A Tale of Two Constructs:

How Relational Psychoanalysis Renews Understandings of Religiousness and Spirituality

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Abstract: Reflections on religiousness and spirituality, both in the Christian church and in the field of experimental psychology, have long been riddled with construct confusion and definitional inconsistency. Throughout historical literature and conversation, and even today, the terms are often used interchangeably. However, recent trends have begun to distinguish them from one another. Researchers have noted that spirituality, now more publicly conceived of as a private and phenomenological construct, has recently surpassed religiousness (more interpersonal and institutional) as a self-ascribed characteristic among American populations. Growing distinctions certainly have implications both for the church and for the field of psychology, which are explored here. However, it is proposed here that religiousness and spirituality, as both psychological constructs and elements of a Christian ecclesiology, must remain bound together even as they become distinctly recognized. A relational psychoanalytic theory, and its corresponding therapeutic situation, is offered as an analogical vehicle by which this proposition might be forwarded. The article first presents the origins and developments of distinguishing trends both in experimental psychology and in the Christian church, and implications are considered. Then, relational psychoanalysis is proposed as an organizing theory for a new understanding of these constructs as distinct but mutually intercompleting. Relational psychoanalysis is presented and considered in terms of its historical and ideological developments, and then religiousness and spirituality are thrust into the positions of analyst and analysand respectively. In these roles, it is demonstrated that religiousness, a participatory subject in its own right, bestows upon spirituality an interpretive narration that organizes the rudimentary pieces of individual spirituality. ON the other hand, spirituality provides the stuff that religious narrative is built upon, influencing the larger directions taken by the religious narrative. Together, they form an ongoing mutual feedback loop, together propelling one another in ongoing evolution (or revolution). The article then reflects on the experimental implications of this new organization, noting that while these constructs might beneficially be measured as distinct, they should always be measured conjointly. Finally, ecclesial implications for the Christian church are explored, presenting the new understanding as one that best adjusts the broad Christian tradition to the postmodern climate it presently inhabits.

A recent issue of *The New Yorker* briefly reviewed a new memoir by Barbara Ehrenreich entitled *Living with a Wild God*. According to the brief treatment, the recent publishing chronicles the left-wing and outspoken athiest's wrestlings to define a series of "seemingly transcendental manifestations," eventually concluding that they were indeed "mystical experiences," though with reluctance and inconclusiveness (Garner, 2014). Ms. Ehrenreich, it seems, experienced some metaphysical, albeit private and subjective, sensation and sought some hermeneutical means by which it might be interpreted. "What can such a thing mean for a staunch atheist?" the reviewer asks (CITATION). Her reflections mirror a contemporary trend that seems to be gaining momement, separating spirituality and religion as two separate, even opposing, constructs. Such movements have rather serious implications for interested subfields of experimental psychology and for Christian ecclesiology alike. They raise questions regarding the definitions of both religiousness and spirituality and regarding the relationships between the two.

On the subject of the psychological community, a complex relationship between religiousness and spirituality, constructs that have proven as slippery as they are baffling, has been revealed (e.g., Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Historically, the terms have been used with confusing inconsistency and interchangeability. Nonetheless, the separating trend continues here. The language both in psychological literature and in popular conversation increasingly associates spirituality with the privately phenomenological and religion with the outward and institutional (Pargament, Mahoney, Exline, Jones, & Shafranski, 2013). However, other findings have also suggested that the two remain intimately intertwined (Zinnbauer et al., 1997), and it would be foolish to overlook the sweeping interconnectedness and constructual overlap that remains between them. What this psychological community needs is a richer theoretical framework for understanding this complex relationship (Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger, and Gorsuch, 2003) in such a way that respects

growing distinctness without overlooking their inevitable and valuable mutual overlap. Such a framework might inform the way the experimental community continues to measure them effectively.

