Another useful compilation of essays on method in spirituality is *Minding the Spirit - The Study of Christian Spirituality* edited by Dreyer and Burrows (2004). *Minding the Spirit* presents twenty-five essays by scholars in the field of spirituality who each address critical and methodological issues related to spirituality as an academic discipline. Three approaches are outlined. They are the historical, theological and anthropological. With the historical approach, researchers studying spirituality examine it in terms of it social context and cultural milieu. The theological approach is characteristic of the study of spirituality in seminaries and denominational schools where the spiritual experience is evaluated according to theological norms established by the denomination. This approach is utilized to assist people in applying faith as described and articulated by the religious community to personal life. The anthropological approach identifies spirituality as a universal human capacity for interpreting human experience according to its transcendental dimension. It is interested in methodological issues related to understanding and articulating spiritual experience. Christian spirituality, according to the anthropological approach, is one particular form among many in the world. The present research follows the anthropological approach.

In her paper *Spirituality as an Academic Discipline,* Schneiders (1993:11) notes that the field of spirituality is complex and that it is useful to identify one's interest in studying it. For example, some people study spirituality in order to learn how to live the spiritual life; others to understand it theoretically, its structure and function, and its relation to theology or psychology or social context. Importantly, Schneiders distinguishes spirituality from psychology by way of analogy. Schneiders (1993:11) notes that the primary application of the term psychology is to that dimension of the human subject in virtue of which the person is a relatively autonomous self, i.e. a center of personal consciousness or subjectivity. In this sense, everyone has a psychology or is a psychological entity. The term spirituality refers to that dimension of the human subject in virtue of which the person is capable of self-transcending integration in relation to the Ultimate, whatever the Ultimate is for the person in question. In this sense, every human being has a capacity for spirituality or is a spiritual being. Academically, psychology applies to the experimental and theoretical study of human subjectivity and to the clinical disciplines aimed at the therapeutic fostering of healthy subjectivity. Similarly, from an academic perspective the term spirituality applies to the experimental and theoretical study of human efforts at self-transcending integration and to the pastoral practices aimed at fostering the spirituality of individuals and groups. Schneiders (1993:15) concludes that the academic discipline of spirituality serves as an intellectual resource for the living of the spiritual life. To Schneider's statement that the field of spirituality can serve as a resource for living the spiritual life, I would also add that it could serve as a resource for living a mentally healthy life. In terms of spirituality as it relates to mental health it is important to note that the nature of mental health needs to be clarified before a discussion of how spirituality is to be understood in that context. There is an increasing body of research emerging that critically examines mental illnesses.

1.4.3 INTERPRETING MENTAL HEALTH

Illuminating the nature of mental illness is a very complex enterprise. Some psychiatrists such as Szasz take the position that mental illness is a metaphor or a 'myth'. One of Szasz's better known works entitled *The Myth of Mental Illness* was first published in 1974. Szasz rejects the notion of mental illness as a distinct disease. He makes the point that during certain historical periods, explanatory concepts such as deities, witches, and micro-organisms appeared not only as theories but as self-evident *causes* of a vast number of events including the event of madness. He argues that today mental illness is widely regarded in a somewhat similar fashion. In mental health there is, as in every medical science, a complex matrix of historical and social interpretation that influences the epistemological categorizations of mental illness that are applied to specific individuals or populations. Szasz remains controversial and any description of mental illness will involve his perspectives. He is often cited by scholars and historians of mental health. For example, in the book, *The Confinement of the Insane: International Perspectives, 1800-1965,* Porter and Wright (2003:2) note that, according to Szasz, the medical profession over the centuries has been involved in a self-serving manufacture of madness. In this, Szasz indicts both the pretensions of organic psychiatry and the psychodynamic followers of Freud, whose notion of the 'unconscious' in effect breathed new life into the obsolete metaphysical Cartesian dualism. For Szasz, any expectation of finding the etiology of mental illness in body or mind - above all in some mental underworld - must be a lost cause, a dead-end, a linguistic error, and even an exercise in bad faith. What the approach of Szasz assists in illustrating, Porter and Wright note, is that insanity is not a disease with origins to be excavated, but a behavior with meanings to be decoded. Therefore it is always necessary to place mental health in its historical and cultural context. Additionally, it is very important to listen to first person accounts of people who are experiencing trauma, since the cause is often encoded in their speech or behaviour.

A very good example of first person accounts is found in Porter's (1987) work, *A Social History of Madness: the World through the Eyes of the Insane*. Porter (1987:3) notes, when we juxtapose the mind of the insane with that of reason, society and culture, we see two facets, two expressions, two faces, and each puts the question of meaning to the other. If normality condemns madness as irrational, subhuman and perverse, madness typically replies in kind, having its own *tu quoque*. As Porter (1987:3) states, the writings of the mad challenge the discourse of the normal, challenge its right to be the objective mouthpiece of the times. The assumption that there exists definitive and unitary standards of truth and falsehood, reality and delusion is put to the test. Porter analyzes the phenomena of madness as it relates to a variety of topics such as power, religion, and women. Porter gives specific examples to illustrate his point that in addition to viewing madness as a disease it is equally possible to think in terms of the manufacture of madness, that is, the idea that labeling insanity is primarily a social act, a cultural construct.

The designation of madness as a medical problem – hence a 'mental illness' is primarily a product of the modern period. It remains the dominant paradigm through which madness is interpreted. Foucault in *Madness and Civilization* (1988) illustrates that one can show that the medicalization of madness is a phenomenological interpretation connected with a whole series of social and economic processes at a given time, and also with institutions and practices of power. Foucault argues that there is a marked shift in our intellectual horizon as we move from premodern to modern history. The fear of death is not the horizon that frames purposeful meaning; it is now the fear of insanity enveloping society in a grand apocalyptic universal event. Foucault argues that the fearful figure of the madman emerges as leprosy disappears and the age of reason is born. The colonies that formally held lepers begin to house the mad. Because rationality in the modern period became so highly vaunted, the insane are to be confined as they are a contagion, disrupting the normal, reasonable civil order.

Foucault's influence in the area of describing the dynamics associated with modern medical practices in general and mental health in particular has been substantial. Jones joined Porter (1994) in editing a series of essays analyzing medical practice following Foucault's phenomenological approach. It is entitled, *Reassessing Foucault: Power, Medicine and the Body.* While some are critical of Foucault's idealism with respect to medicine, most agree that mental illness needs to be set apart from other biological illnesses. For example, Freundlieb (1994) in *Foucault's Theory of Discourse and Human Agency* is critical of Foucault's Idealism with respect to his theory of medical discourse but nonetheless concedes that madness is complex and deserves to be placed in a separate category from other natural medical illnesses.

What we see in contemporary scholarship related to the history and interpretation of mental health is a desire to return to individual experience and adopt a more critical posture with respect to the development of diagnosis to label that experience.

Recent clinical research is also cautioning against an overly dogmatic approach to classifying mental illness as a disease. How diagnostic categories should be understood is an important question that Kendell and Jablensky (2003) address in *Distinguishing Between the Validity and Utility of Psychiatric Diagnoses.* According to Kendell and Jablensky (2003:7), the assumption among a number of researchers today is that most currently recognized psychiatric disorders are not diseases. They conclude, therefore, that it is important to distinguish between the *validity* and the *utility* of all diagnostic concepts and of their formal definitions. At present there is little evidence that, strictly speaking, most contemporary psychiatric diagnoses are valid, because they are still defined by syndromes that have not been demonstrated to have natural boundaries.

With the increasing emphasis on technology in psychiatry, professionals in mental health are concerned with the reductionistic tendencies associated with it.

Andreasen's (2001) editorial in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* 'Diversity in Psychiatry: Or, Why Did We Become Psychiatrists?' places the issue in context.

> Many of us are being pressured to see ourselves as psychopharmocologists who prescribe medications to treat 'brain diseases,' at the expense of forgetting that the mind and the person may need treatment with psychotherapy as well. Many of us feel overwhelmed by the pace at which the neuroscientific basis of psychiatry is growing, and threatened by the possibility that we cannot keep up or learn enough to practice well. The technicalities of dopamine receptors, lod scores, in situ hybridization, thalamic nuclei, and signal transduction seem both irrelevant to the individual person whom we treat and also beyond our purview or intellectual grasp (2001:673).

Tasman (2002) in his article *Lost in the DSM-IV checklist: Empathy, meaning and the doctor-patient relationship* fears that we are training a generation of psychiatrists who lack the basic skills and framework for understanding mental health from a humanistic perspective. With the emphasis on neuro-science and pharmacology, new psychiatrists are not acquiring empathetic listening skills and may lack the appreciation of the role of the symbolic in interpreting symptoms.

In the postmodern frame of reference, mental health is profoundly concerned with individuality, subjectivity and ultimately issues related to the meaning of human experience. Since human experience involves a relationship with the transcendent, psychiatry and spirituality are rapidly converging.

1.4.4 MENTAL HEALTH AND SPIRITUALITY

Some of the pioneers of psychoanalysis of the modern period such as Freud (d. 1939) have had at best an ambivalent attitude towards the religious impulse of the human person. Others such as Jung (d.1961) and Jaspers (d.1969) were congenial to spirituality.

Ever since the time of Freud and his book, *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), where he psychoanalyzed the religious impulse as being rooted partly in

narcissistic needs, attachments and wish fulfillments, certain segments of psychiatry have had, at best, an ambivalent attitude towards the religious impulse of the human person. Even during Freud's time however, there was considerable disagreement concerning the role of spirituality. A close disciple of Freud was Jung who eventually parted company with Freud over Freud's excessive sexual theory. In contrast to Freud's sexualized theories, Jung embraced spirituality.

Jung remains an influential founder of many contemporary forms of psycho-spirituality. According to Jung the psyche creates the experience of the divine. In *Psychology and Religion* (1969), one of his later works, Jung equates the experience of the divinity with the experience of *numinosum.* The *numiosum* for Jung is an internal aspect of transcendence that is not outside of the human person. Dourley (2001:3) in explaining this Jungian concept notes that for Jung, the *numinous* is not the 'wholly other God'. Instead archetypical energy and imagery, created by the religious experience itself within the psyche, works in the interests of the personal integration of the individual in whom it occurs. Contained within the natural psyche, is its intra-psychic 'creator' seeking redemption in its creature. Jung, therefore, contains the dialogue between the human and the divine to the immediate dialogue of consciousness.

The development of a coherent approach to mental health as well as spirituality has been undertaken by Jaspers, who in 1946 produced a very comprehensive and rich tome entitled *General Psychopathology*. Jaspers began early on in his career to ask important questions concerning mental health and spirituality. Jaspers observes that the greatest successes in mental health have not belonged to psychiatrists but to shamans, priests, leaders of sects, wonder-workers, confessors and spiritual guides of earlier times (Jaspers [1946]/1963:806). Jaspers' methodology in *General Psychopathology* is compelling, particularly in its ability to meet the exigencies of our postmodern era. It is also consistent with the trajectory of contemporary trends both in spirituality and mental health with their emphasis on holistic approaches. Jaspers

observes that the individual is truly unique; consequently, the therapist needs to approach each individual with religious reverence. Supporting a holistic anthropology, Jaspers writes:

> At some decisive point every individual is as it were, in theological language 'created' from a source of his own and not merely a processing of a modified hereditary substance…Far from being the sum of his hereditary factors (which would be quite correct for his material preconditions and determinants) the individual is directly created of God (Jaspers [1946]/1963:753).

Jaspers' approach differs from Jung. For Jung the spiritual process consists in discovering the core spiritual self through various psychodynamic processes and testing which uncover broad archetypes that are expressed in particular people. Thus the spiritual self corresponds to an archetypical pattern. The aim of psychoanalysis is to discover these archetypes. For Jaspers since each individual is, as it were, a singular category, there is no internal archetype to discover. The self is not discovered in advance. Instead, the spiritual journey consists in becoming one's own self through concrete existential responses to life. The focus of analysis therefore is on the moral choices that we make in response to the question of life. As a consequence of these moral choices, we discover or rather create our self.

One of the best known proponents of facilitating an existential approach to questions of spiritual meaning is found in the work Frankl. Frankl spent time in a Nazi concentration camp and while there developed what he termed *logotherapy.* Frankl outlines *logotherapy* in his well known book *Man's Search for Meaning: an Introduction to Logotherapy* (1959). *Logos* is a principle originating in classical Greek thought which refers to a universal divine reason, immanent in nature, yet transcending all oppositions and imperfections in the cosmos and humanity. In most of its usages, logos is marked by two main distinctions - the first dealing with human reason (the rationality in the human mind which seeks to attain universal understanding and harmony), the second with universal intelligence

(the universal ruling force governing and revealing through the cosmos to humankind, i.e., the Divine) (Counterbalance Foundation 1995). In the context of logotherapy logos refers to the former; namely to the ability of the human person to craft meaning from challenging, difficult and chaotic life contexts. Logotherapy emerged from an awareness of the spiritual dynamic at work in the unconscious, based on Frankl's personal perspective and his experience and observation. Logotherapy is a form of existential analysis.

According to the *International Society for Existential Analysis and Logotherapy* (GLE International 2006:1), logotherapy can be defined as a phenomenological and person-oriented psychotherapy, with the aim of leading the person to dare (mentally and emotionally) free experiences, to induce authentic decisions and to bring about a truly responsible way of responding to life and the world. Logotherapy is not about imposing meaning from a knowledgeable therapist who can decode the individual's experience. Nor is it about discovering archetypical patterns. The locus of control remains with the individuals themselves, as they come to perceptual awareness of the meaning and purpose of their lives. Logotherapy does not see a person as the mere result of inner-psychic processes or of the influences of his or her environment, but as someone who can shape himself or herself in those things that count in life. Therefore notions like being (existence), relation (values), freedom of decision, responsibility (conscience) form the fundamental concepts of the existential analytical way of thinking and they all lead to the idea of meaning (logos).

While the term spirituality in the context of mental health is generally used to denote movements of the will towards meaning and purpose, there is another more precise existential experience of the spiritual life that has historically been referred to as mysticism. Considerable research is being done in this area.

1.4.5 MENTAL HEALTH AND MYSTICISM

Prince (1979) in his article *Religious Experience and Psychosis* concludes that it is becoming clear that mystical experiences are widely distributed throughout the population. He argues that mystical experience can be distinguished from psychosis. The phenomenon of mystical experience represents successful transformation on the part of individuals experiencing life stress. Prince researches the frequency and distribution of mystical experience by surveying several different studies on the subject. From the three surveys he notes that each study agrees that twenty to forty per cent of the population at large report mystical experiences The Chicago based NORC survey team (1973) and the *Religious Experience Unit* from Oxford (1976) found that frequent mystical experiences are linked with higher social classes while the Gallup Poll (1962) found the reverse. Interestingly, both the NORC and Oxford studies also support Douglas-Smith's (1971) suggestion in his research entitled 'An Empirical Study of Religious Mysticism' published in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* that those who report mystical experience are in good mental health (Prince 1977:171).

Similarly, Hood and Morris (1981) in *Knowledge and Experience Criteria in the Reporting of Mystical Experience* note that current studies of mysticism are remarkably consistent in finding approximately one-third of persons sampled report having had a mystical experience. The unexpected high frequencies of reported mystical experience may be related to the fact that as criteria for mysticism become more publicly discussed, more persons can identify previously unlabeled experiences (or perhaps differently labeled) as mystical (Hood and Morris 1981:76). Their research reveals that people can apply objective criteria to their experience to determine whether they had a mystical experience. To test this hypothesis, Hood and Morris place 91 items in five major factor groups. The five factor groups were: 1. Religious; 2. Unity; 3. Affect; 4. Time and Space; and 5. Noetic. Examples of items placed in the five major factor groups were a sense of reverence (religious item); an experience of unity with an outside world (unity item); joy (affective item); an experience that is both timeless and spaceless

(temporal/spatial item); and a great increase in understanding and knowledge (noetic item). In their study they found that persons reporting mystical experience have intense experiences knowledgably recognized as mystical, while persons who report not having such experiences differ more in the absence of such experiences than in the recognition of the criteria for mysticism. Hood and Morris conclude that, based on their research, it appears to be the case that persons affirming mystical experience report a greater intensity of experience overall based on component factors of mystical criteria. They interpret the foregoing to mean that such persons knowingly apply criteria to affirm a mystical experience that they report having experienced. On the other hand, persons not affirming mystical experiences tend to indicate experience ratings lower overall based on component factors of mystical criteria. They interpret this to mean that such persons knowingly recognize appropriate criteria for mysticism that they simply have no experience of at least at the intensity of persons affirming the experience (Hood and Morris 1981:82). Hood and Morris' research demonstrates that mysticism is a distinctive human experience and that people can knowingly assess whether they have experienced it or not.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that not all self-reports of ecstatic divine union indicates a profound religious experience. The difference between psychosis and mysticism is one that requires a careful evaluation. Siglag's (1986) dissertation *Schizophrenia and Mystical Experience: Similarities and Differences* is an example of just such an evaluation. Siglag (1986:iii) writes that the overall results of his research consistently supports the view that the pattern of experiences reported by individuals with schizophrenia differ in identifiable ways from what the literature describes as classical mystical experience. Siglag (1986:37-38) outlines the basic symptoms of schizophrenia as: 1) Disturbance of association; chains of thinking are organized according to non-logical rules of condensation, and symbolism, such as words being connected by similarity in sound rather than meaning. 2) Affect, rather than logic, has a dominant role in thought formation; 3) Obstructions of thought occur in which the mental stream

suddenly ceases. Thought may continue from seconds to days later, but often with what appears to be completely new thought; 4) A feeling of 'thought pressure' exists in which the patient feels as if a force outside of his conscious volition directly puts thoughts in his mind; 5) Affective disturbances may take the form of apparent lack of emotional responsiveness associated with extreme withdrawal, or extreme overactivity associated with negativity and irritability. 6) A 'schizophrenic ambivalence' exists in which 'contrasts that otherwise are mutually exclusive exist side by side in the psyche'.

After a review of the literature, Siglag (1986:64-65) summarizes the characteristics described by most authors as occurring in mystical states: 1) Difficulty putting the experience into words, a nonverbal quality; 2) Alteration in sense of time and space; 3) Loss or diminution of ego boundaries which may be related to the experience of loss of control, and the sense of being influenced or in contact with a powerful external force; 4) Alterations in rational thought processes and logic, allowing such experiences as the acceptance of seemingly paradoxical thoughts; 5) Perceptual/sensory alterations sometimes as dramatic as hallucinations and out of the body experiences; 6) An experience of unity or oneness with the universe; 7) Sense of sacredness; 8) Noetic quality; 9) A strong sense of self, or a strong ego prior to having a mystical experience; 10) The mystical experience is of short duration; 11) Positive changes in attitudes, behaviours, and interpersonal relationships of those who experience mystical state.

Concerning the relative similarity of the schizophrenic and mystical experience, Siglag notes that individuals reported intense positive affective experiences, and experience of timelessness/spacelessness. This supports the view that there are similar psychological processes operating in terms of schizophrenia and mysticism which might superficially lead some to identify mysticism with schizophrenia. Other conclusions from his research, however, reveal psychological processes of individuals undergoing a psychotic experience which

differ in significant ways from individuals undergoing a mystical experience. For example, the lack of any distinct unifying factor which is present in the mystical experience suggests that this factor is not a primary aspect of the psychological processes of schizophrenia (Siglag 1986:132). People experiencing schizophrenia *do* experience the common mystical experience of loss of orientation and thoughts from one's mind. However, what is noticeably absent is the ability to experience a sense of unity or order in one's world. By way of contrast the mystical experience leads to a profound sense of integration.[3]

This integration which is facilitated by the mystical process has been described by psychiatrists D'Aquili and Newberg (1999:14) as *absolute unitary being.* D'Aquili and Newberg's research has contributed greatly to our understanding of the mystical experience from a neurological point of view. As a result of their research on mysticism and the mechanics of the brain they have developed what they term neuro-theology. Their neuro-theological research is outlined in *The Mystical Mind: Probing the Biology of Religious Experience* (1999) D'Aquili and Newberg argue that a neuro-psychiatric approach to mysticism establishes that there are certain core elements that appear to be universal and that can be separated from particular cultural matrices. From a strictly neuro-psychiatric perspective the brain gives us our sense of reality – including our understanding of the reality of God. In a compelling retort to the charge of reductionism D'Aquili and Newberg state that to maintain that the reality of peoples' objective experience of God is due to neuro-chemical flux, and nothing more, is equivalent to maintaining that their experience of the 'objective' reality of the sun, the earth, and the air they breathe is reducible to neuro-chemical flux (D'Aquili and Newberg 1999:120). As an anecdote, they cite a Zen koan in which two monks argue about a flag waving in the wind. One argues that the wind moves, the other

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[3] The integration that the mystical state facilitates may take some time to be observed and integrated within the personality. A spiritual facilitator familiar with the mystical process is useful in assisting in this process. As reported in Acts 9, Paul's experience on the road to Damascus is instructive. Paul's eyes were opened but he could see nothing (v. 8). For three days he neither ate nor drank. He was eventually assisted by Ananias, one of the disciples in Damascus. This event led to a complete change in religious and cultural vision. As a result Paul became one of the most important leaders in the early Christian community.

that the flag moves. Finally, the master says that it is neither the flag nor the wind that moves; it is the mind that moves. In similar fashion we can say that it is the mind that moves, regardless of whether it is experiencing baseline reality, or whether it is experiencing God (D'Aquili and Newberg 1999:120). Such an approach no more negates the objective reality of God than it negates the objective reality of the sun, the earth, and the air we breathe. D'Aquili and Newberg's research is compelling for our understanding why mysticism has had such a positive impact on so many people, from diverse cultural and religious traditions throughout human history.

The significance of work such as Siglag's and D'Aquili and Newberg is that it is now possible to differentiate psychosis from the mystical process both psychoanalytically and neuro-psychiatrically. Consequently, therapy can be directed at integration of the knowledge acquired through emerging interdisciplinary dialogue between spirituality and mental health, thus utilizing the growth potential of the mystical experience. Much work remains to be done in the development of this area. However, it is evident from the research that the foundation is being laid for such efforts to come to fruition.

Authentic mystical experience has historically been able to unify the deep structures of exteriority and interiority, otherness and sameness, the Divine and the human. For this reason it is beneficial to open up the received wisdom of the mystical tradition of the great religious traditions in order that it be more widely diffused within the world, and particularly within the area of mental health.

 Lancaster (2001:47) notes in his study *on Eckhart, Kabbalah and the Limits of Psychological Inquiry* that there is an urgent need for a mature understanding of the relationship between knowledge based on psychological research and insights from mystics. The mystical dimensions of religious practices, whether Christian as in the case of Eckhart (d.1328) or Jewish as in the case of Abulafia (d.1291) arise when the mystic actively engages with processes that are labeled

in psychoanalytic language as preconscious or unconscious. Eckhart and Abulifafia were not simply communicating a mystical experience but were also trying to communicate the knowledge acquired through their experience. This they accomplished through the categories of thought in which they were immersed. The question Lancaster asks is to what extent might the introduction of psychological terms – perhaps replacing their more philosophical ones – meet the challenge of understanding that human-divine relationship which lies at the focus of all their endeavours? Lancaster argues that the mystics can sharpen our psychological models.

May (2004) in *The Dark Night of the Soul – A Psychiatrist Explores the Relationship Between Darkness and Spiritual Growth* relates the traditional notion of the dark night of the soul as articulated by the mystic John of the Cross (d.1591) to contemporary issues of depression and addiction. The dark night (a mystical experience in which one feels bereft of the presence of God (or the subsequent gifts of joy and hope) is a natural existential experience that occurs even to people who are good. In other words the dark night is not necessarily a punishment from God but can be a blessing. As a consequence of the dark night we become liberated from our attachments and cravings. In his work May sounds an oft repeated note that resonates with many professionals in mental health; namely that mental health practice involves ways to ease the pain of the moment and not so much to find meaning in it. Returning to a core existential theme, May notes that easing suffering is not as important as helping others to find meaning in it. Based on the received wisdom of the mystics John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila (d.1582) May argues that the dark night can be liberating. It can be seen as a blessing and a precursor to an enhanced mystical consciousness.

1.5 SUMMARY

The literature suggests that a path is now open for a fruitful and mutually enriching dialogue between spirituality and mental health. The present research explores not only what is meant by mental health but how spirituality is

understood within mental health. The speciality of spirituality is the proper discipline, not only for clarifying spirituality, but also for clarifying the nature of mysticism in a critical and rigorous way. All persons inasmuch as they are human seek to understand their experience of the Divine, the transcendent, in ways readily apparent to them. Spirituality has the benefit of accessing and mining the vast history and tradition of spirituality and mysticism as it has been expressed and interpreted historically and entering into meaningful dialogue with mental health.

CHAPTER 2
SPIRITUALITY IN A CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

To be alive is power,
Existence in Itself,
Without a further function,
Omnipotence enough.

Dickinson [1894]/1993:178

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Increasing secularization, particularly in the West, has challenged all religions as they begin to adapt and respond to the modern world. Scientific developments, new interpretive methods for history, the advent of sociology, psychology and the social sciences have each had their effect on religions' self-understanding. One of the effects of increasing secularization is that there has been a fracture between religion and spirituality. One hears frequently from people that they consider themselves spiritual but not religious. Today spirituality and religion have become dichotomized in the minds of many. Spirituality often represents something personal, positive, and liberating while religion something bureaucratic, negative and oppressive (Schneiders 1999:1).[1]

Given both the interest in spirituality and the ambiguity attached to the term it is clear that spirituality, as an acknowledged human phenomenon, needs to develop its own contemporary methodologies and contribute to the body of knowledge in a scientific or academic milieu. This challenge is recognized within the emerging speciality of spirituality in theology. Cousins (2000:xiii) writes that in the context of modern scholarship spirituality has not been extricated from the history of religions, the philosophy of religion and theology. Its central focus, its categories and concepts, and its distinct methodology have not been established to the point of being commonly accepted as conventions. Added to this the term

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[1] One sees this trend in Canada. Stats Canada reports that at the time of 1961, less than 1% of Canadians claimed to have no religion. By 1991 this proportion had increased to almost 13% (Clark 1998:6). Yet, Reginald Bibby's Project Canada Survey indicated that 81% of Canadians still believe in God implying that although church attendance has declined most people retain their belief in God (Bibby 1995:130).

'spirituality' is also used for life orientations which are non-religious or even anti-religious. As Schneiders (1986:255) notes:

> One hears talk of feminist spirituality, Black spirituality, Marxist spirituality. Again, we are witnessing an expansion of the term from a strictly Roman Catholic usage in which most of the terminology was fairly standardized, to an ecumenical but still Christian usage in which some terms are unfamiliar or are used in unfamiliar ways, to a usage which includes non-Christian religious experience which must be grasped by analogy through serious and open dialogue, and even to a non-religious usage whose meaning is anything but clear.

This chapter will explore how contemporary Christian spirituality is often conceived in a phenomenological or existential context. Phenomenology, as a research method, lends itself to subjectivity and it is this kind of existential, subjective, and person-centered understanding of spirituality that is operative throughout the present research. Since historical description is an aspect of the phenomenological method, the role of tradition in interpreting spirituality will be explored. Additionally, because the Church has been the place in which spirituality has historically been expressed in the Christian tradition, the relationship and understanding of 'church' in supporting a contemporary understanding of spirituality will be described.

The work of the Modernist theologian George Tyrrell will serve as a locus for this enquiry. Born in 1861, Tyrrell died in 1909. He was among the leading thinkers at the time of the English Modernist Movement. Most discussions of Tyrrell's theology occur within the historical context of the Modernist Crisis in the Catholic Church. However, that is not the basis for his inclusion here. The reason for selecting Tyrrell is that he is sufficiently contemporary, yet an adequate time has lapsed to allow for his ideas to have been tested by history.

Tyrrell lived at a time, not unlike our own, when religion seemed fated to be submerged by the vast torrent of secular knowledge that was sweeping over the

intellectual world (Lewis 1932:9). Tyrrell gave voice to the presence of the Other operative in the modern period that was calling the Church to deconstruct the very intellectual vessels of medievalism that were no longer capable of meeting the exigencies of that time. Additionally, much of his theological thinking seems to anticipate contemporary postmodernity.

By way of articulation of a contemporary understanding of spirituality, attention will be paid *inter alia* to the currents of Catholic Modernism in the early twentieth century and its antecedents in the currents of nineteenth century existentialism as articulated by Nietzsche and Kierkegaard. This will culminate in the contemporary currents of postmodern phenomenology such as those articulated by the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. It may strike the reader as odd to include both a Jewish and agnostic philosopher such as Nietzsche in *Christian* research. The reason for this is twofold. First, the Christian tradition has historically been open, albeit in a critical manner, to intellectual and cultural currents outside of those which it has inherited or developed through the course of its own historical evolution. Second, a contemporary understanding of spirituality is inherently dialogical. This has been the constant tradition of the Christian enterprise since the beginning. Through vital engagement in diverse cultures the primitive Church discovered that there were a variety of contexts in which the gospel could be articulated. As Tyrrell (1906:131) notes:

> Into every time honored phrase and expression a new wealth of meaning was crowded. 'Go borrow the vessels abroad of all thy neighbors even empty vessels; borrow not a few' (2 Kings 4:3). In obedience to some such prophetic impulse the Christian Church wandered far among the gentiles borrowing their vessels even their empty vessels, right and left, to hold the treasures for which she found no receptacle in the house of her birth.

Tyrrell wrote that since doctrine depends on religion more than religion on doctrine, it is the effort of religion to find utterance and embodiment. 'For as the strong creative thought of genius selects spontaneously the aptest (sic) language

at its disposal, so a deeply religious spirit will not fail to respond to that doctrine or system which is more consonant with its needs and exigencies' (Tyrrell 1907:5). The research suggests that the most apt language and method available in interpreting a contemporary understanding of spirituality is phenomenology. This means placing spirituality in the context of existential lived reality and grounding it in an observable phenomenon. By so doing, we sever it from any sense of being an esoteric, abstract idea or theory. As Schneiders (1986:267-268) notes, the discipline of spirituality within theology will be *descriptive and analytic* rather than *prescriptive and evaluative*. Consequently, whether the researcher is studying mysticism, the relation of prayer to social justice involvement, discernment of spirits, ritual, feminist religious experience, God images or any of the hundreds of other topics which are attracting the attention of students of spirituality today, the first task will be to try to understand the phenomenon on its own terms, that is, as it is or was actually experienced.

2.1 HOW IS SPIRITUALITY EXPERIENCED?

While it is true that all knowledge is mediated through a complex series of cultural matrixes, spirituality from an existential perspective is simultaneously concerned with the individual. In examining spirituality, it is to be affirmed that it has a corporate dimension expressed through cultural bodies. Secondly, it is also to be affirmed that spirituality is also concerned with the person's subjective experience of transcendental meaning. These two dimensions have a dialectical relationship each nurturing the other. Frankl (2000:72) writes that there are certain given cultural moulds into which personal religiousness is poured. These moulds are not transmitted in a biological way, but are passed on through the world of traditional symbols indigenous to a given culture. This world of symbols is not inborn, but we are born into it. The religious forms wait to be assimilated by the person. That which serves this purpose is not any inner psychological archetypes but the prayers of our fathers, the rites of our churches and synagogues, the revelations of our prophets and the examples set by saints and zaddiks.

Religious symbols and signs are symbiotically connected with the existential effect these symbols have on people. Regarding the corporate importance of religious symbols and the importance of ensuring their existential relevance, Weil (1951:186) writes,

> Religious things are pure by right, theoretically, hypothetically, by convention. Therefore their purity is unconditioned. No stain can sully it. That is why it is perfect. It is not, however, perfect in the same way as Roland's mare, which, while it had all possible virtues, had also the drawback of not existing. *Human conventions are useless if they are not connected with the motives that impel people to observe them* (italics mine).

