
EMOTION AND TRANSFORMATION IN THE RELATIONAL SPIRITUALITY PARADIGM PART 2. IMPLICIT MORALITY AND “MINIMAL PROSOCIALITY”

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The relevance of metapsychology for theory and research on personality change and spiritual transformation cannot be overstated. The objective of this three-article series is to work toward a new approach to the study of the *affective basis of spiritual transformation* (Emmons, 2005), specifically a moral motive analysis. Envisioned here, the essential task of such an analysis is to model how persons expand their implicit capacity for mature relationality (e.g., compassion), and move beyond “minimal prosociality” (Saroglou, 2006). The objective of the present article is two-fold. It summarizes seven principles of the recently outlined (Hall, 2004) and now expanding (Shults & Sandage, 2006) *relational spirituality paradigm*. Second, seeking to extend this paradigm, this article reviews the *apophatic* tradition in terms of Murphy’s three descriptive dimensions: *telos*, problem, and process (discussed in Part 1). Following Jones (2002), the central thesis developed is that the apophatic “way” is not simply an optional approach to spirituality as typically conceived rather it represents a distinct and essential principle (subtractive) and type of personality change (transformist). This article discusses the meaning of subtractive transformational change in light of recent thinking on the multiple therapeutic actions of psychodynamically informed therapy (Gabbard & Westen, 2003). The article commends the systematic inclusion of this principle and type of change into models of psychotherapy and spiritual formation concerned with moral character (virtue) development. Third, this article briefly overviews a specific moral motive approach that follows in Part 3.

True spirituality gives attention to the moral dimension in our lives. It is false thinking then to separate morality from spirituality; there can be no moral development without a spirituality to sustain it and deepen it, and a spirituality divorced from morality only fosters the illusion of righteousness.

—Neville Symington, *Emotion and Spirit*

To really understand how human morality works ... it may be advisable to shift attention away from the study of moral reasoning and toward the study of *intuitive and emotional processes*.

—Jonathan Haidt,
The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail

Within the psychology of religion, a major area of theory and research has always been religious conversion or spiritual transformation (Emmons & Paloutzian, 2003; Paloutzian & Park, 2005). Paloutzian (2005) has suggested that since much of psychology is concerned with learning how human beings change, and developing effective methods for change, continued exploration of the processes that mediate spiritual transformation remains a central objective for the discipline of psychology. Emmons (2005) notes that while many theories of the processes underlying spiritual transformation have been offered virtually all converge on the importance of the affective basis of spiritual change (Hill, 2002; Oatley & Djikic, 2002). Because of the central place of emotion in subjective and psychological well-being (Lent, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2001), in recent literature there is increasing interest in the role of emotion in personality change (Westen, 2002), and in the “quest” of spiritual transformation (Shults & Sandage, 2006). However, at the present time, while affirming the *importance* of the affective basis of spiritual transformation, arguably, there is no consensual model of how affective processes are involved in spiritual transformation (Hill, 2002). For example, we do not know if and how the “moral

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affective capacity” (Tangney, 1991) of empathy “expands” (Stern, 2004) in the process of spiritual transformation, and through what means. Two of the problems in modeling the role of affective processes continues to be the lack of clarity in several areas of theory and research: 1) conceptualizing the expected changes at various “levels” of personality in spiritual transformation (*Which constructs of personality are expected to change and why?*), and 2) conceptualizing the nature of the principles (processes) by which such structures and processes change (*How are vices diminished and virtues expanded through means of spiritual transformation?*). The thesis of this article is that the relational spirituality paradigm and apophatic vision of change provides us with a framework to approach these questions in new way in future theory and research. The eventual goal is a more “psychodynamically informed” (Westen, 1998) framework for emotion theory and research in the relational spirituality paradigm.

Review and Objectives of the Present Article

In this article series, I am encouraging and seeking to model a re-constructive dialogue between three major approaches in contemporary interdisciplinary moral psychology: Aristotelean virtue ethics (MacIntyre, 1984), relational psychoanalytic thought and spirituality (Hall, 2004), and moral emotion theory and research (Emmons & McCullough, 2004). And, theologically, I am inviting renewed attention to two sacred traditions within Christian thought, first the apophatic (broadly considered), and a second sometimes referred to as orthokardia (re: “right heart”). This kind of interdisciplinary and “complex” anthropological thought responds to psychologist Drew Westen’s (1998) challenge for psychologists to craft theory and research programs that are more “psychodynamically informed,” and to philosopher Owen Flanagan’s (1991) call for a more “psychological realist” account of the dynamics of moral personality. Thus, whether or not the reader has interests in these specific literatures, I believe they merit particular attention. Recent conversations within and between these areas are wrestling with important questions about the nature of moral character and the Good Life (Rubin, 2004), the relational ecological conditions that foster it (Flanagan, 2002), and how these concerns apply to therapeutic interaction (Spezzano & Gargiulo, 1997).

Article 1 in this series reviewed five trends in contemporary psychotherapeutic and spiritual develop-

ment theory, suggesting they offer both promise and peril for contemporary psychotherapists and Christian educators: the return of “spirituality” to mental health (the peril of simple and reductionist spirituality), the “negativity” of positive psychology (the peril of excluding negative emotions as a significant aspect of personality change); the return of “virtue” conceptions of maturity (the peril of ambiguous conceptions of virtue), the gap between mind and heart (the peril of misaligning therapeutic end and means), and the relative exclusion of the implicit and procedural “level” of personality in present meaning-system analyses of spiritual transformation (the peril of ignoring the implicit moral). In light of these potential dangers, I suggested that philosopher Nancey Murphy’s (Dueck & Lee, 2005) recent challenge to the Christian psychological community to formulate alternative tradition-informed accounts of human flourishing has special significance. Following the lead of Aristotelean virtue philosopher Alistair MacIntyre (1984), Murphy suggested that psychologists should more clearly formulate mini-systematic theologies organized around the psycho-theological dimensions of telos, problem, and process, i.e., theology-driven accounts of the purpose, dilemma, and praxis of psychological-spiritual human development and flourishing.

The present article affirms and extends this argument in two ways. First, it provides a summary of the *relational spirituality paradigm* (Benner, 1988; Hall, 2004; Jones, 1996; Shults & Sandage, 2006). Various writers have recently noted that the relationship between “natural” moral development and spiritual transformation has not yet been adequately conceptualized in the psychological literature (Kass & Lennox, 2005). To my mind, the recently outlined (Hall, 2004) and now expanding (Shults & Sandage, 2006) relational spirituality (RS) paradigm provides a theoretical advance in how we model the relationship between implicit personality processes and spiritual transformation; and with this paradigm, we have a useful way to conceptualize the relationship between naturalistic and spiritual transformation. I systematize seven central principles of the RS paradigm with the hope of increasing its visibility and application in the integration community.