The trend certainly has implications for a broader Christian ecclesiology as well. With a growing emphasis on individual spirituality and private experience, coupled with an expanding disregard for institutional or religious unity, comes a consequent abandonment of the historical or communal narratives that can greatly inform and bind together disparate individual spiritual experiences, ultimately providing them with richer meaning. If the bifurcation of these two ecclesial elements, spirituality and religiousness, continues unchecked, the Christian church risks a debilitating loss of identity in the postmodern world. Thus, broader Christian ecclesiology would also benefit from a new way of looking at these increasingly divided elements in such a way that continues to hold them together in intimate mutuality.

It is proposed here that religiousness and spirituality, as both psychological constructs and elements of a Christian ecclesiology, must remain bound together even as they become distinctly recognized. Further, I put forward a relational psychoanalytic theory as an analogical vehicle to demonstrate the necessity of this simultaneous distinctness and mutual oneness, both in experimentation and in Christian ecclesiology. In an effort to complete the proposed tasks, developing psychological views regarding the relationship between religion and spirituality will first be considered, followed by further reflection on the impacts such distinctions have on Christian ecclesiology. With these views in place, the relational psychoanalytic analogy can then be applied, considering the bidirectional forces at work between individual spirituality and institutional religiousness in the dialectic feedback loop. Finally, the analogy can be extended to demonstrate both experimental and ecclesial implications.

Spirituality and Religion: A History of Psychological Terms

Before facilitating an encounter between religiousness, spirituality, and relational psychoanalytic theory it is important to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the construct confusions that have plagued particular areas of psychological research and thought. As suggested above, *spirituality* and *religion* have a long history of interchangeability and inconsistency in the psychological literature and beyond (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005). Experimental and theoretical publications even to this day tend to use the terms indistinguishably. Definitional inconsistencies dating back to the early theorists, James, Hall, and Starbuck, have laid helpful but shaky theoretical grounds by which these terms might be understood and investigated. In his lectures, James distinguished between a personal religiousness and an institutional one. Defining that personal religion as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to…the divine," (p. 39), he holds it in contrast to the worship, sacrifices, theologies, and ceremonies that make up a more institutional religion. Personal religion (similar to what we may call spirituality, today), he suggests, is certainly a part of that institutional religion, but is simply "its unorganized rudiment" (p. 37). With these positions, it seems, the seeds were planted for some construct distinction.

More than 100 years after James' *Varieties* first appeared, the seeds of empirical and theoretical distinctions between these terms are only beginning to grow and emerge in the literature. Hill and Pargament (2008) write

> Thus, one is witnessing, particularly in the United States, a polarization of religiousness and spirituality, with the former representing an institutional, formal, outward, doctrinal, authoritarian, inhibiting expression and the latter representing an

individual, subjective, emotional, inward, unsystematic, freeing expression." (p. 4) A growing body of psychological literature confirms this observation, noting that members of especially Western cultures are beginning to distinguish between religion and spirituality (Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Zinnbauer et al., 1999; Kapuscinski & Masters, 2010; Wink & Dillon, 2008; Wink, 2006). Rising individualism, secular humanism, and wariness towards monolithic institutions has seemingly made way for a boom in spirituality, now popularly labeled as more intrapersonally bound and individually subjective (Zinnbauer et al., 1999). Hill et al. (2000) note that this rising secularism, vibrant in the American 1960s and 1970s, empowered spirituality to gain popular favor as it provided the individual with the means to achieve personal transcendence outside of the negatively connoted and overpowering shadow of religious traditionalism. Vieten et al. (2013) cite several national polls, identifying that, in some contemporary cohorts, upwards of 73% of persons claim to be spiritual but not religious (p. 130).

These results of these experimental developments has seeped into the broader theoretical definitions. The most recently published *APA Handbook of Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality* (Pargament, Mahoney, Exline, Jones, & Shafranski, 2013) uses the increasingly popular definitions. They articulate spirituality as a "search for the sacred" that includes a variety of manifestations of divine or divine-like qualities (p. 14). On the contrary, religiousness is defined as "the search for significance that occurs within the context of established institutions that are designed to facilitate spirituality" (p. 15). These growing distinctions appear to be present in empirical methodology and psychological assessment as well. Strenger, Kim, and Strawn (2014), performing a content analysis of popular psychological measures of spirituality, concluded that items involved in such instruments were far more representative of individualistic models of self-construal rather than relational or collectivistic ones.