Historically, religion has provided the categories and language for people to understand and integrate spirituality in their lives. As religious practice has waned new symbols have not emerged to root people within their cultural history. As a result there exists a free-floating anxiety in contemporary culture. The present crisis of meaning in our Western culture has manifested itself in both mental health and religion. Later chapters will critically explore how mental health has responded to this crisis of meaning. The task of spirituality is first to understand our context and articulate the experience of spirituality according to the ethos of our age so that it is comprehensible and relevant. In so doing it is important that we stay connected to our own traditions.

2.2 THE ROLE OF TRADITION

We are all part of a history or a tradition. As Schillebeecx (1968:27) notes, it belongs to the very essence of humanity to be within a tradition while reactivating it. This is what is known as a *living* tradition. There is a living tradition only if, in the light of the present that is oriented towards the future, that which has already found expression is reinterpreted towards the future. The perpetual death and rebirth of differing forms of articulating the mystery of the Christian faith is part of the living *traditio* of the Church. *Traditio* can be distinguished from *traditum* in that *traditio* is the transmission itself while *traditum* is the content of that transmission.

Traditio is phenomenological. It is the spirit as it is disclosed in our critical examination of various *traditas*. There is a vital osmosis between *traditum and traditio*. We cannot completely cast off our *traditum* as it is that which clothes *tradition.* Consequently, while it is important to locate spirituality in the present moment in order to respond to contemporary realities, we ought not dislodge spirituality from life-giving streams of tradition

As an example of tradition being used to interpret contemporary issues in light of a faith tradition, Levinas (1990:xx) delivered some essays to a group of rabbis. Included in these were questions that the French speaking Jewish community felt it urgent to address, such as attitudes to take toward the Germans, the land of Israel, and the place of Judaism in the world at large. In order to ensure that the interpretation is authentic, Levinas writes that it is necessary to free the text from a potential arbitrary interpretation by recourse to oral law. The oral law is laid out specifically in the Talmud and in various rabbinic principles. The interpreter must by aware of the order of the text accepted by tradition in the Talmud. The reason for this is because the one who is interpreting the text is not a closed 'interiority', distinct from history and the influence of others, but is in fact part of a *living* tradition. This awareness helps to make the relation of the interpreter to the text something other than mere whim, for it forces the interpreter out of his or her private universe and into the life shared with others both past and present (Levinas 1990:xx). Such an approach trains and moulds one's own subjectivity in a wholesome manner:

> What allows one to establish a difference between a personal originality brought to the Book and the pure play of amateurs' (or charlatans') illusions is a necessary reference of the subjective to the historical continuity of interpretation, is the tradition of commentaries that cannot be ignored under the pretext that inspiration comes to you directly from the text. A 'renewal' worthy of the name cannot circumvent these references, just as it cannot circumvent the reference to what is called the Oral Law (Levinas 1990:xxii).

Similarly, to distinguish the charlatan from the prophet Tyrrell, supporting the value of tradition, writes,

> None of us may build wildly according to his private freak and fancy but solely in the best attainable light as to what has already been done and what has yet to be done by the historical church in unity of spirit, idea and plan – to apprehend this idea ever more adequately through the study of the past in light of the present and of the immediate future (Tyrrell 1907:xi).

This relationship, that is the *traditio/traditum* relationship, is often left unappreciated. Casey points out that *traditio* is assailed from both the left and the right:

> The left attacks it because the past is identified with the forces of conservatism; it is understood, to use Margaret Mead's term, as coercive rather than instrumental. It imposes its own way of viewing situations and responding to them so that development is blocked. On the other hand, memory is rejected by the right because it is subversive to the status quo; memory knows another time. It relativizes the present and so can offer an alternative to current ideology – which may be why J.B. Mertz speaks about the dangerous memory of Jesus Christ (Casey 1996: 71-72).

The particular manner in which Christianity historically has both valued tradition, while at the same time being open to contemporary cultural currents, is instructive as we attempt to articulate a contemporary understanding of spirituality. As Christianity spread during the Patristic period there was heated debate around both the manner and extent to which the philosophy of the Greeks should be used to understand the revelation of Christ through one Jesus of Nazareth. The early Patristic teachers were deeply divided over the extent to which Greek philosophy should enter a Christian universe. Some, such as Tertullian (ca 160-225 CE), and Tatian (ca 120-173 CE) were passionately opposed to Greek philosophy and culture in the fear that their influence would adulterate the gospel. Others, however, such as Justin Martyr (ca.112–165 CE) and Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–212 CE), endeavoured to articulate the

message of the gospel using Greek philosophical concepts (Williams 1997:32). Notwithstanding Tertullian's protestation, 'What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?' the baptism of Greek philosophy into Christianity occurred. Henceforth philosophy, even that which originated from the pagan philosophy of Aristotle and Plato would become the *ancillae theologiae*. Such openness to that which was considered 'other' would find expression once again in the medieval Scholastic period of St. Thomas Aquinas who synthesized Aristotle's ethics, cosmology, and metaphysics with the Christian message. This was so in spite of the fact that the Dominican Constitution from the years 1221-1231 stated: 'Our brothers may not study the books of pagan writers (referring above all to Aristotle) and philosophers (what is meant is Arabic philosophy, the great modernism in the Middle Ages); far less may they study the secular sciences' (Schillebeeckx 2002:1). Bold use of notions borrowed from traditions outside of one's own, while not without controversy, has always been a living part of the Christian *traditio.* This is again being felt today as spirituality critically engages with postmodern culture.

The Church has been an important place wherein people are able to express their deepest desires and be nourished by important traditions. It has also served as the place where dialogue concerning these issues can occur. It is important, therefore to distinguish carefully between religious institutions and spirituality in order to understand the value of each.

2.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPIRITUALITY AND THE 'ECCLESIA'

Religion is intimately tied with spirituality and can help in understanding spirituality in a coherent fashion. Schneiders (2003:164) addresses this very issue when she suggests that the contradictory relationship between spirituality and religion results from a faulty understanding of both and that, properly understood, religious traditions are normal and healthy contexts for genuine spiritualities. Religion is the sociological expression of spirituality:

> Religion, as those who specialize in its study tell us, is a notoriously difficult term to define…What seems to mark religions is that they are cultural systems for dealing with ultimate reality, whether or not that ultimate reality is God, and they are institutionalized in patterns of creed, code and cult. In some way, religion is about the human relationship to the sacred, the ultimate, the transcendent, the divine. These are not strictly equivalent terms but religion is basically a system for dealing with that which transcends the individual or even the social entity (Schneiders 1999: 4-5).

As mentioned previously, there are certain given cultural moulds into which personal spirituality is poured. These moulds are not transmitted in a biological way, but are passed on through the world of traditional symbols indigenous to a given culture.

In Christianity the specific sociological entity that emerged from the spirituality of Jesus and his followers has a particular biblical name - the *ecclesia*. Exploring all the various understandings of the *ecclesia* has become a specialty in and of itself in theology, named appropriately enough, 'ecclesiology'. Differing interpretations of scriptural texts, differing historical, political and philosophical movements, and various charismatic or reform-minded leaders have all contributed to the divergent manner in which Christians understand the *ecclesia* as an organizing principle for the faith.

Spirituality is not a categorical object imposed on a group but is rather disclosed through the particularities of the group's self-understanding derived from its own historical culture, tradition and rites (e.g. Eastern Orthodoxy, monasticism, Protestantism, etc.). There is, argues Berdyaev, a plurality of expressions corresponding to the plurality of cultures and people within the one Church of Christ. This plurality is not problematic:

> The selfsame and eternal Truth of the Christian Revelation is individualized in different races, nations, personalities. The absoluteness of Christian Truth is in no way contrary to an individuation of this kind. There are no excluding oppositions between the universal and the individual. The universal and the

individual have herein a concrete sameness. The absolute Truth of Christianity has a human recipient. The human element is not passive but rather active, and it reacts with a creativity different to that which is revealed from above. It creates a multiplicity of forms. And in this should be seen nothing bad. There are many mansions in my Father's house [John 14:2]. Thoroughly justified is the existence of an Eastern and of a Western Christianity, just as there is of a Romanic Christianity and of a Germanic Christianity (Berdyaev 1925:1).

The Church today is understood as a lived experience in the world as opposed to an ahistorical superstructure separate from the living culture in which it is embodied. Masson (1984:340) writes:

> Rahner himself argued that we are witnessing the beginning of a new epoch: the transition from a church of the Hellenistic and European culture and its colonies to a world - church embodied in many different cultures. This 'coming-to-be of the world-church,' he insisted, does not mean merely a quantitative augmentation of the earlier church, it contains a theological caesura in church history which … can be compared perhaps only with the transition from Judeo-Christianity to Gentile Christianity.

Debates relating to ecclesiology, while necessary and legitimate, are foreign to a rigorous examination of spirituality within the scope and history of Christianity as it has existed for the last 2000 years. In surveying the literature associated with Christian spirituality one very rarely comes across any apologies for the various ecclesiologies that are extant within Christianity today. From an existential perspective a Pauline ecclesiology is to be preferred. The notion of the Church as a universal community of spirit filled people renewed in *mind* (cf. Romans 12:2) transcending national, ethnic and gender categorization had its genesis in Paul.

Paul's vision for the *ecclesia* is a universal, christologically conceived human solidarity, in which there is no longer any opposition between male and female, Jew and Greek, slave and free (cf. Gal. 3:28). Paul felt liberated to read very different exigencies into familiar Torah Scriptures as a consequence of his

conversion and self-understanding of Christ's mission. As Pauw (1993:50) notes, Paul evoked Scripture in surprising and even subversive ways to argue for a new vision of the Church. The grafting of the Gentiles into the rich root of Israel required Paul to execute bold and unorthodox re-reading of familiar texts. For example, Paul subverts the story of Hagar and Sarah and their sons in Galatians 4:21-31, by interpreting it to mean that the uncircumcised are children of promise. Such an inclusion was not without controversy. Indeed one of the earliest ethical dilemmas recorded in the New Testament concerned the thorny issue of circumcision. The Jerusalem Council (as reported in the Book of Acts (15:1-29) and in Galatians (2:1-10) eventually exempted Gentile Christians from circumcision and full Torah observance. This was new wine requiring new wineskins. The articulation of this message has been part of the Catholic enterprise ever since. 'It is the mission of the Catholic Church to foster and supernaturalize that progressive evolution and brotherhood of man in Christ, the liberty of the sons of God – the vindication of inalienable rights founded on this equality' (Tyrrell 1904:333). This notion was given fuller expression in the Second Vatican Council's document *Gaudium Et Spes* in 1965.

Most theologians desire to operate *in medio ecclesia.* However, with the expansion of what it means to be Church the sense of center is no longer clear. In the context of Catholic Modernism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Tyrrell exposed unconscious discourses of power that wrongly identified the medieval juridical institution with the experience of faith and the understanding of Church. Such a posture was no longer possible in the Modern age:

> To apply to this juridical and hierarchic power of the later Church texts that refer only to the spiritual influence of the primitive and pre-hierarchic Church was possible and even excusable in an age devoid of the slightest historical and critical sense, yet the misapplication has been and is still the main support of the medieval Church-theory. Surely it is time we had done with this

superficial exegesis that has ceased to be excusable (Tyrrell 1909:69).

The relationship of Christians internally as participants in the mystical body of Christ, with the external manifestation of that body, is determined today less clearly along juridically conceived organizational boundaries. Holland (1998:50) argues that there are three styles of organization corresponding to premodern, modern, and postmodern society. He writes that premodern classical society was not oriented to professionalism but to *authoritarianism.* Pyramidal order was its form of organization, cyclical tradition its extension through time, and absolute rule its governance. Religious consecration was its legitimation.

Modern society, and to a degree modern religious organization, is oriented towards *professionalism.* Bureaucratic rationalization is its form of organization, linear progress its extension through time, and manipulative management its governance.

Postmodern organization, however, will be different still, oriented to the principle of *creativity.* The holistic web of community is becoming its form of organization, a rhythmic spiral its extension through time, and artistic imagination its norm of governance. As a result its legitimation will come primarily from charism, which is at once social and spiritual. Consecration and competence will not disappear but will be placed at the service of the creativity of charism (Griffin 1998:50). This postmodern form of ecclesial organization was Tyrrell's preferred model. The Russian existentialist philosopher Berdyaev suggests that Tyrrell's model of Church is strikingly similar to the Russian notion of *sobernos*t. Berdyaev (1927:2) writes that Tyrrell does not set Protestant individualism against the Catholic authoritative doctrine of the Church, but sets forth rather a peculiar spiritual collectivism, what Russian Orthodox call *sobornost.* Berdyaev explains the notion of *sobornost* as follows:

> In what sense is the Church a reality? The church as an objective reality which stands at a higher level than man (sic.) is a social institution, and in that sense is the objectification of religious life; it is an adaptation of spirit to social conditions. But in its depth the Church is the life of the spirit, it is spiritual life. It is miraculous life which is not subject to social laws; it is community, a brotherhood of men (sic) in Christ. It is the mysterious life of Christ within a human communion with Christ. In this sense the church is freedom and love, and there is no external authority in it, there is no necessity and no coercive force. What is in it is freedom enlightened by grace. And this is what Khomyakov calls *sobernost. Sobornost* is not a collective reality which stands higher than man (sic) and issues its orders to him. It is the highest spiritual qualitative power in men (sic); it is entering into the communion of the living and the dead. This *sobornost* can have no rational juridical expression. Each must take upon himself (sic) responsibility for all. No one may separate himself from the world whole, although at the same time he ought not regard himself as part of a whole….I repeat, the question of the supreme value of personality, of the supremacy of what is personal and individual over the common, and the controversy about universals, are not open to intellectual and rational solutions; a solution is to be found only through the moral will which establishes values, only through volitional choice. The secret of personality, the existential mystery, is revealed only in the creative life of the spirit as a whole. It is a spiritual conflict. False objectified universals, false collective realities must be overthrown in the combat which with the spirit wages (Berdyaev 1957:131-132).

However, Tyrrell radically expands the notion of Church in the sense of the place wherein the Divine is experienced to include the world. This too was a prophetic insight. Today religion is only one of the many places where personal and communal spirituality is lived out.

2.4 MODERN EXISTENTIAL INFLUENCES IMPACTING CONTEMPORARY SPIRITUALITY

The most potent and powerful thinkers influencing contemporary spirituality are Friedrich Nietzsche (d. 1900) and Søren Kierkegaard (d. 1855) Both understood that a period of Christendom was quickly coming to an end leaving in its wake an inevitable challenge with respect to morality and ethical living. While they differed in terms of their understanding of the relationship of the subject with God, each of these philosophers of the Modern period challenged the excessive rationality of

the Enlightenment. They did so by asserting the primacy of the will and the individuated personality against the forces of a society (civil and religious) that stood in opposition to that realization. Some of their insights will be explored as a means of locating where we are today by way of a contemporary understanding of spirituality.

2.4.1 *FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE (D. 1900)*

For Nietzsche, as Porter (1987:140) points out, reason, interpreted as the Cartesian *cogito*, ceases to be the ultimate touchstone of the sane. True sanity lies in whatever confers the bloom of life – power, vitality, health – whatever nourishes the self and the soul's greatness. Mere reason's infatuation with Being is superseded by life's pursuit of becoming. The challenge against the spirit - suffocating rationality of the Enlightenment was launched prophetically by Nietzsche. In terms of his prophetic spiritual character Foucault notes, 'After Port-Royal, men would have to wait two centuries - until Dostoievsky and Nietzsche - for Christ to regain the glory of madness, for scandal to recover its power as revelation, for unreason to cease being merely the public shame of reason' (Foucault 1988:79). In relation to Foucault's observation that madness and scandal are often an inherent aspect of revelation, Nietzsche utilizes as typology an 'insane' person to herald the prophetic truth that 'God' is dead:

> The insane man jumped into their midst and transfixed them with his glances. 'Where is God gone?' he called out. 'I mean to tell you! We have killed him, you and I! We are all his murderers! But how have we done it? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the whole horizon? What did we do when we loosened the earth from its sun?… At last he threw his lantern on the ground, so that it broke in pieces and was extinguished. 'I come too early,' he then said. 'I am not yet at the right time. This prodigious event is still on its way, and is traveling - it has not yet reached men's ears. Lightning and thunder need time, the light of the stars needs time, deeds need time, even after they are done, to be seen and heard. This deed is as yet further from them than the furthest star - and yet they have done it!' It is further stated that the madman made his way into different churches on the same day, and there intoned his *Requiem aeternam deo*. When led out and called to account, he always gave the reply: 'What are

>these churches now, if they are not the tombs and monuments of God?' (Nietzsche [1886]/1964:168-169).

The intent here is not to enter into the debate concerning death of God theology[2] but to describe the radical movement towards individualism so characteristic of postmodernity. The rationalism of Nietzsche's time had the effect of removing one from subjective responsibility and destiny. As an antidote to that, Nietzsche introduced the *übermensch* (super-man)*.* Tyrrell acknowledged that Nietzsche's *übermensch* constituted a new kind of doctrine that required *critical* theological engagement.

Tyrrell recognized in Nietzsche's work an understandable desire, which Tyrrell shared, for a better conception of personhood than that which had been prevailing since the Enlightenment. According to Tyrrell, the *übermensch* represented a revolt, albeit an excessive and indiscriminate revolt, against false mysticism and false sentiment. The *übermensch* is heralded in Nietzshe's poem '*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*' where there is the metamorphosis of the human personality culminating ultimately in the *übermensch*. Brock (1935:128) writes that in Nietzsche's poem '*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*', he formulated his own philosophical task using a variety of symbols. The symbol of the *übermensch* relates directly to the issue of spirituality in terms of what it means to live a full human life given the dissolution of Christendom. The three stages that lead to the *übermensch* parallel Nietzsche's own personal development. The first stage in the metamorphosis is the appropriation of values stage. This stage is where we begin to learn the values that are propagated by social institutions. The second is the living out of those values. The final stage is the transcending of each of the former by going beyond ethical categories and living out of one's own

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[2] There is considerable disagreement in interpretation concerning the status of Nietzsche's 'death of God' pronouncement. The fable of the 'Madman' has been taken as an attack on 'the adherents of secularized versions of the old Christian moral ideal' (Salaquarda 1996:102). Even Heidegger's monumental *Nietzsche* ([1961]/1999) equivocates over Nietzsche's meaning, suggesting that Nietzsche is not attacking the Christian God of biblical revelation but only a misrepresentation of God in metaphysical ontotheology (Peters 2000:26).

individuated personality and will. These three stages of life correspond also to the three main stages of history; namely premodern, modern and postmodern.

According to Nietzsche, the first metamorphosis of the human spirit in history is the acquisition of ethical codes of conduct and duty. This phase could be understood as the development of all the great religions of the world; the development of their sacred texts. This aspect of history is rendered symbolically by the use of the camel:

> All these heaviest things the load bearing spirit taketh upon itself: and like the camel, which, when laden, hasteneth into the wilderness, so hasteneth the spirit into its wilderness (Nietzsche [1891]/1999:13)

The wilderness is a strong biblical allusion signifying a region of openness and trust. Once moving to this desert the human spirit becomes more singular. It becomes freer to critically examine these suppositions, thereby changing into the lion. This transformation could be understood as the transformation from pre-modern mythologizing to Modern criticism and the development of rationalism and empiricism as a way to free oneself from mythical external forces:

> But in the loneliest wilderness happeneth the second metamorphosis: here, the spirit becometh a lion; freedom will it capture, and lordship in its own wilderness (Nietzsche [1891]/1999:13)

The lion, like Jacob wrestling with angel of God, must wrestle with the dragon upon whose scales are all the codes of categorical ethical behaviour: 'All values have already been created, and all created values – do I represent. Verily, there shall be no 'I will' anymore. Thus speaketh the dragon' (Nietzsche [1891]/1999:14)

In the interest of absolute liberty this final dragon must be annihilated. Only a lion who has become sufficiently critical and sufficiently free can achieve this task. 'To create itself freedom, and give a holy Nay even unto duty: for that, my

brethren, there is need of the lion' (Nietzsche [1891]/1999:14). Finally once this dragon is annihilated a new birth emerges. The lion turns into a child and original innocence is regained. This is what Nietzsche refers to as the eternal return. It is, as mentioned above, the fullest expression of the acceptance of earthly reality as a whole. This transformation could be understood as postmodern. All categories and norms are transcended. The human person is utterly free to will its own:

> Innocence is the child and forgetfulness, a new beginning, a game, a self-rolling wheel, a first movement, a holy Yea. Aye, for the game of creating, my brethren, there is needed a holy Yea unto life: *its own* will, willeth now the spirit; *his own* world winneth the world's outcast (Nietzsche [1891]/1999:14).

The spirit that now wills its own is the *übermensch.* It is striking how similar this is to authentic Christian mysticism. In this regard Nietzsche's analysis is important as it represents:

> …the revolt against an exaggerated pessimism which excludes all possibility of God's Will being done on earth as it is in heaven; the revolt against a transcendental mysticism that finds the theatre of man's (sic.) highest life only in the clouds; against a sentimental, enervating pity that views pain and sorrow as the sovereign unmitigated evils, and fosters a blind self-defeating 'indiscriminate charity'; against the confusion of gentleness with softness of meekness with weakness; against an over restraining of the 'organic' idea of Society and against kindred theories of government and authority, socialistic or absolutist, which are fatal to the growth of personality and the truly Christian principle of individual dignity. We should sympathize with the scorn of contented mediocrity, of the average and paltry; with the feeling that in some sense a man should 'be himself' and not the creature of servile imitation and conformity; with the aspiration after the 'strong man,' the hero, the More-than-man, whose production is the goal of all moral endeavour. For all his monstrosity, the Superman is largely built up of, and lives by certain too neglected elements of Christian ideal and sentiment (Tyrrell 1906:67).

Tyrrell was similar to Nietzsche in his understanding that the herd mind cannot elevate itself. The crowd mind, writes Tyrrell (1907a:263), will always be something with us, not as something to acquiesce or defer to, but to combat,

purify, elevate. Like Nietzsche, Tyrrell believed that the Christian must go beyond the noisier and aggressive representatives of the Church and live out of their own subjective, sacred yes. Still, there remains disquieting elements in the *übermensch* that make embracing a fully Nietzschean spirituality ill advised.

2.4.2 CRITIQUE OF NIETZSCHE'S ANTHROPOLOGY

In Nietzsche's final anthropology, the *übermensch* must rebel against natural human compassion. For Nietzsche, compassion and pity were antithetical to the development of the human personality. He criticized Christianity precisely on these grounds:

> Christianity is called the religion of *pity* - Pity stands in opposition to all the tonic passions that augment the energy of the feeling of aliveness: it is a depressant. A man (sic.) loses power when he pities. Through pity, that drain upon strength which suffering works, is multiplied a thousandfold. Suffering is made contagious by pity; under certain circumstances it may lead to a total sacrifice of life and living energy - a loss out of all proportion to the magnitude of the cause (the case of the death of the Nazarene). This is the first view of it; there is, however, a still more important one. If one measures the effects of pity by the gravity of the reactions it sets up, its character as a menace to life appears in a much clearer light. Pity thwarts the whole law of evolution, which is the law of natural selection. It preserves whatever is ripe for destruction; it fights on the side of those disinherited and condemned by life; by maintaining life in so many of the botched of all kinds, it gives life itself a gloomy and dubious aspect (Nietzsche [1895]/1999:24).

Tyrrell's critique of the *übermensch* proved to be prophetic. While acknowledging that authenticity is not tested by adherence to the prevailing categorical discourse of institutions ('Of unconditional obedience to an avowedly conditioned authority the Catholic religion knows nothing' (Tyrrell 1907a:ix), it is not entirely arbitrary either. Authenticity *is* gauged by the sense in which one's will is conformed to the example of Jesus and his understanding. In the Christian tradition, there is a law inscribed on the human heart (cf: Romans 2:14). It becomes known existentially to us through ethical response which is foundational

in human experience. The hungry, thirsty, the naked, the sick, the sinful, these are our judges and law givers (Tyrrell 1907a:380).

On the one hand the ideal of the *übermensch* is easily criticized. Self-giving and self-seeking instincts are essential to the survival of the species. Brutal unmitigated egotism is a principle of decadence and deterioration (Tyrrell 1906:66). This dynamic was played out in Nazi Germany in the 1940's. National Socialism identified the *übermensch* with the Aryan nation, embodied in the Nazi ideal, as it rejected all sense of universality with respect to transcendent human values. In place of that the Nazis presented their own version by violence and through scapegoating an entire culture and race that refused to assimilate – the Semitic.

While Tyrrell (1902:3) acknowledged the Modern dilemma between a freedom of God which annihilates the human person and a freedom of the human person which annihilates God, he was in no way a nihilist. Simply because an understanding of God needs new wineskins this does not mean that we should not actually attempt to find those wineskins. In natural science, scientific structure has to be continually broken up and reconstituted so as to correspond to new tracts of experience - so too with theology. Tyrrell was of the opinion that the subject's self-presence before God was necessary in order to ensure that humanity is preserved. 'Whatever the truth about idealism, man (sic.) is by nature a Realist and similarly by nature a theist until he (sic.) has studiously learnt to align himself in a non-natural pose' (Tyrrell 1902:273). Revelation itself is inscribed in nature. The kind of nihilism that closes off human experience from the possibility of the divine inscribed in nature does not contribute to a 'super-man'. While sharing many of the same characteristics, the Church's saints and doctors are nevertheless different than Nietzsche's super-man who is more of a super-brute (Tyrell 1906:68). A proper existential understanding must appreciate that existence is *received.* The spiritual movement toward truth is a passive quality. Truth is given or revealed through our response to the external world.

Revelation, although occurring in our consciousness, is not self-created but is in a mysterious sense *received.*

Revelation is a transforming and heightening not of the active but the receptive intellect. This means that with revelation we listen, we do not speak, we receive, we do not give (Tyrrell 1907a:283). Tyrrell understood revelation as dialogue that is first revealed from that which is Other to the subject. Upon receiving revelation we then frame that revelation in such a way as to give intelligible voice to that experience. It is a relational but nonetheless subjective process. To understand subjectivity as it is understood in contemporary spirituality it is helpful to turn to the most eloquent proponent of Christian subjectivity and the father of Christian existentialism - Søren Kierkegaard.

2.4.3 SØREN KIERKEGAARD (D. 1855)

Like Nietzsche, Kierkegaard found that the existing ecclesial and social order was inadequate to produce an authentic human, let alone Christian, existence. Neuhaus (2004:29) writes,

> The cultural Protestantism that German theologians call *Kulturprotestantismus* and Kierkegaard calls Christendom is as hostile to Christ as was the religious establishment of first-century Judaism. Indeed the hostility is stronger since the Pharisees did expect a radically new thing in the coming of the true Messiah, whereas Christendom thinks it has smoothly subsumed what it formally acknowledges as the true Messiah into the all-inclusive synthesis that is The System. Christendom is the enemy of Christianity—it is, Kierkegaard says repeatedly, the 'blasphemy'— that stands in the way of encountering Christ as our contemporary. Christendom assumes that Christ is far in the past, having laid the foundation for the wonderful thing that has historically resulted, Christendom. Of course we are all good Christians because we are all good Danes. It is a package deal and Christ and Christianity are part of the package. If we are good Danes (or good Americans), if we work hard and abide by the rules, the church, which is an integral part of the social order, will guarantee the delivery to heaven of the package that is our lives.

Kierkegaard, the forerunner of the existential movement in Christianity, dramatically launched the reaction against the spirit-suffocating rationalism of the Enlightenment as systemized by Hegel and accepted by the Church. Gilson (1952:143) notes that Kierkegaard was haunted by the conviction that, if religion, which is life, is in constant danger of degenerating into abstract speculation, the reason for it is that one of the standing aims of philosophy is to eliminate existence from thought, replacing it with abstract ideas. The very origin of contemporary existentialism is in Kierkegaard, and one might even wonder if pure existentialism did not cease immediately after the death of Kierkegaard. While Tyrrell did not explicitly use the term his spirituality can accurately be referred to as *existentialist*. Tyrrell acknowledged that since Modernism is connected with concrete historical existential experience it is not definable, unlike the abstractions of medieval scholasticism. The reason for this is because the former is living and thus in flux and the latter is dead. 'In the abstract, Medievalism is definable because it is dead; Modernism is not so because it is living' (Tyrrell 1909:141). In a similar fashion, Kierkegaard pointed out in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* an existential system is impossible:

> An existential system cannot be formulated. Does this mean that no such system exists? By no means; nor is this implied in our assertion. Existence itself is a system – for God; but it cannot be a system for any existing spirit. System and finality correspond to one another, but existence is precisely the opposite of finality. It may be seen, from a purely abstract point of view, that system and existence are incapable of being thought together; because in order to think existence at all, systematic thought must think it as abrogated, and hence as not existing. Existence separates and holds the various moments of existence discretely apart; systematic thought consists of the finality which brings them together (Kierkegaard [1847]/1989:201).

For Kierkegaard, Tyrrell and in addition the postmodern 'school' the most important question is not the truth of Christianity as an objective system, but rather the mode of the subjects' appropriation of revelation and the existential effect this then has. Kierkegaard ([1847]/1941:116) writes, 'the subjective

acceptance is precisely the decisive factor; and an objective acceptance of Christianity is paganism or thoughtlessness' Similarly for Tyrrell (1906:68), 'As before, we leave aside the metaphysical problem of the relation of the divine Being to our own, of sameness and otherness, and speak simply of those manifestations of the spirit of which man's soul is the theatre, though God is also their author in some mysterious way'. The Socratic maxim to know thyself implies that knowing oneself is really knowing the truth. Christianity's task, argued Kierkegaard, was not philosophical but concerned itself with subjectivity:

> It is subjectivity that Christianity is concerned with, and it is only in subjectivity that truth exists, if it exists at all; objectively Christianity has no absolute existence. If its truth happens to be in only one single subject, it exists in him alone; and there is greater Christian joy in heaven over this one individual than over universal history and the System, which as objective entities are incommensurable with that which is Christian (Kierkegaard [1847]/1941:116).

By way of natural anthropology, Kierkegaard maintains that each individual human being is cast into the world unfinished and finite, yet, nevertheless, must take responsibility for his or her choices. The human person is not a self-sufficient spiritual atom but, as a subject, is only authentically him or herself in a personal relationship to the God of revelation. According to Kierkegaard, 'existence' is absolutely original and radically personal and unique (Robbins 2001:3). Tyrrell similarly maintains that Christianity needs to be enfleshed in the singular subject in order to be manifested in the infinite variety of people in all places and times. This requires a constant *becoming* on the part of Christians to share the spirit of Christ as opposed to developing ever more totalizing thought systems that would be able to be replicated by individuals if only they follow the formula laid out in the text. Tyrrell (1906:52) writes,

> We see then at once the truth and the fallacy of 'New Testament Christianity' and how falsely and thin a conception of Christ he would have who, without distinguishing the spirit from its embodiment, should take the religion of the synoptics or even of St. John or St. Paul as the sole and only legitimate expression of

> Christianity to be slavishly imitated by all future ages, to be a fetter on all progress and lawful variation.

In this way Tyrrell resembles the existentialism of Kierkegaard but also Heidegger who in his later thought did not rule out a 'nonmetaphysical relationship to God' (Caputo 1993:279,285).

For both Tyrrell and Kierkegaard the solution lay in understanding that the human person is spirit. Spirituality, understood as response to that which is totally Other (God), is the constitutive element of the human person. Kierkegaard dramatically stated its subjective character as follows:

> Every human existence not conscious of itself as spirit, or not personally conscious of itself before God as spirit, every human existence which is not grounded transparently in God, but opaquely rests or merges in some abstract universal (state, nation, etc.), or in the dark about itself, simply takes its capacities to be natural powers, unconscious in a deeper sense of where it has them from, takes its' self to be an unaccountable something; if there were any question of accounting for its inner being, every such existence, however astounding in its accomplishment, however much it can account for even the whole of existence, however intense its aesthetic enjoyment: every such life is nonetheless despair (Kierkegaard [1849]/1989:76).

