



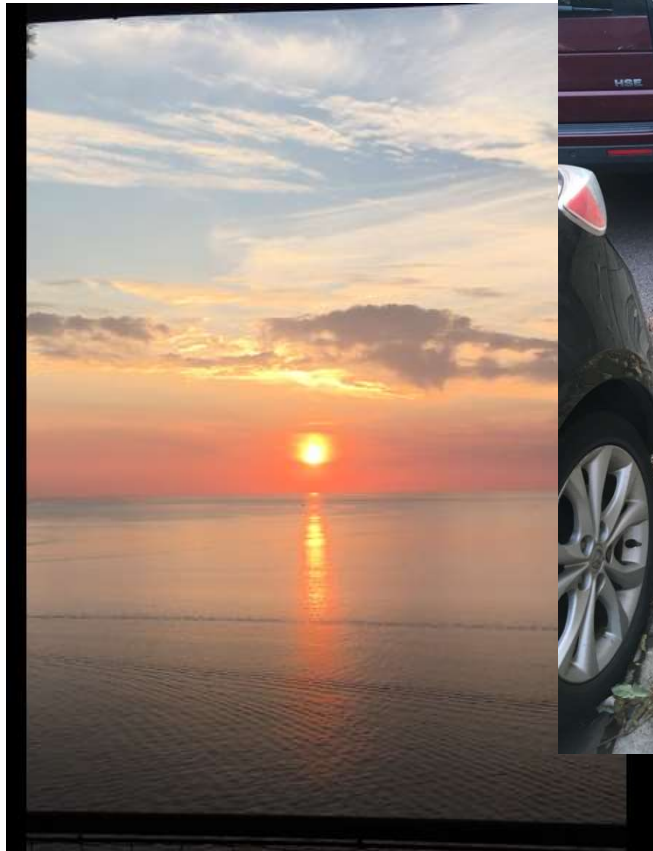
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Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Canolfan Sophia
The Sophia Centre

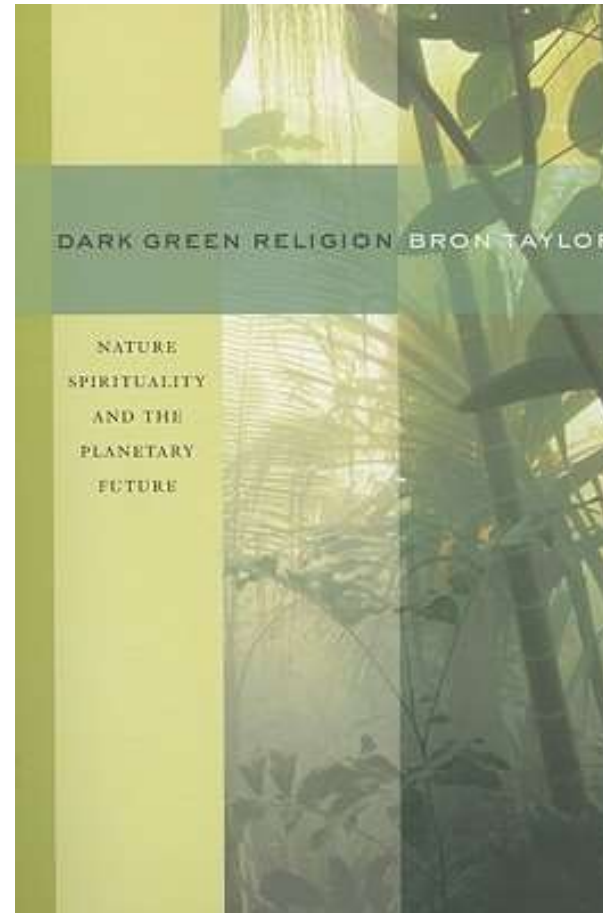
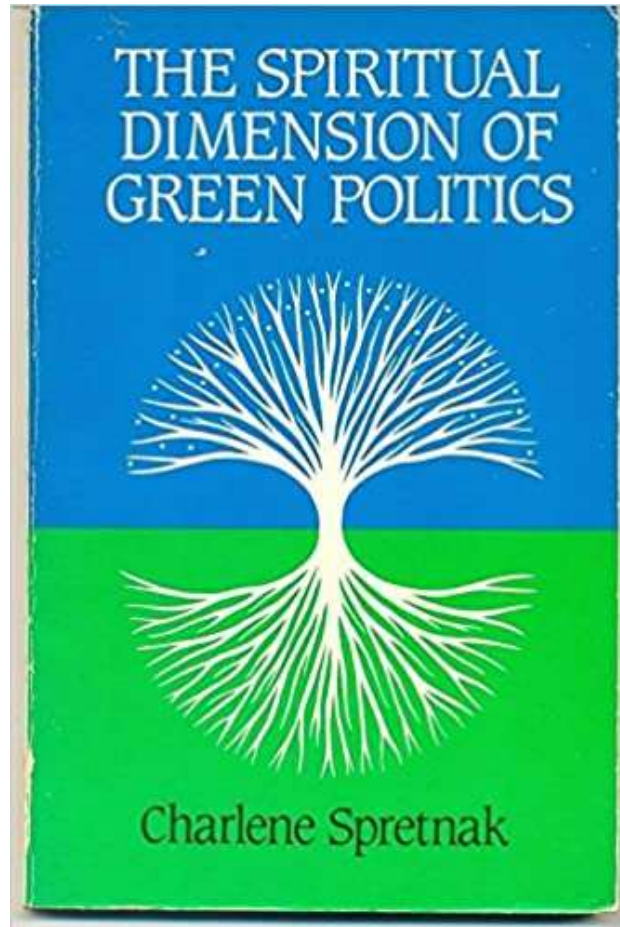
Ecology and Spirituality