Thus, it seems inarguable that spirituality and religion have at the very least begun to distinguish themselves from one another among western traditions. From the perspective of theoretical and empirical psychology, this is a welcome clarification, as it provides some definitional foundations from which further efforts might begin. However we must not be too quick to assume that the two are so distinct as to be entirely separate and mutually exclusive. Interestingly, Zinnbauer et al. (1997) not only revealed distinctions between these constructs, but they simultaneously established a healthy correlation between them as well. The results indicate that participants were able to, at least to an extent, distinguish between religion and spirituality for themselves, but also experienced them, often, as mysteriously linked.

The evidence here supports my thesis. Some construct differentiation may be present, nonetheless they must not be considered in isolation of one another. There are a plethora of conceptions, not all in agreement, that attempt to account for the mutualities between spirituality and religion. James (2004), for example, seemed to suggest that more personal forms of religion (now, perhaps, dubbed as *spirituality*) are subsumed by the umbrella of religiousness when he referred to them as the "unorganized rudiments" (p. 37). On the other hand, spirituality might be considered the broader construct of sacredness, expressed through more specific religious iterations (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005, p. 35). Hill et al. (2000) warn against separating the two constructs too distinctly for two reasons: (1) virtually all religious organizations are oriented around some form of spirituality and (2) every form of religious or spiritual expression invariably expresses itself in some social context (p. 64). Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005) note that to over-polarize these constructs into incompatible opposites is to constrict them. They suggest that limiting religion too much to the sphere of social institutionalization runs the risk of "disconnecting it from the individual, we lose sight of the fact that every major religious institution is fundamentally concerned with personal

belief, emotion, behavior, and experiences" (p. 27). They even suggest a spectrum of terminology

ranging from *religion* (institutional), *religiousness* (individual belief or practice), *spirit* (external

transcendence or internal animating force), and *spirituality* (a sacred human activity) (p. 28).

Additionally, at this point, such a substantial amount of the literature measures empirical impacts of

both religion and spirituality (left undistinguished) that we still have little knowledge about the

differentiated impacts of each separately. As a consequence, at least in the present understanding,

religion and spirituality operate very conjointly. If further insight is to be gained about their

functional distinctions, further empirical research will need to start measuring them as separate, but

related, constructs.

It becomes clear that there are significant challenges ahead for the ongoing exploration of

psychology, spirituality, and religion. A lack of consensus, both in defining the separate terms and in

clarifying their relationships to one another, has made for a fairly erratic and capricious broad

empirical effort (Gorsuch, 1984, 1990; Hill & Hood, 1999). What is needed, in order for the

empirical study of psychology of religion and spirituality to continue productively, is a more fully

developed theory that can approach and organize these two constructs in a way that is simultaneously

sensitive to both their distinctions and their intertwined nature. Nearly all of the leading researchers

in this particular field have called for greater theoretical and definitional clarity going forward (Hill et

al., 2000; Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 2003; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005), particularly

as their interrelatedness appears necessary and ingrained.

The Situation as Viewed from a Broad, Christian Ecclesial Perspective

The separation of the individual spirituality from the institutional religion has certainly

presented challenges for the Christian church. With an emphasis on individually experienced

phenomena and reasoning as the only true foundation, as was presented by Descartes (Murphy,