2.5 MODERN TRAJECTORIES IN THE CHURCH IMPACTING UPON A CONTEMPORARY
UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRITUALITY

The purpose of spirituality is not to eschew mystery but to ensure that it is articulated in forms that are comprehensible. Subjectivity, personalism and plurality are strong cultural paradigms in our world today. Consequently, it is important to articulate a contemporary understanding of spirituality along these lines. Indeed, following Holland's (1998:52) observation that legitimation of contemporary forms of ecclesial organization will come primarily from charism, it is today, as has most often been the case in Christian tradition, the saints and mystics who are the *reguli fidei*. Indeed, Callahan (1989:268) notes that our lived spiritual experience is a valid authority for what we come to believe as true of

God's revelation. Julian of Norwich (d.1416 CE), for example, chose to trust her lived personal experience of God's tender mercy rather than to hold the church's current doctrine about the wrath of God while Teresa of Avila (d.1582 CE) was convinced from her lived spiritual experience that we never get beyond the humanity of Christ, even in exalted stages of prayer. To support this notion Tyrrell observes that historically the development of spirituality has emerged more from individuals and schools of theology rather than from representatives of the institutional dimension of the Church:

> History shows us that all the substantial advance has been the work not of officials, but of individuals, almost in opposition to officials; not of the system, but of those who have to some extent corrected and modified the system. The great teachers of the Church have been the Fathers who, though often Bishops, were not as a class members of the *Ecclesia Docens*. Except St. Augustine, no teacher has taught the Western Church more than St. Thomas Aquinas -not a member of its official teaching staff. To-day the beliefs of the faithful are *de facto* determined far more by unofficial individuals and by schools of theology than by the episcopate (Tyrrell 1907: 180). [3]

In the early twentieth century, Tyrrell anticipated the impact that the style of modernity that was flowering in the Church at the time would later have on contemporary spirituality. During the early twentieth century the Magisterium of the Roman Church was increasingly worried by initiatives in the Church to open it to the worlds of science, philosophy and democracy, as well as the historical-critical method in regard to the Scriptures. Kourie (1985:43) notes that scholarly

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[3] This is not to suggest that the role of women in shaping spirituality ought to be minimized or forgotten. Indeed, there has been significant research and reconstruction on the role of women in shaping the spirituality of the early Church. Swan's (2001) work *The Forgotten Desert Mothers: Sayings, Lives, and Stories of Early Christian Women* is a very useful compilation of significant women ascetics and their doctrine from the Patristic period. Miller's (2005) *Women In Early Christianity: Translations From Greek Texts* is an excellent reconstruction on the history of actual women in Christianity. In the later middle ages, women mystics from diverse cultural backgrounds such as Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179 CE), Mechtild of Magdeburg (d. 1264 CE), Catherine of Sienna (d. 1380 CE), Julian of Norwich (d. 1416 CE) and Theresa of Avila (d. 1582 CE) to name just a few, exerted a powerful influence on the development of mysticism and spirituality. Their work continues to be a source of research in spirituality and mysticism to this day.

activity in Roman Catholic biblical scholarship was influenced more by the negative rather than the positive aspects of Magisterial documents such as *Providentissimus Deus* (1893). This reaction was due largely to the Modernist Crisis in the Church. In the context of Roman Catholic biblical scholarship, modernism utilized the rationalistic and critical approach to scripture. The negative attitude of the church to modern forms of exegesis prevailed well until 1940 and is evidenced in the encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* (1915) which was strongly defensive on the historicity of the bible, and critical and modern scientific advances largely due to the fear that such methods would be destructive to doctrine (Kourie 1985:44). Such a posture changed under the pontificate of Pius XII and the publication in 1943 of the papal encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu.* Pius XII's encyclical is regarded as a watershed moment in terms of biblical scholarship in the Catholic community. Coupled with the establishment in 1941 of the *Pontifical Biblical Commission*, Catholic scholarship was able to keep apace of important developments in scientific research.

Traumas at the hands of the modern world, stretching back to the Reformation and the French Revolution, still weighed heavily upon the church (Arraya 1998: 2). The Church in Tyrrell's time was hesitant to embrace anything that approximated existentialism or subjectivity. With the publication under Pius X, of *Lamentabili* (1907) as well as the anti-modernist encyclical *Pascendi* (1907), the Roman Catholic Church self-consciously and with full intention withdrew from any and all currents outside of the post-reformational medievalism it had inherited. There were very few tools available and acceptable by the Magisterium of the day that could assist in articulating spirituality in a modern context. Consequently, Tyrrell set about to analyze the faith experience using methods derived from his contemporary context outside of the Church's dominant scholastic paradigm. Tyrrell's appreciation of the subjective dimension of theology leading to wholesome contemporary spirituality was a prophetic insight.

For any serious dialogue between the Church and contemporary postmodern culture to bear fruit, it should be acknowledged that our Western philosophical tools, such as classic Thomism are ill equipped to serve as an *ancilla theologiae* for contemporary spirituality, which stresses personal experience over static formulations. Tyrrell argued, 'The Patristic and traditional notion of the Deposit as the form of sound words must be abandoned in favour of the notion that it is a spirit or Idea perpetuated in experience to be expressed by each generation in its own way but having no classical form of expression' (Tyrell 1907a:106). This remains the basic orientation of contemporary spirituality.

Two closely allied postmodern trajectories are critical in offering some context to the current tensions and issues extant in spirituality today and thus deserve exploration. The first is a recognition that a period of medieval Christendom has come to a close, leaving in its wake the kind of material secularity that is part of the fabric of contemporary culture. The other is the controversy concerning anthropology that has occurred as a consequence of this historic shift. Concerning the former, it is now widely acknowledged, among even the most conservative of theologians that a period of Christendom has come to an end. Weigel, an American Catholic theologian, eloquently describes our contemporary Christian context:

> During the past two hundred years or so of Western history, a form of 'Christendom' has come to an end. History has determined that the Church, for the foreseeable future, will not be able to claim a privileged (still less, determinative) role in the formulation of public policy; nor, in most cases, will the Church have state power buttressing its truth claims. The union of altar and throne is over. The last king has not been strangled with the guts of the last priest, as Voltaire wished. But 'the priests' no longer constitute an 'estate,' and the Church is no longer a partisan political actor …. For some Christians, this has seemed a loss; some even consider it a catastrophe. I do not presume to know the future that has been created by the end of this type of Christendom. But I do think I can see a profound paradox emerging in these early days of 'post-Christendom.' And that paradox is a challenge to rethink the question of winners and losers at the end of modernity …. I believe

> it is very good for the Church that a form of Christendom implying a deep entanglement of the *auctoritas* of the Church with the *potestas* of the state is over and done with. The end of this style of Christendom frees the Church for its essential tasks of evangelization, worship, and service. And the end of Christendom gets the Church out of the coercion business, a great stain on its record that Pope John Paul II has called Christians to repent of publicly in preparation for the turn of the millennium (Weigel 1996:62).

With respect to the second trajectory, namely the issue of anthropology, this issue remains current. The very foundation of humanism is being questioned in certain strains of postmodern thinking. One of the questions that the specific discipline of spirituality addresses is what is the most appropriate response to contemporary reality? Schillebeecx (1968:72) writes that if speaking of God really means that we are at the same time saying something meaningful about humanity, then talking about God in categories that belong to an earlier stage of humanity's experience simply cannot involve anything that is meaningful either about – or to – modern people. This research suggests that a turn to subjectivity using existentially derived notions such as phenomenology is appropriate.

2.6 PHENOMENOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRITUALITY

The affirmation of the external, created world as the theatre for the operation of the divine as opposed to a more theoretical and ontological approach to spirituality is a strong aspect of phenomenological spirituality. The incarnational perspective of the Divine disclosing itself in creation and in secular experience is a powerful current in contemporary spirituality. Through reflection on our experience in the world, the world itself discloses the Divine. Tyrrell (1909:135) writes,

> If he (sic) believes in the Church as a Catholic, as a man (sic) he believes in humanity; he believes in the world. To regard the world outside the Church as God-forsaken; to deny that God works and reveals himself in human history, that he is in mankind in all its struggles against evil and ignorance and degradation, that he is the primary author of all intellectual, aesthetic, moral, social, and

political progress, seems to the Modernist the most subtle and dangerous form of atheism (Tyrrell 1909:135).

Merton, writing several decades later, made a similar observation. The profound notion of the incarnation needs to be explored by spirituality in ever richer and creative ways. This has been lacking in much of theology as Merton ([1968]/1989) notes.

> Robinson is right, I think, when he says that Christianity has tended more and more to preach the 'disincarnate word,' to reduce Christ to formal abstract concepts which ordinary people are no longer able to cope with….What we need is a deeper understanding of Christ and of His presence in the world, in man (sic). From this we will gain a much truer, less arrogant, more humble and more merciful awareness of the true meaning of the Church and of her mission to man (sic).

The identification of revelation as derived from experience as opposed to abstract formal definitions derived from intellectual deduction is a strong phenomenological theme in contemporary spirituality. Tyrrell certainly typifies this theme when he writes,

> When any statement or formulation of experience is accepted as exhaustive it soon comes to usurp the place of experience, to be X or Y that does duty for it in its absence. Mistaking the symbol for the reality, the formula for the thing, we cease to be pressed by the inadequacy of the formula, as we are pressed by it when the two together are present to our consciousness (Tyrell 1909:141).

Still, the experience requires a coherent methodological approach in order for spirituality to be articulated. As Tyrrell (1906:139) notes:

> A faith that really springs out of our rational or spiritual nature, or commends itself to it, cannot be fundamentally irrational or incapable of being explained and defended; and a reason which is unable to find an intelligible meaning in some of the deepest experiences of human souls must be one sided and imperfectly developed. In other words there must be reflection on religious experience as on all other experience if it is not to be squandered.

A phenomenological approach to spirituality is reasonable although not rational in the Cartesian sense of the word. Kourie (1992:89) writes that reason has both a discursive and non-discursive form. This can be seen in the classical distinction between the *episteme* and the *nous* in which the former is characterized by discursiveness and the latter by a more intuitive grasp of the whole. Non-discursive rationality does not manifest the Cartesian clarity of the rationalist epistemological ideal. Its understanding of knowledge extends beyond the conceptual and empirical (Kourie 1992:89). Postmodern phenomenological theology is based on the primary experience of the *nous.* As Levinas understands it, phenomenology is a reading, the understanding of meaning an exegesis, a hermeneutics, and not an intuition (Peperazk et al. 1996:38).

2.7 A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRITUALITY – EMMANUEL LEVINAS AND THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE OTHER

In 1951 Weil noted:

> We are living in times that have no precedent, and in our present situation universality, which could formerly be implicit, has to be fully explicit. It has to permeate our language and the whole of our way of life. Today it is not nearly enough to be a saint, but we must have the saintliness demanded by the present moment, a new saintliness, itself also without precedent' (Weil 1951:99).

Weil recognized, however, that a certain liberality of language and expression is required and that the Church as an institution ought not to impose a specific language or systems that might frustrate the kind of broad catholicity she envisioned. While acknowledging the Church's role as preserving the deposit of faith she wrote, 'But she is guilty of an abuse of power when she claims to force love and intelligence to model their language upon her own. This abuse of power is not of God. It comes from the natural tendency of every form of collectivism, without exception, to abuse power' (Weil 1951:80).

Subjectivity is a dominant aspect of contemporary culture. Levinas's metaphysical approach which defends subjectivity can, therefore, serve as a

useful foundation for articulating contemporary spirituality. The mistrust of totalizing systems with an emphasis on the subjectivity is a strong theme in Levinas.

> To remedy a certain disorder which proceeds from the Order of universal Reason, it is necessary to defend subjectivity. As I see it, subjective protest is not received favorably on the pretext that its egoism is sacred but because the I alone can perceive the 'secret tears' of the Other, which are caused by the functioning – albeit reasonable – of the hierarchy….I am *for* the I, as existence in the first person, to the extent that its ego-ity signifies and infinite responsibility for an Other. Which amounts to saying that it is as if the substance of the I is made of saintliness. It is perhaps in this sense that Montesquieu rested democracy upon virtue (Peperzak et al. 1996:23).

There is a strong movement within contemporary spirituality away from ontological assertions of God derived from theoretical deduction. The movement is instead towards active engagement in the drama of life itself (i.e. the drama of being-in-the-world). Levinas writes,

> The essential contribution to the new ontology can be seen in its opposition to classical intellectualism ….To comprehend our situation in reality is not to define it but to find ourselves in affective disposition. To comprehend being is to exist. All this indicates, it would seem a rupture with the theoretical structure of Western thought. To think is no longer to contemplate but to commit oneself; to be engulfed by that which one thinks, to be involved. This is the dramatic event of 'being-in-the-world' (Peperzak et al.: 1996:4).

The quest for meaning and purposefulness as fundamental to our understanding of spirituality lies at the heart of human experience. Its lack constitutes angst and despair. This quest is characterized in contemporary spirituality as self-transcendence or in postmodern philosophers such as Levinas as metaphysical desire. The good life has classically been understood as the state of being (*dasein*) in which one lives joyfully in the fullness of one's humanity. We do not always experience ourselves as living, in an existential way, the good life. Still we

have some kind of primordial notion as to what this means as a consequence of being in the world. 'The true life,' writes Levinas, 'is absent. But we are in the world.' (Levinas 1969:33). 'Yearning for happiness' Levinas terms 'metaphysical desire'. Metaphysical desire is a constitutive aspect of the human person that propels us into the world. Metaphysical desire is positive and personal; part of subjective, human experience founded on the idea of infinity. '[Totality and Infinity][4] does present itself as a defence of subjectivity, but it will apprehend the subjectivity not at the level of its purely egoist protestation against totality, nor in its anguish before death, but as founded on the idea of infinity' (Levinas 1969:26). The idea of infinity is neither an abstract intellectual construct nor an impersonal ideal springing from an apprehension of need. The notion of infinity is analogous to the notion of self transcendence. It is experienced as metaphysical desire. Metaphysical desire, which springs from the idea of infinity, is not a desire to return to a prior ontological state. Such an understanding of desire would be nostalgia for the same (i.e. one's own horizon) As Levinas writes,' The metaphysical desire does not long to return, for it is a desire for a land not of our birth, for a land foreign to every nature, which has not been our fatherland and to which we shall never betake ourselves. The metaphysical desire does not rest upon any prior kinship' (Levinas 1969:34). Metaphysical desire is a transcendent human desire for meaning, rooted in the existential experience of human relationships, that seeks the Other (that Levinas sometimes renders using the biblical imagery of Stranger) in the face of the other. 'To begin with the face as a source from which all meaning appears, the face in its absolute nudity ... is to affirm that being is enacted in the relation between men (sic), that Desire rather than need commands acts. Desire, an aspiration that does not proceed from a lack - metaphysics - is the desire of a person' (Levinas 1969:299). Our being-in-the-world does not frustrate metaphysical desire. It is its starting point.

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[4] *Totality and Infinity* (1969) was one of the first texts where Levinas began to explore the subjective founding of metaphysics on the ethical response.

Affirmation of the created world ('exteriority' or 'worldliness' as it is described in contemporary spirituality) is the starting point for all experiences even the experience of faith. Levinas casts worldliness as the *chez-soi.* That is we are 'at home' with things and are happy for the fulfillment of those needs. According to Levinas, need cannot be interpreted as simple lack, despite the psychology of need given by Plato, nor as pure passivity, despite Kantian ethics. The human being thrives on need; he (sic) is happy for his (sic) needs (Levinas 1969:114). Tyrrell agrees, 'To imagine then that we can love God more by loving creatures less, is an error akin to that which supposes that we can know him better the less we know of those creatures which reveal him; and that He is found by shutting our eyes and not opening them' (Tyrrell 1907:241).

Contemporary spirituality (i.e. metaphysical desire) is not an interior construct applied to the world but is an unparalleled openness to the world, to others, to the 'marvel of exteriority'. Spirituality is disclosed through our own ethical response in human relationships. A contemporary understanding of spirituality is a 'delightful lapse of the ontological order'. For Levinas ontology means theory as distinct from actual existents. Levinas writes, 'Being, which is without the density of existents, is the light in which existents become intelligible. To theory, as comprehension of beings, the general title 'ontology' is appropriate' (Levinas 1969:42). Consequently, ontology creates a self-contained system ('the same') that resists any intrusion that would call forth from us an existential response. 'Here (ontology) theory enters upon a course that renounces metaphysical Desire, renounces the marvel of exteriority from which the Desire lives' (Levinas 1969:42). Ontology inasmuch as it concerns itself with grasping the universal truth of things (*being*) apart from the plurality and density of actual existents prevents us from maintaining the other's alterity. Maintaining the alterity of the other is fundamental. Alterity refers to the state of non-identification with the other. It means allowing difference to be. For Levinas, alterity is necessary in order for the face to face encounter to be the foundation for our ethical response. 'The nakedness of the face is not what is presented to me because I disclose it

… The face has turned to me - and this is its very nudity. It *is* by itself and not by reference to a system.' (Levinas 1969:75). This turning of the face is the moment whereby I am changed. It is a revelation (an 'eschatological moment').

For Levinas, eschatology does not consist in introducing a teleological system into the totality of history or in teaching an orientation of history. The first 'vision' of eschatology reveals the very possibility of eschatology, that is, the breach of the totality, the possibility of a *signification without a context*. This *signification without a context* is revelation. There is a certain metaphysical atheism that mirrors closely the apophaticism of many mystics. Levinas (1969:78) articulates it as follows:

> Revelation is discourse; in order to welcome revelation a being apt for this role of interlocutor, a separated being, is required. Atheism conditions a veritable relationship with a true God ... A relation with the Transcendent free from all captivation by the Transcendent is a social relation. It is here that the Transcendent, infinitely other, solicits and appeals to us ... His very epiphany consists in soliciting us by his destitution in the face of the Stranger, the widow, the orphan. The atheism of the metaphysician means, positively, that our relation with the Metaphysical is an ethical behavior ... God rises to his supreme and ultimate presence as correlative to the justice rendered unto (others).

Allowing the Other to disrupt the 'at homeness' (*chez-soi*) of our own horizon is ethics. It is not simply a medium by which we abstract from existents the truth of their being and grasp them in their primordial sublimity separate from their density, but is an existential response accomplished through ethics. No category, no system can ever capture or maintain the person, as each one is unique and free in themselves. Those that try to create a separate intellectual system (ontology) from the density of real live persons (existents) inevitably breed violence. For Levinas the purpose of his work *Totality and Infinity* was 'the establishment of this primacy of the ethical, that is, of the relationship of man to man - signification, teaching, and justice - a primacy of an irreducible structure upon which all the other structures rest (and in particular all those which seem to

put us primordially in contact with an impersonal sublimity, aesthetic or ontological) (Levinas 1969:79).

Levinas rejects any kind of natural onto-theology, placing instead the ethical response in the face-to-face existential encounter as the location where the Other discloses itself.

> Ethics is the spiritual optics ... The work of justice - the uprightness of the face to face - is necessary in order that the breach that leads to God be produced - and 'vision' here coincides with this work of justice. Hence metaphysics is enacted where the social relation is enacted - in our relations with men. There can be no 'knowledge' of God separated from the relationship with men. The Other is the very locus of metaphysical truth, and is indispensable for my relation with God (Levinas 1969:79).

Persons need freedom and liberty in order to fully actualize themselves in their context. For Levinas it is precisely in the free ethical response to the Other who is revealed, not in a shock negating the I, but as the primordial phenomenon of gentleness that our selfhood emerges. The Other does not at all limit our freedom. On the contrary it calls it to responsibility, founds it and justifies it. Unlike the Hegelian dialectic, the other is not like an allergy that needs to be assimilated into a systematic synthesis. The relationship is instead positive. It evokes an ethical response. 'The relation with the other as face heals allergy .... But the relation is maintained without violence, in peace with this absolute alterity. The 'resistance' of the other does not do violence to me, does not act negatively; it has a positive structure: ethical ... I do not struggle with a faceless god, but I respond to his expression, to his revelation' (Levinas 1969:197). The response to life is one that no interiority can avoid. Indeed the response precedes the reflection. Universality is thus founded upon the ethical response which takes the form of dialogue.

> Thus I cannot evade by silence the discourse which the epiphany of the face opens ... The face opens the primordial discourse whose first word is obligation, which no interiority permits avoiding.

> It is that discourse that obliges entering into discourse, the commencement of discourse rationalism prays for, a 'force' that convinces even 'the people who do not wish to listen' and thus founds the true universality of reason (Levinas 1969:201).

In the Christian tradition, there is precedent for viewing spirituality in such a manner. Meister Eckhart states that the one 'who understands my teaching about justice and the just person understands everything I say' (Schurmann 2001:92). As mentioned above, the coming revelation of God, (eschatology), is neither the introduction of a teleological system nor the orientation of history. It is a response formed without image and without mediation. Meister Eckhart in his sermon on Wisdom 5:16: 'The Just live in Eternity' says:

> The just person seeks nothing in their works. Those that seek something in their works or those who work because of a 'why' are (serfs and mercenaries). And so if you want to be transformed by and transformed into justice, have no [specific] intention in your works and form no 'why' in yourself, either in time or eternity, either reward or happiness, either this or that. Such works are in fact, dead. Even if you form God within yourself, whatever works you perform for a [specific] purpose are all dead, and you ruin good works…It is a characteristic of creatures that they make something out of something, while it is characteristic of God that he makes something out of nothing. Therefore if God is to make anything in you or with you, you must first have become nothing. Hence go into your own ground and work there, and the works you work there will all be living. This is why he says, 'the just lives'. Because he is just he works, and his works live (McGinn 1986:296)

As Schurmann (2001:93) comments that the just no longer look for support elsewhere; nor do they let their acts be determined by external precepts. If they strove for conformity with exterior laws, their acting would simply be legal. The just one who acts out of intimate assimilation with justice 'is' just in the same way that the reflection of a beautiful face is beautiful; totally by another and yet totally in itself.

2.8 CONCLUSION

Our time is unique and requires a creative theological imagination in order to read the 'signs of the times'. For postmodern thinkers ambiguity is not something to fear but embrace. Any attempt to build an overarching meta-system separate from the density of actual existing human persons is viewed with suspicion.

Spirituality has now evolved towards a holistic orientation. The holistic approach makes the study of spirituality infinitely more complex than its dichotomous nineteenth-century forebear. It is no longer possible for us to fragment the human person into parts and faculties, into inner and outer, into personal and social. We are all of these things at once and much of the spiritual task consists precisely in bringing this rich multi-facetedness into unity. The value of spirituality is qualitative. It is actualized in the secrecy of the person's own subjective consciousness, but lived in concrete action.

As mentioned at the outset the phenomenological method of investigation is the preferred one for a contemporary understanding of spirituality. Postmodernity possesses an apolitical character tending towards a humanism grounded in caring justice. Principled theories or systems distance us from the concrete and personal qualities of other human beings. Engster (2002:2) writes, 'Rather than meeting them (other human beings) on their own terms we subsume them under objectifying categories. The other's reality becomes data, stuff to be analyzed, studied, interpreted'. Spirituality concerns itself with what is most human and what is most human transcends categorization. It is *disclosed*. Heidegger ([1926]/1962:73) notes that a person is never to be thought of as a thing or a substance. Instead the person is a unity of a spiritual 'living through'.

All of the historical factors with respect to religion and culture are brought to bear in the study of spirituality but not in such a way as to try to create some kind of meta-spiritual 'over-system'. Freedom and subjectivity lie at the heart of contemporary spirituality and are inseparable from authentic religious expression.

The fact that so many of these existentially derived notions evolved from traditions outside traditional Christianity sensitizes us to listen ever more intently and carefully to the experience of spirituality outside of our own religious categories. It means not seeing the other as 'heretic' but as one sharing an experience. This requires dialogue and respect. In a contemporary understanding of spirituality, the density of particular religions and peoples as they live within their culture and history are respected as given. The process of inter-religious dialogue and co-operation as Gross (1999:367) correctly notes is not the same as syncretism, a futile attempt to create a new religion by selecting the 'best' features of the existing religions. Mutual transformation does not result in new religions or in one universal syncretistic religion, but in the enrichment of the various traditions that results when their members are open to the inspiration provided by resources of others. How much more satisfying is this both intellectually and ethically than mere tolerance or religious ethnocentrism and chauvinism!

Traditionally, ascetic or mystical theology covered much of what is intended by the term spirituality. Given, the emphasis on community, culture, anthropology, and language, spirituality must broaden its scope to account for the presence of the afore-mentioned. A contemporary understanding of spirituality can in fact achieve this by simply allowing these disciplines to 'just be' thereby allowing a space whereby the animating and transcendent principle present within these disciplines to 'come to presence' in our consciousness. Heidegger uses the German term *anwessen lassen* meaning a 'coming-to-presence' to articulate this point (Schurmann 2001:206)[5]. He emphasizes that to let all things be means to experience their presence in a contemplative or spiritual manner. It is this 'spirit' that quickens and gives life. Whether we understand the spirit in the context of the Hebrew *ruah* or the Greek *pneuma*, the breath of life permeating and

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[5] By way of philosophical conception, Heidegger additionally notes that the German language does not say 'there is' *being* but rather 'it gives' *being* (*es gibt Sein)* (Schurmann 2001:207). While *sein* is rendered as being, it can also more accurately perhaps be rendered as 'spirit'.

animating all of life is what is meant. It is not more real than that which discloses it. As Levinas (1978:39) writes,

> The world is what is given to us. The expression is admirably precise! The given does not to be sure come from us, but we do receive it …. The world offers the bountifulness of the terrestrial nourishment to our intentions – including those of Rabelais; the world where youth is happy and restless with desire is the world itself. It takes form not in an additional quality inhering in objects, but in a destination inscribed in its revelation, in revelation itself, in the light.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF MADNESS

Much madness is divinest sense
To a discerning eye;
Much sense the starkest madness.
'Tis the majority
In this, as all, prevails.
Assent and you are sane;
Demur, - you're straightway dangerous,
And handled with a chain.

Dickinson [1894]/1993:30

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In *General Psychopathology*, Jaspers ([1946]/1963:778) writes that psychosis is a puzzle. They (the various manifestations of psychosis) are the unsolved problems of human life. The fact that they exist is the concern of everyone. This concern is one of the mainsprings of our desire for greater understanding of mental health. In the previous chapter, the notion of spirituality as having two dimensions was explored. First, spirituality has a corporate dimension expressed through cultural bodies. Secondly, it is a person's subjective experience of transcendental meaning. These two dimensions have a dialectical relationship, each nurturing the other. A similar dynamic can be observed with respect to madness. As Porter (1987:3) notes, when we juxtapose the mind of the insane with that of reason, society and culture, we see two facets, two expressions, two faces, and each puts a question to the other. If normality condemns madness as irrational, subhuman and perverse, madness typically replies in kind, having its own *tu quoque*.

The understanding of what constitutes normalcy is largely determined by the cultural mores of any given society in history. As Jaspers ([1946]/1963:780) notes, the meaning of 'sick' in general terms depends less on a doctor's judgment than on the judgment of the patient and the prevailing conceptions of contemporary culture. With the great majority of physical disorders, this is not so

noticeable, but with mental health disorders, it is very evident. The same psychological state that will bring one individual to the psychiatrist as a sick person, will take another to the confessional as one suffering from sin and guilt.

There is in mental health, as in every medical science, a complex matrix of historical and social interpretation that influences the epistemological categorizations of mental illness that is then applied to specific individuals. Critically examining the history of these interpretations is necessary to clearly grasp the illusive character of madness. This chapter addresses the social history and social constructs of a particular age inasmuch as these constructions have, for good or ill, impacted both on our conceptualization of mental illness and conditioned our response to it. After all, as Jaspers ([1946]/1963:792) points out, all therapy and attitudes towards patients depend upon the state, religions, social conditions, the dominant cultural tendencies of the age and finally, but never solely, on accepted scientific views.

The broad term 'madness' used in this chapter is not meant to be pejorative. The reason for this is because historically the term 'madness' generally refers to mental illness in medical terms. Indeed, the designation of madness as mental illness is itself a product of the modern period. Foucault (d. 1984) is an important historian in this regard. His work on madness is central to this chapter. As Osborne (1994:42) comments:

> The critique forwarded by Foucault of medical expertise – its monologic character, its organic fixation – can serve as justification for the promotion of subjectivity. What is at stake here is, again, not the antinomy of the medical model so much as a deepening of the probity of clinical rationality. It is not the absence of expertise, the eclipse of the directive presence of the doctor which is at issue but the expertise of subjectivity; an expertise that is all the more irreversible for being tied to our desire for freedom.

In order to interpret the phenomenon of madness, it is helpful to describe its social history by examining the social policy and cultural attitudes towards the

phenomenon of madness in the premodern, modern and finally postmodern period.

3.1 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Mental health is not simply an objective science examining the range and boundaries of reason, standardizing this range and classifying various dysfunctional phenomena so as to treat people who then happen to fall within these categories. It is also profoundly concerned with individuality, subjectivity and ultimately issues related to human anthropology. Individual experience often challenges the standardized classifications that have developed in the course of the modern period. As Porter (1987:3) states, the writings of the 'mad' challenge the discourse of the normal and its right to be the objective mouthpiece of the times. The assumption that there exists a definitive and unitary standard of truth and falsehood, reality and delusion is put to the test.

In mental health, the subjective approach towards madness corresponds to the overall trajectory of the present research and is also fully in keeping with orthodox scientific clinical practice. As discussed in the first chapter, the phenomenological method of investigation brings us ever closer to the thing itself. The thing itself, in the context of this chaper, is madness. By way of approaching madness, Foucault's method is to return to subjectivity and rest medical structures upon the individual's experience. Osborne, commenting on Foucault's thesis in *The Birth of the Clinic* (1975), writes:

> Far from being a form of thought which subverts individuality, clinical thought is precisely the science *of* individuality. Hence, calls for an ever more profound turn to the individual may only be expressions of the clinical ethos itself….Indeed the possibility of a subjectification of the medical field (another anti-medical theme) also seems to be internal to this – clinical – logic in two main ways. First, because there is a curious space of possibility for a phenomenological emphasis within clinical thought. A phenomenological emphasis is there, waiting to be unleashed. The disappearance of the disease as entity entails the consequence that the doctor confronts the modulations of the volumes of the

> body, as it were, directly. And this is a mutation which leads, as Foucault argues, to the vaunting of 'the signifying powers of the perceived and its correlation with language in the original forms of experience'. Hence, the injunction to get as close as possible – preferably without forms of mediation (*pace Reiser*) – to the authenticity of the object of knowledge: to let the object, as it were, 'speak for itself', that is, as if it were a *subject* (Osborne 1994:40).

In the context of mental illness, it is important to appreciate that what is constitutive in madness is the social and political action that divides madness from reason, and *not* the science which is elaborated once this division is made (Foucault 1988:ix). It is this action - namely the conceptual understandings propagated by particular institutions (i.e., the discourses) - that have shaped our perceptions. Rose (1994:58) writes:

> To differentiate is also to classify, to segregate, to locate persons and groups under one system of authority and to divide them from those placed under another. Placing persons and populations under a medical mandate – in the asylum, in the clinic, in an urban space guided by medical norms – exposes them to scrutiny, to documentation and to descriptions in medical terms. It is here that one can discover the conditions for the emergence of 'positive' knowledge of the human individual …. Truth, at least in the human sciences, arises out of the institutional and organizational conditions which gather humans together and seek to act upon them in order to produce certain ends. The history of truth, the constant schism, oppositions, transformation and successions of rationalities, is to be understood as a 'practical matter' – that is to say, as always a matter of practices. We can best grasp the relation of truth to our experience of its effects through a study of what one might term *truth machines*: the machinery of forces, spaces and subjects which bring into existence and configure the space which truths inhabit, and for which truths themselves provide the fuel.