Second, endeavoring to advance the RS paradigm, I suggest the inclusion of the apophatic view of personality change into the theory relational spiritual transformation. In recent integration literature there is renewed interest in exploring this sacred tradition

for the therapeutic insights it has to offer (Coe, 2000; Jones, 2002; Mangis & Watson, 2001; Shults & Sandage, 2006; Watson, 2000). Notably, Jones (2002) has suggested that the apophatic “way” should not be regarded simply as an optional style of spirituality as typically conceived (Holmes, 1981), rather more fundamentally, as a distinct and essential principle (subtractive) and type of personality change (transformist). Following Murphy’s descriptive framework, this article summarizes the apophatic tradition (broadly considered), particularly its emphasis on subtractive change, in terms of its conceptions of moral *telos* (*love and likeness*), moral problem (*attachment and idealization*), and moral process (*subtraction and mourning*). But first, I briefly continue our conversation about why the construction of a new approach to the study of emotion and spiritual transformation is an important and timely thing to do, and how the RS paradigm and apophatic tradition facilitate such an approach.

Moving Beyond “Minimal Prosociality”

As the above epigraph (Symington) would suggest, there is a complementary but ambiguous relationship between the “moral” and “spiritual” tasks of psychotherapy and spiritual transformation (also see Lear, 2003; Rubin, 2004). While it is generally recognized that religion is not the origin of morality, and that morality and religion are overlapping but distinct domains, it is still widely held that religion and more recently generic “spirituality” has a specific role to play in promoting prosociality (Saroglou, 2003). One of the functions emphasized in most classical theories and religious teachings is the facilitation of prosociality and the related transformation of personality in the direction of an expanded motive and capacity to love (Symington, 1994). While there are a number of research programs that seem to affirm the general prediction of religiosity and prosociality, especially when using standard self-report measures, there are many counter-indications, or at least findings implying “an intriguing discrepancy” between the ideals (meaning-system constructs) and observable prosocial behavior of religious persons (see Saroglou, 2006 for a brief review). Notably, the size of the associations between religion and prosocial self-report measures is usually weak, for example, typically not exceeding .20 for agreeableness and benevolence (McCullough & Worthington, 1999). Perhaps more disquieting, as suggested in Part 1, present data seem to indicate that there is

little substantial change in the “core” (Big Five) factors of religious persons over and beyond normal and expected developmental shifts (Paloutzian, Richardson, Rambo, 1999). Further, as Saroglou’s (2006) review concludes, while there is reason to believe that religious persons are prosocial, it is a rather selective and restrictive “minimal prosociality,” and one that is normatively limited to those closest to us, rarely “extended to universal and unconditioned altruism” (p. 2). I suggested in Part 1 that one of the reasons for this discrepancy might be that investigators in this area have yet to sufficiently model, intervene, and assess the kinds of processes that might lead to systematic increases in core (affective-motivational) variables; that what is needed are alternative models of the processes we expect might produce such changes.

To my mind, the RS paradigm suggests an approach that directs attention to this “intuitive” and “emotional” moral dimension of personality (Haidt above), while inviting integrative conversation from a variety of sacred traditions about the role of emotion in spiritual transformation. I would clarify at the outset, however, that in arguing for the centrality of implicit and affective processes as mediators of change, mine will not be an argument for a new form of emotivism over rationalism in religion (Watts, 1996).¹ The argument here is for a more scientific understanding of the linkages between affective processes and spiritual transformation, particularly toward the goal of an expanded capacity to love (a characterological, not subjectivist focus). In order to construct such a moral motive approach we need a paradigm that helps us conceptualize the relationship between “natural” structures of implicit moral character and spiritual transformation. As evident from the discussion below, the RS paradigm commends the theoretical and methodological priority of a certain level of personality change over others, the *implicit* and *procedural* structure-processes that mediate motives and affective interactions with other persons, and with God.

¹On this continuum the approach I am commending is a version of “cognitive intuitionism” (Shweder & Haidt, 1993), rather than either a Humean emotivism or Kantian-Kohlbergian cognitive rationalism. These authors suggest that the mark of a cognitive intuitionism is the assumption that mental states serve a representational function, rather than emotivist theory that assumes mental states serve primarily nonrepresentational functions (p. 361). The main tenet of cognitive intuitionism is that “moral appraisals (this is good, that is right) are grounded in self-evident truths (intuitions), saturated with local cultural meanings, and activated by means of the emotions” (p. 360).

Second, this article then describes a theological *tradition* for clarifying the multiple principles of change believed important by the “classical” apophatic way for effecting relational affect transformation (e.g., negative affective “vices” like pride). Following this emphasis, the thesis of the discussion is that any significant movement beyond minimal prosociality likely involves the systematic and intentional practice of subtractive methods of personality change, those that target the affective and implicit level of personality. Moving beyond minimal prosociality may well involve reworking the implicit personality structures of morality.

RELATIONAL SPIRITUALITY: CONCEPTUAL HYPOTHESES AND LINKAGES

Seven organizing assumptions or hypotheses that define the RS paradigm are described here.² As the following discussion is intended to complement and augment previous thought, particularly that of Benner (1988) and Hall (2004), I will expand certain points and only briefly mention others addressed by these authors.³ In synoptic form, these hypotheses (or “links”) may be delineated as follows: 1) The “natural spirituality” of all persons, believer or nonbeliever (*universal prevenience hypothesis*); 2) the spiritual (directional) nature of psychological structures and processes (*telic directionality hypothesis*); 3) the structural (psychological) mediation of all relational experience (*structural mediation hypothesis*); 4) the development of structural and directional maturity markers (*developmental complementarity hypothesis*); 5) the primacy of implicit and procedural structures of morality in personality change (*implicit struc-*

tural change hypothesis); and, 6) the centrality of intersubjective relatedness for implicit relational transformation (*intersubjective relatedness hypothesis*). I give greater attention to Links 5 and 6, as they are central to the specific moral motive approach proposed in Part 3.

Another way to think about these hypotheses is that they represent conceptual “links” in the nomological network connecting various propositions about the relationship between naturalistic moral development and spiritual transformation. Each link is stated as a hypothesis, and as some of these propositions represent metaphysical “faith assumptions” (Links 1 and 2), they cannot be supported with empirical evidence. However, two of the links (Links 5 and 6) are likely supportable by data (not reviewed here), while the remaining two (Links 3 and 4) await further systematic attention. This model is therefore presented as a proposal to spur thinking and research in this area, not as an established fact.