2001), has come the loss of the foundation as a sturdy theological grounding altogether. Today, the increased popularity of spirituality sans institutional religious systems makes for an increasingly fragmented set of values, which in turn has made it essentially impossible to maintain foundationalism as a philosophically defensible means of universal knowing. Instead, with the help of more contemporary philosophers like Wittgenstein, Peirce, and Rorty, a linguistically bent epistemology of intersubjective coherence has arisen. In this way, the upwards-moving linear methodology of foundationalism, deductively building upon substantiated beliefs and conclusions, gives way to networked and web-like structure of knowledge built upon inductive and abductive collaborations (Murphy, 2001). Of course, this makes it quite difficult for the institution to successfully operate as a monolithic and unchanging arbiter of truth. The ecclesiology of the Christian church as an institution has been left to gasp for air in a new epistemological climate. And as spirituality perhaps separates itself from religion in popular conversations, it seems that a new theoretical framework for holding the two together is essential.

Relational Psychoanalysis: That Theoretical Framework

Many relational theorists identify relational psychoanalysis as more of an emerging tradition than an organized and boundaried school (Hoffman, 2014) which draws from intersubjectivity and constructivist theories common in the postmodern situation. Seminal relational analyst and theorist Lewis Aron (1996) refers to the writings of Ghent when he describes this emerging tradition as holding the complementary relationship between the intrapsychic and the interpersonal as central to its movements (p. 17). These two forces, often seen as competing in earlier psychoanalytic traditions, are viewed not in conflict, but instead as wholly intercompleting. In this way, relational psychoanalytic theory equally values the inner and the outer phenomena of human existence and interaction, seeing specific and unique human relationships as playing a superordinate role in the

development of character and personality (Ghent, 1992a, as cited in Aron, 1996, p. 17). Arguably, such an analytic perspective is a naturally postmodern evolution from the earlier drive theories of Freud and other closely related theorists.

Though certainly revolutionary in their own right, Freud's classical drive theories, seemed to have lacked these relational components. Freud's theories, though perhaps not perceived as such in popular perceptions, were largely biological (Guntrip, 1961). Built upon those ideas that remained foundational to his theories, the instinctive/drive and structural theories, Freud seemed to have a conception of experience that largely originated in the biological impulses bubbling within the individual organism.

In his analysis of Freud's original theories, Guntrip wrote, "The object has no intrinsic, but only utilitarian, value for the ego" (1961, p. 30). Any relational or interpersonal elements of this model, taken simply, ultimately serve the drives of the individual and only find their value in their drive-satisfying function. This is reflected in a classically analytic mode of therapy, often referred to as the one-person model of psychotherapy (Stark, 2000). Centered on the cathartic interpretational and insight-oriented mode of treatment, the model sets the analyst up as an objective observer, revealing the structural conflicts, fueled by instinctive drives, in a manner that is relationally unidirectional.

Of course, Freud's theories and those immediately following were birthed out of a modernist context, particularly relying on logical positivist epistemological perspectives. Freud absolutely viewed his work as scientific, the uncovering of intrapsychic facts. However, with the coming of a postmodern perspective, abandoning logical positivism for social constructivism and contextual

criticism, a more interpretive hermeneutic slowly developed (Aron, 1996, p. 26). No longer did humanity faithfully believe in a representational, "mirrored" view of reality. Instead, we moved towards a perspectival model, understanding the lenses through which reality is viewed and ultimately defined (e.g., Rorty, 1979). Thus came what has often been deemed the relational turn in psychoanalytic thought.

Finding its roots in interpersonal understandings of personhood, as forwarded by the likes of Sullivan beginning in the 1920s, later object relationalists capitalized on shifts in focus to the interpersonal fields of individuals (Mitchell & Black, 1995, p. 62). Arguably, it was W.R.D. Fairbairn who first challenged the drive/structure model outright (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). Rather than conceiving of a libidinal drive seeking pleasure or tension-release, he modified it to seek actual objects themselves (Fairbairn, 1952, p. 137). Through relational frustrations and disappointments, introjections and consequent ego-disintegration occurs, and self-definition is lost. What is proposed, as part of the therapeutic situation, is a corrective experience that reintegrates and strengthens the ego to begin entering into an intimate mutuality with real objects once again (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983, p. 157). The therapeutic end is a developed healthy maturity that is characterized by a capacity for intimate mutuality.