As Porter (1987:3) notes, most people and practically all psychiatrists would affirm what seems like a common sense proposition, the reality of mental illness. But it is equally possible to think in terms of the manufacture of madness, that is, the idea that labeling insanity is primarily a social act, a cultural construct. Foucault illustrates that one can show that the medicalization of madness, in other words, the organization of medical knowledge around individuals

designated as mad, is connected with a whole series of social and economic processes at a given time, and also with institutions and practices of power.

Schrenk (1973:17) agrees with Foucault's view that the end of leprosy in the fifteenth century left an empty space in European society. In the subsequent search for new rituals of purgation, madness took the place of leprosy, with leper houses being transformed into workhouses and asylums in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Expecting to find insanity rooted in neurological or biochemical disorders, a branch of medicine that may anachronistically be termed 'psychiatry' – emerged from the late eighteenth century, anchored in the asylum movement (Porter 1987:18). It emerged, however, as a *consequence* and not a *cause* of the social policy towards those labeled insane. It would be a mistake to regard the drive over the last three centuries toward institutionalizing insanity fundamentally as the brainchild of psychiatry. In the first instance, the sequestration of the mentally ill was primarily an expression of civil policy, more an initiative from magistrates, philanthropists and families than the achievement of doctors (Porter 1987:17). Consequently, confinement and juridical authority is integrally linked with mental health in the modern period. However, this has not historically always been the case.

In order to come ever closer to the truth of the thing itself – in this instance madness - deconstructive methodologies are applied. Deconstruction has become jargon in postmodern discourse. Almost anyone dissatisfied with a dominant mode of theorizing has called for deconstruction. Indeed, one is likely to get away with calling *any* kind of critical analysis a deconstruction. Thus, deconstruction needs to be carefully understood if it is to be properly used. Rose (1994:71) writes:

> Deconstruction is not aimed at deligitimizing that which we take to be pure by revealing its impure origins. Rather, in delineating the complex contingencies that have made up the territory of our experience, in showing us that things could have been different, such analyses encourages us to weigh up the costs as well as the benefits of the present we inhabit .

Since critical historical analysis is an important aspect of understanding madness in the following section attention will be paid to early Greek and early Christian understanding of madness. With respect to early Greek understanding, Simon (1978:40) argues that Athenian thinking developed the model for later thinking concerning madness.

3.2 PREMODERN GREEK INTERPRETATION OF MADNESS

In his book *Mind and Madness in Ancient Greece*, Simon (1978:42) argues that the ancient Greek models with respect to the mind and madness can be divided into three types. They are the *poetic* (mainly Homeric), the *philosophical* (mainly Platonic), and the *medical* (mainly Hippocratic).These models are useful insofar as analysis of them reveal important issues that continue to this day in mental health. The present discussion will limit itself to the Platonic (philosophical) and Hippocratic (medical) models that developed in ancient Greece, since these are most directly relevant to contemporary issues in mental health. Platonic philosophy concerns itself with the good – a dimension of which is social order. In Plato's *Republic*, for example, it is the philosopher king who rules. Thus, with Plato, the emergence of reason, reflection and knowledge becomes a strong aspect of social leadership. Porter (1987:11) writes that Greek philosophers energetically set about subjecting nature, society and consciousness to reason. They wished to tame anarchy, establish order and impose self-discipline. Rationality became definitive of the noblest faculty in humanity. Mental health drew heavily on Plato's notions; displacing the philosopher king for the psychoanalyst. Altschule (1965:195) writes:

Plato held that society consisted of uneducable masses who had to be governed by an élite – philosophers, of course. Freud's uneducable masses are to be governed by another élite – the (analysts), of course. In general, the belief expressed by some Freudians that only the (analysts) can understand psychology and psychiatry resembles that of those ancient Greeks who held that only the virtuous can know anything .

Among the pre-Socratic Greeks, it became the domain of philosophers to examine how the forces of reason and un-reason (or madness) were related and understood. Prior to this pre-Socratic philosophical development, literary mythologies by novelists such as Homer were created to explain human psychology. Often these mythologies featured people completely at the mercy of the external forces of the gods. Porter (1987:10-11) notes that the ancient Homeric epic gives its characters no sensitive, reflective inner self; no mind of their own grappling with 'the choice of life'. Homer's heroes are like puppets, players at the mercy of forces essentially from Beyond and beyond their control: gods, demons, the fates, the furies. The inner life, with its dilemmas of reason and conscience and the torments of mental strife, is not yet the center of attention. Eventually the pre-Socratics shifted the center of these forces. The pre-Socratics demythologized the fates and furies and located their activity within the human mind. The pre-Socratic origin of the term 'mind' (sometimes translated as soul) refers to a fragment from Anaxagoras (ca. 500-428 BCE) who wrote 'All other things have a portion of everything, but *mind* alone is without boundary and self-ruled, and is mixed with nothing, but is all alone by itself' (Kirk and Raven 1962:372-73). The human psyche, which is the carrier of thoughts in the mind, became the landscape for the exploration of the range of human experience. In demythologizing the fates and furies, the basic architecture for the later understanding of the human person as self -transcendent was born. Clearly the human person is mortal; however, the mind carries with it a transcendental quality that was gradually perceived as mysterious, immortal, and in some respects, divine.

In reviewing the philosophical model of Greek antiquity Simon (1978:60) notes that the term *psyche* remained in use from Homer (poetic model) to all later Greek philosophical thought with respect to the mind. For the pre-Socratics, within the psyche there were two dimensions or hierarchies. There was a transcendent aspect which was incorporeal and immortal and another aspect identified with the body. In defining two modes of thinking, a superior and an inferior, the pre-Socratics thus laid the groundwork for some of the central issues in Platonic thought. One of these issues is how to understand the human person as a creature capable of both abstract, sophisticated, logical thinking as well as impulse-ridden, fantasy-dominated thinking

In *Phaedurus*, Plato has Socrates discuss the role of madness in the human person. Madness, for the Greeks, was understood according to the above-mentioned concept of impulse-ridden, fantasy-dominated thinking. Interestingly, in *Phaedurus*, this is not viewed as an evil that must be exorcised. Rather there is something divine lying at the heart of the experience of the passions or madness.

> False is the tale that when a lover is at hand favor ought rather to be accorded to one who does not love, on the ground that the former is mad, and the latter sound of mind. That would be right if it were an invariable truth that madness is an evil, but in reality, the greatest blessing come by way of madness, indeed of madness that is heaven sent (Hamilton and Huntington 1961:491).

Strict rationality is not the only expression of a full life. The embrace of the irrational (or as it is referred to in this dialogue, madness) is connected with art and truth. Indeed, Plato has Socrates connecting madness with art and prophecy. 'Yet, it is in place to appeal to the fact that madness was accounted no shame or disgrace by the men of old who gave things their names; otherwise they would not have connected that greatest of arts, whereby the future is discerned, with this very word 'madness,' and named it accordingly' (Hamilton and Huntington 1961:491). Very early on then, the connection between creativity

and madness was intuited. However, we can glean from these early writings an understanding of the destructive nature of madness as well.

It is clear that in addition to the transcendent, mystical and prophetic aspect of madness, it was also viewed as having a destructive force. The key to healing the destructive elements lay in embracing the 'irrationality' of mystery and purging the destructive elements through participation in religious rites. It is interesting that the early Greeks, like the Hebrews in the Old Testament which we will examine later, saw destructive madness as punishment for some ancient sin against the gods:

> And in the second place, when grievous maladies and afflictions have beset certain families by reason of some ancient sin, madness has appeared among them, and breaking out into prophecy has secured relief by finding the means thereto, namely by recourse to prayer and worship, and in consequence thereof rites and means of purification were established, and the sufferer was brought out of danger, alike for the present and for the future. Thus did madness secure, for him that was maddened aright and possessed, deliverance from troubles (Hamilton and Huntington 1961:492).

Uniting this dialectic, or at the very least taming the negative aspect, became a task of religion and mysticism but increasingly included the craft of medicine as well.

3.3 THE MEDICAL MODEL IN ANTIQUITY

Simon (1978:226) writes that the ideas and attitudes that we associate with the medical model become much more explicit with the rise of Hippocratic medicine in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. If Socrates was the man who, according to Cicero, brought philosophy down from the heavens to the marketplace, Hippocrates (ca.350 BCE) was the one who brought philosophy down from the level of theoretical discourse to the practice of caring for and curing the body. One of the most extensive documents dealing with mental disturbances, all of which were grouped under the category of epilepsy, is found in Hippocrates'

work, *On the Sacred Disease*. Hippocrates takes the position that this disease is like any other. Positing an imaginary divine cause only frustrates its treatment.

> It is thus with regard to the disease called Sacred: it appears to me to be nowise more divine nor more sacred than other diseases, but has a natural cause from the originates like other affections. Men (sic) regard its nature and cause as divine from ignorance and wonder, because it is not at all like to other diseases. And this notion of its divinity is kept up by their inability to comprehend it, and the simplicity of the mode by which it is cured, for men are freed from it by purifications and incantations …. The quotidian, tertian, and quartan fevers, seem to me no less sacred and divine in their origin than this disease, although they are not reckoned so wonderful. (Hippocrates 1994:2)

The significance of the foregoing is the shift that began to occur in medical science with the emergence of the Hippocratic model. Like the philosophical model, impersonal forces of gods have been replaced with personal ones, except this time, the physiological emphasis is substituted for the mythological (Simon 1978:222). While there were many other psychodynamic theories extant at the time, this particular insight of Hippocrates has particular resonance today in terms of the ascendancy of neuro - or bio-psychiatry. However, epilepsy, for example, has a definite physical manifestation of seizures. Psychological disturbances that create psychic stress and mania leading to strange behaviours were not differentiated and placed entirely under the purview of medical knowledge. The irrational still belonged to the realm of the philosophical and religious dimensions of society. What is clear is that among the ancients, not unlike in our own time, restoration from mental agitation to a sense of equilibrium was connected to both the art of medicine and/or the practice of religion. Alongside these essentially Greek ideas, Judaism and Christianity embraced similar views.

3.4 MADNESS IN THE BIBLE

Analysis of how madness is interpreted in the Bible presents researchers with a hermeneutical problem. The cosmology of the Bible is very different than the cosmology of the contemporary era:

> The cosmology of the New Testament is essentially mythical in character. The world is viewed as a three storied structure, with the earth in the centre, the heavens above, and the underworld beneath. Heaven is the abode of God and of the celestial beings – the angels. The underworld is hell, the place of torment. Even the earth is more than the scene of natural, everyday events, of the trivial round and common task. It is the scene of the supernatural activity of God and his angels on the one hand, and of Satan and his daemons on the other. These supernatural forces intervene in the course of nature and in all that men (sic.) think and will and do. Miracles are by no means rare. Man (sic.) is not in control of his own life. Evil spirits may take possession of him; Satan may inspire him with evil thoughts. Alternatively, God may inspire his thoughts and guide his purposes (Bultmann 1953:1).

Consequently, the issue of biblical interpretation is an important one. Bultmann states that in order to arrive at a correct interpretation, we have to first identify our interest. Our interest is in the relevance of the Bible for today. Bultmann writes:

> Now we have found the adequate way to put the question when we interpret the Bible. This question is, *how is man's* (sic) *existence understood in the Bible?* I approach the Biblical texts with this question for the same reason which supplies the deepest motive for all historical research and for all interpretation of historical documents. It is that by understanding history I can gain an understanding of the possibilities of human life and thereby of the possibilities of my own life. The ultimate reason for studying history is to become conscious of the possibilities of human existence (Johnson 1987:310)

In order to achieve this goal, Bultmann suggests abandoning premodern mythological conceptions in order to apprehend the deeper meaning of the text. The method of interpretation which tries to recover the deeper meaning behind the Biblical images such as demonology, Bultmann calls demythologizing. Its aim

is not to eliminate the mythological statements but to re-interpret them. This is Bultmann's hermeneutical method (Johnson 1987:293).

For example, Ratzinger (1970:238) suggests that the three cosmic levels mentioned above – the earth with heaven above and hell below ought to be seen not as a description of the physical structure of the cosmos but as symbols of the dimensions of human experience. Hell, then, is not a name for some unearthly place, but a dimension of human nature, the abyss into which it reaches down to its lower end.

Applying this method to how madness is rendered in the Bible, we can re-interpret the evil spirits of the Bible as projections of unconscious contents of the human mind (White [1952]/1967:191). Indeed White ([1952]/1967:192) cites Rivkah Schärf (1948), who favours a subjective and psychological approach to interpreting evil spirits. Schärf identifies Satan, not with a distinct spiritual being, but instead with the *'yetzer ha ra'* – that is the 'evil inclination' or imagination inherent in man of which we read first in Genesis – and then frequently in the Old Testament.

3.4.1 *MADNESS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT*

In the Bible, much of the sickness afflicting humanity was attributed to demons. In the earlier Old Testament period, demons might have been called by God for a specific purpose. Tweltfree (1985:25) cites, as an example of the foregoing, the author of the story in 1 Samuel 16 who believed that even the evil spirit which afflicted Saul was 'from the Lord (vv.14,16,23; Num. 21:6). This interpretation slowly shifted. For example Pseudo-Philo (ca.70 CE) and Josephus (ca.100 CE), Jewish writers in the New Testament era no longer held this view and when interpreting the story, dropped all reference to the evil spirit coming 'from the Lord'. We begin to see a slight movement towards juxtaposing good and evil in a more dualistic framework. Distinct evil spirits whose origins lie with a separate being, Satan or the devil, lie at the heart of conflicts. It is possible to

demythologize the demonology of the Bible in order to ascertain what might have been meant by the use of such imagery.

May (1969:123) defines the demonic[1] as *any natural function which has the power to take over the whole person*. Examples are sex and eros, anger and rage, and the craving for power. The demonic can be either creative or destructive and is normally both. When the power goes awry and one element usurps control over the total personality, we have 'demon possession', the traditional name throughout history for psychosis. May (1969:123) adds that the Greek concept of 'demon' – the origin of our modern concept – included the creativity of the poet and artist as well as that of the ethical and religious leader, and is also the contagious power which the lover has.

The cosmology of Hebrew culture with respect to madness resembled the early Greeks insofar as madness had a divine source linked with prophecy. Its expression, however, could be evil or good. The Hebrew word for prophet is *nemi*; it is also the term for 'madman'. The phenomenon the term *nemi* describes is a matter of discernment for both the community and the individual. For example, in I Samuel 10:10, a band of prophets meet Saul and he falls into a prophetic frenzy among them. When the people view this frenzy they ask, 'What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul among the prophets?'(v.12). What this exchange demonstrates is the cultural experience of the people to the manifestation of frenetic activity, which could be described as mania. It is the genesis of a popular colloquialism concerning those who appear eccentric or even somewhat mad – 'Is Saul among the prophets?' In this instance, the proverb 'is Saul among the prophets?' has a positive connotation showing that the Lord's spirit empowers Saul to prophesy and rule (Coogan 2001:414).

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[1] May notes that the word can be spelled 'demonic' (the popularized form), or 'daemonic' (the medieval form often now used by the poets – by Yeats, for example), or 'daimonic' (the derivative from the ancient Greek word 'daimon'). He uses the spelling 'daimonic' – I have chosen the more popular 'demonic'.

While he had been privately anointed earlier, there is a public proclamation and vote where Saul is eventually chosen to be king. The good spirit of God comes upon Saul as he proves himself worthy to lead. Later, however, we read that the good spirit of the Lord departs from Saul and an evil spirit from the Lord torments him (1 Samuel 16:14). Interestingly each spirit - the good and evil – is seen as having its source in God, although they are both centered in the person of Saul. The evil spirit is disquieting and a remedy is sought through the agency of music. There is a crude sense at this time that certain natural aesthetic remedies can help in normal states of melancholy. The servants decide that having someone play music will help restore Saul. David is enlisted for this cause. This does not have its desired effect as the demons of envy and rage overtake Saul.

Saul's ecstatic behaviour is once again evidenced in 1 Samuel 18:10 when an evil spirit from God rushes upon Saul, compelling him to take David's life. David is successful in eluding Saul. Later in the narrative, Saul falls into a prophetic frenzy, strips off his clothes and lies before Samuel (19:23-24). The people ask again if Saul is among the prophets because God is using this mad, but prophetic spirit, to prevent harm from coming to David (Coogan 2001:431). Saul is a tortured person and the narrative leaves few clues as to the reason for his torture.

Elaborating any further on the specific form of madness as we understand it today is difficult as the purpose of the story is to tell the beginning of the Israeli monarchy and not to the explore the madness of King Saul. What is instructive is the particular manner in which the people receive Saul's madness. The boundaries of reason that are breached in such a jarring way may be connected in some way with a truth that cannot be disclosed to others. On the other hand, it could be destructive. Either way, it is understood as a gift from God. As we move closer to the New Testament period, the evil spirits tend to be attributed to a distinct demonic force.

3.4.2 *MADNESS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT*

In the New Testament period, demonology takes on a much more discrete form. White ([1952]/1967:193) writes that since Schweitzer (d.1965) and Otto (d.1958), it has become difficult to read the Gospels at all other than as an account of the struggle between the *de jure* reign of God and the *de facto* reign of Satan – the actual 'prince' or 'god' of this world over human hearts, minds and affairs. The coming of Christ evokes the spirit of the anti-Christ (White [1952]/196]:193) Tillich articulates it as follows:

> Christianity asserts that Jesus is the Christ. The term 'the Christ' points by marked contrast to man's existential situation. For Christ, the Messiah is he who is supposed to bring the 'new eon', the universal regeneration, the new reality. New reality presupposes an old reality; and the old reality, according to prophetic and apocalyptic descriptions is the state of the estrangement of man and his world from God. This estranged world is ruled by structures of evil, symbolized as demonic powers (Tillich [1957]/1969:27).

Tillich ([1957]/1969:27) suggests that our existential predicament is alienation from God and one another, combined with the desire for deeper reconciliation. In that sense, existentialism, argues Tillich, is a natural ally of Christianity. The texts of the New Testament can be read as symbolic of our existential predicament. Thus the theme of redemption in the Gospels can be interpreted symbolically as saying something about the need for restoration of health, including mental health, to the human person as well as a deeper renewal of being. The force of evil is named by Jesus in the New Testament. The naming of the demonic, argues May (1969:167), illustrates the positive curative side of the role of knowledge in relation to the demonic. May continues, 'Traditionally, the way man (sic) has overcome the demonic is by naming it. In this way, the human being forms *personal meaning* out of what was previously merely threatening *impersonal chaos'* (May 1969:167). Manifestations of madness (impersonal chaos) as well as manifestations of healing (personal meaning) are each symbolized in the gospel stories.

One of the most interesting stories of demonic possession that those in mental health care might recognize as an extremely disassociative, psychotic personality disordered behaviour, is the story of the Geresene Demoniac (Mark 5:5). The land of the Gerasenes is outside of Jewish territory. While connected with Jesus' Galilean ministry, the evangelist notes that it is opposite Galilee (Mark 5:25) (Brown 1968:130). There is a strange otherness to this man, not only culturally, but behaviorally as well. He wears no clothes and lives in the tombs. He is clearly marginalized and outside of both Jewish and Gentile society. He is restrained with shackles and chains. We are told that many demons haunted this man. Jesus orders the unclean spirit out of the man. In this instance the healing of the demoniac is brought about by Jesus demanding the *name* of the demon (Mark 5:9). In the next vignette, the people witness the man sitting by Jesus, healed, clothed and in his right mind. Thus a transformation is wrought in this man that is clearly evident to the Gentile population. Not only that, but as a Gentile, Jesus suggests that he return to the Gentiles declaring how much God has done for him. Otherness, both psychologically and culturally, is transcended and healed through the action of Jesus.

It is interesting to note that when commissioning the twelve, the ability to cast out demons (disease of the *mind*) and cure diseases (somatic disease) is part of the same singular mission, although a distinction is clearly drawn between the *types* of diseases. The demons, while perceived as distinct beings, are understood to haunt the recesses of human consciousness. There is, however, as much ambiguity with respect to madness or possession among biblical authors as there was among the early Greeks and Hebrews.

For example, the accusation of being either mad or possessed was leveled several times against Jesus. In one instance, his family is concerned that he appears out of his mind (Mark 3:20-35). The charge is later leveled against Jesus that he has Beelzebul and it is by the ruler of demons that he casts out demons.

Jesus counters this charge by saying that the 'unclean' spirits are gone and it makes no sense that an evil spirit would exorcise an evil spirit.

When Paul is discussing the experience of faith to King Agrippa, King Agrippa says to Paul that he is out of his mind and that too much learning is driving him insane (Acts 26:24). Paul replies that he is not out of his mind but speaks the sober truth. That sober truth is a spiritual one. Paul follows the intimation of the New Testament in characterizing the new dispensation as one of the spirit. However, Paul seems to be describing a new kind of inner experience. Watts and Williams (1988:94) argue that there is a theological point being made about a psychological development towards greater inwardness and subjectivity in Paul. We see evidence for this in the concept of consciousness ('syneidesis'), a Hellenistic concept imported by Paul, to which he gives a deeper religious significance (Watts and Williams 1988:94). Paul draws a contrast between the spiritual person (*pneumatikos anthropos*) and the natural person (*psychikos anthropos*) (1 Cor. 2:14-15). The spiritual person is one alive with the spirit of God, a new creation. Thus there is a sense in which the spirit of Christ expands consciousness, making the person quite literally a *new* creation. This process of renewal involves embracing madness. In a striking passage, Paul states that the cross itself is madness. 'For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jew and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength'(1 Cor. 1:22-25).

3.5 MADNESS IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

While the Bible is not a medical history it influenced the cosmology of the medieval period, particularly with respect to madness. In addition, the Greek tradition of medical art began to flourish again with Artesius and Galen in the first century CE. They made contributions to the history of medicine, reviving Greek thinking through experimenting and developing theories around mania and

melancholia (Mathews 2004:4). These Greek and Christian streams converged in the medieval period, producing a particular approach to madness. Porter outlines the dynamic:

> The culture of medieval Latin Christendom absorbed and made use of both of the Greek alternatives (madness as moral trauma, madness as disease). But it also fitted them within a cosmic Christian scheme – madness as divine Providence – which could impart a higher significance to either. Medieval and Renaissance minds could regard madness as religious, as moral or as medical, as divine or diabolical, as good or bad (Porter 1987:13).

Adopting a Biblical cosmology influenced by the New Testament, the devil was eventually accepted as the culprit for all manner of deviant behaviour, including madness. May (1969:168) notes that in the Middle Ages, the priests who were successful at casting out devils were those who could divine the name of the demon, the pronouncing of which was sufficient to conjure the evil spirit away. Indeed, during the middle ages, demonology eventually became the 'psychiatry' of the day (Mathews 2004:3). White ([1952]/1967:192) notes that with the rise of scholasticism beginning with St. Anslem around 1050 CE did questions concerning demonology become acute. May notes that angelology and demonology are in fact primordial psychological themes that emerge in the consciousness of the medieval period. May (1969:138) writes:

> Satan, Lucifer, and the other demonic figures who were all at one time archangels, are psychologically necessary. They *had* to be invented, *had* to be created, in order to make human action and freedom possible. Otherwise, there would be no consciousness. For every thought destroys as it creates: to think this thing, I have to cut out something else; to say 'yes' to this is to say 'no' to that and to have a 'no' in the very ambivalence of the 'yes' . … For consciousness works by way of either/or: it is destructive as well as constructive.

White argues that while 'devils' and 'complexes' are not altogether synonymous terms, in point of fact theological and psychological accounts can be put side by side and are not mutually exclusive.

When the theologian says that somebody is afflicted by the devil, he is describing his situation in relationship to God. When the psychologist says he is suffering from an unassimilated autonomous complex, he is describing an inherent functional disorder. Each speaks a different language; each describes an observed occurrence from a different view point, or, as he scholastics would say, in a different *ratio formalis qua*. Our contention is that the meanings of the two sets of terms (the theological and the psychopathological) are, however, not mutually exclusive; and we would offer for expert consideration the suggestion that, while the meanings are different, each terms may be, and commonly is referable to the selfsame phenomenon or occurrence (White [1952]/1967:203).

Haitzmann (d. 1700 CE) is a case in point. Haitzmann believed that he had made a pact with the Devil. In order to free himself from this pact, he submitted himself to the priests and was subsequently successfully exorcised by the Holy Fathers. So successful was his exorcism that he entered the monastery and became known as Brother Chrysostom until his death in 1700. Porter notes that Freud analyzed Haitzmann's case. Freud added that the ancient demonological interpretations such as that in Haitzman's case shared much in common with psychoanalytical accounts. Psychoanalytic language simply needed to supplant and convert the theological language:

For both demonology and psychoanalysis stressed the priority of turmoil in the consciousness, rather than resting content with lazy suppositions of mere organic disease. The 'superstitious' theory of he 'dark ages' had presupposed maleficium, forces possessing from without, from above; modern psychiatry saw disturbances as triggered by forces within, welling up from below. For that reason, the religious neuroses of several centuries back were – just like the neuroses of children – easier to 'crack' than the complex organically disguised neuroses of latter days …. Freud thus believed that Christian demonology had stumbled upon, yet ultimately mystified, the true nature and cause of the disturbance. But he could lay that mystification bare, by showing how the theological language was a sort of code, recording all the hieroglyphic clues in strange tongue which would succumb to the

right translation device. Freud had no hesitation in labeling Haitzmann a case of 'neurosis' (Porter 1987:85-86).

The problem with Freud's approach is that madness, even religious madness, was presumed to be manifestations of pathology. As the age of reason begins to characterize the modern period, madness has no positive feature. As Foucault observes, the original shock of the cross, its power of paradox and otherness was inverted and changed:

> The great theme of the madness of the Cross, which belonged so intimately to the Christian experience of the Renaissance, began to disappear in the seventeenth century, despite Jansenism and Pascal. Or rather, it subsisted, but changed and somehow inverted its meaning. It was no longer a matter of requiring human reason to abandon its pride and its certainties in order to lose itself in the great unreason of sacrifice. When classical Christianity speaks of the madness of the Cross, it is merely to humiliate false reason and add luster to the eternal light of truth; the madness of God-in-man's image is simply a wisdom not recognized by the men of unreason who live in this world …. After Port-Royal, men (sic) would have to wait two centuries - until Dostoievsky and Nietzsche - for Christ to regain the glory of madness, for scandal to recover its power as revelation, for unreason to cease being merely the public shame of reason (Foucault 1988:79).

3.6 MADNESS IN THE MODERN PERIOD: CULTURAL SHIFTS

Both in the popular imagination and in literature, the theme of madness is substituted for the theme of death. The fear of death is not the horizon that frames purposeful meaning; it is now the fear of insanity enveloping society in a grand apocalyptic universal event. Foucault (1988:17) describes this rupture: 'It is no longer the end of time and of the world which will show retrospectively that men (sic) were mad not to have been prepared for them; it is the tide of madness, its secret invasion that shows that the world is near its final catastrophe; it is man's (sic) insanity that invokes and makes necessary the world's end'.

As Porter (1987:15) writes, the growing importance of science and technology, the development of bureaucracy, the formalization of the law, the flourishing of the market economy, the spread of literacy and education all made their contribution to this amorphous but inexorable process of prizing rationality, as understood by those 'right-thinking' members of society who had the power to impose social norms. In terms of the cultural impact, from around the mid-seventeenth century, a similar process of redefinition was afoot within Europe, tending to deny the validity of traditional forms of religious madness. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation had made a great play of the reality of religious madness: some of it good, derived directly from God and manifested in ecstasies or in prophetic powers; much of it evil, originating from the Devil and all too obvious in witches, demoniacs and heretics (Porter 1987:15). In the modern period, any notion that the individual may have a unique relationship with an external, or even internal, transcendent source was viewed as imaginary. As Porter (1987:85) notes, Hobbes (d.1679) is an out-and-out skeptic of such notions and suggests that claims of immediate personal contact with God or the Devil were, by definition, frauds, fictions or crazy delusions, marks of diseases of the head. They lacked scientific plausibility; they had no authentication.

Madness was thus torn from that freedom which allowed it to flourish on the Renaissance horizon. In less than a half century, it was sequestered, and in the fortress of confinement, bound to Reason, to the rules of morality and to their monotonous rights (Foucault 1988:64).

> Since the end of the eighteenth century, the life of unreason no longer manifests itself except in the lightning-flash works such as those of Holderlin, of Nerval, or Nietzsche, or of Artaud – forever irreducible to those alienations that can be cured, resisting by their own strength that gigantic moral imprisonment..(Foucault 1988:278).

The figure of the 'mad' as an exclusionary and fearful creature begins as leprosy disappears at the end of the Middle Ages:

> In the margins of the community, at the gates of cities, there stretched wastelands which sickness had ceased to haunt but had left sterile and long uninhabitable. For centuries, these reaches would belong to the non-human. From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, they would wait, soliciting with strange incantations a new incarnation of disease, another grimace of terror, renewed rites of purification and exclusion (Foucault 1988:3).

While leprosy disappeared and the leper vanished, the structure of exclusion and the theme of reintegration remained. Poor vagabonds, criminals, and 'deranged minds' assumed the part previously played by the leper. With an altogether new meaning and in a very different culture, the forms would remain – essentially that major form of a rigorous division which is social exclusion but spiritual reintegration (Foucault 1988:7). The new priests of this spiritual reintegration became psychiatrists. Additionally, the landscape for this exclusion became both a physical space (the asylum) and a psychic interior space (emergent psychiatric theories).

3.6.1 *MEDICAL SHIFTS*

The Modern period saw a fundamental change in how medicine was understood and practiced. As a consequence of modern medical evolution (which preceded the emergence of psychiatry but is nonetheless related), we should not be surprised, as Rose (1994:68) points out, that health has replaced salvation in our ethical system; that the doctor has supplanted the priest; that the discourse of medicine has become saturated with questions concerning the meaning of life.

Modern medicine is governed by an object-centered cosmology rather than a person-centered one (Armstrong 1994:51). Eighteenth-century medicine based on patient dominance, which accordingly recognized the primacy of a patient-defined agenda, is usurped by a medicine which treats patients as objects and ignores their words in search of a presumed underlying pathological basis of illness. Hospital medicine with the new technologies of physical examination,

autopsy and statistics swept across Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century (Armstrong 1994:18). The hospital provides a locus for a new medical mythology. Foucault writes how this happened in France:

> The years preceding and immediately following the Revolution saw the birth of two great myths with opposing themes and polarities: the myth of a nationalized medical profession, organized like the clergy, and invested, at the level of man's bodily health, with powers similar to those exercised by the clergy over men's souls; and the myth of a total disappearance of disease in an untroubled, / dispassionate society restored to its original state of health (Foucault 1975:31-32).

The resulting objectification of medicine has led to a distancing from the doctor-patient relationship as the doctor views the patient through an exclusive bio-medical gaze. In consequence, the autonomous identity of the patient is alienated by new mechanistic forms of clinical practice (Armstrong 1994:20). Foucault outlines the consequence of the bio-medical model with respect to the 'mad':

> In the serene world of mental illness, modern man (sic) no longer communicates with the madman; on the one hand the man of reason delegates the physician to madness; thereby authorizing a relation only through the abstract universality of disease; on the other the man of madness communicates with society only by the intermediary of an equally abstract reason which is order, physical and moral constraints, the anonymous pressures of the group, the requirement of conformity (Foucault 1988:x).

Transferred to mental health, hospital medicine had the effect of reinforcing the power of the doctor who now not only possessed psychoanalytic knowledge, but also increasingly begins to amass coercive juridical power.

3.6.2 THE BIRTH OF THE ASYLUM

Historians studying the rise of psychiatry in the Western European world and our current attitudes towards the mentally ill, including the development of exclusionary social policy, see the emergence of psychiatry as corresponding to

the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment (Porter 1987:10). Through the Middle Ages and well beyond, the mentally ill had rarely any special, formal provision made for them. Refuges specifically for lunatics were almost unknown (Porter 1987:13). All of this changed as we entered the Modern period. The particular form of exclusion varied - based on the political systems of the country. For example, Porter (1987:16) writes that the systematic confinement of lunatics instigated by the state developed in France from the mid-seventeenth century as part of the great confinement of troublemakers launched by Louis IV's absolutism. In Britain, the biggest growth sector for the confinement of lunatics before the nineteenth century lay within the market economy where a 'trade in lunacy' grew up centered upon the private madhouse. Not until 1774 were any legal safeguards enacted to protect patients held within them.