Central Postulate: The “Psychospiritual” Unity of Personality. Each of these hypotheses or links represents a commentary on a central organizing concept that Benner refers to as the “psychospiritual unity” of the personality (1988, esp. Ch. 5). Briefly, the idea is that “psychological and spiritual aspects of human functioning are inextricably connected [linked], and any segregation of spirituality and psychology is, therefore, both artificial and destructive” (p. 108). This assumption is also consistent with other nondualist and/or “non-reductive physicalist” conceptions of personality and spirituality (Brown & Jeeves, 1999; Polkinghorne, 2001), although RS does not require adoption of this metapsychological position. From this perspective, all spiritual and moral activities (e.g., love of God and love of neighbor as one’s self) operate within the substratum of psychological structures and processes, and conversely, all psychological structures and processes have a spiritual foundation.

Link 1: Universal Prevenience Hypothesis. A first auxiliary hypothesis suggests that all persons are created as spiritual beings in the sense that all potential structures and processes of personality derive from God (regardless of the process by which this occurred). An example of *structure* is a “working model” of attachment; an example of *process* is the innate human striving for relationality. This faith assumption states that psychological structures and processes form the natural ground for certain higher-order directional strivings (the “spirituality”) of human personality. For Benner, certain directional

²Hall (2004) cites various authors and sources from which he derives the term “relational spirituality” or more precisely, an “implicit relational framework” (p. 75) for research in Christian spirituality and mental health. A *disclaimer*: What follows is a synthesis of these authors, and in no way should be construed to represent the unanimous theological position of the writers contributing to this perspective. The following framework, however, is entirely consistent with my own heritage and Wesleyan interpretation of relational spirituality as described elsewhere (Leffel, 2004).

³Hall (2004) summarizes five “organizing principles” of relational spirituality that he derives from a variety of contemporary (especially) psychoanalytic literatures. The seven principles I outline here are intended to be more general, but inclusive of Hall’s. Throughout the discussion I note the correspondence of his principles to the one under consideration.

tendencies of the psyche 'mark' persons as more than strictly materialist beings (further discussed below). Thus, Benner suggests that the distinction between a person who is spiritual and one who is *non-spiritual* is that they have a different awareness of and causal attributions about these directional strivings. Benner posits that the ground of all *religious spirituality*, inclusive of Christian spirituality, is a *natural spirituality* consisting of one's progressive awareness of and response to these directional strivings. Viewed through a theological lens, as these directional strivings are natural (innate) within all persons, they may be conceptualized as expressions of Prevenient Grace, an ever-present activity of God in the universe and human nature that seeks to organize, re-organize ("redeem"), and lift lower organizations of life to ever-greater levels of complexity (Lefel, 2004; Lodahl, 2003).

Link 2: Telic Directionality Hypothesis. A second hypothesis further states that while the mechanisms that enable spiritual (directional) life are psychological (structural), these structures and processes themselves "inevitably have direction, and that direction derives from the spiritual basis of psychic life" (Benner, 1988, p. 116). In general, various authors within the RS paradigm assume at least three directional strivings represent the presence of Divine "ultimate concerns" (Emmons, 1999) within personality, but which are enabled (or not) by natural developmental processes: 1) *relationality* (the capacity for mature relatedness), 2) *self-construction* (the capacity for agency and meaning), and 3) *self-transcendence* (the capacity to re-organize one's sense of agency and meaning around a transcendent point of reference). This hypothesis incorporates Hall's (2004) first organizing principle that states: "people are fundamentally motivated by, and develop in the context of emotionally significant relationships" (p. 68), but also extends it to encompass the other two directional tendencies of personality (self-organizing and self-transcending capacities). Theologically, each of these directional potentialities may be viewed as expressions of the *imago Dei*, and for Benner, as manifestations of the central telic direction of the human personality: the "progressive restoration of personality to the image of God" (p. 115). Benner suggests that while not all persons necessarily respond to and participate in this directional striving (not all psychological growth results in Christian spiritual maturity), these natural spiritual strivings themselves remain an ever present (prevenient) fea-

ture of God's activity in the personality, conscious or not, "believe" it or not.

Link 3: Structural Mediation Hypothesis. A third proposition, one more potentially testable, suggests that growth toward spiritual maturity necessarily involves changes in the *relational deep structure* (Jones, 1996) or *implicit relational representations* of personality (Hall, 2004). RS assumes that structures and processes of personality that guide and motivate relationships with other people (e.g., a capacity to trust) also mediate one's subjective experience of relationship with the Sacred Other. Thus, all spiritual growth necessarily involves transformation (development and healing) of psychological structures that facilitate relational experience. This understanding incorporates Hall's (2004) fourth organizing principle that reads: "implicit relational representations, formed from experiences in early significant relationships with caregivers, shape the emotional appraisal of meaning in subsequent relationships" (p. 72).

In psychodynamically informed models of RS a variety of constructs could be used to describe these mediating structures of personality. Note: For readers who may be wary of "structural" language, and the dangers of reification it invites, Westen (1985) reminds us that the concept of structure or psychic organization need not be reified, and offers his definition of psychic structures as "constellations of functionally related processes" (p. 97). While there are certainly conceptual distinctions to be made between them, various constructs stand as referents for relational experiences that are encoded (primarily) in implicit and procedural form in associative memory, and for this reason Hall (2004) suggests the term *implicit relational representations* (IRR) as a summative signifier. RS follows the lead of recent memory research that demonstrates there are likely different types of knowledge structures and memory processes, the *implicit* (vs. explicit) and *procedural* (vs. declarative) systems (Siegel, 1999; Westen, 2002). Hall's (2004) second and third organizing principles define and further elaborate these structures as: "repetitions of relational experiences, sharing a common affective core, that are conceptually encoded in the mind as non-propositional meaning structures" (p. 71). By this view, implicit and procedural associative networks form the nonconscious moral "core" of personality. A "cognitive intuitionist" (Shweder & Haidt, 1993) RS interpretation assumes that moral appraisals (this is good, that is right) are generated rapidly and automatically, without deliberate reflection or deductive or

inductive reasoning (see note 1). In this approach, moral emotions (pride, disgust, empathy, gratitude, etc.) are interpreted as a rapid “hot” system of cognitive appraisals and motives that ‘energize’ (or obstruct) loving action tendencies. Thus, in this model, the implicit-procedural “level” of moral personality becomes the central locus of spiritual transformation and therapeutic practices. Following Hall, we might refer to this nonconscious level of personality change, and corresponding therapeutic methods and spiritual disciplines, with the descriptive term *implicit relational spirituality*.