Nick Campion

Glitter path at sunset Majorca, September 2020,
Leaves Bristol, October 2020, The Murmuration of
Starlings at the Avalon Marshes, Glastonbury



Spirituality and Religion



On You Tube

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9R4matNOK0c>



Perium Presents: Dark Green Religion with Prof Bron Taylor

375 views · May 30, 2019

11 1 SHARE SAVE



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=soK-HX4UYAI>



Gender Equality Panel 2 Ecofeminism

237 views · Sep 21, 2017

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Spirituality as a pervasive concept – from the UWTSD library

1



ARTICLE
Spirituality, Religion, and Health: An Emerging Research Field
Miller, William R ; Thoresen, Carl E
United States: American Psychological Association
The American psychologist, 2003-01, Vol.58 (1), p.24-35
“ ... The section reviews epidemiological evidence linking religiousness to morbidity and mortality, possible biological pathways linking spirituality/religiousness to health, and advances... ”
PEER REVIEWED OPEN ACCESS
[Full text available](#) >

2



BOOK
Christian spirituality.
Alister E. McGrath 1953-
Oxford : Blackwell 1999
“ spirituality available on the InternetWritten by a... 'Christian Spirituality' Clarifying Terms: Mysticism and... ”
[Available at Lampeter Library Main Collection \(248 MCG \)](#) >

3



ARTICLE
The Boundaries of Woman's Spirituality in the Beliefs-Spirituality-Religiousness (B-S-R) Model: A Third Perspective—Beliefs as a Cognitive Basis
Skrzypińska, Katarzyna
New York: Springer Science and Business Media LLC
Journal of religion and health, 2016, Vol.56 (5), p.1583-1599
“ The real nature of the phenomenon of woman's Spirituality is the main contemporary challenge for empirical research... ”
PEER REVIEWED
[Download Article](#) > [Full text available](#) >
[View Issue Contents](#) >

4



MULTIPLE VERSIONS
Jewish spirituality. [Vol. 1], from the Bible through the Middle Ages
Arthur Green 1941-
“ Spirituality of the Psalms Notes Bibliography From Prophecy to Apocalypse: The Book of the Watchers and Tours of Heaven Notes Bibliography Emergence the ”
[3 versions of this record exist. See all versions](#) >

Greek Philosophy: a foundation of western spirituality

Soul/Psyche Nous/Mind Numinous: pervades the universe
Pantheism: the world is identical/the same as/the divine
Panentheism: the world is in the divine

Philosophers

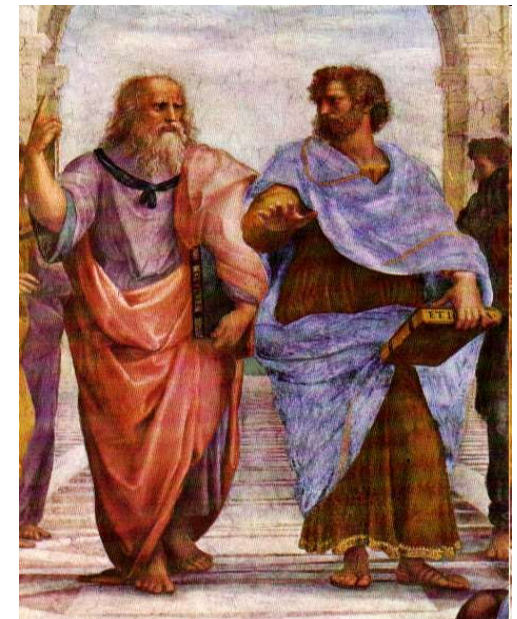
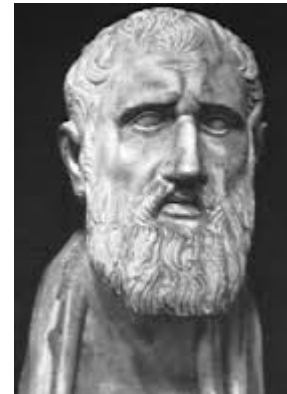
Plato c. 428-348: soul pervades the entire material universe but is also transcendent and non-material

Aristotle c. 384-323: soul pervades the entire material universe. In later versions of Aristotelianism the soul can also be transcendent and non-material

Zeno of Citium (founder of Stoicism) c. 334 – c. 262 BC: soul and matter are identical.