The typical therapeutic situation in many of these object-relations models is often referred to as a one-and-a-half person mode of therapy, involving an analyst that remains an objective and generally unchanging interpreter and provider of a "re-parenting" experience (Stark, 1999, p. 19). As Aron (1996) articulates, the screen of a classically Freudian model has simply been replaced by an empty container, or holder rather (p. 57). This denies, in large part, the subjectivity of the analyst involvement in the co-construction of transferential/counter-transferential relational configuration.

These relational configurations, according to Stephen Mitchell, serve as the primary psychological antagonists (Aron, 1996, p. 34). Thus, relational psychoanalysis, even more so than object relations theory, relies on a relational conception of self, stressing a theory of mind that both originates in and is structured through interpersonal interaction (Hoffman, 2014, p. 163). Though individually internal structures remain important participants, change and self-facilitation arise only within relational configurations between multiple subjectivities. This is important to consider as it demonstrates a certain oneness-with-the times exhibited by the overarching theory. Because it values this intersubjectivity, it coincides with many of the broader constructivist and perspectival epistemological notions common to the postmodern situation.

Consequently, an analytic situation of such a bent is often referred to as a two-person model (Aron, 1996, p. 47). As it involves two acknowledged subjectivities in the co-construction of a therapeutic intended to bring about healthy change, balanced differentiation, and mature dependence inevitably involves a negotiotiation of dialectics. Marie Hoffman, a Christian relational analyst, identifies four of these dialectics present in the analytic situation (2011, p. 46). Two of these are perhaps most relevant to the present conversation. First, balancing transcendence (otherness) and immanence (oneness) in the therapeutic relationship strives to allow for mutual radical influence simultaneous to subjective differentiation (Hoffman, 2011, p. 46). Second, allowing both archeological (understanding the past) and future-oriented teleological perspectives to inform the interaction is analytically sound as well.

Holding these dialectics in place may inform the draping of this relational metaphor atop the mutual complexities of both religiousness and spirituality. Amidst this postmodern situation, valuing perspectival realism and interpersonal constructivism while largely rejecting the foundationalism and positivism of the past, this intersubjective relational understanding thus serves as a most helpful

analogy for proposing a new understanding of spirituality and religiousness, perhaps propelling them into the eschaton in greater cooperation.

Of course, it is important to remind the reader that the demonstration of the argument here is one of analogy. And, as such, it must be interpreted cautiously and with understanding of its own limitations. With that being said, the relational theory presented here, and its corresponding analytic situation, serves as a helpful vehicle by which to forward a new understanding. If, say, an institutional religion were to take the role of the analyst, and the role of the analysand were to be given to individual spirituality, there is an interesting mutuality and interplay that emphasizes a radical co-construction. And in this situation, speaking ecclesially, both are required in intimate relation to roll forward towards the eschaton. As Sorenson (2004) notes in recalling the words of Melanie Klein, it will take the two to know either one (p. 42). So as we examine the loop of mutuality formed when these two constructs come into relationship with one another, it is perhaps most helpful to first understand what each "subject" has to offer the other.

Religion on Spirituality

To begin an examination of the mutuality of this relationship, both psychologically and theologically, we might first break it down by considering a single direction of influence: Religion on spirituality. Applying the relational analogy, evoking D. W. Winnicott might best set the stage. He writes, of the slowly individuating infant, "What is there is an armful of anatomy and physiology, and added to this is a potential for development into human personality" (1987). Extrapolating Winnicott's words to the religiousness-spirituality situation, one might consider the rudimentary sensations that make up individual spirituality as those nascent anatomies and physiologies with the potential to blossom into a dynamic and rich fullness. This spirituality, like Winnicott's infant,

cannot fully develop on its own. It requires a holding and nurturing context found in a unique

relationship.

Randall Sorenson (2004) notes commonly understood etymologies of the term *religion*.