Link 4: Developmental Complementarity Hypothesis. In this approach, since psychological structure and spiritual directionality are interdependent, a fourth link suggests that psychological growth necessarily precedes spiritual maturity (Benner, 1988). That is, certain structures of personality (e.g., the capacity to trust) must reach “good enough” functional levels of maturity before further spiritual growth is possible. This principle posits that the psychological structures that enable spiritual (directional) movement “complement” the innate telic directionality of the human psyche. To acknowledge this complementarity of structure and direction, Benner uses the term “psychospiritual growth” (p. 123). Again, this does not imply that spiritual growth automatically and necessarily follows from psychological growth; rather, that spiritual development is now structurally possible. Benner outlines one possible model of the complementarity of psychological and spiritual “milestones” of psychospiritual growth, although others are possible (including non-theistic models). To cite two of his examples, 1) the child’s “symbiotic dependency” on early caretakers facilitates later development of the capacity to trust (eventually God), and 2) the maturing structural capacity for “differentiation of self” later enables an awareness of the “call to self-transcendence” and the recognition of this call “as from God” (p. 127).

Link 5: Implicit Structural Change Hypothesis. The implicit and procedural nature of moral personality has implications for what is designated as the central target of change in psychotherapy and spiritual transformation. In the RS paradigm, change begins in and grows out of interiority, with the affective-motivational structures of *heart* (Benner, 1988, p. 107). In Scripture, while the term “heart” is sometimes used in parallel with or as equivalent to other Biblical anthropological terms like *soul*, *spirit*, and

occasionally *mind*, it almost always is used as a comprehensive metaphor for what in a general sense we refer to today as *self*. And, in contemporary “connectionist” psychodynamic language, since self is regarded as an associative network of “content-process” structures (Westen, 1998), these implicit moral structures may be seen as correlative to the metaphor of heart. In this light, Hall’s (2004) discussion of the implicit-procedural nature of these structures extends Benner’s hypothesis about the primacy of interior change in several significant ways.

First, Hall notes that a number of theoretical and empirical literatures converge around the concept of *implicit relational knowledge*, as the affective and nonconscious “center” of personality, e.g., the Boston Psychotherapy Change Study Group (Stern et al., 1998). In this model, implicit relational knowledge is seen as a network of affectively charged relational experiences one has acquired in the course of a lifetime. Centrally, this constellation of knowledge concerns how ‘to be with’ other persons (e.g., how to trust, be empathic, reciprocate, etc.). For this kind of knowledge, Stern (2004) prefers the verb term “implicit knowings” (as opposed the more static noun “knowledge”), emphasizing the active and processive nature of relational interactions (p. 112). These *knowings* provide the interactive “map” which describes *how* to relate with others in various situations, and these knowings are implicit and procedural rather than explicit and declarative in form. For the most part, it is assumed that these knowings remain out of one’s awareness in associative memory, but they may also be made conscious and symbolically re-presented (as in the content of an interpretation made by therapist to client). There are two important practical implications of this emphasis on the primacy of nonconscious (and through defensive processes, *un*-conscious) affective meaning structures.

A first major implication is this: *It is likely that this network of implicit knowings forms the foundation for procedural moral character.* That is, there is growing empirical evidence to believe that the roots of moral (prosocial) life begin well before the child encounters the mores that belong to society or the specific religious teachings of a subculture, certainly before attempts by adults to convey moral codes through the medium of language (declarative knowledge). This moral core is sometimes referred to as “preconscious moral knowledge” (Kitwood, 1990), the prerepresentational “moral self” (Emde, 1983), or the “moral motivational system” (Tangney,

2000). Many researchers now believe that some of the most important moral emotions (trust, empathy, gratitude, guilt, forgiveness) and “rules” of mature relatedness (reciprocity) are based on acquired implicit relational knowledge that is procedurally represented in the brain (Emde, Johnson, & Easterbrooks, 1988). To illustrate, consider that the moral emotion of empathy is sometimes re-conceptualized as a “moral affective capacity” (Tangney, 1991). Empathy is defined as a “shared emotional response between an observer and stimulus person”—a holistic response that requires three interrelated skills or capacities (Feshbach, 1975). First, it requires the cognitive ability to take another person’s perspective (role-taking or perspective taking); second, the cognitive ability to discriminate or accurately read cues regarding another person’s particular emotional experience (affective cue discrimination); and third, the affective capacity to personally experience a range of emotions, i.e., because empathy involves the sharing of another’s affective experience in one form or another. Almost certainly, the relational condition of *intersubjectivity* (discussed below) provides the developmental foundation for the emergence of these affective and interactive capacities (Stern, 2004). Thus, psychotherapy or spiritual development informed by these considerations must address the development (and healing) of these non-conscious moral structures of personality.

Link 6: Intersubjective Relatedness Hypothesis.

The implicit and procedural nature of moral structures also has implications for *how* the process of change is conceptualized. In particular, this approach emphasizes the importance of “intersubjective moments” of relatedness (Stern, 2004). Briefly, the essential idea is that in a moment of intersubjective relatedness there is a reading (inference) of the other’s intentions or affective state, and that in this moment of knowing together, new “structures” of relationality are constructed. Stern (1985) believes two types of ‘mind reading’ are of particular importance: *knowings* about the feeling states of another (“affect attunement”) and inferences about the motives or intentions of another (“interintentionality”). He believes that the construction of these capacities provides us with the essential structural guides for responding to and initiating prosocial interactions. Without these interactive structures we may know *about* the right things to do in social interactions (moral *principles* as declarative knowl-

edge), but may not know *how* to construct them (moral *capabilities* as procedural knowledge).

Therefore, a second implication of this conception of affective meaning structures is this: *Intersubjective relatedness may be the necessary precondition for the emergence of new moral affective capacities.* The Boston PCSG (Stern et al., 1998) believes that the acquisition of new relational capacities (a process they refer to as “expansion”) *requires* an intersubjective interactive environment. They propose that “moments of meeting” (pp. 908-910) are the critical relational exchanges necessary for the construction of new and improved implicit relational knowings Stern (2004) also calls this expansion process the “shared feeling voyage” (p. 172), and suggests that such moments of meeting occur many times in the development of a child’s procedural relational skills. While these authors do not discuss at length the acquisition of moral affective capacities of interest in this moral motive analysis (e.g., gratitude, empathy), they do suggest that intersubjective moments are likely the formative experiences responsible for the construction of the capacities that constitute mature relationality. If this assumption is at least partially correct, this too suggests that psychotherapy and spiritual formation must give greater priority to the quality of the intersubjective environment in which virtue-acquisition (and vice-diminishment) is presumed to take place (see Shults & Sandage, 2003, esp. Ch. 2, for a similar argument and discussion related to forgiveness).

To summarize, if the kind of cognitive intuitionist RS approach outlined here were to supercede the older Kohlbergian cognitive rationalism, we would be in a better position to appreciate what (perhaps) the apophatic tradition has been trying to teach us all along: The mind of the implicit moral is located in the heart, which is, paradoxically, a cognitive organ, and it is through the heart that we both know moral truth(s) and are motivated to love one another (Clenenin, 1994, esp. Ch. 3).