We can find these same alternatives in India and China, while the notion of : soul and matter as identical may be much more common in 'indigenous' traditions. There was a close interchange of ideas between classical Greece and India.

Notions of transcendence were influential in formulating concepts of the transcendent soul, as separate to body, in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, BUT the Stoic alternative has remained current throughout



Right: Plato and Aristotle, detail from
The School of Athens, Raphael (1483-1520)

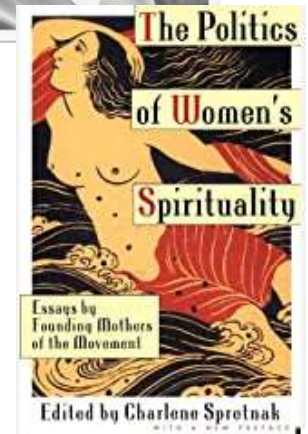
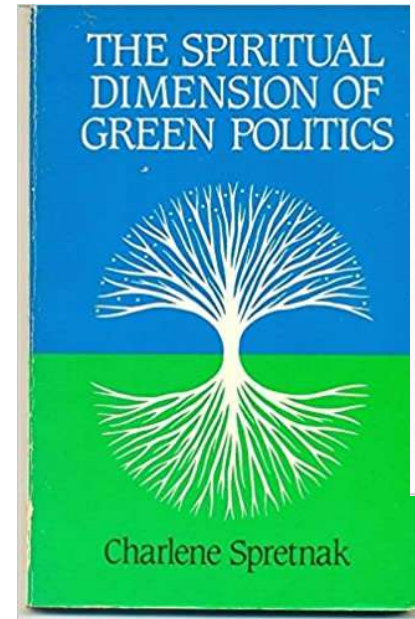
Left: Zeno of Citium

What is Green Spirituality?

Charlene Spretnak

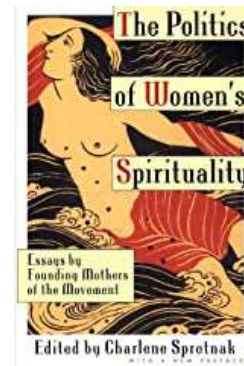
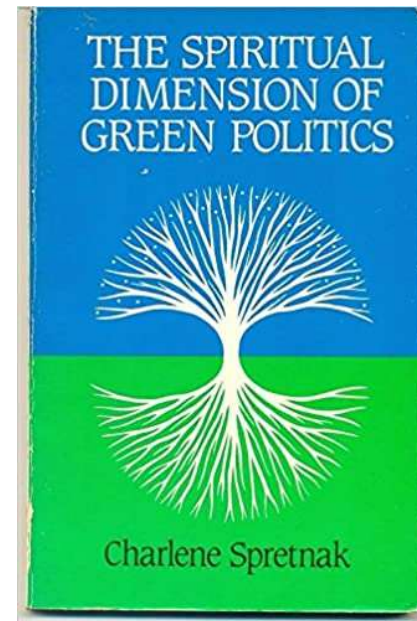
p. 15: Coming of age in the modern era marks a passage into emptiness. At puberty we put aside the ways of childhood, not only the **toys and stuffed animals, but also our secret and magical sense of the world, our special relationship with the family pet, with the big tree in the backyard, with the old deliveryman, and with our favourite grandparents.** We had entered preschool shining forth with a very personal cosmology and a numinous sense of the world around us. This we had expressed in totemic finger paintings of smiling suns and lovable animals and later in stories and puppet shows are great school teachers encouraged us to create.

- Spretnak, Charlene, *The Spiritual Dimension of Modern Politics* (Santa Fe: Bear and Company, 1986).



Spretnak: defining spirituality

- P. 41 **'My own working definition of spirituality** is that it is the **focusing of human awareness on the subtle aspects of existence**, our practice that reveals to us **profound interconnectedness...** our perceptions at the gross levels – that we are all separate from Nature and from each other – are **revealed as illusion** once we employ the **subtle, suprarational reaches of mind**, which can reveal the true nature of being: **all is One**, all forms of existence are comprised of one continuous dance of matter/energy are rising and falling away, are rising and falling away'.