A date, argues Foucault (1988:39), can serve as a landmark for the birth of the asylum, 1656, the decree that founded, in Paris, the Hôpital Général. From the very start, it is clear that the Hôpital Général is not a medical establishment. It is rather a sort of semi-judicial structure, an administrative entity which, along with the already constituted power, and outside of the courts, decides, judges and executes decisions. As mentioned above, this phenomenon occurred all across Europe. The constitution of an absolute monarchy and the intense Catholic renaissance during the Counter-Reformation produced in France a very particular character of simultaneous competition and complicity between the government and the Church. Elsewhere it assumed quite different forms but its localization was just as precise. In German-speaking countries, it was marked by the creation of houses of correction, the *Zuchthäusern* [2]. In England, an act of 1575 covering both 'the punishment of vagabonds and the relief of the poor' prescribed the construction of houses of correction, to number at least one per county (Foucault 1988:43).

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[2] Others were founded in the second half of the century: Basel (1667), Breslan (1668), Frankfort (1684), Spandau (1684), Königsberg (1691). They continued to multiply in the eighteenth century: Leipzig first in 1701, then Halle and Cassel in 1717 and 1720, later Brieg and Osnabrück (1756), and finally Torgau in 1771 (Foucault 1988:43).

These houses were not designed specifically to house the mad as this category had not been established yet. The category of people kept in them is not clearly differentiated according to strict behavioural parameters. To inhabit the reaches long since abandoned by the lepers, administrators chose a group that to our eyes is strangely mixed and confused. For example, in the Royal edict of April 27, 1657, the Hôpital Général set itself the task of preventing 'mendicancy and idleness as the source of all disorders' (Foucault 1988:47). Before it had the medical meaning we have given it, confinement is required for something quite different from any concern for curing the sick. The Hospital does not have the appearance of a mere refuge for those whom age, infirmity or sicknesses keep from working, but it has an ethical status. The authorities of the Hospital are granted every juridical apparatus and means of repression. They have the power of authority, of direction, of administration, of commerce, of policing, of jurisdiction, of correction and punishment. Since policing and segregation lie at the heart of the original exclusion, the perception that the mad were alien and different began to pervade Western consciousness.

That perception would take on greater clarity when eventually the mad became the exclusive inhabitants of the asylum. The nineteenth century would consent, would even insist, that to the mad, and to them alone, be transferred the lands on which, a hundred and fifty years before, authorities had sought to pen the poor, the vagabond, the unemployed (Foucault 1988:57). As the Age of reason begins to dominate, confinement is the practice that corresponds to madness experienced as unreason; that is, as the empty negativity of reason. Madness takes on a moral character where it is perceived on the social horizon as poverty, the incapacity for work, of inability to integrate with the group.

The sequestering of the mad is primarily a political act out of which evolved modern medical psychiatric practice. While reforms were initiated at the bequest of physicians such as Tuke (d. 1822) and Pinel (d.1826), these reforms had the

effect of guaranteeing that the physician becomes the essential figure. As Foucault (1988:270) notes, the physician initially played no part in the life of confinement. However, as a consequence of reforms from the end of the eighteenth century, the medical certificate becomes an obligatory requirement for the confinement of the mad. This requirement remains to this day. The coupling of the person of science with the force of sequestering, reinforces, not the restorative aspect of the medical arts within the asylum, but grants to the doctor a moral juridical status. 'Our own age,' writes Jaspers ([1946]/1963:807) echoing the above, 'is characterized by the fact that psychiatrists are now performing in secular fashion what earlier was performed on the grounds of faith. The basic medical knowledge of the doctor derives from the natural sciences and constantly colours the situation but, whether he (sic) wants to or not, he (sic) is always exercising some psychological and moral influence.' Paradoxically, the doctor is used to continue exclusionary political policy and this perception hardens into practice. Foucault (1988:270) writes:

> However, and this is the essential point, the doctor's intervention is not made by virtue of a medical skill or power that he possesses in himself and that would be justified by a body of objective knowledge. It is not as a scientist that *homo medicus* has authority in the asylum, but as a wise man. If the medical profession is required, it is as a juridical and moral guarantee, not in the name of science … For the medical enterprise is only a part of an enormous moral task that must be accomplished at the asylum, and which alone can ensure the cure of the insane.

Today, public policy with respect to mental health care is more and more envisaged in a community-based and recovery-oriented paradigm. Davidson (2005:3) defines recovery in the context of mental illness as 'a process of restoring or developing a meaningful sense of belonging and positive sense of identity apart from one's disability while rebuilding a life in the broader community despite or within the limitations imposed by that disability'. He notes that a recovery-oriented system of care offers supports that identify and build upon each person's assets, strengths, and areas of health and competence to support

the person in managing his or her condition while regaining a meaningful, constructive sense of membership in the community. Recovery-oriented care assumes social inclusion and self-determination as fundamental civil rights of people with psychiatric disabilities, not as privileges to be earned through the reduction of symptoms, the acquisition of skills, or compliance with treatment (Davidson 2005:15). To examine this shift, it is helpful to analyze what changed between the modern period and the postmodern one.

3.7 MADNESS IN THE POSTMODERN PERIOD: CULTURAL SHIFTS

Our ethos in the postmodern period has shifted dramatically. 'Ethos' is a Greek term and refers to a general mood or feeling that provides the foundation for a consciously constructed response. Ethos refers to the intellectual, spiritual or cultural feel of a culture. From ethos derives the term 'ethic' which refers to much more concrete action in response to life. Part of the reason for the shift towards a postmodern ethos was due to the world-shattering events of two world wars, the technological revolution, liberation movements of all kinds, an explosion of knowledge, and rapid developments in philosophy, the humanities, the personality and social sciences (Schneiders 1986:270). This change in ethos demanded that the ethic (policy and practice) shift as well. Spretnak (1998:39-40) suggests that questions posed with respect to social policy can be raised in a postmodern frame of reference. These referents she identifies as ecological wisdom, grassroots democracy, personal and social responsibility, nonviolence, decentralization, community-based economics, postpatriarchal values, respect for diversity, global responsibility and future focus. Falk (1998:83) writes that postmodern sensibility helps emancipate us from colonizing forms of knowledge associated with both evident and disguised structures of domination. This spirit does not repudiate the achievements of modernism, but seeks to displace its negative features. One of those negative features is alienation. Lyotard expresses the current anxiety well when he writes:

> We could say there exists a sort of destiny, or involuntary
> destination toward a condition that is increasingly complex. The

needs for security, identity, and happiness springing from our immediate condition as living beings, now seem irrelevant next to this sort of constraint to complexify, mediatize, quantify, synthesize, and modify the size of each and every object. We are like Gullivers in the world of technoscience: sometimes too big, sometimes too small, but never the right size (Lyotard 1992[1997]:78).

Lyotard [1992]/1997:79) identifies that technoscientific development characteristic of the modern period as being a cause of deepening our malaise rather than being an agent in allaying it. It is no longer possible to call development progress. It seems to proceed of its own accord, with a force, an autonomous motoricity that is independent of us.

In mental health some researchers such as Bracken and Thomas (2001:725) note that psychiatry must move beyond its modernist framework. Faith in the ability of science and technology to resolve human problem is diminished. Bracken and Bridge refer to this dynamic as 'post-psychiatry'. Post-psychiatry emphasizes social and cultural contexts such as community. It places ethics before technology and works to minimize coercive interventions.

Two key postmodern themes in post-psychiatry as they relate to mental health deserve attention. They are empowerment of the individual and community-based directions.

3.7.1 *PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT AND FREEDOM*

A recovery of personal autonomy is critical in facilitating the social spaces for people to be able to recover from the effect of mental illness in their lives. Illich (1976:267) writes:

> The recovery of personal autonomy will thus be the result of political actions reinforcing an ethical awakening. People will want to limit transportation because they will want to move efficiently, freely, and with equity; they will limit schooling because they want to share equally the opportunity, time, and motivation to learn *in* rather than *about* the world; people will limit medical therapies

> because they want to conserve their opportunity and power to heal. They will recognize that only the disciplined limitation of power can provide equitably shared satisfaction.

The direction towards personal empowerment is recognized in both civil and religious institutions. Politically, we have moved from a conception of the state that holds that the state is a created good from which citizens derive their rights and dignity, to a conception of state which sees itself as being ordered to the inherent dignity of the human person in his or her political, religious and economic aspirations. One sees this reflected in two prominent institutions symbolizing the civil and religious spheres of the West - the United Nations (UN) and the Vatican. The UN, with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948, clearly positioned the rights of the human person above whatever political system a governing body chooses to use in its geographic boundary. Article 2 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* reads:

> Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty (United Nations 1948:1).

Such a position represents the consensus of the global community in terms of the values that we want to see extant in the civil arena as we move forward in history.

With the publication of the Declaration on Religious Liberty (*Dignitas Humanae*) at Vatican II, the Catholic Church recognized that religious freedom and cultural plurality are values most consistent with the dignity of the human person.

> This Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. Freedom of this kind means that all men (sic)

> should be immune from coercion on the part of individuals, social groups and every human power so that, within due limits, nobody is forced to act against his convictions in religious matters in private or in public, alone or in associations with others. The Council further declares that the right to religious freedom is based on the very dignity of the human person as known through the revealed word of God and reason itself. This right of the human person to religious freedom must be given such recognition in the constitutional order of society as will make it a civil right (Flannery 1975: 800).

This historic document was a recognition that truth claims from religious bodies could no longer be linked with the *potestas* of the state. Murray (1966:15) argues that in light of this and other Catholic social teachings, there has been an inversion in Catholic social teachings such that now 'the safekeeping and promotion of ... rights is government's first duty to the common good'.

The human person is self actualized within his or her natural social, political and religious environment (i.e. their community). Clarifying what is meant by community is important.

3.7.2 *COMMUNITY BASED APPROACHES*

In the nineteenth century, as complex regimes of medical practice spread across urban space, the town became a multifaceted apparatus for fighting disease and securing health. The organic community became subject to scrutiny from a clinical gaze. The domestic environment – the home and family and all the relations amongst person and activities within it – was constituted as a site subjected to scrutiny and administration in medical terms (Rose 1994:63). This dynamic of the modern period has created what McKnight[3] refers to as a service economy which frustrates the growth of organic community. McKnight believes that a service economy based on needs hides a very different landscape. That landscape is the organic community out of which emerges care and healing. 'He thinks that people are becoming aware in their bones that hospitals cannot

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[3] McKnight has worked with communities and neighbourhoods throughout Canada and the United States and directs a program in community studies at Northwestern University

simply produce health, nor schools education, nor police departments safety. Experience has taught them, he says, that communities can only regenerate from within' (CBC 1994:13).

McKnight (CBC 1994:14) defines a community as a group of persons who understand themselves as citizens responsible for and accountable to their neighbours. Community is not about technicians 'fixing' problems that disrupt the social order. We do not create community by inventing all kinds of services and products for consumer consumption. Community subsists in the concrete presence of persons who understand themselves as citizens first. Berdyaev outlines well the understanding of community and how the human person is self-actualized in that context:

> Community (communality) is always personalistic, it is always an encounter of person with person, the 'I' with the 'thou' in a 'we'. In authentic (community) there are no objects, for another person is never an object, but is always a 'thou'. Society is an abstraction, it is an objectification, and in it the person vanishes. (Community) however is concrete and existential, it is outside of objectification. In society there is a conforming oneself into the state, and the person enters into the sphere of objectification, he becomes abstracted from himself, he undergoes as it were an alienation from his proper nature. About this there was many an interesting thought from the young Marx. Marx discerns this alienation of human nature in the economics of the Capitalist order. But in essence this alienation of human nature occurs in every society and state. Both existentially and humanly, the only community is the 'I' with the 'thou' in the 'we' (Berdyaev 1936: 55).

For McKnight (CBC 1994:16), a citizen is one who has a vested interest in the well-being of the community as it impacts on his or her immediate family and/or friends. It is the recovery of a sense of citizenship which is much more in line with the notion of personhood, as opposed to 'clienthood' that should be driving our social response.

Community is not just about economics. We are saturated with advertising in our consumer-driven culture. Mass marketing has convinced us that citizenship derives from consumption. Historically, the market has been understood as the production and trade of goods. Now, with the human service industry expanding, people themselves are becoming these goods, and human services are becoming factories. People are viewed as products, commodities or 'shares' which drive the engines of the organization rather than fellow citizens with gifts who contribute to the richness of our local fabric. Viewing itself in this economic paradigm, unconsciously but with what McKnight calls 'the mask of love', the organization or institution seeks to expand itself and seek out or more accurately *create* larger and larger markets. The cost (or side effect) of this, argues McKnight, is the loss of citizenship. Dressing this phenomenon with sentimental vocabulary will not change anything.

We do not need to be creating sub-cultures and sub-communities that only serve to further marginalize people and force us to look at our neighbour as 'consumer'. We are all members of the local community. The harm in colonizing and/or segregating the mentally ill is the fact that 'people will become known by their deficiencies not their gifts' and 'active citizenship will retreat in the face of professional expertise; and services will aggregate to form total environments' (CBC 1994:5). Despite the reduction and closure of mental institutions and asylums, mental health service has increased considerably. As Double (2002:902) points out, as more resources have been provided for mental health services, more resources are perceived to be needed. The traditional boundaries of psychiatric disorders have broadened. Everyday problems regarded as the province of other social spheres becomes 'medicalised' by mental health. McKnight comments:

> So we're involved in, actually, a humorous but tragic kind of never ending search for new needs in people, because systems that grow have to find new needs and impute them to people, and the problem with that is it is always at the cost of diminished

citizenship. So that as these systems of service colonize your life and my life, saying that we are bundles of needs and there are institutionalized services there to meet the needs to make us whole, to make us real, what we become is less and less powerful. (CBC 1994:3-4).

3.7.3 *POSTMODERN APPROACH TO MADNESS*

Values tending towards empowerment of the human person are foundational in a postmodern approach to madness. The ethical question today is how to act in congruence with the personalistic values of our postmodern ethos. Any system predicated upon abstractions of human experience risks losing the human element. In our day, part of that process involves critical analysis theory often using contemporary deconstructive methodologies derived from postmodern philosophers such as Foucault. The problem that Foucault (Rabinow and Rose 1994:40) outlines, the problem of power, does not imply all power is evil. The problem with the issue of power lies not in denying that power is exercised but in knowing how to avoid the kind of domination where someone is subjected to the arbitrary and unnecessary authority of an authority figure. 'I believe', says Foucault, 'that this problem must be framed in terms of rules of law, rational techniques of government and ethos, practices of the self and of freedom' (Rabinow and Rose 1994:40). The direction of postmodern ethics is to find ways to exercise as little domination as possible. A postmodern approach to madness is aimed at communal inclusion and dialogue. Freire (1995:48-49) writes:

> To achieve this (ethic), however, it is necessary to trust in the oppressed and their ability to reason. Whoever lacks this trust will fail to initiate (or will abandon) dialogue, reflection, and communication, and will fall into using slogans, communiqués, monologues and instructions. Superficial conversions to the cause of liberation carry this danger …. Those who work for liberation must not take advantage of the emotional dependence of the oppressed-dependence that is the fruit of the concrete situation of domination which surrounds them and which engendered their inauthentic view of the world …. Libertarian action must recognize this dependence as a weak point and must attempt through reflection and action to transform it into independence. However, not even the best-intentioned leadership can bestow independence

as a gift. The liberation of the oppressed is a liberation of women and men, not things. Accordingly, while no one liberates himself by his own efforts alone, neither is he liberated by others. Liberation, a human phenomenon, cannot be achieved by semihumans. Any attempt to treat people as semihumans only dehumanizes them. When people are already dehumanized, due to the oppression they suffer, the process of their liberation must not employ the methods of dehumanization .

A postmodern approach to madness means understanding individuals with a mental illness as fellow citizens, who share our same human hopes and aspirations and who have gifts to contribute as opposed to broken cogs in the machinery of society who require separate colonies such as asylums to inhabit or specialized services.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter explored how madness has been understood historically. The terms 'premodern', 'modern' and 'postmodern' are conceptual terms used to delineate different horizons out of which our culture in the Western world conceives of science, politics, philosophy and religion. Relevant to this chapter, these developments had, and continue to have, far-reaching consequences by way of understanding mental illness from the point of view of those who experience it and those who treat it. While there have always been people who have been understood as mad, mental illness, as a distinct scientific, medical phenomenon with a new class of medical doctor, the psychiatrist, did not emerge until the Enlightenment. The modern period has significantly conditioned many of our attitudes towards madness and our classification of populations through the *discourse* of various psychoanalytic and psychiatric theories that dominate our understanding of the human person today. According to Hedges (2005:1), *discourses* are propagated by specific institutions and divide up the world in specific ways. Discourses promote specific kinds of power relations, usually favoring the 'neutral' person or professional using the discourse (the lawyer, psychiatrist, professor, doctor, etc.). This fact in no way impugns the scientific validity or the therapeutic effectiveness of mental health; it does not endorse

psychiatry, but neither does it invalidate it (Rabinow and Rose 1994:38). It does, however allow us to critically examine what is absent in modern approaches.

Premodern interpretations reveal important intuitions that should inform our approach. Historically madness was perceived as one pole of spiritual experience. It contained both divine and destructive elements. Madness, prophecy and creative genius were linked to the same spirit. Indeed, Plato (d. ca. 347 BC) has Socrates (d. ca. 399 BC) connecting madness with art and prophecy. The term used by the Greeks to describe the spirit of madness was *daimon.*

As we moved into the later medieval period, Western culture adopting a biblical cosmology influenced both by the New Testament and Greek philosophical thought eventually accepted 'demons' as the culprit for all manner of deviant behaviour, including madness. Demonology became the psychiatry of the day. The medieval period understood some aspects of madness as religious; derived directly from God and manifested in ecstasies or in prophetic powers others as evil and destructive influenced by Satan and requiring the agency of exorcists. As we moved into the age of reason, that is the period of the Enlightenment, madness had no positive feature. It was torn from any transcendent source.

In the modern period the patient-defined agenda became usurped by a medical approach which treated patients as objects. In the context of mental health, this meant that psychology ignored the patient's words in search of a presumed underlying pathological basis of illness. Madness was torn from that freedom which allowed it to flourish in the pre-modern period. Madness, as Foucault notes was sequestered in the fortress of confinement, bound to reason, and to the rules of morality and their monotonous rights. The landscape for this exclusion became both a physical space (the asylum) and a psychic interior space (emergent psychiatric theories).

In contemporary mental health many researchers now agree that mental health must move beyond its modernist framework. Faith in the ability of psychology and psychiatry alone to resolve human problems is diminished. Researchers refer to this dynamic as postmodern psychiatry or more simply 'post-psychiatry'. Post-psychiatry emphasizes social and cultural contexts. It places ethics before technology and works to minimize coercive interventions. Post-psychiatry demands that the ethic (policy and practice) shift as well.

Postmodern mental health invites a vital and critical dialogue between various disciplines including spirituality. Spirituality places ethics before technology. Such an inversion conditions us to respond differently. Ethical critique of power relationships so that they support the individual is a strong theme in spirituality. Because each person is caught up in the web of knowledge and viewed as an active participant, contemporary spirituality is concerned with ethical social policy that facilitates individual freedom and autonomy. This new ethic is impacting social policy and treatment of the mentally ill in the form of positing recovery-oriented directions for the mentally ill that stress community, citizenship, empowerment and choice with respect to treatment options.

CHAPTER 4

**CONTEMPORARY EXPRRESSIONS OF SPIRITUALITY IN MENTAL HEALTH:
TOWARDS A HOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING**

Surgeons must be very careful
When they take the knife!
Underneath their fine incisions
Stirs the Culprit, - Life!

Dickinson [1894]/1993:14

4:0 INTRODUCTION

In the realm of mental health today there are two distinct tracks competing for emphasis. The first is the psychoanalytic track. It derives from, and is rooted in, traditional psychological theories based on the research of the founders of modern psychotherapy such as Freud, Jung and others. The other track is neurological. It is primarily connected with physiology and roots itself in the rapid discoveries that neuroscience has discovered with respect to how certain chemical imbalances in the brain can create psychotic or schizophrenic episodes. These differences in emphases correspond to the distinction made between the *mind* and the *brain* in the psyche. The *mind* refers to the cultural, religious, social, and historical contexts in and through which all of us act. It is our *mind* that provides the form for our paradigms, speech and particular understanding of our world.

The *brain* refers to the observable neurological and chemical changes that occur as a consequence of cognitive processes. Chemical variations can be observed among patients exhibiting psychotic or schizophrenic episodes. By comparing these results with typical imaging patterns, researchers have been able to locate particular neurological areas that exhibit increased or decreased levels of activity during certain psychotic episodes. This has led researchers to pinpoint specific neurological or chemical imbalances in the brain which have correlations in terms of affect in mood or in cognitive impairment. Replicating certain chemicals and/or

suppressing the transmission of chemicals such as serotonin has become part of the emerging technology of pharmacology.

There is growing concern that the pharmacological and technological approach to mental health is dehumanizing. Mental health is increasingly turning to spirituality as a means to humanize its practice. This chapter critically examines how spirituality is being interpreted within mental health. The research of Frankl (1959;1967;2000), a well-known existential psychologist and father of logotherapy and Jaspers (1946) the influential existential psychiatrist and philosopher will be explored. These psychotherapists, along with others, support a holistic understanding of mental health that coheres well with contemporary spirituality. Given the semantic diffusion of the term 'holistic', a clarification of that term as it is used in mental health is offered. Finally, methods supporting such a direction will be outlined. The first issue that needs to be addressed, however, is what exactly is meant by the term 'mental illness'.

4.1 THE DISEASE MODEL IN MENTAL HEALTH

The issue of precisely what illness is being treated in mental health is a compelling one. Psychiatric nosology is incredibly fluid and frustratingly inexact. Drawing on the research Albert et al. (1988), Kendell and Jablensky (2003:6) write that the types of conditions that may be said to constitute a disease range from nominalism and cultural relativistic theories (i.e. something becomes a disease when a profession or society labels it as such) and social idealism (i.e. failure to attain a social idea of perfect health) to culturally normative statistical concepts (i.e. deviations from statistical normality) and finally the disease realism view (i.e. objectively demonstrable departure from adaptive biological functioning). While each of these has its place, they acknowledge that since the end of the nineteenth century the disease realism model in both its biological and psychodynamic version has dominated.

The trend in mental health towards the disease realism model is useful. Teaching is now based on an international reference system that provides a worldwide common language. This international reference system is The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Medical Disorders* Fourth edition (DSM IV). The DSM IV is the clinical guidebook used by mental health for assigning illnesses to various psychiatric pathologies. It is publicly available and regularly updated as a consequence of emerging research. Public access to the diagnostic criteria used by mental health professionals has helped improve communication with users of services, caregivers, and society at large (Kendell and Jablensky 2003:4). There is, however, increasing disenchantment with the disease realism model. Psychiatric diagnoses are still based on culturally normative statistical concepts not biologically functioning. Accordingly to Kendell and Jablensky, one cannot validly claim that deviation from culturally normative statistical concepts means that one is suffering from a disease. The reason for this is because according to the disease realism model, a disease is called a disease when research has determined its validity. The term valid is derived from the Latin *validus* meaning strong and is defined by the Oxford dictionary as 'well-founded and applicable; sound and to the point; against which no objection can fairly be brought' (The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 1978). The problem with using the term valid in the context of mental illness, argue Kendell and Jablensky (2003), is that objections can be fairly brought against the categorization of mental illness as a specific disease entity.

They suggest a more nuanced understanding offered by Jaspers. Mental illness, argues Jaspers, is not so much a concrete disease entity but an idea. The idea of the disease-entity, Jaspers explains, is in truth an *idea* in Kant's sense of the word; that is the concept of an objective which one cannot research, but all the same it indicates the path for fruitful research and supplies a valid point of orientation for particular empirical investigations (Jaspers [1946]/1963:569). On the theme of mental illness as idea as opposed to disease, Kendell and Jablensky (2003:5) concur:

> Thoughtful clinicians have long been aware that diagnostic categories are simply concepts, justified only by whether they provide a useful framework for organizing and explaining the complexity of clinical experience in order to derive inferences about outcome, and to guide decisions about treatment. Unfortunately, once a diagnostic concept such as schizophrenia or Gulf War syndrome has come into general use, it tends to become reified.

Consequently, the assumption among the majority of researchers today is that most currently recognized psychiatric disorders are not disease entities (Kendell and Jablensky 2003:7). Kendell cites Jaspers ([1946]/963:570) who adds that while the idea of disease entities has become a fruitful orientation for the investigations of psychiatry no actual disease entities exist. They conclude, therefore, that it is important to distinguish between the *validity* and the *utility* of all diagnostic concepts and of their formal definitions. Otherwise, the term 'valid' will continue to mislead. At present there is little evidence that, strictly speaking, most contemporary psychiatric diagnoses are valid, because they are still defined by syndromes that have not been demonstrated to have natural boundaries (Kendall and Jablensky 2003:7).

This view represents the consensus of the scientific psychiatric community at present. The editors of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Medical Disorders* (DSM IV) state in the preface:

> The concept of mental disorder, like many other concepts in medicine and science, lacks a consistent operational definition that covers all situations….All medical conditions are defined on various levels of abstraction….Each is a useful indicator for a mental disorder, but none is equivalent to the concept, and different situations call for different definitions….In DSM IV, there is no assumption that each category of mental disorder is a completely discrete entity with absolute boundaries dividing it from other mental disorders or no mental disorder. There is also no assumption that all individuals described as having the same mental disorder are all alike in all important ways. The clinician using DSM IV should therefore consider that individuals sharing a

> diagnosis are likely to be heterogeneous even in regard to the defining features of the diagnosis and that boundary cases will be difficult to diagnose in any but a probabilistic fashion. This outlook allows greater flexibility in the use of the system…and emphasizes the need to capture additional clinical information that goes beyond the diagnosis (American Psychiatric Association 1994:xxi-xxii).

Notwithstanding the foregoing, there is a strong counter-movement which seeks to interpret mental illness according to the disease realism model. Gelenberg (2002) believes that the multiplicity of syndromes and the plethora of diagnoses (over 400 in the DSM IV) obscures the essential issue. That issue is that mental illness is primarily a biochemical disturbance – the particular manifestation of which (i.e. the diagnosis) varies but the cause of which is most evident in the chemical reactions occurring in the brain. Readjust these imbalances with the use of medication and irrespective of the particular diagnosis that the imbalance is named, the person will be in a better position to be able to adjust to their specific context.

Gelenberg suggests that enhanced technology in brain imaging and genomics will abolish the current heterogeneity of diagnoses.

> I find myself growing restless and impatient. I manipulate today's diagnostic categories and therapeutics. At the same time, I am convinced than in just a few years will look back on today's understanding as primitive….Within the next two decades, brain imaging and genomics and proteomics technology should break apart today's heterogeneous syndromes into more homogenous diagnoses. Then we will emulate our colleagues in other medical specialties by attacking the pathophysiology at its root causes. Ultimately, we can 'reeducate' aberrant nucleic acids and proteins, preventing brain disease (Gelenberg 2002:2).

The particular way in which aberrant nucleic acids are reeducated is by way of pharmacological intervention.

4.2 THE ASCENDANCY OF PHARMOCOLOGY

Drugs for depression are regarded as so safe and efficacious that they do not require a medical specialist such as a psychiatrist to prescribe them. They are often prescribed as the first line of treatment for depression whether that depression is episodic, situational or clinical. Since depression, anxiety and disturbance of mood is such a common experience today, the market for drugs that treat anxiety and mood disorders has exploded. Geleneberg outlines how this occurred from a pharmacological perspective:

> New antidepressants introduced into the US in the early 1980's were largely disappointing. But the introduction of fluoxetine in 1988 heralded a new generation of antidepressant agents. The selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI's) are now mainstream and are usually first-line treatment for depression. Along with other new generation antidepressants, SSRI's are better tolerated, diminishing the efficacy-effectiveness gap, and are much less hazardous in overdose than were earlier antidepressants (Gelenberg 2002:3).

The prescription of anti-depressants and other psychotropic medication is rapidly becoming standardized. The proliferation of these drugs is not without ethical problems. Fervent debate surrounds this area with psychiatrists convening ethical panels to discuss this phenomenon. As the Zenit news agency reports:

> At a meeting on Bioethics and Psychiatry, organized by the Regina Apostolorum Pontifical Athenaeum last Thursday and Friday, Italian psychiatrist Dante De Santis said that the 'indiscriminate use, even at school age' of psycho-drugs or antidepressants 'poses many questions from the ethical point of view.' The practice also causes an 'increase of expectations' among people on the efficacy of these drugs, which in some countries, such as Italy, are prescribed by general practitioners, De Santis said. (Zenit 2003).

In 2004, The Food and Drug Administration in the United States warned that antidepressants should come with the nation's strongest warning - in a black box on the label – stating that they can sometimes spur suicidal behavior in children

and teenagers. It is a rare risk, and therefore families need detailed information on how to balance that concern with the need to treat depression. 'It will make prescribing more difficult. I anticipate there will be alarm from parents and the child,' said Goodman.[1] (Neergard 2004:1).

4.3 REACTION TO TECHNOLOGICAL/PHARMOCOLOGICAL EMPAHSES IN MENTAL HEALTH

Piombo, the moderator of the Bioethics and Psychiatry panel mentioned above, expressed a clear 'no' to the commerce of psychiatric treatments for chronic patients. He emphasizes that the patient's consent cannot be reduced to a bureaucratic ritual. When the basis for the relationship becomes discussions around the technological details of symptomology and dosages both clients and professionals begin to feel as if they are part of a dehumanizing technocratic system. There is a growing alarm among many psychiatrists concerning this dynamic within mental health. Andreasen (2001:673) writes:

> Many of us are being pressured to see ourselves as psychopharmocologists who prescribe medications to treat 'brain diseases' at the expense of forgetting that the mind and the person may need treatment with psychotherapy as well. Many of us feel overwhelmed by the pace at which the neuroscientific basis of psychiatry is growing, and threatened by the possibility that we cannot keep up or learn enough to practice well. The technicalities of dopamine receptors, lod scores, in situ hybridization, thalamic nuclei, and signal transduction seem both irrelevant to the individual person whom we treat and also beyond our purview or intellectual grasp.

Interestingly, the dehumanizing effect of the excessive technological approach in mental health is referred to as 'spirit breaking'. For example Deegan (1990), a psychologist who has experienced first hand serious mental illness and the effect of the current system in her own life writes:

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[1] Goodman is chair of psychiatry at the University of Florida. He backed the step on a 15-8 vote. "I think that's worth that complication, because it will raise the threshold to prescribing" these drugs to minors. (St. Petersburg Times 2004:1).

> In many respects, people with disabilities who have lived the experience of dehumanization, trauma and depersonalization are the real experts. When those of us with psychiatric disabilities come together to talk among ourselves we don't use clinical language. Instead, we talk about the experience of 'spirit–breaking' or we refer to times when 'they almost broke my spirit'. We use our own language and discover our own words in order to reclaim our experiences and validate them…. That is why it is so important to listen to people and allow them to find their own words in order to name their own world (Deegan 1990:305).

The concern over dehumanization in the field of mental health is being widely felt among professionals involved in the training of psychiatrists. Frank (2003:69), with refreshing candor, writes:

> Anyone who attends rounds…soon realizes that empathy is a concept primarily enshrined in commencement speeches, white-coat ceremonies, and elegies for physicians. In clinical practice, commitment to empathy is honored more in the breach than in the observance. This apparent hypocrisy requires a rigorous examination of why empathy is essential to good care, why so many who practice this virtue must do so in secret, and why the social and intellectual organization of medicine so often discourages its development.