LESS IS MORE: PERSONALITY CHANGE IN THE APOPHATIC STORY

Having now described and commended the RS paradigm as a helpful framework for integrating conceptions of implicit moral development and spiritual transformation, I now turn to a description of the apophatic telling of the “story” of change and Christian spirituality. The central thesis advanced is that

the apophatic tradition offers a more “complex” (Pope, 2002) model of the dynamics of change than the one presently dominant in contemporary psychological theory (particularly positive psychology). In brief, in place of the prevailing model that emphasizes *addition* of something new to the personality through *decisionist* practices, the apophatic tradition emphasizes subtraction of something old through *transformist* practices.⁴ Following Murphy’s MacIntyrean framework, this section re-considers the apophatic “way” in terms of psychodynamically informed RS constructs and assumptions as outlined above.

An Apophatic (Subtractive) Principle of Transformational Change

While the apophatic approach has not, of course, been explicitly adopted into the canon of standard psychological theory, it has long been recognized as a “style” or approach to spirituality within the Christian church (Benner, 1988; Holmes, 1981; Jones, 1985).⁵ Perhaps the best known statements of the apophatic approach was that made by the 16th century Spanish poet, St. John of the Cross, termed “the dark night of the soul.” In the recent integration literature there is renewed interest in conserving the intuitions of the “classical” apophatic approach, but in ways more congenial to the contemporary psy-

chotherapeutic mind (Coe, 2000; Jones, 2002; Mangis & Watson, 2001; May, 2004; Shults & Sandage, 2006; Watson, 2000). Of particular relevance is the application of the apophatic approach to issues related to *spiritual struggle* (Exline & Rose, 2005; Pargament, Murray-Swank, & Nao, 2005) and *spiritual questing* (Shults & Sandage, 2006), concerns centrally related to how persons ‘let go’ and ‘move through’ the pain of negative life experiences, both natural and traumatic. The apophatic approach is also particularly relevant to a particular kind of human suffering increasingly evident in our time and culture, experiences involving the dynamic of “ambiguous loss” (Boss, 2006).⁶ Holmes (1981) suggests that while most pre-Reformation spirituality contained both kataphatic and apophatic injunctions for change, a number of commentators have suggested that apophatic prescriptions are nearly “lost” to contemporary forms of spirituality (Needleman, 1980). (Table 1 in Part 1 presented a synopsis of the kataphatic and apophatic approaches considered as principles of change.) Etymologically, the term apophatic means “against or away from the light” and it denotes a way of growing toward God by knowing less, not more. Jones (2002) reminds us that *via negativa* (“way of negation”) is not essentially a metaphysical position or statement about the impossibility of knowing anything (one’s self or God), rather it is a kind of “transformational strategy” (p. 109). He suggests that, psychologically, the apophatic way involves the process of going beyond existing forms and into the ‘void’ and uncertainty of the strange and unfamiliar, in order to arrive again in new territory. Fundamentally, the apophatic tradition asserts that there is more to personality change and spiritual transformation than simply the addition (construction) of new knowledge, or the “priming” (reinforcing) of the old, through cognitive rationalist and decisionist practices. Rather, viewed in the context of RS assumptions, it suggests that psychospiritual transformation (i.e., changes to implicit psychological structures and processes that mediate

⁴Attempts have been made to analyze the different root metaphors and philosophical traditions (Lyddon, 1989) that inform various therapeutic approaches (Brown & Miller, 2005; Lyddon, 1990) and Christian spiritualities (Maddox, 1998). Three models of moral psychology are discernible: *decisionist* (or cognitive rationalist), *constructivist*, and *transformist*. Briefly, in this scheme decisionist approaches correspond with the personality change goal of socio-emotional well-being (subjective well-being model), constructivist approaches correspond with the personality change goal of maturity or virtue-enhancement (psychological well-being model), and transformist approaches with the goal of vice-diminishment (implicit well-being model). I believe it is possible to categorize existing theory and research within these models (see Shults & Sandage, 2006 for a related discussion). I am suggesting here that the logic of the apophatic approach is more consistent with the transformist tradition, than with the decisionist tradition.

⁵While psychological theorists generally have not employed the term apophatic, or always made explicit reference to the subtractive process, it is sometimes implied in their constructs and therapeutic approaches (Jones, 2002). It is prominent, for example, in a variety of psychoanalytic approaches to therapy, including: Horney’s concept of idealized self, Winnicott’s concept of the “false self” and transitional space, Bollas’s concept of transformational object, and Loewald’s concept of symbolic linkage.

⁶Boss refers to ambiguous loss as the physical and/or psychological loss of significant others under circumstances of ambiguity, e.g., personal and systemic losses related to catastrophic physical events (terrorists attacks) and traumatic psychological absence (addictions and illnesses of loved family members). She believes ambiguous loss is the perhaps the most stressful kind of loss, as the ambiguity defies “closure” and freezes the grief process. The reflective wisdom literature of the Old Testament (Job and Ecclesiastes) can likewise be depicted as a Scriptural paradigm of ambiguous loss and the apophatic process of change.

spiritual directionality) involves the *subtraction* of vices that diminish and obstruct the development and expression of virtue. This tradition does not assume, as does much contemporary psychological theory, that the addition of new structure will necessarily “undo” or override the presence of the old (see Westen’s, 1985 argument presented in Part 1). Thus, in contrast to the “negativity” in much of positive psychology about the role of negative emotions and life experiences to facilitate personality change (Held, 2004), the apophatic way emphasizes that negative emotions and symptoms are both *meaningful* and *necessary* for transformation of implicit relational structures and processes of personality.

Essentially, many “new” spiritual approaches to change (Part 1) follow the logic of the kataphatic model of change that aligns with the decisionist strategy. This approach is well illustrated in contemporary research concerned with the enhancement of happiness (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, Schkade, 2005). These investigators have identified behavioral, cognitive, and volitional strategies of “intentional” activity by which persons are able to bolster and then sustain higher levels of happiness and well-being. This strategy is also evident in “cognitive rationalist” (Lyddon, 1989) approaches to therapy that endeavor to construct new knowledge structures (schemas) through optimistic thinking. By contrast, apophatic practices are grounded in a *transformist* model of change (Brown & Miller, 2005; Loder, 1989; Lyddon, 1990; Miller & C’deBaca, 2001). This approach likewise emphasizes the construction (addition) of virtue, but predominately through methods aimed at the subtraction of vice. That is, apophatic methods are grounded in the premise that structural change is *primarily* a subtractive process, while still recognizing the importance of constructivist (additive) processes. We see this subtractive principle at work, for example, in the central metaphor of change in “dark night” teachings as the removal of ‘soot from a face’ or (in other places) ‘smudges from a window’ (Collings, 1990, esp. Ch. 2). The following is a representative passage from John of the Cross (Kavanaugh & Rodriguez, 1979):