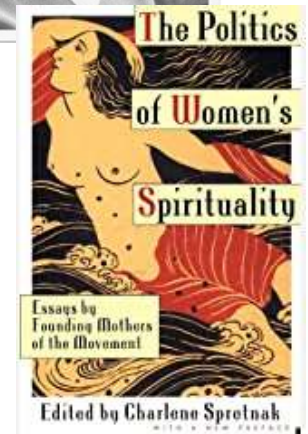
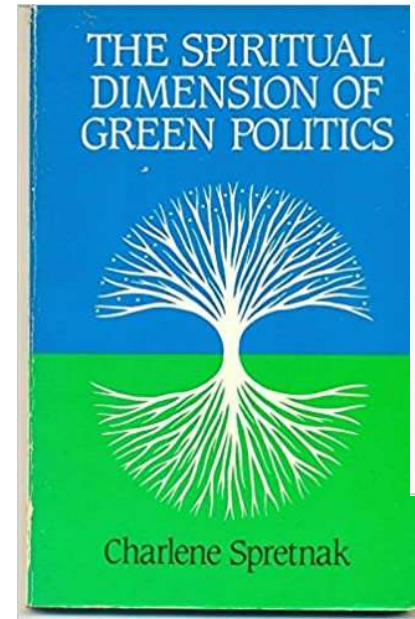


Spretnak: defining spirituality

Pp. 41-2

The experience of the union with the one has been **called God consciousness, cosmic consciousness, knowing the One mind**, and so forth. It is the core experience common to the sages of all the great religions and has been expressed in the rapture of Christian saints as well as the simple words of a *haiku* poem....

Such **experiential**, rather than merely intellectual, **awareness of the profound connectedness** is what I hold to be the true meaning of being in a “**state of grace**”. Or add the intricate wonders of creation and a celebration of the cosmic unfolding are the roots of worship’.



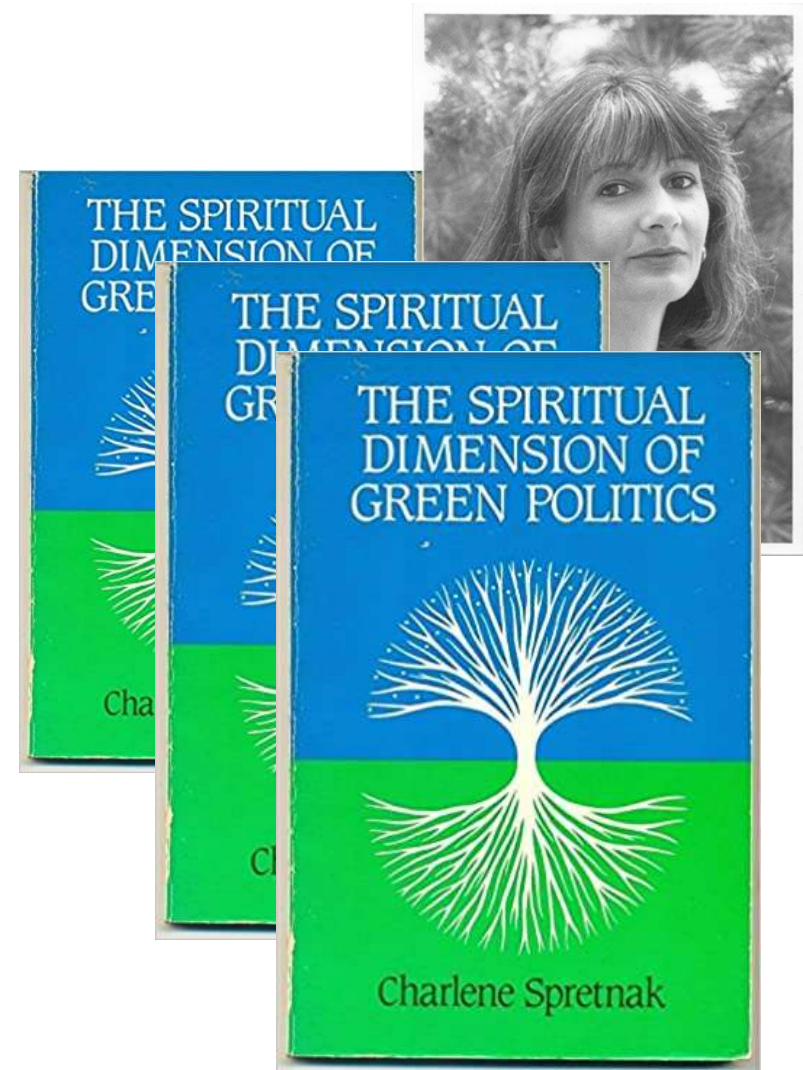
Spretnak's journey

Having grown up, and encountered the modern world
Spretnak then looked for the answer in religion,
attending a Catholic university, but lost her faith:

p. 16: Speaking of the modern world, she writes
'others of us gradually realised with a low level of
horror, that *there is no inner life in modern,
technological society*. p. 16-17: 'I was not
embittered, merely disappointed at what seemed
to me to be a spiritual emptiness.