Often, he comments, the word is associated with root words like *legere*, or to gather together, and

ligare, meaning to bind together (p. 24). With these in mind, communal or institutional religion

might be understood as a great binder, or holder, of individual spiritual phenomena. If that is the

case, its binding cord is most certainly narrative. Religion, Sorenson (2004) notes, particularly in the

Jewish and Christian traditions, is primarily a story (p. 50). It is the backdrop, and often the

interpreter, of individual phenomenology. Schafer (1983, as cited in Aron, 1996, p. 37) suggested

that reality is always mediated by narrative, and a collective and historical tradition offers rich stories

by which to understand the scatterings of individual experience.

In this sense, if we were to revisit Hoffman's (2011) relational psychoanalytic dialectics,

perhaps religiousness serves as the archeology. The ever-quotable G.K. Chesterton wrote of

historical tradition as a "democracy of the dead," (2007, p. 39), in that it draws upon the voices of

communities past to bind the narrative of today's phenomena. And the institution of religiousness,

much like the analyst, allows its historically-informed, subjective theories to shape and organize the

free associated material of individual spirituality (Aron, 1996, p. 37). For an individual spirituality,

as is the case with any experienced human sensation, must unfold in the context of interpersonal

narrative matrices. As the Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber, suggests, to claim that the individual

spirit can simply bend back upon itself is to offer an illusion (1958, p. 93). Like the developing

individual human mind requires interactional frameworks to network its experiences into a whole

according to relational psychoanalytic theory, the sensational experiences making up an individual

spirituality gain their meaning through the archeological narrative provided by the institutional religious tradition.

Spirituality on Religion

Of course, within the mutuality of the relationship, individual instances of spirituality greatly inform, and in some cases, radically alter the institution itself (or, to adhere to the analogy, our analysand may radically alter that theory of the analyst). As noted previously, the early contemplator of psychology and religion, William James (2004), referred to the private experience as the true rudiment, or perhaps building block, of the institutional religion (p. 37). And to take the illustration from the other end of Chesterton's democracy, these individual experiences are what make up the voices from the past and present that ultimately coalesce to form the institutional tradition and narrative.

In classically analytical approaches to the analogy applied here, the content of these private experiences might be regarded with little power outside of their own self-contained sphere. However, a relational approach acknowledges the influence that subjectivity can have on subjectivity, thus creating room for an individual spirituality to push back, so to speak, on its own holding religion. And one need not dig too deep into the Christian tradition to find historical instances of a single individual's search for the sacred rippling to alter the direction of the broader institution. The Old Testament prophets sharing visions with the community, the events subsequent to Saul's mystical encounter on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3), and even those much later reflections of Martin Luther all demonstrate the ways that an individual spirituality can reshape the narrative of the monolithic institution.

Going back to the relational dialectics articulated in Hoffman's *Toward Mutual Recognition* (2011), it becomes apparent that, perhaps if the institution of religiousness binds these spiritualities

together to form the ever-growing archeological bedrock, perhaps these spiritualities, in a sense,

provide the stuff of teleology. Hoffman writes, "The old, that is, archeology (Ricoeur), is

transformed by a view of the future (teleology)" (p. 48). This can be considered from the perspective

of a broadly Christian theology as well. These individual spiritual rudiments, so to speak, perhaps

provide the means through which God continues to shape the narrative of the larger institution

towards that already-but-not-yet kingdom. Taken this way, these individual phenomena are crucial

to the fabric that eventually becomes woven together into the narrative of the larger religious system.

The Loop

Now we see the ways that these two constructs, when allowed to remain in ongoing mutual

recognition of one another, constantly act upon one another. Understanding these independent

dynamics, it is further beneficial to look at the operations of this system in order to better understand

how they work together. To do so, it is helpful to begin to imagine these two subject forces working

together in a perpetual and mutual feedback loop. Perhaps thanks to many of the same postmodern

forces that gave rise to the relational turns in psychoanalysis, many psychological theorists have now

moved away from unidirectional bottom-up understandings of human action. These primarily

biological perspectives on the causations of human action, often now considered reductionist, have

given way to a bottom-up-top-down feedback loop of perpetual reshaping (Murphy & Brown, 2007).