One of the methods available to address the dehumanizing technological emphasis within mental health is the application of deconstructive methodologies. Deconstruction, in the present context, means critically exploring the technology surrounding mental health in order to make proper use of it. Jaspers ([1946]/1963:778) writes that to question the nature of something is not to question its potential use. It is not a matter of robbing science of something integral but of clarification within that science.

4.4 DECONSTRUCTING MENTAL HEALTH'S TECHNE

In our time we have seen the ascendancy of technology and the eclipsing of the classical understanding of science. Science is derived from the Latin *scientia* *Scientia* means knowledge. An aspect of knowledge is the wisdom (*sapientia*) required to make proper use of technology. Deconstruction, therefore, is not the

deconstruction of science, if by science we mean wisdom. Rather it is the deconstruction of an over-confident *techne*. In commenting on Goethe's dictum, 'He who possesses art and science also has religion', Frankl (2000:75) writes, 'But today we know only too well where (we) would wind up if we had science and nothing beyond it: soon the only thing that would be left at all of our science would be the atom bombs we possessed.' Indeed as White ([1952]/1967:33) points out human hubris of the modern period has reversed the creation-story of Genesis not merely on paper but in fact. Humankinds' own ingenuity has begun to reduce matter back to force, cosmos to chaos. The official code name for the explosion of the first atom bomb in the Mexican desert was 'Operation Trinity'. White ([1952]/1967:33) continues, citing Cattel (1938) who wrote even before the Second World War:

> Psychologists and social scientists lose their militant attitude to religion when they realize that all their forces may well be needed to re-establish some order in the city they have so successfully besieged. The intellectual world is full of 'post-war' problems from this enormous cultural conflict, but perhaps the everyday world is even more distressingly aware of imminent emotional famines and pestilences arising from intellectual readjustment (Cattel 1938:50).

This is certainly indicative of the crisis in postmodern culture. Too often, our first instinct in a crisis is to revert to simplistic formulas and solutions such as reductionism. Reductionism is the perennial temptation in mental health.

Reductionism is basically the view that complex phenomena are *reducible* to simpler 'building block' elements from which they were constructed (Hersch 2003:155). Reductive materialism that has been an aspect of biopsychiatric research until very recently. It has crowded out an important dimension of the human person. It neglects the basic human intuition that the human person is free, creative, and self-transcendent. For example Crick (1994:3) writes that,

> …you, your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambition, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behaviour of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their

associated molecules. As Lewis Carrol's Alice might have phrased
it 'You're nothing but a pack of neurons'.

Reductive materialism (that is a scientific approach that dismisses *a priori* any transcendental or spiritual understanding of the human person) as a medical approach is based on the assumption that the preferred discourse (the neuropsychiatric discourse) renders the other discourse (spiritual approaches) redundant (Watts 2002:9-10). However, as Watts (2002:41) observes, many neuroscientists are abandoning reductive materialism. They seem to be heading towards a middle ground in which there would be room for *both* scientific and spiritual approaches. One way to achieve this middle ground is by way of developing a holistic approach in mental health.

4.5 DESCRIPTION OF A HOLISITC APPROACH

A holistic approach is an unending process of acquiring knowledge whereby we are illuminated through constant dialogue and engagement with diverse forms of understanding and interpretation. The liberation theologian Boff (1988:11) explains it as follows:

> *Holism* comes from the Greek *holos* which means 'totality' (and is a term widely diffused from its use by South African philosopher Jan Smuts). It means the tendency in nature to form wholes that are more than the sum of the parts. Here we have a synthesis that orders, synthesizes, regulates, and completes the parts in a whole, and relates each whole to another greater whole.

A holistic understanding does not close the horizon of our knowledge as reductionism does. It demands openness to all of the elements of human life, including spiritual elements. It takes the data of a particular science or discipline and seeks ways to integrate that data with new knowledge and interpretations that come to the surface. This requires openness and creativity. Smuts (1927:140) writes that 'creativeness' is a key word relating to a great battle being fought between nineteenth and twentieth-century conceptions of the nature and trend of the universe, between mechanism as ordinarily understood and what is

called holism. If the concept of holism really wins through, notes Smuts, mechanism as a scientific and philosophical category will be reduced to a very modest proposition (Smuts 1927:140).

Ethics also plays a large role in holism. Just as an ethical response is an inherent aspect of contemporary spirituality, so too is an ethical response an inherent aspect of a holistic approach.

> The ethical message of Holism to man is summed up in two words: Freedom and Purity. And from what we have just seen it is clear that these two grand ethical ideals are at bottom identical. The function of the ideal of Freedom is to secure the inward self-determination of the personality, its riddance of all alien obstructive elements, and thus its perfection as a pure, radiant, transparent, homogenous self-activity. In other words, the function of Freedom is to attain Purity in the Personality. And similarly the function of the ideal of Purity is to afford the free play to the inward self-determination and self-activity of the personality by removing all external impediments, all stains of impurities, all vice, cowardice, intemperance and injustice, all evil and ugliness; in short, all elements alien to the nature of the Personality, and thus to realize the Ideal of Freedom in the Personality (Smuts 1927:324).

The foregoing clearly has implications for anthropological understandings of the human person and what constitutes human consciousness.

4.6 A HOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF CONSCIOUSNESS

There are two paradigms (one materialistic, the other holistic) with respect to consciousness. The holistic paradigm is becoming more persuasive. Miller (2000:344) notes that research is discovering that consciousness is not a product of the brain but a primary principle of existence and reflective of the cosmic principle itself.

Jaspers ([1946]/1963:753) agrees, writing:

> The individual possesses something in addition which is not found in the hereditary connections….At some decisive point every

individual is as it were, in theological language 'created' from a source of his own and not merely a processing of a modified hereditary substance….Far from being the sum of his hereditary factors (which would be quite correct for his material preconditions and determinants) the individual is directly created of God.

Frankl (2000:61) adds further that one can only be a servant of one's consciousness if it is understood as transcendent. 'I can be the servant of my consciousness only when the dialogue with my consciousness is a genuine *dia-logos* rather than mere *mono-logos.* This, however, can only be so when my consciousness transcends myself, when it is the mediator of something other than my self'. For Frankl and many existentialists the very term 'person', seen in the light of holistic understanding, takes on a new meaning. One may say, notes Frankl (2000:60) through the consciousness of the human person, a transhuman agent (a *per-sonat)* – 'is sounding through'. If our anthropological paradigm is one that posits that the individual is free, possessing the wondrous capacity to transcend class, background, and a whole host of challenges in order to create meaning in their life and serve as inspirations for others, this has implications for the entire theory and practice of mental health.

4.7 CHANGING PARADIGMS IN A HOLISTIC CONTEXT

One of the critical questions within mental health is what place does the therapist occupy in the psycho-therapeutic relationship: that of awakener or that of moralist. Foucault suggests that the latter has been the one adopted by mental health. Scientific advancement in mental health has served then and continues to serve discourses whose function is to repair that which was broken (technology) as opposed to awaken that which is latent (holistic). 'Between a cure by the passions and cure by the prescriptions of the pharmocopia, there is no difference in nature; but only a diversity in the mode of access to those mechanisms which are common to body and soul' (Foucault 1988:181). Foucault is drawing attention to the fact that irrespective of the particular tool that the therapist uses, the anthropological understanding is the same. The human person is a mechanism that with proper manipulation can be repaired in order to function properly within

society. It is the goal of the doctor with increasing technical skill to unlock the perplexing problem of mental illness and repair the person. Irrespective of the mode of treatment, the person is viewed mechanically. Additionally, from this point of view, the understanding of doctor shifts from that of an artisan to that of a technician which impacts upon ethics. Illich (1976:21-22) writes:

> With the transformation of the doctor from an artisan exercising a skill on personally known individuals into a technician applying scientific rules to classes of patients, malpractice acquired an anonymous, almost respectable status. What had formerly been considered an abuse of confidence and a moral fault can now be rationalized into the occasional breakdown of equipment and operators. In a complex technological hospital, negligence becomes 'random human error' or 'system breakdown' callousness become 'scientific detachment' and incompetence becomes 'a lack of specialized equipment'. The depersonalization of diagnosis and therapy has changed malpractice from an ethical into a technical problem .

Anthropological questions concerning the nature of the human person and subsequent moral issues are even more acute in mental health, particularly since the Enlightenment when mental health as a science was born. Andreasen (2001:158) writes,

> During the 18th century, under the influence of the humanistic ideals of the Enlightenment, physicians identified themselves as specialists in caring for the mentally ill because they believed in the importance and dignity of the individual human beings. This group of specialists in mental illness eventually became known as psychiatrists, or 'healers of the mind/spirit'.

This image has perdured. Jaspers ([1946]/1963:807) notes that our own age is characterized by the fact that therapists are now performing in secular fashion what earlier was performed on the grounds of faith. The basic medical knowledge of the doctor derives from the natural sciences and constantly colours the situation but, whether the doctor wants to or not, he or she is always exercising some psychological and moral influence. It is precisely this context that begins to

provide the basis for the doctor-patient relationship that is increasingly being critiqued and questioned in light of the increasing technological posture of modern mental health.

As outlined in the previous chapter the modern period of mental health practice has ensured that the psychiatrist is in the position of both physician and judge. The doctor for his or her part is granted powers from the State to confine the person and occasionally, although subject to certain checks and balance mechanisms, enforce treatment. As Jaspers ([1946]/1963:792) states, and which is still true today, whatever the therapy, an arbitrary element is present which derives in the last resort from the authority and demands of the state. Every consultation takes place within a situation in which the doctor has effective authority, heightened by the clinic and his own official position. While this position may be diminished, there is no question that for the near future the psychiatrist will remain a moral agent on behalf of the community. Consequently, ethical reflection regarding best practice will inevitably touch on philosophical and theological questions concerning mental health practice.

In the context of mental health determinism (as opposed to holism) is defining the self by recourse to reductionism. Foucault describes well why this particular kind of thinking leads to epistemological oppressiveness that leaves no room for spirituality:

> What the classical thinkers retain of the 'world,' what they already anticipate in 'nature,' is an extremely abstract law, which nonetheless forms the most vivid and concrete opposition, that of day and night….A law which excludes all dialectic and all reconciliation; which establishes, consequently, both the flawless unity of knowledge and the uncompromising divisions of tragic existence; it rules over a world without twilight, which knows no effusion, nor the attenuated cares of lyricism; everything must be either waking or dream, truth or darkness, the light of being or the nothingness of shadow. Such a law prescribes an inevitable order, a serene division which makes truth possible and confirms it forever (Foucault 1988:109-110).

To address Foucault's criticism above, mental health is adopting a holistic approach.

4.8. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES IN HOLISTIC MENTAL HEALTH

For mental health, Jaspers' methodology is compelling, particularly in its ability to meet the exigencies of our time. It is also consistent with the trajectory of the present research with its emphasis on a holistic approach. Jaspers began early on in his career to ask important questions concerning the science of psychiatry. Jasper's purpose in *General Psychopathology* ([1946]/1963) is not to build up in its entirety any integrated picture of the human person as a whole, but to ground research in the mystery of the individuated human person. 'In the end no empirically recognizable basic form of human life emerges. Rather in the end the human being himself remains an open question and so too our knowledge of the human person' (Jaspers [1946]/1963:749). Jaspers is not a nihilist but a scientist interested in methodological issues. He is interested in facilitating a context by which the science of psychiatry could be of service to the human person. While he does not mention it by name, that context is a holistic one.

Jaspers states that integration of knowledge is indeed possible, but only in a *methodological* sense and not as an ontological theory of human life. No explanation of the human person ought to constitute for us a closed horizon in which we integrate our knowledge:

> Therefore we think it is a mistake in psychopathology to try to set up any principle of the whole or set one up scientifically as a point of orientation for research instead of taking up an attitude of faith and recognizing the infinite extent of what is knowable. When for example L. Binswanger wants to investigate individuals from a particular theoretical point of view, when he discards the 'conglomerate concept' of man as body-psyche-mind unity which he says is a synthesis of several methods (scientific, psychological and cultural) and demands some 'pre-arranged' idea which for him is the 'basic ontological idea of existentiality' he makes a philosophical and scientific mistake. Such a formulation confuses in

the first place the method of philosophical illumination with that of knowledge and robs the former of its power to conjure the human mind and lend it wings; secondly it constitutes a basis for psychopathology which is utterly inadequate (Jaspers [1946]/1963:749).

In contradistinction to material reductionism, the holistic approach is ready to adopt any method and asks only for those universal scientific criteria: general validity, convincing insights (which can be proved), clarity of method and the possibility for meaningful discussion (Jaspers [1946]/1963:788). Perspectives and approaches are limitless. Each has their value but none can be totalizing. If the particular whole under examination is taken as absolute, other truths are subsequently placed outside of our horizon. When a holistic approach is not undertaken the danger is that:

> The momentary whole tends to be taken for the ultimate whole: the psyche is consciousness and nothing else; the performance as a whole is the only objectivity, the only object for science; the body-psyche unity is reality itself; milieu and culture are absolutes to partake in which is psychic reality; personality is the essence of the psyche, its meaningfulness is its Being; theories grasp the true reality; causal connections are the substance of things, the body is everything, the psyche only an epiphenomenon of cerebral processes; the individual is only a transit-station for hereditary connections; clinical reality only consists in disease entities, constitutions and the life-history as a unit; the individual is a function of society and history (Jaspers [1946]/1963:751).

The reason for not taking any theory as absolute is that the individual can never be circumscribed within a single discourse. The therapist must therefore set him or herself against every attempt to create an absolute and to claim that particular methods of research are the only valid, single objectivities:

> All such conversions into absolutes are false. The mere number of them, when we set them out and look at them, shows us vividly that no complex unity of psychic life is ever the whole itself. To get to know the individual is comparable to a sea-voyage over limitless seas to discover a continent; every landing on a shore or island will teach certain facts but the possibility of further knowledge vanishes if one maintains that here one is at the center of things; one's

> theories are then like so many sandbanks on which we stay fast without really winning land (Jaspers [1946]/1963:751).

The foregoing does not lead to intellectual nihilism in which nothing can ever be known. Rather, the unification we seek as far as knowledge is concerned simply lies in the search for relationships between everything that is known about the human person.

What we do know of the human person is that there is a mysterious, transcendent aspect to each individual's personality. The challenge is to find a means by which this aspect can be included in mental health. Frankl's logotherapy is one method by which the spiritual aspect of the human personality is affirmed and integrated.

4.8.1 LOGOTHERAPY

When we turn to mental health it becomes evident that there is a transcendent dimension of the human person that is characterized as spiritual. While acknowledging that there are multiple psychophysical overlays that present themselves, mental health needs to appreciate that there is a free space within the human person. This free space is rendered in contemporary vocabulary as the spirit. It is referred to as spirit because it does not arise from psychological processes. Frankl (2000:34) draws a distinction between psychophysical facticity and spiritual existence. Drawing a distinction between the spirit and psychophysical facticity in no way implies a quasi-Manichean duality in which the spirit is good and the material world (in psychology this would refer to the psychophysical facticity) evil. Instead logotherapy involves clearing a psychological space for the individuated person's human spirituality to shine through in total freedom by transcending or transforming whatever might be weighing the spirit down in the psychophysical facticity.

Frankl refers to this spiritual activity as 'logos'. Logos is a Greek term originally referring to the intelligibility or meaning of the universe that emerges from the

mysterious depths of God. In fact, notes Frankl ([1959]/1971:156), logos in Greek means not only 'meaning' but also 'spirit'. Thus the human person's search for meaning is by definition in logotherapy a spiritual quest.

In classic Christian Trinitarian theology, there is a distinction but not a separation between the intelligibility of God (logos) and the nature of Godhead (cf. John 1:1-6). Frankl applies this theological notion to the human person. The logos (our life meaning) emerges from the mysterious depths of human consciousness as we respond to the world. The meaning of one's life is one that each person must come to in the depths of his or her consciousness in response to the demands of life. In logotherapy the world is a given – we do not create it. It cannot be changed. Our existential *response* to the given-ness of life is the locus for logotherapy. Frankl (2000:29) writes:

> What is the meaning of life? I made this inversion in my first book, *Arzlich Seelsorge*, when I contend that man (sic) is not he who poses the question, What is the meaning of life?, but he who is asked this question, for it is life itself that poses it to him. And man has to answer to life by answering for life; he has to respond by being responsible; in other words, the response is necessarily a response-in-action…. While we respond to 'life in action' we are also responding in the 'here and now'. What is always involved in our responses is the concreteness of a person and the concreteness of the situation in which he is involved (Frankl 2000:29).

In logotherapy the psychotherapist is one of liberator. The liberation is an awakening to the marvel of the world. In order for this to occur one's eyes need to be opened to see clearly the best way to respond. The philosophy of the postmodern Levinas (1969) supports this notion. As discussed in the first chapter, spirituality is an unparalleled openness to the secret of the other who is disclosed through engagement with the world. In this way logotherapy avoids the criticism that all existentialism is ultimately solipsistic. Frankl ([1959]/1971) writes:

> If the meaning that is waiting to be fulfilled by the human person was nothing but a mere projection of the self, it would immediately lose its demanding and challenging character; it could not longer call forth or summon the human person.

We miss this announcement or call when we do not open ourselves up to response. The response is in the deepest sense of the word spiritual. The term spiritual refers to the fact that this process lacks a thematic order that can be imposed on each experience. For Frankl ([1959]/1971;2000), logotherapy is neither teaching nor preaching. Logotherapy facilitates an awakening on the part of the client to what Levinas (1969) refers to as the marvel of exteriority. Frankl ([1959]/1971:175) writes:

> I wish to stress that the true meaning of life is to be found in the world rather than within man or his (sic) own *psyche*, as though it were a closed system. By the same token, the real aim of human existence cannot be found in what is called self-actualization. Human existence is essentially self-transcendence rather than self-actualization….For only to the extent to which man commits himself to the fulfillment of his life's meaning, to this extent he also actualizes himself. In other words, self actualization cannot be attained if it is made an end in itself, but only as a side effect of self-transcendence.

4.8.2 THE CHALLENGES OF A CLIENT CENTERERED-SUBJECTIVE APPROACH

The question that is often raised in emphasizing subjectivity in psychotherapy concerns the issue of delusional thinking. A paranoid person, for example, does not deny the existence of all reality but does deny the clinician's view of reality in favour of another that he or she believes to be true. As Hersch (2003:30) notes, there are patients who are convinced that the hospital is really a secret prison and the staff are disguised agents who are part of a government conspiracy. The patient may explain how he or she knows or enjoys privileged access to the real truth that others do not have, by virtue of a special radio receiver planted in his or her brain by the resistance movement. A facile turn to subjectivity is clearly not an option in this instance. Hersch (2003:114) concedes that while a phenomenologically based or otherwise satisfactory general theory concerning mental illness is not sufficiently developed at this time, one way to address the

problem of subjectivity correctly is by way of a dialogue with philosophy. Hersch suggests that two concepts developed by existential philosophy are helpful. The first is bad faith as elaborated by Sartre (1943:86). The second is authenticity as understood by Heidegger (Hersch 2003:268).

Hersch (2003:268) explains that bad faith is the pejorative label Sartre gives to a particular form of self-deception regarding the nature of ourselves (and of many other worldly phenomena) that allows them to seem more definite, solid, absolute unchanging, or universal than they really are. Reductionistic theories in mental health as well as individuals taking refuge in grandiose delusions are each examples of bad faith.

> (Sartre) contended that I would rather create illusions to the contrary and cling to them tightly. Thus, I try (defensively) to convince myself that 'indeed I am a thing,' an essence, something that is set, fixed, determined, and complete. It is this self deceptive process that he calls bad faith….Bad faith, then, was Sartre's psychological explanation for our apparently erroneous tendency to describe or think of ourselves as if we were mere 'things'. He believed we take comfort in this, since it allows us to hide from both the arbitrariness and the uncertainties of life, as well as - in Erich Fromm's (1941) terms – to 'escape from freedom' (Hersch 2003:268).

The notion of authenticity is also an important issue related to moral development and psychological integration. Authenticity is generally seen as an ethical and psychological goal. Authenticity is not a solipsistic activity. Hersch explains authenticity in the context of mental health as follows:

> In psychological literature, behaviours that people feel best reflect *their truest self* and that lead them to strongly positive feeling of self-cohesion, integrity, and a sense of 'having done the right thing' are often labeled authentic as well. Yet as the term is used in psychology…it sometimes seems to overemphasize the *self* component of authenticity at the expense of the *world* portion with which it supposed to be in harmony. This can reflect or give rise to a common misinterpretation of the term whereby authenticity is grounded in how a given act *feels* to the agent carrying it out. Self-indulgence, self-centeredness, and even selfishness – perhaps rationalized under the rubric of 'self-actualization' – can all feel

quite good and 'right' to an individual, yet none of these can be seen as authentic in the technical philosophical sense described above. Also the *realistic* basis of the idea 'that it is better to be authentic than to be inauthentic' is not and cannot be based merely on the psychological fact that one way of acting simply *feels* better than another….The concept of authenticity does offer us an argument that some possibilities are more in harmony than others …It follows that these 'harmonious' possibilities are more specifically 'appropriate' than the rest (Hersch 2003:278).

To encapsulate these notions, Kierkegaard's category of the aesthete who remains in despair and never comes to full self-possession is instructive. The aesthete described by Kierkegaard ([1843]/1992) in *Either/Or,* corresponds to what we would call today an oppositional-defiant, narcissistic personality disorder [American Psychiatric Association, 1994]. The self never comes into being, because there is no spiritual activity springing from the core being of the person. The final chapter of *Either/Or* contains 'The Seducers Diary' in which the author is seduced by the manipulation of people and situations. The aesthete uses irony and artifice in order to transform the boredom of the world into his own image. This approach is criticized from the point of view of Kierkegaard's ethical/religious state. The aesthete (Johannes the Seducer) is emptily self-serving and escapist. His activity is simply another form of despair since it avoids responsibility and commitment and fails to acknowledge social debt and communal existence. Furthermore, and worse still, even from an existential point of view, it is self-deceiving in that it substitutes fantasies for actual states (McDonald 1996:1). Tillich ([1957]/1969) comments that Kierkegaardian characters such as Johannes represent:

> The particular individual who has succeeded in drawing the universe into himself in terms of the power to use for himself whatever he wants to use. Kierkegaard describes the complete inner emptiness of this situation, which leads to the determination to bring death to everything he encounters including himself….Here, with the same psychological penetration, he shows the emptiness and despair of that unlimited sexual striving which prevents creative union of love with the sexual partner (Tillich [1957]/1969: 53).

4.9 BRIEF NOTES ON RELIGION

Frankl (2000:80-81) draws an important distinction between religion and mental health:

> Although religion might have a very positive psychotherapeutic effect on a patient, its intention is in no way a psychotherapeutic one. Although religion might secondarily promote such things as mental health and inner equilibrium, its aim does not primarily concern psychological solutions but, rather, spiritual salvation....Thus we could say that whoever tries to make psychotherapy into an *ancilla theologiae*, a servant of theology, not only robs it of the dignity of an autonomous science but also takes away the potential value it might have for religion, because psychotherapy can be useful to religion only in terms of a by-product, or side-effect, and never if its usefulness is intended from the start.

Having said this, it is a misreading to suggest that religion is a contributor to psychopathology. Frankl writes that Freud ([1927]/1961) in *The Future of Illusion* said that religion is the universal compulsive neurosis of mankind. However, if there is universal compulsive neurosis of mankind, culture has a great impact on its form. Frankl argues that the neurotic person derives their fear and anxiety from the *zeitgeist* of the socio-cultural milieu in which they find themselves. Evidence for this is provided in Frankl's (1967) *Psychotherapy and Existentialism*. Frankl (1967:116) writes, 'Krantz in Mainz and Von Orelli in Switzerland were able to show that the delusional ideas of today are less dominated by a feeling of guilt – the guilt of man before God – and more by worry over the body, physical health, and working capacity than formerly. We notice time and time again how the delusion of sin is replaced by the fear of disease or poverty'. In view of the above, Frankl (2000:75) argues, we are tempted to reverse Freud's statement and dare to say compulsive neurosis may well be diseased religiousness. Maladaptive religiousness therefore is not the result of spiritual expression, per se, but the result of either misappropriation of religion, or else a response to a world in which religiousness is explicitly denied and suppressed.

In any case, the cultural dynamic in our era has changed considerably from that of Freud's time. In our century, deified reason and megalomanic technology are the repressive structures to which the religious feeling is sacrificed (Frankl 2000:74).

An example of a holistic understanding in mental health using notions from spirituality is found in White. Turning to a classic Thomistic framework, White ([1952]/1967:118) writes that subject (person) and objects (divine) are not ultimate *a prioris.* They are conscious data which presuppose a pre-conscious identity, a *participation mystique* in the deepest sense. Spiritual interpretation involves presuming divine activity in ourselves and in our world to which we respond and participate. This interpretation is, to use Kierkegaard's language, a leap of faith. Frankl (2000:62) writes that the irreligious person who simply presumes that the spiritual element of the human person is the psychophysical facticity stops short of the fullness of human life. The reason for this is because he or she may not want to lose the 'firm ground under their feet' which a psychophysical approach permits. Perhaps, for them spirituality seems too hidden in the fog, and they dare not risk venturing into the uncertainty. Yet from a holistic perspective spirituality is part of the drama of human life. It permits freedom, openness, hope, meaning and change.

4:10 CONCLUSION

A holistic understanding of mental health involves permitting space for the innate spiritual experience to express itself through conscious choice in free response to the world. The spiritual aspect of the human person is one that can be perfectly compatible with different orders of scientific knowledge such as neuropsychiatry and various psychological theories. Andreasen (2001:675) suggests that retaining a fresh, holistic humanism, but not exclusively pharmacological is the way forward:

> Each of us, in whatever way we can, must fight against a variety of perverse ideas that denigrate or diminish this unique contribution: that a history can be obtained by a computerized checklist, or that recording a narrative history is a waste of time, or that the practice of psychiatry should be limited to prescribing medications, or any of the other injunctions that threaten to destroy the essence of psychiatric practice.

The current diagnostic criteria in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Medical Disorders* (American Psychiatric Association 1994) are useful but need to be understood in a holistic sense; that is as descriptive and not prescriptive as Kendall and Jablensky (2003) noted.

Jaspers ([1946]/1963:815) writes that success in mental health depends on confronting the unconscious depths with enhanced respect. Consequently, we have to avoid excessive technological emphases if we are to keep open communication with our own nature which can be described as spiritual. This open communication with our spiritual nature is what is meant by a holistic understanding in mental health. Methods supporting holistic approaches facilitate this open communication with our spiritual nature. The practices best suited to holistic understandings are existential-styled methods such as logotherapy as developed by Frankl.

Frankl (2000:33) argues that within mental health today the problem is spiritual existence versus psychophysical facticity. Inasmuch as both contemporary spirituality and mental health locate meaning within the subject, sustained dialogue is both inevitable and mutually enriching.

A holistic perspective appreciates the spiritual dimension of the human person. It is helpful to interpret this phenomenon spiritually since spirituality provides a context and language for describing this dimension of human experience.

CHAPTER 5

MYSTICISM AND MENTAL HEALTH

The brain is wider than the sky,
For, put them side by side,
The one the other will include
With ease, and you beside.

The brain is deeper than the sea,
For, hold them, blue to blue,
The one the other will absorb,
As sponges, buckets do.

The brain is just the weight of God,
For, lift them, pound for pound,
And they will differ, if they do,
As syllable from sound.

Dickinson [1894]/1993:24

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Dickinson expresses a profound intuition concerning the relationship between the brain and the transcendent when she writes, 'The brain is just the weight of God'. That line could serve as a *leitmotif* for neuropsychiatry's foray into spirituality. Among the rapid discoveries in neuropsychiatry, one of the most surprising is the validation of the notion that mystical experience is an inherent aspect of a person's consciousness, a dimension of our natural experience. This concept no longer needs expression solely through poetry. It can be observed in the brain itself. Such a discovery is an exciting one for researchers in both mental health and spirituality. Many psychiatrists are becoming interested in the development of our consciousness from a biological point of view and draw on allusions to well-known religious stories to articulate the intuitions of their research. For example, Grof (2002:1) in *The Madness of Adam and Eve: How Schizophrenia Shaped Humanity* writes:

> [Horribin] postulates that the origins of schizophrenia and the origins of humanity are intimately related….The same ancient genetic mutation

that is now presumably responsible for schizophrenia did, in other human beings, generate exceptional skills and creativity - which defines us as human beings and differentiates us from our nearest relatives, the apes and the chimpanzees. Taking an evolutionary approach, [Horribin] describes how the first humans who originated in Africa and migrated over Urasia and Australasia, presumably carried with them the genetic gift of inventiveness, as well as the vulnerability to schizophrenia. He alludes to the observation that families with schizophrenia have not only more problems with family members - such as more dyslexia, more bipolar disorders, more sociopathy, and more criminals - but also more creative people. He mentions that such families have more high achievers in every field, including music, religion, the arts, and science.

Lukoff (1985:155) observes that psychotic and religious experiences have been associated since earliest recorded history and undoubtedly before. It is ironic that the premodern intuition that madness is linked to creativity is again being explored as we plunge ever deeper into the biological and neurological composition of the human person and begin to appreciate in richer ways the mystery that such knowledge opens up. Fox (1988:7) writes that a radical religious awakening worthy of being called a spiritual renaissance is one that critiques both psyche and society.

In the previous two chapters, an analysis and critique of our historical approach to madness was offered, while providing a context for further development of a contemporary understanding of spirituality in psychiatry. This chapter addresses mysticism. It is important to bear in mind, however, that not all self-reports of ecstatic divine union indicates that the person is having a profound religious experience. Lukoff (1985:156) observes that the similarity between psychotic symptoms and aspects of mystical experiences has received acknowledgement and discussion in psychiatric literature (Arieti 1976; Buckley 1981; James 1961). In his classic study on mystical experiences, Leuba (1929) included psychiatric and epileptic patients in his sample. The difference between psychosis and mysticism, therefore, is one that requires careful evaluation. This is important because, as Buckley (1981:521) writes:

> Though the correspondence between the comparatively benign mystical experience and the onset of acute psychosis is a limited one, sufficient overlap exists to warrant systematic biological and psychological

investigation of such altered state experiences in the hope of illuminating
further the nature of both.

Given the diffusion of the term mysticism in popular culture, mysticism, as interpreted in the Christian tradition, it requires some explanation and contextualization. Illuminating the nature of mysticism is the purpose of this chapter. Here, how mysticism has historically played, and can continue to play, an important role in shaping a wholesome, life-giving, religious consciousness is explored. There are four objectives involved in achieving this purpose.

The first objective is to examine the data surrounding the frequency of the mystical experience in our time. The second is to explore how mysticism has been utilized historically to address suffering and facilitate meaning in life. As Jaspers (1946]/1963:806) notes, the greatest successes in mental health have not belonged to psychiatrists but to shamans, priests, leaders of sects, wonder-workers, confessors and spiritual guides of earlier times.

> The 'exercitia spiritualia' of Ignatius Loyola were enormously successful and provide us with examples of real psychic cure; they were aimed at the control, arbitrary production and repression of every kind of emotion, affect or thought. Yoga techniques and the meditative exercises of Buddhism are also extraordinarily effective (Jaspers [1946]/1963:805).