Spretnak recounts how she then arrived in India in
1969

'there I searched for spiritual teachings that
illuminated the human experience, but did not
entail guru worship, ritual or other cultural
baggage, or the subjugation of women. I found it
in Buddhist Vipassana ("insight") meditation,
which by the way, turns out to be the same kind of
meditation practised by E.F. Schumacher and
advocated in his book *A Guide for the
Perplexed*(1977).'



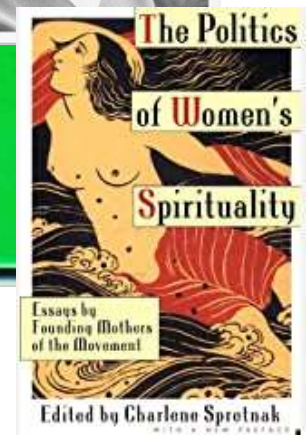
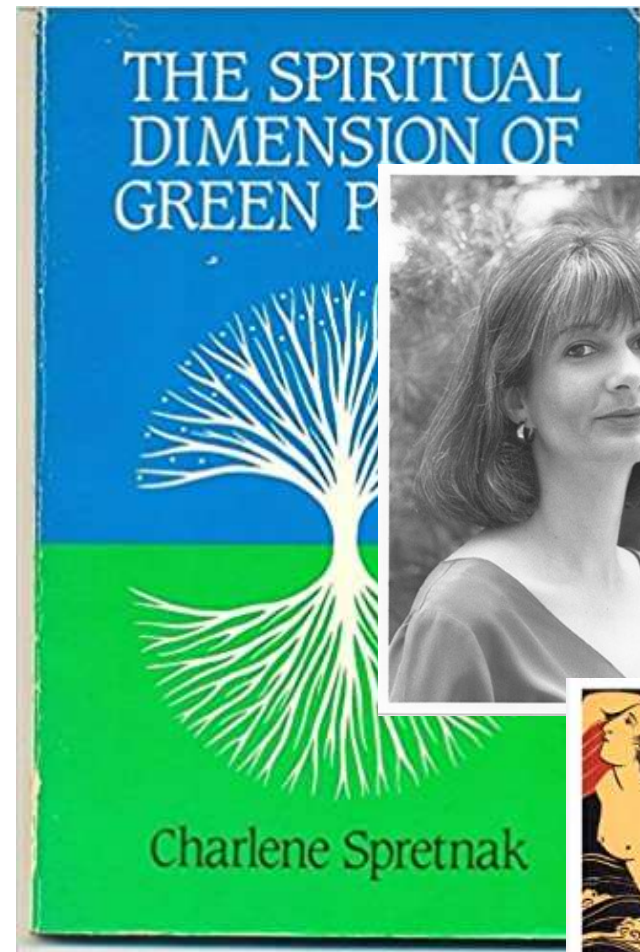
Spretnak's journey

I learned new meanings of ritual by participating in feminist spirituality groups where Nature and the mysteries of creation, our bodies, our feelings, and our transformative powers were honored.

pp. 17-18.

I am also drawn wisdom tradition of the Christian mystics and **"creation spirituality"**, which **honors the natural world as the most profound expression of the divine**. To a lesser extent, I have studied **Taoism** and **Native American spirituality**, which turns out to be a bittersweet experience. To explore a philosophy of life as profoundly nature-based as either of those paths is to realise how very far our society is from comprehending, let alone abiding by, **the deepest levels of ecological wisdom**. One encounters, for instance, that frustration of the Hopi man who had been asked too many times to explain how Hopi economics and culture related to their intimate reverence for nature: **almost everything we do is a religious act from the time we get up to the time we go to sleep. How can the white man ever understand that?**

Citing Harold Courlander (ed.), *Hopi Voices* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), p. xxv.



Then for Spretnak, to summarise

The conventional institutional religion is superficial, carries cultural baggage, and fails to answer the problems of emptiness that arise from the modern world.

Spirituality

connects us with Nature, with a capital 'N'

depends on an **experience of the interconnectedness** of all things expressed as God consciousness or cosmic consciousness

honours the body,

restores the magical enchanted world of childhood,

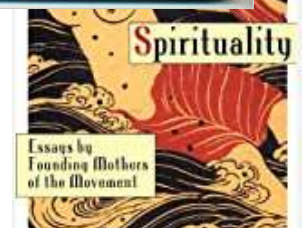
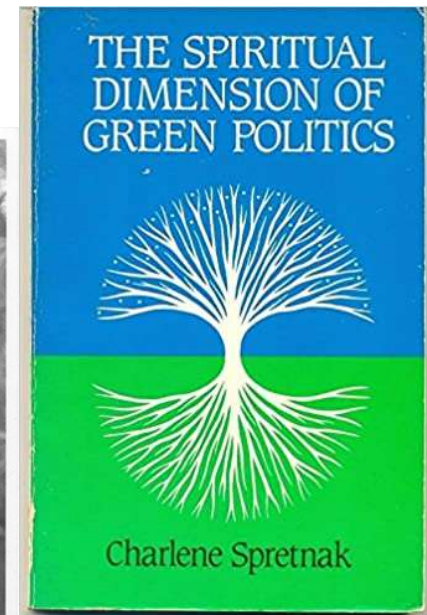
recognises the interconnectedness of all things in social life from economics to culture to nature.