A ray of sunlight shining on a *smudgy window* is unable to illumine that window completely and transform it into its own light. It could do this if the window were cleaned and polished ... The extent of illumination is not dependent on the ray of sunlight but on the window. If the window is totally clean and pure, the sunlight will so transform and illumine it that to all appearances the window will be identical with the

ray of sunlight and shine just as the sun’s ray ... *the window is the ray or light of the sun by participation*. The soul on which the divine light of God’s being is ever shining, or better, in which it is ever dwelling by nature, is like this window, as we have affirmed. (1584/1979, p. 164; *emphasis added*)

An important question the contemporary therapeutic mind might pose to the apophatic tradition is this: Is the notion of subtraction predominately metaphor, or does it have some objective and scientific basis of its own? What does the subtraction of characterological ‘smudges’ mean in light of contemporary psychological knowledge

Subtraction in Light of Connectionist Therapeutic Models

In response, I suggest that the kataphatic-apophatic distinction finds its contemporary analogue in recent theory and research concerned with the *connectionist* and *parallel distributed* nature of mind (see Westen, 2002 for a practical discussion applied to psychotherapy). Recent distinctions in cognitive neuroscience between different kinds of memory systems shed new light on the additive and subtractive principles of personality change and their implications for psychotherapy (Gabbard & Westen, 2003). These authors propose an integrative model of change which incorporates two broad categories of personality change and related strategies: 1) changes to nonconscious (implicit and procedural) associational networks, and 2) changes to conscious (explicit and declarative) patterns of thought, feeling, and affect regulation. While both processes are important, these authors suggest that to the extent that nonconscious networks guide much of our thought, feeling and behavior, in most cases they will be the primary focus of therapeutic action. By this view, altering the functioning of associational networks involves both the weakening (subtraction) and strengthening (addition) of connections in relational networks. First, subtraction involves *weakening* the links between nodes of a network that have been activated together, perhaps for decades, and a general lowering of their level of chronic activation (i.e., their tendency to assimilate new experiences and thus to influence ongoing activity). According to connectionist models, implicit relational representations are not “things” stored in memory, but connections among mental units (ideas, memories, sensations, affects, etc.) that ‘fire together.’ Subtraction thus means the *relative* deactivation of problematic links in associational networks such that the person

will tend to find new, adaptive interactions and persons more available. Second, structural change to associative networks involves addition, the construction of new associative linkages and/or the strengthening of links previously weak. Such additions make it possible for the person to construct and respond to others in new and better (loving) ways. In this model, it is assumed that structural change does not obliterate or completely replace old networks, which is likely neurologically impossible. Rather, structural change is never final and is always a matter of degree, and depends upon the 'regressive' pull of present circumstances, the pervasiveness of previous associational networks, and the person's capacity for conscious self-reflection (Gabbard & Westen, 2003, pp. 827-829).

I suggest that this therapeutic understanding is consistent with the logic of the apophatic approach. A fundamental assumption of apophatic change is that the addition of new structure through *decisionist* practices does not itself do away with the influence of prior motives and structures (Dubay, 1989 on St. John of the Cross). Rather, the old must actively be subtracted ("died to") even as one attempts to construct the new (Mangis & Watson, 2001 on Desert spirituality). The apophatic view understands, for example, that even as one decides to become more intentional in enacting the Christian virtue of compassion, a person may discover she is not functionally free from other "parallel process" implicit motives, affective states, and patterns of interaction that function to obstruct or interrupt the expression of this striving (e.g., pride). Thus, the apophatic approach commends the subtractive principle of change (further discussed below), while also appreciating the role of additive (kataphatic) disciplines.

The significance of this multi-process prescriptive strategy is made even clearer when viewed in context of the larger apophatic "story" of spirituality. The following discussion, framed in the Murphy-MacIntyrean model, further highlights the significance of the apophatic subtractive principle and transformist type of change, particularly in light of RS and connectionist assumptions.

Moral Telos: Quest of Love and Likeness

Within the broader psychotherapeutic literature, while the status of love as a normative developmental and therapeutic telos is probably ambivalent at best (Balswick, King, & Reimer, 2005; Lear,

2003; Rubin, 2004), in the Christian integrative literature it is not novel to posit *capacity to love* as the central therapeutic and spiritual formation outcome (Tjeltveit, 2006). So, about this I will be brief. In recent commentaries on the apophatic tradition there is a clear emphasis on the *teleology of loving* as a central reference point for conceptualizing the process and goal of psychotherapy and spiritual formation (Coe, 2000; Mangis & Watson, 2001; Shults & Sandage, 2006; Watson, 2000). These recent approaches, intersecting the contemplative spiritual and contemporary relational psychoanalytic traditions, follow some of the "Christian Psychologists" of the ancient church (e.g., St. Augustine, Desert Fathers and Mothers, St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Athanasius) in suggesting that it is a *union with God in love* that is the endpoint of psychospiritual development. Distilling the many insights to be gleaned from this literature, three trajectories in the apophatic vision are central. First, these ancient saints and sages are nearly unanimous in their insistence that the central aim of spiritual formation practices is restoration (healing and development) of one's capacity to truly "love" another as *other*, whether that other is God or another person (Watson, 2000, p. 282). Second, in this process, while experiential (subjective) nearness to God may be an eventual outcome of the apophatic quest, it is not the primary goal. Felt 'nearness' to the Divine Presence is second in priority to growth toward characterological likeness to God (love). Along the way, some persons are likely to encounter "dark night(s)" where they acutely experience the distance and absence of God, relative to how they have previously experienced God's presence and provision (Coe, 2000). Third, whether such an experience is normative or not, the function of the spiritual disciplines in the apophatic process shifts from a focus on knowledge about God (kataphatic emphasis) to increased focus on knowledge of self, particularly self-in-relation-to-others. The purpose of this movement in one's "developmental spirituality" (Coe, 2000) is to illuminate (*via illuminata*) and detach from (*via purgativa*) "old" images of self, in order to more fully unite (*via unitiva*) with the character and purposes of God in the world. The overall objective of the classical "three ways"—primarily subtractive in its restorative action—is to redress a normative and non-declarative obstacle in one's quest toward union with God in love.

Moral Problem: Dilemma of Idealization and Attachment

Psychodynamic therapist David Shapiro (1989) observes that many therapists, early in their professional work, are confronted by a painful and discouraging fact: "They discover that it is one thing to bring about a momentary change in a patient, even a strikingly therapeutic change, in which the patient experiences a marked sense of relief and a new sense of what he feels and what he wants to do [changes in *subjective well-being*]; but it is quite another thing to make such a change stable and lasting and to build upon it" (p. 192). In brief, what therapists often discover is how persons can remain "tenaciously attached" (Stark, 1999) to old relational motives and representations, how highly resistant and slow to change we can be, despite protestations and good intentions to the contrary. In light of this dismaying realization, Shapiro (1989) suggests that many therapists come to see that "psychotherapy is essentially a subtractive process, not an additive one; it aims to remove, not to augment" (p. 116).