It is not possible to understand mysticism in the Christian tradition unless it is contextualized in its historical and cultural context. Christian mysticism is integrally linked to *both* its Hebrew and Greek roots. Within Christianity we have, as Tyrrell (1907a:44) notes, two religious traditions running together that eventually became a singular expression. Judaism, reformed and spiritualized by the prophets, and universalised by the philosophy of Alexandria, was perfected in both respects by Christ. It was later preached and proclaimed explicitly as a world religion by Paul. This world religion which became known as Christianity was not primarily concerned with drafting legislative observance. It had an inner-directed, experiential focus. Watts and Williams (1988:94) note that Paul describes a new kind of inner religious experience. There seems to be a theological point being made about psychological development towards greater inwardness and subjectivity in Paul's writings. Paul describes a shift in this general

direction when he contrasts the moral and religious thinking of the Old and New Testament periods, the contrast between 'the letter that kills' and the 'spirit that gives life' (2 Cor 3:6). This history formed the basis for more systematic mystical developments in the Middle Ages. In terms of methodological considerations of the Christian mystical experience as it developed in the later medieval period, exemplars of divergent apophatic and kataphatic approaches will be offered. Specifically, the mystical thought of Ignatius of Loyola (d.1555 CE) and Meister Eckhart (d. 1328 CE) will be offered.

The third objective of this chapter is to evaluate the mystical experience represented in the approaches of Eckhart and Loyola from a neuropsychiatric perspective. This objective will involve establishing the neurological basis for the mystical mind. In order to achieve this end, the groundbreaking work of neuropsychiatrists D'Aquili and Newberg (1999), who have researched the mechanics of the brain and, as a result, have developed what they term neurotheology, will be explored. D'Aquili (1999:217) uses advances in neuropsychiatric research to suggest that with the advent of improved technologies for studying the brain, the mystical experience may be differentiated from any type of psychopathology.

The fourth objective is to develop a contemporary understanding of mysticism in the area of mental health by drawing on the important contribution of psychology in evaluating the experience. To this end, the work of Siglag (1986) with respect to the similarities and differences of schizophrenic and mystical experiences will be analyzed. The significance of such work is that if it is possible to differentiate psychosis from the mystical process, therapy could be directed at integration of the 'knowledge' acquired -utilizing the growth-potential of the mystical experience (Stahlman 1992:1).

5.1 FREQUENCY OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

Hood and Morris (1981:82) note that a consistent theme runs through more popular treatments of mysticism, namely, the frequency of mystical experience and the commonality of the description has caught both scientists and religious leaders by surprise. Scientists and religious leaders may be surprised for different reasons. From the social scientist domain, Prince (1979:68) notes that up until a few years ago we had very little idea of the frequency of mystical experience. That has changed as this area becomes more rigorously studied. Prince (1979:86) observes that of three surveys done separately, each reported that some 20% to 40% of the population claimed mystical or religious experience. Similarly, Hood and Morris (1981:76) note that studies of mysticism are consistent in finding approximately one-third of persons sampled affirming that they have had a mystical experience. This figure holds whether data is obtained from survey research in the United States or Great Britain. Studies include Back and Bourque (1970); Bourque and Back (1968;1971); Greeley (1974); Hay and Morrisy,(1978), Thomas and Cooper (1978;1980) and Withnow (1978). Sampling from volunteer population yields similar results. These include Brown, Spilka and Cassidy (1978); Hood (1973a;.1973b; 1975; 1977a; 1977 b; 1978); Hood and Hall (1980) and Margolis and Elifson (1979).

In addition to the frequency of mystical reports, the research also demonstrates that there is a psychodynamic context in which people can make judgments with respect to mystical experience. Contrary to other studies suggesting that the mystical experience is so ambiguous that it cannot be measured by structured questionnaires (e.g. Thomas and Cooper 1977;1980), Hood and Morris' (1981:79) research indicates that persons can knowledgably apply mystical criteria to experiences they have had. They conclude that not only is mysticism relatively common, but it is knowledge-based. In other words, people are aware that they are having an existential experience of the transcendent that can be contrasted from other types of life experiences. Hood and Morris (1981:82) conclude that 'persons do not indiscriminately identify themselves as having had a mystical experience; hence, confrontation with such common experiences appears a task for more serious consideration by contemporary religious leaders'.

For their part, religious leaders generally circumscribe the mystical experience within a relatively narrow range of religious experiences. Historically, Christian leaders have expressed some reticence concerning claims of mystical experience. Aside from the understandable concern that some experiences may be self-delusion at best, or a form of uncritical superstition at worst, issues of authority arise. As Allen (1999:29) writes, official Catholicism has always taken a cautious, even oppositional, stance toward mystical experience and claims of direct, divine inspiration - especially in cases where mystics have insisted that what they learned in their private revelations supersede Church law and authority.

It is clear that the frequency of mystical experience has implications for both religious leaders and people in the field of mental health since, notwithstanding the aforementioned issues, authentic mystical experience has historically been able to unify the deep structures of exteriority and interiority, otherness and sameness, the Divine and the human. For this reason it is beneficial to open up the received wisdom of the mystical tradition of the Church in order that it becomes more widely diffused within the world, and particularly within the area of human psychiatry.

5.2 MYSTICISM IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION – HEBREW ROOTS

Christianity was born out of the Hebrew culture. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the world is presented as the field of humankind's experience, the stage on which one's work and destiny are played out. The human being is not interpreted in the light of the world, but the world in the light of the human being (Bultmann [1956]/1966:20). History is the major theme of Hebrew literature. History is not, as in Greek literature, the scientific study of the past as a means of finding out the eternal laws which govern all events. Rather, it looks toward the future, to a divinely appointed goal (Bultmann [1956]/1966:21). The culmination of human history rests in the notion of a messiah. Messianism is of ancient Hebrew origin and is the contribution of the Hebrew people to world history.

Berdyaev (1957:200) notes that messianic hope is born in suffering and unhappiness. Suffering is to be distinguished from pain. According to Woods (2005:6), pain is primarily some form of acute physical discomfort, the capacity for which people share with animals and, according to several researchers, even some form of plant life. Suffering, however, entails not only an awareness of pain, but its meaning, or lack of meaning, in the scheme of life as a whole. It may well be that higher forms of animal life suffer in addition to experiencing pain, but as generally understood, suffering is both distinctively human and also largely a psychological and spiritual event. In the Hebrew frame of reference, the experience of suffering has two dimensions; a positive and negative one. On the negative side, suffering is meant to punish and correct a recalcitrant people, and must therefore be willingly borne; the nation must turn so that God can turn to it again. On the positive side, it also signals the possibility of hope. This dual nature of suffering is reflected in the Hebrew Scriptures. Besides negative admonitions, there are also passages which promise a good time coming, when God will create his people anew (Bultmann [1956]/1966:33). From a subjective psychological perspective, as Brown (1988:31) points out, this approach to the experience of suffering means that:

> Every believer (confronts) God not as a soul committed, for a time, to the necessary if thankless task of bringing order to an alien body, but rather as the possessor of a 'heart,' that is, of a hidden core of the self, that might harden: it could become a *heart of stone*, clenched in a state of mute rebellion to God's will. Or it might open itself to fully receive His command and to respond without reluctance to His fatherly love… While a 'good inclination'(urges) them to obey God, an 'evil inclination,' a deep set tendency to hold back from following His will, also lay close to their own hearts. The evil inclination (appears) to suffuse the human person as a whole, like an 'evil yeast' working deep within the dough of human nature.

It is not for human beings to reason why, but to make their submission to God (Bultmann [1956]/1966:31). Such acquiescence is allied with a confidence that God will redress the situation in the future. From the psychological point of view, this is compensation. The consciousness of messianic election, the hope of a better and more meaningful life,

compensates for the experience of suffering (Berdyaev 1957:200). It was in this historical context and within this culture that Jesus of Nazareth emerged.

Jesus turned away from certain nationalistic interpretations of messianism current at the time and offered a more inner-directed, subjective interpretation.

> Jesus agrees with Judaism that God no longer reveals himself in the history of the nation. When he speaks of his judgment, he is not thinking of disasters in history – wars between nations and the like – as was the case with the ancient prophets, any more than he expects the Reign of God to take the form of a magnificent terrestrial empire for Israel…The coming salvation will bring bliss to the individual. Since judgment and salvation are thus detached from history, Jesus' conception of God is similarly non-historical, just as in Judaism, as also his conception of man. But there is an all-important difference between them at this point. For Judaism God has become remote. He governs the world by means of angels, while his relations with man are mediated by the book of the Law….For Jesus, however, God's distinction from and transcendence over the world means that he is always the God who comes. He meets man not only in the future judgment, but already here and now in daily life, with its challenges and opportunities (Bultmann 1956[1966]:175).

While maintaining its anthropocentric, humanistic character inherited by Jesus' appropriation of Hebrew culture, Christianity's mystical character derived from its interaction with Greek culture.

5.2.1 *GREEK ROOTS*

Greek culture in the centuries just prior to Christianity developed a definite form of mysticism. It came to mean a particular sort of approach to the whole problem of reality in which the intellectual, and more especially the intuitive faculties, came into play (Happold [1963] /1971:18). This approach to reality was known as Neoplatonism and it had a substantial impact in the early centuries of the Christian era. A system of mystical spirituality rooted in strains of Neoplatonism, which was one of the main foundations of Christian mysticism, came into existence. Happold ([1963]/1971:18) outlines some of the characteristics of Neoplatonism: 1) The phenomenal world of matter and individual consciousness is only a partial reality and is the manifestation of a Divine Ground in

which all partial realities have their being; 2) It is of the nature of the human person that not only can they have knowledge of this Divine Ground by inference, but also realize it by direct intuition, superior to discursive reason, in which the knower is in some way united to the known; 3) The nature of the human person is not single but dual. The person has not one but two selves, the phenomenal *ego,* of which he or she is chiefly conscious and which he or she tends to regard as the true self; and a non-phenomenal, eternal self, an inner person, the spirit, the spark of divinity, which is the true self. It is possible for a person, if he or she so desires and is prepared to make the necessary effort, to identify with the true self and so with the Divine Ground, which is of the same or like nature; 4) It is the chief end of humanity's earthly existence to discover and identify with their true self. By so doing, they will come to an intuitive knowledge of the Divine Ground and so apprehend Truth as it really is, and not as it appears to be to our limited human perceptions. Not only that, they will enter into a state of being which has been given different names: eternal life, salvation, enlightenment, etc.

As Christianity evolved, it began to find itself entrenched in a Hellenistic milieu. Ratzinger (1970:95) writes that the early Christians found themselves once again in an environment teeming with gods, and thus once again facing the problem with which Israel had been confronted in its original situation and in its debate with the great powers of the exilic and post-exilic period. Realizing that the return of Jesus may not happen in their lifetime, the early community began to interpret its experience in a different fashion. The messianic idea was foreign to the Greeks but they were nonetheless acknowledged as having a unique intellectual vocation (Berdayaev 1957:200). Consequently, between the Judaic and Hellenistic worldviews, there was a *rapprochement*. No longer was the imminent return of Jesus the driving force, but an interpretation of the inner life of the spirit (i.e., mysticism) began to develop. Christian theologians drew heavily on Greek philosophical notions while distancing themselves from their religious mythology. The response of the early Church to Greek paganism was to demythologize their religion. This meant proceeding in a more humanistic fashion while at the same time using Greek notions to articulate the mystery of their religious experience.

It would be a mistake to present mystical theology as a strictly philosophical and intellectual pursuit. One of the earliest and most influential neo-Platonic Christian mystics, Augustine of Hippo (d. 371 CE) presents a strong psychological exposition of mysticism drawn from his personal experience. As Woods (1989:104) notes, Augustine's contribution in shaping the inner-directed, existential and psychological focus of Western mysticism lay in his awareness of the presence of God in the deepest level of human consciousness. While religious feeling had figured in the earlier teaching of Evagrius (d. 399 CE), Augustine's deep personal experience surfaces as the troubled ground of the human spirit itself, often wrought with the desire for total communion with God, but equally bereft of the felt sense of that presence.

5.3 APOPHATIC AND KATAPHATIC APPROACH

Two approaches to mysticism began to evolve in early Christian mysticism which can be interpreted psychoanalytically to the extent that they involve cognitive processes or the deliberate suspension thereof. These are the *apophatic* and *kataphatic* approach. It is useful to use the *apophatic* and *kataphatic* schema as these approaches represent variant theological emphases and methods. The mystical experience, in either its *apophatic* or *kataphatic* form, leads to what is referred to in classic spiritual vocabulary as the *unio mystica*. That is, there is a unity between the I and the Other and the self-Other dichotomy is obliterated

The mystical process is relevant to the area of psychology since it has implications for the integration of the self. From an existential psychological perspective, the 'I' (or the 'self') is not a continuous, fixed entity. Kierkegaard, for example, held that the true self is not discerned in advance but discovered in 'becoming'. As outlined in the first chapter, for Kierkegaard, the ultimate stage of human development is the religious or mystical stage. It is this stage that provides ultimate meaning and integration. Some analysis of the spiritual approaches utilized in the facilitation of human integration and existential meaning is therefore beneficial. The *apophatic* approach has dominated among mystics in the Church, particularly in the medieval period with Ignatius of Loyola (d. 1555 CE)

being a notable exception. Ignatian spirituality, given its *kataphatic* character, translates itself into the activist impulse of Ignatian spirituality.

5.3.1 *KATAPHATIC MYSTICISM – IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA (D. 1555)*

The *Spiritual Exercises* are the fruit of Ignatius of Loyola's spiritual journey to maturity. In the *Exercises,* Ignatius' personal insights into spirituality find their clearest expression (Gleason 1989:17).The genesis of the *Spiritual Exercises* is drawn from the well of Ignatius's own mystical experience. After finally recovering in Montserrat from wounds he received in battle, Ignatius had a conversion experience and discerned that he needed to change his life direction.

From Montserrat in 1522 CE, Ignatius journeyed toward Barcelona but stopped along the river Cardoner at a town called Manresa. Intending to stay only a few days, he remained there for ten months. O'Neal writes that on the banks of this river, Ignatius had a vision which he regarded as the most significant in his life:

> The vision was more of an enlightenment about which he later said that he learned more on that one occasion than he did in the rest of his life…. Ignatius never revealed exactly what the vision was, but it seems to have been an encounter with God as He really is so that all creation was seen in a new light and acquired a new meaning and relevance, an experience that enabled Ignatius to find God in all things. This grace, finding God in all things, is one of the central characteristics of (Ignatian) spirituality (O'Neal 1993:3-4).

From these and other experiences, Ignatius gradually developed a systematic method of sharing with others his insight into the mystical life. This method became Ignatius' *magnum opus,* the *Spiritual Exercises*. The *Exercises* are unique in the history of Christian mysticism in that they are simultaneously deeply experiential, but also systematic and structured.

The transference of his previous life context, which was militaristic and feudal, to a mystical one brought with it a creative use of imagery. Images associated with battle (e.g.

the '*Two Standards*')[1], chivalry as well as feudal theological images (e.g. imagining oneself in the heavenly court, before the divine Majesty, etc), figure prominently. Ignatius uses secular images from his own historical, social and cultural context to point to spiritual realities. Many of the images are dated. Consequently, some appreciation of the historical context of his choice of symbols is important in order to appreciate his insights. Most spiritual directors using the Exercises use more contemporary symbols that are analogous to Ignatius' medieval imagery. Symbols ought to be readily recognizable and resonate with our contemporary mind in order to have the desired effect and achieve the purpose for which the *Exercises* were designed.

Ignatius begins the *Exercises* by writing that its purpose is to help the exercitant conquer the self and to regulate one's life so as not to be influenced by any inordinate attachment (Gleason 1989:48). This freedom facilitates the understanding of one's destiny and assists in providing the courage to carry it out. In psychodynamic vocabulary, destiny is an unconscious aspiration that a person intuitively feels will be realized. Psychological crisis or existential angst is often an unconscious desire to break free of one's fate; the opposite of destiny. According to Freud, fate is that which sets one's personality on course. It can become the tragic element in one's character. It is, in Jungian vocabulary, the shadow side of the unconscious. While both destiny and fate are internal and part of the unconscious, they are quite distinct. Indeed, in Freudian terms, conflictual patterns within one's unconscious are often various libidinous 'ids' (or drives) vying for domination of the ego. The ego is the 'I' that must reconcile all of these parts in a harmonious unity. Harmony and a general psychic élan ensue as a consequence of activity springing from destiny, while dysfunctional neuroticism and hyper-anxiety spring from the ego's surrender to fate.

For Ignatius reflection on one's life context is a critical component in breaking free of fate so as to live out of destiny. Ignatius believes that one's destiny is discovered in the call of

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[1] The two standards is an exercise in which the excertants imagines themselves in a vast plain where under one standard (or flag) stands Lucifer and under the other stands Christ. The idea is to have an image of being under the standard of Christ being able to withstand the demons who are sent from the other standard (Gleason 1989:75).

Christ the King. This call is discerned in the second week of the *Exercises*. Once found, a person will begin to fashion daily life according to one's destiny. This lies deep within one's unconscious and presents itself in a variety of ways. Our task in discerning our destiny is to interpret the action of the good and bad spirit.

Ignatius describes destiny as a battlefield on which our soul (the 'I') is engaged in a struggle. There are shadow forces (bad spirits) frustrating the integration of our destiny within ourselves. Drawing on classic Christian vocabulary, Ignatius refers to these shadow forces as the devil or Lucifer. In the original translated text of the *Exercises,* Ignatius refers to Lucifer symbolically as the 'enemy of our human nature' (Gleason 1989:75). May (1969:139) notes that the devil comes from the Greek word *diabolis,* which literally means 'to tear apart' (*dia-bollein*). In a passage (*The Two Standards*) which can easily be interpreted as the libidinous id seeking to dominate the ego, Ignatius writes:

> *The third point* is to listen to the harangue which he (the devil) delivers to them, how he spurs them on to ensnare men (sic) and to bind them in chains. He bids them first to tempt people with the lust of riches (as he is most accustomed to do), that they may thereby more easily gain the empty honor of the world, and then come to unbounded pride. The first step in his snare is that of riches, the second honor, the third pride. From these three steps Satan leads on to all other vices (Gleason 1989:76).

To counter these ids, the superego (Christ consciousness) presents to the ego another alternative. Christ is offered symbolically as that which will hold the 'I' together. May (1969:139) notes that the term *symbolic* is the antonym to *diabolic.* Symbolic comes from *sym-bollein* and means 'to throw together'.

> The third point is to listen to the discourse which Christ our Lord makes to all His servants and friends whom He sends on this mission, charging them that they should seek to help all men; first by encouraging them to embrace the most perfect spiritual poverty, and if it should please His Divine Majesty, to choose them for it, also to embrace actual poverty. Secondly, by encouraging them to desire insults and contempt, for from these two things come humility. So then there are three steps: the first, poverty opposed to riches; the second scorn or contempt, opposed to

> worldly honor, the third humility, opposed to pride. From these three
> steps let them lead all people to all virtues (Gleason 1989:76).

For Ignatius, one of the ways for the realization of destiny to occur is to pay attention to the symbolic nature of dreams and images that occur in different states of consciousness. This paying attention, in a critical manner, to details of visions and images is an important dimension of the *kataphatic* approach. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Ignatian method of 'composition of place'.

'Composition of place' is related to the *kataphatic* method and refers to the method that the exercitant is asked to practice when meditating on particular texts. Ignatius suggests in the first preludes to the *Exercises,* which are often meditations on Biblical scenes, that the exercitant create a mental image of the place. 'It should be noted,' Ignatius writes 'at this point that when the meditation or contemplation is on a visible object, for example, contemplating Christ our Lord during His life on earth, the image will consist of seeing with the mind's eye the physical place where the object we wish to contemplate is present' (Gleason 1989:54). Ignatius has an intuition into the importance of conscious images and their effect on the unconscious. Conscious images can direct deep unconscious stirrings. In the *kataphatic* approach, as attention is paid to the development of conscious images and symbols, these images in turn name and direct unconscious movements.

Unlike *kataphatic* mysticism, *apophatic* mysticism eschews subjective images, desires and dreams, deliberately suspending conscious reflection on them. It is useful to turn to one of the most prominent of the *apophatic* mystics, Meister Eckhart (d. 1328 CE), to explore how this approach has been interpreted historically in the Christian tradition.

5.3.2 *APOPHATIC MYSTICISM – MEISTER ECKHART (D. 1328)*

Meister Eckhart has been known as the father of German mysticism and the greatest of all mystics. Several authors refer to him with honour as 'the man from whom God hid nothing' (O'Neal 1996, Brown 2005, McGinn 2003). He is known as a philosopher and a theologian, but it was as a mystic that Eckhart excelled. In his day, Eckhart enjoyed

success as a popular preacher and churchman of high rank in his order, the Dominicans. However, Eckhart was the one of the most prominent theologian of the medieval period to be formally charged with heresy. The shock of his trial for heresy and the condemnation of some of his work by Pope John XXII (d. 1334) in *Agro Dominco* (1329) cast a shadow over his reputation and a lingering suspicion over his orthodoxy that has lasted to this day.[2] Ratzinger (1989:12) in a *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of Christian Meditation* referenced Meister Eckhart and wrote, 'Still others do not hesitate to place that absolute without images or concepts, which is proper to Buddhist theory, on the same level as the majesty of God revealed in Christ, which towers above finite reality .... Thus they propose abandoning not only meditation on the salvific works accomplished in history by the God of the Old and New Covenant, but also the very idea of the One and Triune God, who is Love, in favour of an immersion in the indeterminate abyss of the divinity.'

Interior renewal and the indwelling of God were key elements in Eckhart's mysticism. According to Eckhart, Christ became a child of a human being in order that we might become children of God*.* Eckhart states*,* 'Why did God become man? So that I might be born of the same God' (Fox [1980]/2000:356).

To enter into the apophatic experience, a certain degree of asceticism is necessary. Like all of Eckhart's spirituality, asceticism is not understood as external practice. It is primarily psychodynamic. Indeed, Eckhart's resistance to, perhaps even rejection of, exterior penance as unhelpful in leading towards union with God is outlined clearly in the *Talks of Instructions*:

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[2] Since 1980. the Dominican Order and the International Eckhart Society have tried to obtain an official declaration from the papacy to acknowledge 'the exemplary character of Eckhart's activity and preaching and to recommend his writings…as an expression of authentic Christian mysticism and as trustworthy guides to the Christian life according to the spirit of the gospel' (cf McGinn 2001:193, n2) To date no such statement has appeared, although Pope John Paul II quoted Eckhart with approval in an address in 1985. In 1992, then Master of the Dominican Order Timothy Radcliffe noted that the Order had tried to have the censure on Eckhart lifted and were told that there was really no need since he had never been condemned by name, just some propositions which he was supposed to have held, and so we are perfectly free to say that he is a good and orthodox theologian (Mills 2003:63)

> Many people think that they are performing great works by outward things such as fasting, going barefoot, or other such things which are called penance. But the true and best penance is that whereby one improves greatly and in the highest degree; and that is that a person should experience a complete and perfect turning away from whatever is not entirely God and divine in themselves and in all creatures, and have a full, perfect and complete turning towards their beloved God in unshakeable love, so that their devotion and yearning for Him are great (McGinn and Colledge 1981:33-34).

Central to Eckhart's ascesis is detachment. Detachment is a central component in the apophatic approach. Detachment is a well winnowed term and popularized in recent times by the interest in Eastern religions. Eckhart, articulating a fairly common Buddhist theme, writes, 'all suffering comes from love and attachment. So if I suffer on account of transitory things, then I and my heart have love and attachment for temporal things, I do not love God with all my heart and do not yet love that which God wishes me to love with Him' (Woods 2005:19). Detachment, or as Eckhart described it in the vernacular German of his day *abegescheidenheit,* is an integral aspect of apophatic spirituality. It forms the praxis of apophatic mysticism and speaks in a practical way to appropriate psychodynamic disposition. Schurmann (2001:81-82) examines the etymology of the term *abegescheidenheit,* in order to better understand its meaning. *Abegescheidenheit* (in modern German *Abgeschiedenheit*) is formed of the prefix *ab-* which designates a separation[3] and the verb *scheiden* or *gescheiden.* In its transitive form, this verb means 'to isolate', 'to split', 'to separate,' and in its intransitive form, 'to depart,' 'to die'. The word *abegescheidenheit* evokes, in the illusive thought of Meister Eckhart, a mind that is on the way to dispossession from all exteriority which might spoil its serenity. The difficulty in interpreting Meister Eckhart stems from the necessity of reproducing in ourselves the disposition that allows such an encounter to occur. Some analysis of the notion of detachment, therefore, is helpful in order to understand the apophatic approach.

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[3] *abetuon*: to rid oneself of something; *abekêre*: turning away, apostasy

5.3.3 DETACHMENT (ABEGESCHEIDENHEIT)

Eckhart did not develop any specific techniques to facilitate detachment. As Lancaster (2001:41) writes, Eckhart eschews technical practices warning that whoever seeks God with a special technique gets the technique but misses God, who lies hidden in it. Eckhart's writings are invariably directed to the ends and not the means. Eckhart, as Merton ([1968]/1989:54) notes, did not have the kind of mind that wasted time being cautious about every comma: he trusted people to recognize that what he saw was worth seeing because it brought obvious fruits of life and joy. The peace that detachment offers is the peace that comes from taking every moment without expectation, anxiety or promise (Stephens 2005:36). Eckhart states:

> Every attachment to every work deprives one of the freedom to wait upon God in the present and to follow him alone in the light with which he would guide you in what to do and what to leave alone, free and renewed in every present moment, as if this were all that you had ever had or wanted or could do. Every attachment or every work you propose deprives you again and again of this freedom (McGinn and Colledge 1981:178).

Abegescheidenheit becomes key in terms of receptivity of the Divine truth and becoming one with God (*unitas indistinctionis*). Eckhart's *abegescheidenheit* is a 'cutting away' or 'letting go' of things. (McGinn 2000:4). A somewhat contemporary understanding of Eckhart's understanding can be found in the expression of Thoreau ([1854]/1985:75):

> I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear...I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to cut a broad swath and shave close.....

Eckhart frames *abegescheidenheit* in two ways (biblical and philosophical) - both of which speak to the same psychodynamic reality. Schurmann (2001:18) writes, 'Detachment has been described as a passive attitude: the receptive intellect and virginity - one a philosophical figure of thought, the other biblical - both speak of the absence of any determination of the mind.' Such a passive disposition does not lead to withdrawal, quietism or resignation. On the contrary, it forms a *pointe vierge* for action. For medieval

women and monastics, virginity, properly understood, had less to do with physicality than it did with interior disposition. The narrow sexual resonances that we associate with the concept of virginity in our modern era spring, as Dworkin (Norris 1996:200) writes, 'from a male frame of reference which sees virginity as a state of passive waiting or vulnerability; it precedes and is antithetical to wholeness. But in the women's frame, virginity is a fuller experience of selfhood and identity. In the male frame, virginity is virtually synonymous with ignorance; in the woman's frame, it is recovery of the capacity to know by direct experience of the world.' It is in this positive, spirit-affirming perspective that Eckhart speaks of the 'negative' concept of *abegescheidenheit.* Eckhart's feminine conceptions and practical applications of his spirituality were shared by other apophatic mystics of the period such as Marguerite Porete (d.1310), who echoed these themes.

Lichtmann (1994) points out the similarity between Eckhart and Porete concerning *abegescheidenheit*. Eckhart's *abegescheidenheit* like Porete's *aneantissement,* or annihilation, relentlessly purifies the soul of attachment to works, to the will of God, or to heavenly reward. Yet, where Eckhart has an *abegescheidenheit* that is literally a cutting away, Porete has an *aneantissement*, a gradual 'becoming what one is most deeply' (Lichtmann 1994:84) For both Porete and Eckhart, the apophatic approach facilitates becoming what one is most deeply. There is a mistaken notion that the more quiet apophatic approach makes one remote and distant. This is mistaken. The apophatic approach is not at all contrary to human passion. Eckhart writes:

> Our upright people, however, say that we must become so perfect that no kind of joy can move us any longer that we must be immoveable to joy or sorrow. They are wrong in this matter. But I say that there was never a saint so great that he or she could not be moved ....This was not the case even for Christ. He let us know this when he said: 'My soul is grieved to the point of death' (Mt. 26:38) (Fox [1980]/2000:484).

For Eckhart, living fully out of the consciousness of truth that is derived from the apophatic approach is more important than memorizing dogmas. In that respect Eckhart is thoroughly contemporary and speaks to the postmodern passion for a living experience over static formula. Berdyaev (1957:v) put it well when he wrote:

> My philosophical thinking does not take a scientific form: it is not ratiocinative, it belongs intuitively to life. Spiritual experience lies at the very foundation of it, and its driving power is a passion for freedom. I do not think discursively. It is not so much that I arrive at truth as that I take my start from it.

For Eckhart, the unconscious landscape is where God's activity takes place. By focussing mysticism within the unconscious landscape, Eckhart and Ignatius, while representing different mystical traditions and psychodynamic movements, nonetheless exemplify that mysticism is an inherent part of the human psyche as it crafts meaning and purpose in life.

Recently, the mystical phenomenon has been studied with respect to the brain; leading researchers such as D'Aquili and Newberg (1999) to develop what they refer to as neurotheology. As mentioned at the outset of the chapter, this discovery is an exciting one for those involved in both spirituality and mental health.

5.4 NEUROTHEOLOGY

D'Aquili and Newberg (1999) argue that the neuropsychiatric approach to the mystical experience establishes that there are certain core elements that appear to be universal and that can be separated from particular cultural matrices. From a strictly neuropsychiatric perspective our God consciousness is necessarily interpreted by the brain which gives us our sense of all reality.

Neuroscientists have divided the brain into two main subdivisions. These subdivisions have implications in terms of understanding the neurological basis for the difference between *apophatic* and *kataphatic* mystical approaches. Additionally, observation of these hemispheres has given researchers insight into the neurological basis of the 'mystical' mind allowing us to appreciate the fact that mystical experience is a constitutive aspect of our natural human life.

5.4.1 *LEFT AND RIGHT HEMISPHERES AS THEY RELATE TO APOPHATIC AND KATAPHATIC MYSTICAL APPROACHES*

From classic research in brain chemistry we know that the main subdivision of the brain is that of the left and right hemisphere. Each hemisphere contains a cerebral cortex, which is generally considered to be the seat of higher level cognitive functions as well as sensory and motor control. The left cerebral cortex receives and analyzes sensation from, and generates movement in, the right side of the body, and the right cerebral cortex receives and analyzes sensation from, and generates movement in the left side. The classic teaching is that the left hemisphere is more involved with analytical and mathematical processes, as well as the time sequential and rhythmical aspects of consciousness. The left hemisphere is also the usual site of the language center, which is that part of the brain that understands and produces written and oral language (D'Aquili and Newberg 1999:28).

The right hemisphere is usually more involved with abstract thought distinct from language, non-verbal awareness of the environment, visual-spatial perception and the perception, expression and modulation of most aspects of emotionality (D'Aquili and Newberg 1999:28). While each of these left and right centers operate independently and can create what appear to be two separate consciousnesses we also need to see how they work together. In examining the left and right brain hemispheres it is important to realize that each hemisphere has a relationship with the other. For example, even though the major language center may be in the left hemisphere, the right hemisphere also has an area that concentrates on language. The language area in the right hemisphere comprehends and generates emotional inflection in the language. Thus, the left and right hemisphere work together in such a manner that the left hemisphere can understand *what* is being said, and the right hemisphere can understand *how* it is being said in terms of emotional nuance (D'Aquili and Newberg 1999:28). Additionally the right hemisphere provides the 'space' in which the stimulus from the left is placed. This has relevance for what occurs neurologically with different mystical approaches.