answers the needs of the inner life

is to be found in traditions outside the Christian mainstream: Buddhist meditation, Taoism, Native American spirituality and Christian mysticism.

Is fundamental to **'the deepest levels of ecological wisdom'** (p. 18).

However a clue to the problematic nature of the spirituality versus religion dichotomy is found in her quote from the Hopi man who said that everything the Hopi do is a religious act. How then can we restore the tarnished nature of religion?

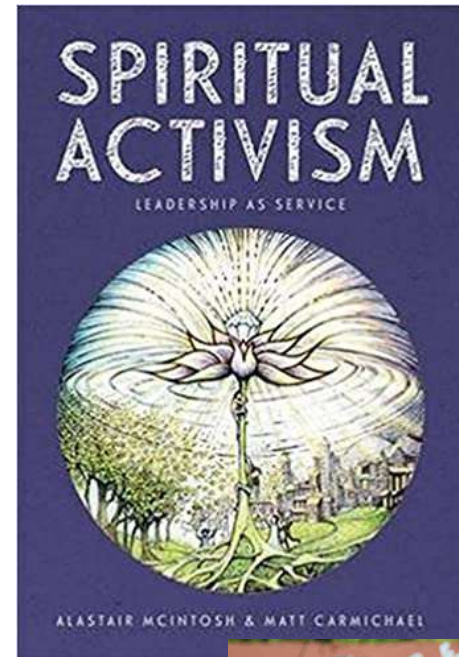


Alastair McIntosh and Matt Carmichael

McIntosh, Alastair and Matt Carmichael, *Spiritual Activism: Leadership as Service* (Cambridge: Green Books, 2016).

p. 27

We see it [spirituality] as central to activism because it is, first of all, **our way of knowing**. That leads on to **a way of doing**, and from there, to **a way of being** in what becomes a positive feedback loop. It is **not a logical sequence of priorities** because they all reinforce one another. You have to know it to be it and thus to do it; but equally, you have to do it to know it and be it, and so on, in various permutations.

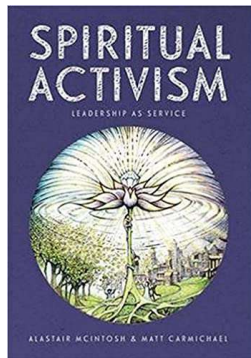


Spirituality defined and its consequences

p. 30

McIntosh and Carmichael define spirituality in three ways (influenced by Spretnak? – they do not mention her)

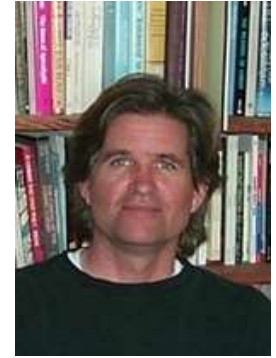
1. the presence of God, Goddess, Allah, Christ, Brahman, etc. in our lives
2. the inner aspect of reality
3. that which gives life and, specifically, life is love made manifest



p.27: Activism

- 'By engaging with activism at the deepest levels of what it means to be human, **we open doors of perception*** through which we can better see our human nature ecologically; that is, in **its total context within the universe**, the earth, the land, culture, society, history, community, family and soul. **Academic rigour is of great assistance in this, provided it is kept in context and not allowed to induce *rigor mortis* by attempting to over control and simplify complex life systems**'.
- *referencing William Blake and Aldous Huxley

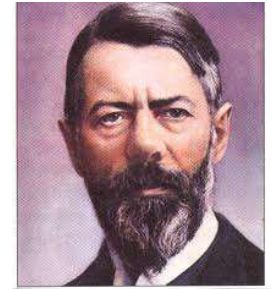
Questioning Religion



Problems of definition:

- ‘The definition of religion continues to be a matter of dispute among scholars. And I suspect that disagreement about the topic will persist so long as religion is studied in academic circles’.
- William Herbrechtsmeier, ‘Buddhism and the Definition of Religion: One More Time’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 32/1 (1993), p. 1.