Consistent with Shapiro's therapeutic observation, the apophatic tradition has long emphasized that across the course of one's life and religious education, beliefs and behaviors become organized around certain images, metaphors, or concepts about God (self and others), and have been (perhaps inappropriately) *idealized* as we invest more of ourselves in them (Jones, 2002). While such images are important as declarative meaning-system guides to personal and spiritual identity ("God is like a Good Shepherd" and will protect me from harm), and while such images may have been developmentally appropriate, when too long 'grasped' they become obstacles to assimilations of new experiences and mature relational development. In dynamic terms, what a person must come to relinquish are the motivated attachments to inadequate, dysfunctional, and self-defeating implicit associational networks. In apophatic language, the names sometimes given to these motivated enactments include: *attachments*, *appetites*, or *gratifications* (Dubay, 1989; May, 2004). These constructs emphasize that "idealized" images may come to function as "idols" (Johnson, 1990) in one's life. Consequently, apophatic methods aim to facilitate a 'letting go' of these obstructive attachments (affective vices), and 'opening to' new images of meaning and experiences of relationality.

In connectionist terms, the apophatic approach suggests that the implicit and procedural structures of one's personality (*windows* as implicit relational representations), not just one's explicit and declarative religious beliefs and values, may have been developed in the context of relationships not "good enough" (Winnicott, 1965) to facilitate an adequate implicit and procedural capacity for mature love (*window* as psychological capacity to love). A person may discover, for example, that his implicit *attachment working model* (Fonagy, 2001) and *cyclical maladaptive pattern* (Strupp & Binder, 1985) now obstructs the motive and capacity to love (*smudges* on the window), even though one's meaning-system constructs (declarative beliefs, personal values) suggests he ought to behave otherwise. By this view, the objective of apophatic transformation is the "reconciliation" or "atonement" (Loewald, 1988) of the multiple and nonconscious implicit structures and motives of personality that obstruct satisfactory expression of one's more consciously valued goal strivings (e.g., compassion). One realizes that implicit and procedural motives and representations have become obstacles to the goal of mature love and likeness to God, and require transformation via processes of *purgativa*, *illuminata*, and *unitiva*. Each of these processes may be seen to nuance a central and critical aspect of the dissolution of the representations ("smudges") that conflict with and obstruct expression of loving prosocial motives and relational capacities (the "ray" of sunlight, which by participation in God, becomes God-like love). An apophatic RS approach, therefore, emphasizes that continued growth toward love and likeness depends upon the progressive detachment from obstructive motives and structures, precisely in order to make room for "expansions" (Stern, 2004) of new experiences and virtues of mature relationality.

Moral Process: Paradox of Subtraction and Mourning

Concerning one's personal participation in the cooperant Divine-human project of love and likeness, two themes consistently reappear in apophatic story: 1) the inevitability of suffering and loss (mourning), and 2) the importance of intentionality (Dubay, 1989). First, the apophatic approach emphasizes that the restorative action of subtraction involves the experience of grief and mourning (Jones, 2002). It suggests that in order to grow

beyond earlier developmental structures of meaning and patterns of relatedness, one must relinquish attachment to these forms, and that this kind of liberation normatively involves the process of mourning. So central is the mourning process, in some depictions of the apophatic way grief and tears are understood to be a "Divine sacrament" of transformation (Allen, 1994 on Orthodox spiritual direction). Likewise, in ascetic writings of Syrian Christianity, primarily Macarius the Egyptian and Ephraem Syrus (Christensen, 1996), mourning is seen as a primary means of Grace to be intentionally cultivated for continued transformation into the likeness of Christ (love). Notably, the purpose of this grief is not primarily *forensic*, i.e., remorse and sorrow for sins committed and forgiveness sought from the guilt of sin. Rather, mourning is *therapeutic* in the sense of liberation from the power of inward attachment. That is, grief and mourning are seen as necessary and inevitable aspects of healing, and as a natural consequence of truly seeing (*via illuminata*) and confronting one's vices (*via purgativa*).

Psychodynamic conceptions of grieving cast further light on this subtractive mechanism of change. In some psychodynamic formulations, particularly those from the object-relations tradition, the action of subtraction is seen as pivotal in relational transformation, and to be accomplished primarily through a process of illuminated mourning (Pollock, 1981). By this view, just as transference operates in the personality as a counterforce opposing repression, mourning acts as the counterforce that opposes the pervasive tendency towards denial (Loewald, 1960). Automatic implicit transferences ("attachments") are understood to provide defenses against the grief that would ensue if one faced the realities of painful losses and relational experiences. Thus, mourning is an essential process of change because it attenuates the need to defend against and recreate painful aspects of one's past in present situations.

Understood by Pollock (1981), *mourning-liberation* is the process of working through the grief automatically activated when one seeks to relinquish "parts of self that once were, or hoped might be" as well as "other feelings about reality losses and changes" (p. 576). Similarly, in other emotion-focused and relational dynamic therapies, mourning is viewed as a primary means to effect liberation from one's inordinate attachment to nonconscious associational networks (Bucci, 1997; Fonagy, 2001; Fosha, 2000). These approaches view mourning as

an intentional activity of "integrating" (Shabad, 1993) nonconscious motives, images, and wishes into one's more conscious working associational network (Bucci, 1997). Such activity represents an "atonement" (at-one-ment) (Loewald, 1988) of the dissociated facets of one's personality. Through mourning one is able to bear the loss and let go of the wished-for that never was or things that never should have been (Stark, 1999). In the integration of such losses and through the internalization of new and better experiences with others, the person is then able to relinquish the earlier and "automatic" implicit motives to reenact wishes connected to past significant others (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999).

Second, apophatic change necessarily involves intentional activity on the part of the participant, and this intentional activity is aimed primarily at healing interior obstructions to mature love (Coe, 2000 on St. John of the Cross). In the apophatic tradition, the *desert* or *wilderness* represents a geographic and metaphoric "liminal space" (Shults & Sandage, 2006) for participation in processes that facilitate therapeutic mourning-liberation (Mangis & Watson, 2001). Desert spirituality—then and now—is an intentional way of living that is aimed principally at overcoming illusion, enhancing relational and spiritual discernment, and purifying duplicitous motives and attachments; a symbolic "martyrdom" of the false self *via dolorosa* in the interest of greater love and likeness (Benner, 1988).