In this system, the subject is perpetually acting, perhaps out of biological necessities, on an

environment that is constantly exerting influence right back (Jeeves & Brown, 2009). So, if

individual spirituality and institutional religiousness were paired in such a feedback loop, we see that

spirituality is perpetually feeding individual sensations and phenomena into the religious system,

influencing its makeup. All the while the institution is perpetually figuring ways to assimilate these

individual experiences into its narrative fabric, providing the individual with the archeological

bedrock of interpretation and context. In this sense, much like the intrapsychic and interpsychic worlds in relational psychoanalysis are co-constructive and not competitive, so are the intrapersonal spirituality and interpersonal religiousness.

The relationally analytic situation, again, provides a useful guide here. Lowell Hoffman (2014) suggests that the analyst-analysand relationship is typically mutual but asymmetrical (p. 173). Due to an inherent difference of power within the organized therapeutic relationship, there is a certain authority that is allowed the analyst. In the relational system, however, this does not negate the analyst as participatory subject. Interpretations, reflections, and alternatively organizing enactments are offered out of the analyst's own psychology (Aron, 1996, p. 97), an entity that is itself in perpetual relational flux with the analyst. Thus, the authority of the analyst in the therapeutic situation is something that is negotiated and renegotiated as the feedback loop of the relationship continues to spin (Hoffman, 2014, p. 173). The spin of this wheel means that the interpersonal world shared between those involved does not hold still, but dances to and fro as the participants negotiate.

A similar ecclesial relationship is proposed here, with the help of this relational model. Theologian Stanley Grenz suggests that the Christian church community of the New Testament is essentially the result of "the reciprocal relationship between the individual believer and the corporate fellowship indicative of the church as a covenant people" (1994, p. 480). Such a theological observation harkens to Marie Hoffman's offered relational dialectic: transcendence and immanence (2011, p. 46). Such a held tension balances both the one and the many in epistemological pursuit. This reciprocity between the individual experience and the corporate narrative parallels quite nicely that mutuality articulated in the relational psychoanalytic situation. Though the religious institution pulls its interpretive and guiding authority perhaps ultimately from the vastness of its numbers and influence, though it is unquestionably needs to be a participatory subject in the feedback loop. Like

an analyst too disengaged and withdrawn to promote any relational participation or change in an

analysand, a religious institution too rigid and too dissonant with its individual spiritualities

ultimately loses earthly presence both in shared thought and in sheer population. On the contrary,

spirituality unaware of the distinct institutional subjectivity of the religious system with which it is in

relationship loses its access to the narrating resource that ultimately defines the sensational

phenomena. Thus, this relationship, and religion's ongoing authority, must be negotiated and

renegotiated over time as the two move forward through the ongoing narrative of God's kingdom.

Implications for Experimental Measurement in Psychology

The argument thus far has presented a relationship that understands the developing

distinctions of a private spirituality and an institutional religion while it strives to simultaneously

understand them as a relational whole, or loop, negotiating together in a way that is mutually

defining. Such an argument has apparent implications for the ongoing psychological measurement

of these constructs.

As has been previously stated, the distinction between these constructs certainly does provide

helpful organization, and it would be advisable to begin using the terms with more definitional

consistency. Doing so can continue to collect and provide data informing wider understandings of

spirituality and religiousness. However, taking the relational considerations into account, it is also

advisable that these constructs perhaps be measured distinctly but always in conjunction. Separate

measures might be administered in experimental and clinical settings. However, because these

factors are so intimately interrelated, they should likely be more frequently measured together. This

way, correlations might be better and more consistently understood, and the knowledge of their

mutuality might be better cataloged.