5.4.2 *APOPHATIC MYSTICISM FROM A NEUROLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE*

When deliberate suspension of cognitive activity occurs in *apophatic* styled mystical meditation, definite neurological reactions can be observed. In *apophatic* mysticism, one starts with the intent to clear the mind of thoughts and words. This results in a partial *deafferentation* of the *right* orientation association area located in the right hemisphere. Deafferentation is a technical term, which refers to the process whereby incoming information (i.e. afferents) into the brain are 'cut off' (i.e. *de*-afferented). This cutting off, which is generated through meditative techniques, is an actual physiological process. In apophatic states, there is a deliberate attempt not to pay attention to direct sensory input (D'Aquili and Newberg 1999:111). The deafferentation of the right orientation association area consists of blocking input from the verbal-conceptual association area as well as from specific sensory modalities of the left area. Since the right orientation association area is concerned with generating a sense of space in which to orient incoming stimuli, the deafferentation of this orientation (which is the point of *apophatic* meditation) does not result in unusual visions, sounds or tactile sensations. Hence one rarely hears description of ecstasies reported from *apophatic* mystics. Instead, the deafferentation that occurs in apophatic mysticism results in an absolute subjective sensation of pure space (D'Aquili and Newberg 1999:112). At the same instant that the right orientation association area is totally deafferented, the left orientation association area is likewise deafferented. This process results in the obliteration of the self-other dichotomy at precisely the same moment that the deafferentation of the right orientation association area is associated with a sense of absolute transcendent wholeness. D'Aquili and Newberg (1999:112) believe that this results in the subject's attainment of a state of rapturous transcendence and absolute wholeness that conveys such overwhelming power and strength that the subject has the sense of experiencing absolute reality. How this process has been described in mystical language by some Christian *apophatic* mystics will be described below.

5.4.3 *KATAPHATIC MYSTICISM FROM A NEUROLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE*

In *kataphatic* mysticism, one begins with the subject willing or intending *not* to clear the mind but to focus either on a mental image or external physical object. Because the

person is calling forth an image from memory, whether it be a religious symbol or a past memory, it is affected by the stimulatory impulses running from the right attention association area since, as was stated above, the right hemisphere generates emotional nuance in what is being said or thought. Because attention is focussed so intensely on a particular image or memory, there is a corresponding ongoing and powerful stimulation (*not* deafferenting) coming from the right association area. In this way the left and right areas are working together. However, in the case of *kataphatic* mysticism the impulses are facilitatory and stimulating, *not* inhibiting or deafferenting, as in *apophatic* mysticism (D'Aquili and Newberg 1999:114). The result is nonetheless the same; self-other dichotomy is obliterated during this period of time (D'Aquili and Newberg 1999:116). However, the feeling is different. It is ecstatic. The person feels absorbed *into* the object, or is one with the object (D'Aquili and Newberg 1999:116). How this process has been described in mystical language by some Christian *kataphatic* mystics will be described below.

5.4.4 *THE DIFFERENCES IN GOD CONSCIOUSNESS AS A RESULT OF THE APOPHATIC AND KATAPHATIC METHOD*

The diverse 'God' consciousness that is produced in *apophatic* and *kataphatic* approaches is related to different methodological approaches. Either method leads to differing experiences of what D'Aquili and Newberg (1999:109) describe as 'absolute unitary being'. For example, most mature mystics who practice *apophatic* mysticism tend to experience a quiescent effect, while those who practice *kataphatic* mysticism tend to experience an ecstatic effect. In terms of God imaging, the quiescent experience tends to be interpreted impersonally, as the peace and emptiness of the absolute ground of being (the nameless or no-thing God), while in the ecstatic experience, the person feels absorbed into the object of meditation (God is everywhere).

Neuropsychiatric analysis sheds light on why there is a difference in articulation (and consequently a different approach to prayer and meditation) concerning mystical experience, even among mystics of the same religious confession. For example, the *apophatic* experience lends itself to a certain depersonalization of the Divine while the *kataphatic* experience lends itself to seeing the divine in all things. The apophatic

experience described by D'Aquili and Newberg is clearly seen in the *apophatic* mystic Mechtild of Magdeburg (d.1279) and Meister Eckhart. The *kataphatic* experience is clearly seen with Ignatius of Loyola. A brief overview of these mystic's spiritual experience will serve to illustrate how the mystical mind described neurologically by D'Aquili and Newberg is described in classic religious language.

Mechtild frequently employs the image of the desert in describing her mystical thought. The desert is the landscape of consciousness which when emptied receives the fullness of God. Mechtild (Tobin 1994:49) writes that God whispers to His beloved within the confines of this desert. It is our clinging to external forms, ideas and multiplicity that keeps us from entering the desert. One lives in the true desert if one loves *das niht* (nothing) and flees *das iht* (something). For Mechtild, one must stand alone, not seek consolation, console others, keep busy but be free of all things (Tobin 1994:49). In this way, through detachment as described by Eckhart, the mind experiences a breakthrough, where, 'I am unborn, and following the way of my unborn being I can never die.' The Lord then leads the noble detached mind into a desert and speaks, 'One with one, one of one, one in one, and in one forever' (Tobin 1994:50). The apophatic experience is described by Mechtild as 'sinking', a kind of psychological descent. However this descent does not provoke anxiety or fear. On the contrary, 'the more deeply she sinks - the more sweetly she drinks' (Tobin 1994:51). It is interesting that Mechtild uses the word 'sink' to describe her experience. This is not ecstatic language.

For Ignatius, the experience is similar but it culminates in an active, personal and ecstatic apprehension of the Divine in all of creation. Ignatius suggests as a meditation in the fourth and final week of the Spiritual Exercises:

> *The second point* is to consider how God dwells in His creatures: in the elements, giving them being; in the plants, giving them life; in the animals, giving them sensation; in men, giving them understanding. So He dwells in me, giving me being, life, sensation, and intelligence, and making a temple of me, since He created me to the likeness and image of His Divine Majesty (Gleason 1989:104).

Ignatius suggests that the exercitant think about God as an *active* worker in the world.

> The third point is to consider how God works and labours for me in all created things on the face of the earth, that is, He conducts Himself as one who labours; in the heavens, the elements, plants, fruits, flocks, etc. He gives them being, preserves them, grants them growth, sensation, etc. Then I will reflect on myself (Gleason 1989:104).

These differences suggest that diverse methods produce differing orientations. Rohr (1992:226), for example, suggests that *apophatic* styled meditation is more natural for the 'gut centre' types. The latter refers to people who operate out of sensation and instincts. It is one of the three typologies in the Enneagram (the other two being mind centered and emotional centered). Rohr notes that meditation practices in which they are entirely by themselves and in their body are best for these people (Rohr 1992:226). The reason for this is because apophatic styled mysticism will facilitate a space in which to contextualize and calm the raw emotional response to life typical of 'gut centre' types.

Irrespective of the method, meditation of either type has its benefits. Newberg (2006) refers to academic literature that shows that people who meditate tend to have better mental states, lower levels of depression and anxiety and decreased drug and alcohol abuse. Clearly, opening up the mystical literature of the Christian tradition is a useful means to assist people in their personal integration. Mysticism, in either its *kataphatic* or *apophatic* form, does not seek to rupture the person but to assist in deepening the experience of what it means to be fully human. This process entails a change in perceptual experience; however, that change does not lead to the dissolution of the integrity of the human person. As Merton ([1961]/1990:166) writes:

> In mystical experience the spirit of the person is indeed aware of the reality of God as 'Other' immanently present within itself, but the more conscious it becomes of His reality and of His 'otherness' the more it (the spirit of the person) also becomes conscious of the union and 'sameness' which unite Him to itself. And this is the great paradox without which mysticism would become schizophrenia, splitting man's (sic) whole personality and destroying him, instead of unifying and integrating and perfecting him in the highest degree.

5.5 DIFFERENTIATING MYSTICISM AND PSYCHOSIS

Psychosis and mysticism need to be seen separately. Unlike the mystical experience, in psychosis the perceptual change in experience leads to increasing fragmentation and confusion:

> In psychosis (and drug experiences that go wrong, or shade into psychosis), the orderly return does not happen. The individual finds themselves (sic) stranded beyond the reach of their constructs or propositional subsystem, trying to operate in the world. Not surprisingly this is extraordinarily difficult. The familiar boundaries between people, events, time and space are not accessible as before. Telepathy seems normal. Other people can read, and worse, interfere with, the individual's thoughts. Coincidences abound - everything is connected and everything is disconnected. Everything is possible and nothing is possible. Where this new reality might be exhilarating for a short while, the sustained experience is terrifying. The desperate sufferer tries to make sense of the unfamiliar environment, clutching at whatever connections come to hand. In this way delusions, which usually have their origin in the early stage of the breakdown, are born. In another dissolution of normal boundaries, internal concerns are experienced as external communication, and the person hears voices. Normal thought is disrupted - or as the psychiatrist would say, disordered (Clarke 1998:1).

One of the major differences between psychotic states and mystical states is that phenomena that may occur in acute psychotic states, such as self-destructive acts and aggressive and sexual outbursts, are not part of the mystical experience, though the latter have been observed in some states of 'possession' (Buckley 1981:521). Another noticeable difference between the psychotic and mystical experience is the experience of terror and fear. It was observed that people with schizophrenia who reported mystical experience also reported a significantly higher incidence of terror and fear. These results are notable because scholars such as Hood (1975) do not include these emotions as characteristic of mystical states. Those who do include these emotions in their description of mystical states often speak of a developmental process in which these negative emotional states are eventually extinguished (Siglag 1986:134).

To address this issue more specifically, the work of Siglag (1986) whose research was conducted on a group of seventy-five adult people experiencing schizophrenia. The study was intended to address specific questions about the relationship between schizophrenic and mystical states.

On of the purpose's of Siglag's study was to determine whether those people experiencing schizophrenia who claim to make a claim that they have undergone a mystical experience differ from those who do not make such a claim. Siglag (1986:130) found that individuals who experienced a mystical state are more likely to see a sense of oneness and unity within the world. They are also more likely to see their experience as valid and meaningful. One of the differences identified between the schizophrenic experience and the mystical one was that experiences having to do with sexuality are more central to schizophrenic experience than mystical experience. Siglag (1986:133) suggests that one way of explaining the emergence of sexuality as a factor for individuals experiencing schizophrenia is that they re in a state of consciousness where they are struggling with issues of sexuality and sexual identity whereas mystical experiencers, presumably, do not have the same need to deal with similar issues pertaining to sexuality.

Siglag (Siglag 1986:137) finds that the mystical experience questionnaire used in his research showed sensitivity in distinguishing qualities of schizophrenic states which are similar to mystical states, and highlighting types of experiences which are central for schizophrenic states but not for mystical states. This is important since we now have appropriate tools for measuring characteristics of mystical states and can empirically assess questions about the relationship between mystical and other states of consciousness.

A second central finding was that individuals with schizophrenia who had a mystical experience were more likely than individuals who had not had not undergone a mystical experience to have experienced a sense of unity, oneness or connectedness with the

world. They were more likely to report a range of affective experiences, and are more likely to have experienced joyful, peaceful states of consciousness. They are more likely to experience a sense of sacredness and holiness. Finally they are more likely to see their experience as valid and meaningful than other individuals with schizophrenia (Siglag 1986:138).

Many researchers have observed that both schizophrenic and mystical states reflect the manner in which individuals respond to extreme stress or the need to reorganize their lives (Karon and Vandenbos 1981; Boisen 1936; Laing 1967). The mystical experience offers coherence, clarity and peace; this is in contrast to the schizophrenic experience which produces further confusion and disintegration. By clearly understanding the nature of the mystical experience, mental health professionals are now in a better position to distinguish mystical experiences from psychotic ones. This differentiation allows mental health practitioners to appreciate the integration that can be facilitated by a mystical approach.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Given the frequency of reported mystical experience, the scientific exploration of this dimension of human experience is important. While psychiatry and spirituality function in distinct domains, there are significant areas of overlap. Neuropsychiatric research is validating from a neurological perspective the benefits of mysticism for the human person. Additional research concerning the differences between schizophrenia or psychosis and mysticism also helps to clarify the nature of mysticism. Research is pointing to the conclusion that the mystical quest has profound relevance for achieving meaning and purpose in life.

Given the research that illustrates that mystical experience is an integral aspect of the human person, a recovery of the mystical tradition will fill a much-needed void in society. As Fox (1988:46) notes, a society that denies the mystical and lacks a prophetic religion that insists on the primary role of the mystical within the psyche will fall into various forms of pathological pseudo-mysticism. Indeed, in our contemporary era, we have seen the

ascendancy of various forms of pseudo-mysticism such as nationalism, militarism, fascism, technology, consumerism, fundamentalism, new ageism, asceticism, and psychologism. It is urgent therefore that spirituality should find creative ways to offer what is unique in their tradition to the world. As Tyrrell (1904:26) observed, if true religion does not feed the mind's craving for the mysterious, the wonderful, the supernatural, then the mind will feed on the garbage of any superstition that is offered it. But this is false mysticism and no more discredits the true mysticism of an Eckhart or an Ignatius, than spiritualism discredits spirits or jugglery discredits the miracles of Christ.

This chapter illuminated the nature of mysticism by describing how historically it has been (and continues to be) the spiritual process by which integration and wholeness can be achieved. Historically, there has been some reticence in psychiatry with respect to addressing the mystical dimension of the human person. In recent decades, as new research emerges, we see that this is plainly no longer the case. Neuropsychiatry and the social sciences have joined with spirituality in the articulation of mysticism. This dialogue is leading to an emerging consensus with respect to the efficacy of the mystical experience in people's lives and a renewed interest in how these mystical states might be achieved. There are no better guides than the great saints, mystics and Doctors of the Church whose experience has guided people for well over two millennia. Appropriating their insights in a contemporary context is an important contribution that the speciality of Spirituality can make to mental health.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.

Dickinson [1894]/1993:39

In exploring the value of spirituality in the field of mental health, the ambiguity attached to the term spirituality is clarified. The purpose of spirituality is not to eschew mystery but to ensure that it is articulated in forms that are comprehensible. Spirituality has two dimensions. The first is the person's subjective experience of transcendental meaning. The second is a corporate dimension expressed through cultural and social institutions. These two dimensions have a dialectical relationship each nurturing the other. Historically, religion has provided the categories and language for people to understand and integrate spirituality in their lives. As religious practice has waned new symbols have not emerged to speak to contemporary spirituality. However, spirituality as a human phenomenon remains. Personal and communal spirituality precedes the development of religious institutions. Today religious institutions are only *one* of the many places where personal spirituality is lived out. The task of the present research has been to understand our historical context and articulate the experience of spirituality according to the ethos of our age. Subjectivity, personalism and plurality are strong cultural paradigms in our world today. Consequently, it is important to articulate a contemporary understanding of spirituality along more existential as opposed to theoretical lines. Existential spirituality is that spirituality originally inspired by Kierkegaard (d. 1855) and Nietzsche (d. 1900) which takes human existence as its point of departure and tries to understand it in terms of transcendental meaning. In the contemporary

understanding of the term, spirituality is interpreted phenomenologically and understood according to existentially derived notions. The affirmation of the external, created world as the theatre for the operation of the divine is a strong aspect of contemporary spirituality. The incarnational perspective that the Divine discloses itself in creation and in secular experience is a powerful current in contemporary spirituality. Through reflection on our experience in the world, the world itself discloses the Divine.

Affirmation of the created world as 'other' than ourselves is the starting point for all spiritual reflection. Contemporary spirituality is not an interior construct applied to the world but is an unparalleled openness to the world, to others. Spirituality is disclosed through our own ethical response in human relationships. Contemporary spirituality grants primacy to the ethical. The postmodern philosopher Levinas (1969:79) articulates a contemporary spirituality well when he writes that ethics is the 'spiritual optics'. There can be no 'knowledge' of God separated from the relationship with people. The Other is the very locus of metaphysical truth, and is indispensable for a relationship with God.

Spirituality has now evolved towards a holistic orientation. Traditionally, ascetic or mystical theology covered much of what is intended by the term spirituality. Given the emphasis on community, culture, anthropology, language, and mental health, spirituality must broaden its scope to account for the presence of the afore-mentioned. The holistic approach makes the study of spirituality infinitely more complex than its dichotomous nineteenth-century forebear. It is no longer possible for us to fragment the human person into parts and faculties, into inner and outer, into personal and social. We are all of these things at once and much of the spiritual task consists precisely in bringing this rich multi-facetedness into unity. The value of spirituality is qualitative. It is actualized in the secrecy of the person's own subjective consciousness, but lived in concrete action. All of the historical factors with respect to religion and culture are brought to bear in the

study of spirituality but not in such a way as to try to create some kind of meta-spiritual 'over-system'. In our contemporary age it is not unusual to hear people say that they consider themselves spiritual but not religious. Spirituality represents something personal, positive, and liberating while religion is perceived as institutional, dogmatic and doctrinaire. Consequently, there exists an inevitable and seemingly unbridgeable chasm between religion and spirituality. This chasm is bridged by making an important distinction between religion and spirituality. While religion has provided an important place wherein people are able to express their deepest desires and be nourished by important traditions, the identification of spirituality with the institutional structure of the church is a misunderstanding of both the nature of spirituality as well as the nature of religion. Spirituality is not a categorical object imposed on a group by monolithic religious institutions. Instead spirituality is disclosed through the particularities of the local community's self-understanding derived from its own historical culture, tradition and the prophetic voices and charismatic leaders that emerge from these communities.

Spirituality concerns itself with what is most human and what is most human transcends categorization. It is *disclosed*. Scientific disciplines, particularly those scientific disciplines such as mental health, that have as their subject the human person, need to allow space whereby the animating and transcendent principle present within the human person may 'come to presence' in consciousness. The major question addressed in this dissertation has been: *How is spirituality understood scientifically and clinically within mental health?* The results of this enquiry are now elucidated.

Most people would agree with what seems like a common sense proposition, namely, the reality of people with mental health problems. Indeed, In *General Psychopathology*, Jaspers ([1946]/1963:778) writes that the various manifestations of psychosis are the unsolved problems of human life. The fact

that they exist is the concern of everyone. This concern is one of the mainsprings of our desire for greater understanding of mental health. The paradox is that the understanding of what constitutes mental health is largely determined by the cultural mores of any given society in history. As Jaspers ([1946]/1963:780) notes, the meaning of 'sick' in general terms depends largely on the prevailing conceptions of contemporary culture. With the great majority of physical disorders, this dynamic not so noticeable, but with mental health disorders, it is very evident. Consequently it is useful to think of mental health in terms of the history of the 'manufacture' of madness, that is, the idea that labeling insanity is primarily a social act, a cultural construct. The research concludes that one can show that the medicalization of madness, in other words, the organization of medical knowledge around individuals designated as mad, is connected to a series of social and economic processes at a particular time in history, and also with institutions and practices of power.

Historically, madness was perceived as one pole of a *spiritual* experience. It contained both divine and destructive elements. Madness, prophecy and creative genius were linked to the same spirit. The embrace of the irrational (or madness) is connected with art and truth. Indeed, Plato has Socrates connecting madness with art. The term used by the Greeks to describe the *spirit* of madness was *daimon.* May (1969:123) defines the demonic as any natural function which has the power to take over the whole person. Sex and eros, anger and rage, and the craving for power are examples. The demonic is either creative or destructive and is normally both. When the power goes awry and one element usurps control over the total personality, we have 'demon possession', the traditional name throughout history for psychosis. Among the ancients, restoration from mental agitation to a sense of equilibrium was connected to both the art of medicine and/or the practice of spirituality.

The later medieval period in Western culture adopted a biblical cosmology influenced both by the New Testament and Greek philosophical thought, which

eventually accepted 'demons' as the culprit for all manner of deviant behaviour, including madness. Demonology became the psychiatry of the day. The medieval period understood some aspects of madness as religious; derived directly from God and manifested in ecstasies or in prophetic powers and others as evil and destructive influenced by Satan requiring the agency of exorcists. May (1969:167) notes that the way we have historically overcome the demonic is by naming it. In this way, the human being forms *personal meaning* out of what was previously merely a threatening *impersonal chaos*. While 'demons' and 'diagnoses' are not altogether synonymous terms, in point of fact spiritual and psychological constructs are not mutually exclusive. They are differing names given to similar manifestations of behaviour or thought.

In the age of reason, that is the period of the Enlightenment, madness was dissasociated from any transcendent source. The growing importance of science and technology, the development of bureaucracy, and the formalization of the law, each made their contribution to an amorphous but inexorable process of prizing rationality, as understood by those 'right-thinking' members of society who imposed social norms. In terms of the cultural impact, from around the mid-seventeenth century, a similar process of redefinition was afoot tending to deny the validity of religious madness. The Modern period saw a fundamental change in how medicine was understood and practiced. As a consequence of modern medical evolution (which preceded the emergence of mental health but is nonetheless related), we should not be surprised, as Rose (1994:68) points out, that health has replaced salvation in our ethical system; that the doctor has supplanted the priest.

'Our own age,' writes Jaspers ([1946]/1963:807), 'is characterized by the fact that psychiatrists are now performing in secular fashion what earlier was performed on the grounds of faith. The basic medical knowledge of the doctor derives from the natural sciences and constantly colours the situation but, whether he (sic)

wants to or not, he (sic) is always exercising some psychological and moral influence.'

The modern approach to mental health is no longer viable. Postmodern philosophers such as Lyotard (1992:79) identify technoscientific development, characteristic of the Enlightenment and the modern period, as being a cause of deepening our malaise rather than being an agent in allaying it. It is clear that there is a meaningless and oppressiveness attached to a purely technological approach to mental health. Development in modern mental health, including strides in pharmacology, has had its benefits. However, these developments are accompanied by an obscuring of core human values. The research concludes that in our contemporary landscape the discourse of medicine has become saturated with questions concerning the meaning of life. Consequently, it is precisely with respect to the existential question of values that the dialogue between spirituality and mental health takes place

Therefore, as stated, mental health is now moving beyond its modernist framework. Faith in the ability of psychology and psychiatry alone to resolve human problems is diminished. Researchers refer to this dynamic as 'post-psychiatry'. As a means of distinguishing it from the modern period, it is referred to in the present research as 'postmodern mental health'. Postmodern mental health emphasizes social and cultural contexts. No discipline can be an island unto itself nor claim totality over the range of human experience. Consequently, postmodern mental health invites a vital and critical dialogue between various disciplines including spirituality. Spirituality places ethics before technology. With spirituality our attention is directed towards ethics – towards justice and love, and it is above all these realities that are manifestations of the divine. Indeed, the present research concludes that spirituality is *disclosed* through our own ethical response in human relationships. Spirituality has concrete implications in the field of mental health.

One word provides the context in which the value in spirituality in the field of mental health can be succinctly expressed. That word is *holistic.* A contemporary understanding of spirituality in the field of mental health presumes a holistic approach. Simply put, holism means that the 'whole' is greater than the sum of all its parts. It is the opposite of reductionism. Reductionism is basically the view that complex phenomena are *reducible* to simpler 'building block' elements from which they were constructed (Hersch 2003:155). A holistic understanding does not objectify the human person but is instead a search for the appropriate *relationships* between the various elements and aspects of the person. A holistic understanding does not close the horizon of our knowledge as reductionism does. In contradistinction to reductionism, holisim is ready to adopt any method and asks only for those universal scientific criteria: general validity, convincing insights (which can be proved), clarity of method and the possibility for meaningful dialogue. Perspectives and approaches are limitless. Each has their value but none can ultimately be totalizing. A holistic approach to mental health takes the data of the particular discipline (such as psychiatry, sociology, psychology, neurology, spirituality, etc.,) and seeks ways to integrate that data with new knowledge and interpretations that surface. The nature of holism requires creativity with keen attention to current research.

Modern scientific advancement in mental health has tended to support discourses whose function is to repair that which is broken (technology) as opposed to awaken that which is latent. The human person is a mechanism that with proper manipulation can be repaired in order to function properly within society. It is the goal of the doctor with increasing technical skill to unlock the perplexing problem of mental illness and repair the person. Irrespective of the mode of treatment, the person is viewed mechanically. As a result of contemporary research in mental health such a mechanistic approach characteristic of the modern era is no longer viable. The fundamental structure of human consciousness is being looked at differently as a consequence of holistic approaches.

Consciousness is not simply a product of the brain but a primary principle of existence and reflective of the cosmic principle itself. Supporting a holistic approach, Jaspers ([1946]/1963:753) writes:

> The individual possesses something in addition which is not found in the hereditary connections…At some decisive point every individual is as it were, in theological language 'created' from a source of his own and not merely a processing of a modified hereditary substance…Far from being the sum of his hereditary factors (which would be quite correct for his material preconditions and determinants) the individual is directly created of God

Specific methods such as Frankl's logotherapy lend themselves to a holistic approach. According to Frankl, logotherapy is a therapy that dares to enter the spiritual dimension of human existence. In fact, *logos* is a Greek term that refers not only to intelligibility but also to 'spirit' - to a universal divine reason, immanent in nature, yet transcending all oppositions and imperfections in the cosmos and humanity. Logotherapy emerged from an awareness of this spiritual dynamic at work in the unconscious, based on Frankl's personal perspective and his experience and observation. With logotherapy the role of the psycho-therapist is one of liberator and not as one who imposes discourses derived from psychoanalytic theories onto a passive client. The liberation fostered by holistic therapies such as logotherapy is an awakening to the marvel of the world. The way in which the logos of the human person is discovered is by paying attention to the hopes, dreams and desires of the client which is disclosed and clarified through the psychotherapeutic relationship. If the human person can find a 'why' to their existence, then they will discover a 'how' to live out that meaning to the fullest.

The inclusion of *mysticism* is an important aspect of a holistic approach to mental health. While spirituality assists in crafting meaning, purpose and change in life, mysticism goes deeper. The mystical experience carries with it an existential and

transformative change in the person in whom it occurs. The world itself is perceived anew. Authentic mystical experience has historically been able to unify the deep structures of exteriority and interiority, otherness and sameness, the divine and the human. For this reason it is beneficial to open up the received wisdom of the mystical tradition of the Church in order that it becomes more widely diffused within the world, and particularly within the area of mental health. Afterall, as Jaspers ([1946]1963:806) notes the greatest successes in mental health have not come from psychiatrists but to shamans, priests, leaders of sects, wonder-workers, confessors and spiritual guides of earlier times. Neuropsychiatry has joined with spirituality in the articulation of mysticism. This dialogue is leading to an emerging consensus with respect to the efficacy of the mystical experience in people's lives and a renewed interest in how these mystical states might be achieved.

Mysticism is, in a certain sense, 'hardwired' in our brains and is a natural constituent of human personality. The mystical basis of the human mind can be demonstrated neurologically by researchers in the field of neuro-psychiatry. Neuroscientists have divided the brain into two main subdivisions. From classic research in brain chemistry we know that the main subdivision of the brain is that of the left and right hemisphere. Each hemisphere contains a cerebral cortex, which is generally considered to be the seat of higher-level cognitive functions as well as sensory and motor control. The left cerebral cortex receives and analyzes sensation from, and generates movement in, the right side of the body, and the right cerebral cortex receives and analyzes sensation from, and generates movement in the left side. The classic teaching is that the left hemisphere is more involved with analytical and mathematical processes, as well as the time sequential and rhythmical aspects of consciousness. The left hemisphere is also the usual site of the language center, which is that part of the brain that understands and produces written and oral language. The right hemisphere is usually more involved with abstract thought distinct from language, non-verbal awareness of the environment, visual-spatial perception and the perception,

expression and modulation of most aspects of emotionality (D'Aquili and Newberg 1999:28). While each of these left and right centers operate independently and can create what appear to be two separate states of consciousness we also need to see how they work together. In examining the left and right brain hemispheres it is important to realize that each hemisphere has a relationship with the other. For example, even though the major language center may be in the left hemisphere, the right hemisphere also has an area that concentrates on language. The language area in the right hemisphere comprehends and generates emotional inflection in the language. Thus, the left and right hemisphere work together in such a manner that the left hemisphere can understand *what* is being said, and the right hemisphere can understand *how* it is being said in terms of emotion. Such research is profoundly relevant for the study of mysticism.

The observation of the left and right hemispheres has given researchers insight into the neurological basis of the 'mystical' mind allowing us to appreciate the fact that mystical experience is a constitutive aspect of our natural human life. The classic left and right brain subdivisions have implications in terms of understanding the neurological basis for the spiritual distinction drawn between *apophatic* and *kataphatic* mystical approaches. Neuropsychiatric research has established that there are certain core elements of mysticism that appear universally. These core elements present themselves in various cultures and religious traditions under differing forms of spiritual practice. As mentioned above, differing forms of spiritual practice can be divided into two main approaches – namely *apophatic* and *kataphatic*. In the Christian tradition, these divergent approaches are illustrated in the doctrine of great *apophatic* mystics and saints such as Meister Eckhart (d. 1327 CE) and Mechtild of Magdeburg (d. 1297 CE) and *kataphatic* mystics such as Ignatius of Loyola (d. 1556 CE). Each type of mysticism produces differing states of consciousness with respect to the relationship between the self and Other. The *kataphatic* approach produces a more ecstatic effect while the apophatic approach produces a more quiescent

effect. Extroverted personalities experiencing intense and visceral reactions to life may benefit from a quiescent experience and so *apophatic* styled meditation may suit them best. Introverts experiencing difficulty connecting with their emotional life may benefit from an ecstatic experience and so *kataphatic* meditation may suit them best. It is not unusual today to find retreat houses, monasteries and convents offering spiritual programs modeled on the *apophatic* and *kataphatic* traditions. Examples of the former include contemplative, centering prayer as popularized by the Cistercian monk Fr. Keating as well as prayers of quiet influenced by Eastern Orthodox traditions such as Hesychasm. Examples of the latter include various forms of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola which are offered in modified and contemporary forms. These traditional mystical approaches correspond to the difference that researchers in neuropsychiatry have discovered in the left and right operations of the brain. The benefit of contemporary neuropsychiatric research is that it sheds light on the neurological basis for mystical experience and bolsters the conclusion of the present research that *mysticism is in fact a natural response to life that lends itself to wholeness and integration*. Something mystics have known for millennia. Hood and Morris (1981:82) conclude that people do not indiscriminately identify their mystical experiences; hence, further investigation into such common experiences is necessary. This could be an area for further research in the field of spirituality and mental health. Not surprisingly mental health is increasingly turning to the ancient mystics for clues as to how to harness such experiences for people suffering from psychological trauma and distress. It is clear that the mystical dimension of life is an integral component of human nature. Research has confirmed that not only is mysticism relatively common, but it is has a noetic element.

Indeed, the present research demonstrates that mysticism can be distinguished from different kinds of psychosis. The pattern of experiences reported by individuals undergoing psychosis differs in identifiable ways from what is generally described as classical mystical experience. For example, the lack of

any distinct unity factor which is present in the mystical experience is not present in the psychotic one. Those experiencing psychosis *do* experience the common mystical experience of loss of orientation and thoughts from one's mind. However, what is noticeably absent is the ability to sense unity in one's world or to organize one's world. The mystical experience in either its *kataphatic* or *apophatic* form leads to a profound sense of integration While mysticism and psychosis each lead to perceptual changes, one of the starkest differences between the mystical experience and the psychotic experience is that the perceptual change in experience in psychosis leads not to deeper integration and wholeness but instead to fragmentation and confusion. There is an order and structure to the mystical experience that manifests itself in external behaviour.

Emotions such as terror and fear are not characteristic of mystical states. Additionally, phenomena that may occur in acute psychotic states, such as self-destructive acts and aggressive and sexual outbursts, are also not part of the mystical experience. The mystical experience offers coherence, clarity and peace; this is in contrast to the psychotic experience which produces further confusion and disintegration. By clearly understanding the nature of the mystical experience, mental health professionals are now in a better position to distinguish mystical experiences from psychotic ones. Not only can mental illness and mysticism be set apart conceptually, we now have criteria available as to how this distinction can be clinically made. Given the foregoing, a further conclusion of the present research maintains that mystical experience is an integral aspect of the human person; therefore, a recovery of the mystical tradition will fill a much-needed void in mental health.

Through continued and sustained inter-disciplinary dialogue, spirituality and mental health continue to converge particularly in the area of mysticism. A clear consensus emerges that through continued research by professionals in both the field of mental health and spirituality the vital change wrought by the mystical experience can be realized. By clearly understanding the value of spirituality for

mental health and by utilizing the tools of the latter we can harness the constructive and positive benefits of mysticism in order to facilitate the full integration of people so that they may have life and have it more abundantly.

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