There is a growing psychological literature on intentional change (Brandstadter, 1999; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2004) that attempts to understand the factors that enable persons to adopt a "sustainable" way of change, and promises (I believe) to offer scientific-based practical advice for apophatic processes. In their "sustainable happiness" model these researchers propose that intentional activities can be tailored to the person, creating a more dynamic *person-activity fit*. Their research documents that the "matching" of activity to personal inclinations predisposes persons to be more persistent in and to internalize the activity, thus benefiting more from intrinsic activities than from prepackaged prescriptions (Sheldon & Elliott, 1999). Collectively, this body of literature suggests ways to facilitate intentional activity, and applied here, may suggest practical directions for helping individuals sustain and internalize activities through which they intentionally grieve toward greater love and likeness (further discussed in Part 3).

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS: TOWARD A PSYCHOLOGY OF IMPLICIT RELATIONAL SPIRITUALITY

The objective of this article has been to outline a conceptual framework for: 1) “integrating” concepts of implicit moral development with spiritual transformation (relational spirituality paradigm), and 2) “clarifying” conceptions of psychospiritual change (especially the apophatic subtractive principle). In conclusion, I briefly consider how we might continue to develop such an approach. I offer three suggestions, and in so doing, anticipate a specific moral motive approach proposed in Part 3. The following three theoretical emphases may help facilitate construction of a more psychodynamically informed *yet positive* model of implicit moral development, one that prioritizes vice-diminishment as an essential aspect of change. In future thought, following Hall (2004), we might refer to this approach as *implicit relational spirituality*, and regard it as a separate sub-discipline within the larger literature on emotion and spiritual transformation.

Delineate an Implicit Level of Personality Change

First, I suggest that we more carefully delineate the domains of *implicit well-being* (IWB), *subjective well-being* (SWB), and *psychological well-being* (PWB) as presently understood in the personality development and change literature (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Upon closer review of this literature, I argue that a further discrimination can be made between approaches and change strategies that emphasize growth by addition of something more to one’s personality (e.g., virtue-acquisition), and *transformation* by subtraction of something obstructive or conflicting from personality (vice-diminishing). Again, the central idea is that while the construction of complexity in one’s personality through accommodative growth processes certainly brings maturity, this does not guarantee that one is free from multiplicity, duplicity, and vice that may have (likely has) accrued along the “hard road to the good life” (King, 2001). Differentiating the psychological well-being (PWB) domain and goal of “maturity” (construction of virtue) from the implicit well-being (IWB) domain and goal of “wholeness” (diminishment of vice) yields a clearer level of analysis for personality change and spiritual development. The special province of IWB would be methods that facilitate “integration”

(Emmons, 1999) of implicit structures and processes of personality that obstruct happiness and maturity, i.e., *implicit relational character* and associated afflictive emotions (further discussed in Part 3).

Differentiate the Additive and Subtractive Principles of Change

Related to this, we might more clearly differentiate various approaches to personality change and spiritual transformation in terms of the additive and subtractive principles of change. As noted, while this distinction has generally not been recognized within the personality change literature, I suggest we would do well to incorporate this understanding into our nomenclature and conceptual analyses. Proposed here, the kataphatic and apophatic traditions tend to emphasize different principles of personality change, the kataphatic with the additive principle and related decisionist methods, and the apophatic with the subtractive principle and transformist methods. We will likely want to keep both approaches, as did early Christian spiritual direction, but I am arguing that neglect of the latter may lead us to under-emphasize an essential aspect of implicit personality change. In contrast to the more prevalent “decisionist” models and practices (Maddox, 1998), transformist models prescribe practices aimed primarily: 1) to diminish the power of compensatory (false) implicit motives, afflictive affects (vices), and deficient relational representations, and 2) to develop character virtues (affective capacities) that increasingly make one more capable of creating and expressing compassion-hearted love. This trajectory of thought, taken to its logical conclusion, shifts the paradigm from the presently dominant cognitive rationalist moral psychology (Shweder & Haidt, 1993) to a “cognitive intuitionist” *moral motive* approach that is more centrally focused on implicit more than explicit meaning-system constructs of personality (further discussed in Part 3).

Develop Moral Motive Analyses and Models

As noted in Part 1, meaning-system analyses presently dominate the literature on spiritual transformation (Paloutzian & Park, 2005). To complement (not contradict) meaning-system analyses, I propose the construction of various *moral motive* analyses of spiritual transformation. Relative to meaning-system analyses, such analyses would give greater theoretical and methodological priority to

the affective and motivational basis of spiritual transformation. Specifically, as Emmons (2005) has suggested, they would investigate the mechanisms by which emotional processes are both “motivators of change and potential consequences of change” (p. 247), and (perhaps) as described in this article include the apophatic (subtractive) process of change. To this end, we are in need of moral motive models that specify the kinds of motivators that are to be the targets of change in spiritual transformation. To illustrate the kind of theoretical model I am suggesting, consider the following provisional model, not intended here to be sufficiently descriptive (further considered in Part 3).

First, spiritual growth could be defined as expansion of the motive and capacity to care, where caring is understood as a mature mode of prosocial relatedness, not simply as a feeling state. Specifically, deriving from developments in contemporary generativity theory (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1998) and moral affect theory (Emmons & McCullough, 2004), care can be further defined as the motive and capacity to emotionally invest in the strengths development of others (Leffel, 2006). Second, the emotions required to invest in the strengths development of others can be conceptualized in terms of the “moral emotions” (Haidt, 2003). The moral emotions I have in mind (e.g., empathy, gratitude) are also sometimes referred to as the “other-regarding virtues” (McCullough & Snyder, 2000) or the “warmth-based” virtues (Worthington & Berry, 2005). Third, this approach proposes that these prosocial moral emotions collectively comprise a person’s *implicit* and *procedural* capacity to care. Following connectionist and parallel distributed processing models of mind (Westen, 2002), this psychological capacity to care can be regarded as an associative network, i.e., nonconscious knowledge structures of ‘how to’ relate to (emotionally invest) in another person. Fourth, by this view, the central objective of spiritual transformation practices is “amplification” (Tomkins, 1970) of caring capacity by methods that: 1) expand (strengthen) action tendencies within the prosocial associational network (virtues), and 2) diminish (weaken) connections in the associational network of afflictive emotions (vices). In this model, virtues would be regarded as moral affective capacities that (theoretically) can be facilitated and amplified in appropriate intersubjective relational contexts, whether therapeutic or other formative interactive settings.

I suggest that moral motive analyses of this nature (perhaps of various theoretical persuasions) might help us shift the paradigm in the study of emotion and spiritual transformation away from over-reliance on upper-level meaning-system analyses and toward emotion-focused moral motive approaches. Perhaps these analyses will better facilitate our understanding of how persons move beyond “minimal prosociality” and toward a greater motive and capacity for universal benevolence, a topic to which we will return in Part 3.

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