Further, ongoing factor analyses and other further efforts to clarify the functionality of relevant measures are advisable. As both the religious and spiritual phenomena they measure will likely evolve as a result of their ongoing interactions with one another, it is important to maintain ongoing understanding of how their corresponding measures align. As the mutual influences are enacted, ongoing examination of employed measures might better monitor the ways that these psychological constructs continue to change.

Concluding Thoughts: Psychoanalysis, Religious Tradition, and the Eternal Revolution

Using relational psychoanalytic theory as a vehicle for forwarding a way of understanding the complex relationship between the distinct but mutually identifying religiousness and spirituality certainly renders the conversation vulnerable to some critique. It is no coincidence that a relational conception of religion and spirituality might raise similar concerns, regarding relativism, as those relational conceptions of psychoanalysis and human development. To address these, relational psychoanalysis lends itself as a helpful analogy yet again.

Relational psychoanalysis, much like Christian doctrine, is the product of many authors, drawing on the personal reflections of several aforementioned theorists. Sorenson (2004) cleverly likens the plurality of psychoanalytic institutes to the multiplicity of religious denominations populating the world. He (2004) suggests that Freud never viewed the field of psychoanalysis as a finished project, but rather one that would enter an "ongoing reformation" as the sensations, experiences, and phenomena of its participants change (p. 132). And what Sorenson called an ongoing reformation, Chesterton called an eternal revolution (2004). These constructs, the real phenomena they represent, and their mutual relationship to one another are all negotiating and renegotiating; they are contextualizing and recontextualizing. And it is important to note that this contextualization, in relational psychoanalysis Christian ecclesiology, does not equate to relativism.

Rather, the contextualization is both illuminating and enriching as more closely binds developing ideas to their cultural and traditional roots, making for a richer mutual dialogue within the postmodern context (Stolorow, Atwood, & Orange, 2006).

In many ways, this provides the Christian church with a means of addressing that postmodern conundrum highlighted in the former half of this paper. The Christian church now lacks the epistemological foundations, as fully philosophically viable instruments of hegemony, that it once enjoyed. The spirituality of the individual has now grown to distinguish itself and seems to want greater voice. Thus, it seems, the tradition has reached an epistemological crisis.

However, traditions need not be static. Christian ethicist Alasdair Macintyre suggests that, at such a moment in time as this, an epistemological tradition make adjustments to its interpretive schemata while remaining in acknowledgement towards its own narrative history (1980). This mutual engagement between individual spirituality and institutional religiousness, as articulated by a relationally psychoanalytic perspective, does just that. It adjusts the Christian church's schemata, and it does so in one important way. This mutual and ever-perpetuating feedback loop rolls, if you will, the unified whole into the eschaton in forever negotiating and renegotiating relationship. In doing so, it responds to a helpful proposition made by Stanely Grenz and John Franke in their book, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in Postmodern Context* (2001). They suggest that perhaps the foundations are no longer found wholly behind us, but instead are now before us, serving as the targets of our ongoing negotiations. These future foundations serve as the models that we build towards as we construct the ongoing identity of Christendom on earth. So in this relational model, the spiritual and religious Church less leans back on its historical and philosophical foundations and rather leans forward towards the eschaton.

It becomes apparent that a new model for understanding the complexities of the distinct but mutually unifying relationship between spirituality and religiousness, informed by relational psychoanalysis, provides for necessary adjustments both in experimental and ecclesial understandings of these constructs. Coinciding with the relational turns in psychoanalysis, it seems necessary to hold these two constructs simultaneously as differentiated and as joined. The relational psychoanalytic model provides a helpful analogical vehicle by which this can best be understood, as it puts these two forces into an ever-spinning feedback loop that continually and mutually defines. Experimentally, such an understanding demands that these constructs always be measured together, and that their experimental alignment be revisited over time. Ecclesially, such an approach provides a helpful schematic adjustment for the Christian church situated within the postmodern context, highlighting the mutuality between the institution and the individual as the two work together in the feedback loop to roll towards the eschaton.

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