Classic Theorists: Emile Durkheim



1858-1917

Europe's first professor of sociology

1895: *Rules of Sociological Method*

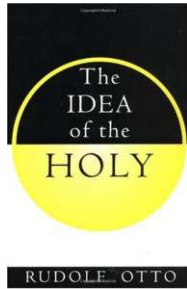
Sociology assumes that, if enough quantitative data is gathered about a society it is possible to build a complete model of how it works. This idea was only moderated in the late 20th c. But still underpins journals such as *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*.

1912: *Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, Paris; F. Alcan 1912. This was translated into English as *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields, New York: Free Press, 1995.

'A religion is a **unified** system of **beliefs** and **practices** relative to **sacred things**, i.e., things **set apart** and forbidden -beliefs and practices which unite in one single **moral community**, called a **Church**, all those who adhere to them'.

The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, Book 1, Ch. 1.

A religion is therefore defined by its community, institutions and practices.



Classic Theorists: Rudolf Otto



1869-1937

Lutheran pastor, pioneer of comparative religion.

1917 *Das Heilige - Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* *The Idea of the Holy, (The Holy - On the Irrational in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational).*

The Idea of the Holy

Developed the notion of the 'Holy' as a category in the understanding of religion in response to a perceived over-emphasis on 'rational' explanations.

The 'Holy can be understood though looking at the experience of it, such as 'Mysterium Tremendum' (dread, fear, awe, love of God) and what he calls 'Fascination'.

Coined the term 'numinous' as a non-theistic word for God/divinity.

(My opinion is that the word is derived from 'Nous', the Platonic divine Mind, but I haven't got a source in Otto's work.

Otto's work tended to be out of fashion in the mid 20th century due to the influence of the atheist scepticism current amongst sociologists and psychologists who saw religion as an error a false ideology (Marx) or a childish phase in human development (Freud).

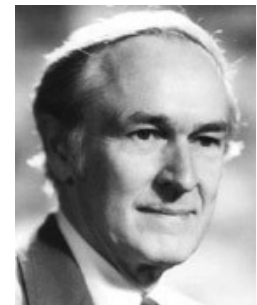
However, it is now more highly regarded due to the influence of Phenomenology (see next slide)

Recent Theorists: J. Milton Yinger

The overlap between religion and politics as semantic categories was identified notably by J. Milton Yinger in the 1960s and 70s. His view was that religion is found wherever,

‘one finds awareness of an interest in the continuing, recurrent, "permanent" **problems of human existence** - the human condition itself, as contrasted with specific problems; where one finds **rites and shared beliefs** relevant to that awareness which define the strategy of an **ultimate victory**; and where one has **groups** organized to **heighten that awareness** and to **teach and maintain those rites and beliefs**’.

J. Milton Yinger, 'A Structural Examination of Religion', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 8, (Spring 1969), p. 91.



Theorists: Ninian Smart



- The 7 dimensions of religion
 1. the ritual or practical, including “worship, meditation, pilgrimage, sacrifice, sacramental rites and healing activities”;
 2. the doctrinal or philosophical;
 3. the mythic or narrative;
 4. the experiential or emotional;
 5. the ethical or legal;
 6. the organisational or social;
 7. the material or artistic.

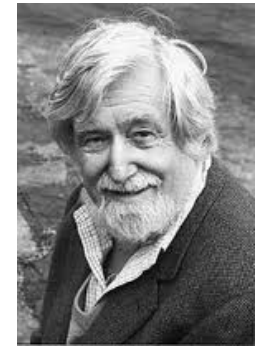
Ninian Smart, *Dimensions of the Sacred: An Anatomy of the World's Beliefs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 10–12.

Also, on

The Phenomenon of Religion: The Religious Experience of Mankind

- (unfortunately Smart's books are not available electronically, although there are reviews of his work which can be cited)

Theorists: Clifford Geertz



‘A religion is a **system of symbols** which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men **by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic**’.

Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, p. 90.

Ebook through the University Library

See also Clifford Geertz, ‘Religion as a Cultural System’, Michael Lambek (ed.), *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, p. 63.

•



Theorists: Jonathan Z. Smith

The notion of religion as a discrete category is a fabrication of 18th c scholars.

They wished to attack the political power of the church.

This meant attacking its ideology

And this required identifying and isolating its beliefs

Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: from Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

(Not available electronically but

....For a good blog on Smith see

- Austin Cline, 'Jonathan Z. Smith on the Definition of Religion', *Thoughtco*, 29 July 2018, <https://www.thoughtco.com/jonathan-z-smith-on-the-definition-of-religion-251039>

Jonathan Z. Smith on the Definition of Religion

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Advert

Spirituality v Religion

'That converts to belief systems as varied as Buddhism, Islam, and Paganism consistently say "It's not a religion, it's a way of life" speaks volumes about a **previously impoverished** understanding of what "religion" is'.

Bowman, Marion and Sutcliffe, Steven, *Beyond New Age: Exploring Alternative Spirituality* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000), p. 5.

-

The sense that 'spirituality' is 'good' and liberating and religion is 'bad' and repressive is to follow the Enlightenment paradigm in which religion, science, history and so on are treated as discrete categories.



Sociological Theory: Privatisation

Bryan Wilson

Secularisation is marked by the decline of traditional, formal religious affiliation and the rise of greater pluralism, in which individuals create their own 'private' 'spiritualities' by taking items from different traditions or practices.

- Wilson, Bryan, *Contemporary Transformations of Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979 [1976]) (not available as an ebook).

Bryan R. Wilson and Steve Bruce, *Religion in Secular Society Fifty Years On* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) (e book via the University library)

- **Abstract and Keywords**
- Here Wilson introduces the main changes that need to be explained: declining influence of religion; changes in the social status of the clergy; increased rationalization of the world; and marginalization and privatization of religion. He also rebuts the view that religion has not so much declined as changed its form'.



Max Weber 1864-1920

The Theory of Disenchantment



The combined effect of the Protestant Reformation and the scientific revolution in Europe was to 'disenchant' humanity.

'The increasing intellectualization and rationalisation do *not*, therefore, indicate an increased and general knowledge of the conditions under which one lives.

It means something else, namely, the knowledge or belief that if one but wished one could learn it any time. Hence, it means that principally there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is **disenchanted**. One need no longer have recourse to magical means in order to master the spirits, as did the savage, for whom such mysterious powers existed. Technical means and calculations perform the service. This above all is what intellectualization means'.

Weber, Max, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H.H. Garth and C. Mills Wright, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1947, p. 139.

ENCHANTMENT

Literally from the Latin *cantare*, to sing.

In English to 'chant' is to utter words often in a monotone, or with little variation in tone, often to achieve an enlightening effect – as in plain chant in religious ritual.

(also repetitive chanting in political and sports crowds)

The Oxford Concise Dictionary:

'enchant as to : 'Bewitch, charm, delight...(*cantare* sing...), from the French *chanter*, to sing.

Associations with witchcraft, magic

Spanish *encantar* = to love

Marsilio Ficino : 'remember that song is a most powerful imitator of all things. It imitates the intentions and passions of the soul as well as words'.

Ficino, Marsilio, *Three Books on Life*, ed. Kaske, Carole C. and Clark, John R., Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, Binghamton: State University of New York at Binghamton, 1989, III.21, p. 359.

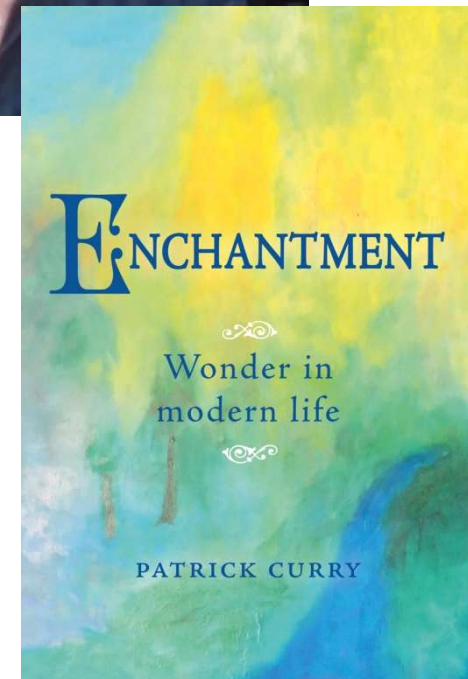


What is Enchantment?: Patrick Curry

Perhaps best defined by the state of being in love, in which the entire world becomes full of meaning, and ordinary perceptions of individuality, time and space disappear.

Primary enchantment: occurs spontaneously

Secondary enchantment: is evoked by ritual, action (singing, reciting myth, dance, theurgy, magic....)



What is Enchantment?: J.R.R. Tolkien

'Faërie contains many things besides elves and fays, and besides dwarfs, witches, trolls, giants, or dragons: it holds the seas, the sun, the moon, the sky; and the earth, and all things that are in it: tree and bird, water and stone, wine and bread, and ourselves, mortal men, when we are ***enchanted***... *Faërie* itself may perhaps most nearly be translated by Magic – but it is magic of a peculiar mood and power, at the farthest pole from the vulgar devices of the laborious, scientific magician'.

Tolkien, J.R.R., *Tree and Leaf*, London: Unwin 1964, pp. 15-16.



Final Thoughts

To be spiritual is to prioritise the inner experience of the divine whether defined as a deity, the cosmos or Nature

For ecologists to be spiritual is to have a direct experience of the unity of all things – ‘the One’.

Recognise that categories such as spirituality and religion do not have an essential meaning but are described in different ways – and may not make sense outside modern western thought.

The sense of wonder, awe, interconnectdness, the unity of all things, **Enchantment**.

