

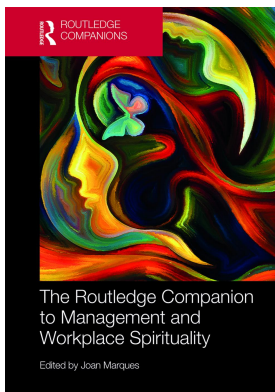
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MSR 2.0

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MSR 2.0

Spirituality Plus Religion

Eric B. Dent

MSR 2.0: Spirituality Plus Religion

Someone reading the Management, Spirituality, and Religion (MSR) literature for the first time would readily conclude that spirituality is a “good” thing and that religion is a “bad” thing. The most widely quoted source in MSR is Mitroff and Denton (1999) and they report that their respondents say “[religion] divides more than it unites. It is more exclusive than inclusive. Religion is more concerned with perpetuating itself than with helping humankind. Spirituality on the other hand, is personal” (p. 48).¹

Religion often has the negative connotations of being “parental,” “authoritarian,” and “requiring unconscious obedience” while spirituality is “self-managed, adult, self-directed, and conscious development” (Mohamed, Hassan, & Wisniewski, 2001). Zaidman, Goldstein-Gidoni, and Nehemya (2009) write “Unlike institutionalized religion, which looks outward and is anchored in formal rites and scriptures, spirituality is inwardly directed and is concerned with deeper motivations and with existential moments in the life course” (p. 617). Other sources suggest that religion has no place in the workplace (Delbecq, 2009) and that religion is not required for context in defining spirituality and its relationship to the workplace (Dehler & Welsh, 1994). Even the esteemed Dalai Lama (1999, p. 22) has been quoted as saying

Religion I take to be concerned with faith in the claims of one faith tradition or another, an aspect of which is the acceptance of some form of heaven or nirvana. Connected with this are religious teachings or dogma, ritual prayer, and so on. Spirituality I take to be concerned with those qualities of the human spirit—such as love and compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, contentment, a sense of responsibility, a sense of harmony—which bring happiness to both self and others.

These statements are typical, not extreme, within the MSR literature. In a review of the MSR literature to that point in time, Dent, Higgins, and Wharff (2005) found that only 29% of the articles directly linked spirituality and religion and only 43% of the articles that mentioned both spirituality and religion linked them. As Taylor (2009) noted, “many within the management and organization studies community insist that religion and spirituality are and must be empirically and conceptually separate” and that “religion, it is *almost* needless to say, is the bad sibling in this relationship” (p. 336).

From this sketch one could conclude that religion is divisive, more concerned with perpetuation than humanity, authoritarian, requiring unconscious obedience, outward and anchored in formal rites and scriptures, concerned with faith in the claims of one faith tradition, connected with dogma, and has no place in the workplace.

Hicks (2002) made another interesting observation about the MSR literature. He notes that there is broad consensus that MSR scholars avow that employees should be able to “bring their whole selves to work” (Mitroff, 2003, p. 376) but often a few pages later in the same article, the author will decry any religious expression in the workplace (Mitroff, 2003, p. 378). In the case of Mitroff, to his credit, he admitted his own internal inconsistency, but decided to press on maintaining the inconsistency rather than attempting to resolve it.

For purposes here, the final relevant observation about the MSR literature is to note the wide variety of definitions of spirituality and religion. In a recent article, Tackney, Chappell, and Sato (2017) described “the most enduring challenge” of the field as “the spirituality—religion juxtaposition” (p. 144).

The purpose of this chapter is to point out some “muck” that the MSR literature is mired in and to suggest that the explication of starting axioms will allow the field to take a quantum leap forward to “MSR 2.0.” This muck consists of conceptual difficulties such as dichotomizing religion and spirituality, employing too many idiosyncratic definitions of workplace spirituality and terms within, and allowing papers that include philosophical inconsistencies in important concepts. Tackney et al. (2017, p. 247) summarized these difficulties as

- (a) delineating and operationalizing the key terms of religion, spirituality and workplace spirituality; (b) acknowledging the work to date in the MSR corpus around definitions of these terms, and (c) being explicit about how ontological and epistemological assumptions inform our methods.²

Having already discussed some aspects of the “muck,” the chapter will then introduce a standard definition of religion and show how it is essentially synonymous with a belief system. Such belief systems all have starting axioms that cannot be deduced from within themselves. Consequently, a leverage point for the MSR literature will be the identification and explication of starting axioms. The next section of the chapter will illustrate, in some detail, the starting axioms of five selected religions or philosophies. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of how the MSR literature can advance to the next stage in a lifecycle of academic literature.

Religion Defined

There may be occasions when it makes sense to develop a context-specific definition. For example, one person may define *God* a certain way and another person a different way. *Religion*, however, is a universally used term with a standard, dictionary definition. Such a definition should be used unless the author has a good reason for developing an idiosyncratic definition. Consider, then, *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*'s definition of *religion*:

a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs.

(2006, p. 630)

Someone's religion may be different from a so-called "organized" religion. When many people hear the term "religion," they automatically translate that to "organized religion" meaning one of the major organized religions of the world—Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and so forth. There is clearly nothing in the definition of "religion" that necessitates membership in an organized religion. One's religion, then, is one's "set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe" (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 2006). Rather than frame a discussion in terms of a religion/spirituality dichotomy, it may be more fruitful to consider an individual's or group's "set of beliefs."

The Nature of Belief Systems

Hofstadter (1979) is perhaps the most popular of many to illustrate Gödel's famous incompleteness theorem and prove that, in any belief system, some elements of the system cannot be derived from other parts of the system. In other words, every philosophy or belief statement contains starting propositions that cannot be proven and are taken on "faith." Such starting premises may be true, false, accurate, inaccurate, realistic, or unrealistic, but such a judgment cannot be made using other components of the belief system. An excellent example of an unproven starting axiom is provided by Lewontin (1997, p. 29).

We take the side of science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, in spite of its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.

Lewontin makes clear in this quote that the "religion" of atheism makes an *a priori* commitment, a "leap of faith," if you will, in materialism. So, one of the starting premises for atheism is the belief that all phenomena have material causes. As he points out, there is nothing within atheism which can lead to this conclusion. All philosophies, belief systems, religions have such *a priori* commitments.

Knowing what one's *a priori* commitments are may be a non-trivial task. Keller (2008) points out that one of the best ways of surfacing such commitments is by examining one's doubts, which tend to be more readily apparent. For example if a woman from an organized religion claims "there is only one true path to salvation" and a man denies that claim, he has revealed an *a priori* commitment. He has demonstrated belief in multiple paths to salvation. This belief, however, cannot be derived from within a philosophy so he is accepting it as an act of faith.

Starting Axioms

As noted above, all religions, belief systems, philosophies, worldviews, narrative identities, or whatever other descriptor is used, assume starting axioms that cannot be justified from within the system of belief. In one sense, the starting axioms are what people place "blind faith" in. In

many cases, starting axioms cannot be validated to those who choose not to accept the starting axiom or premise. For example, all of the religions discussed in this chapter assume that reality is intelligible. However, none can derive that assumption from within its belief system. Each takes it as a matter of “blind faith.”

Every human being holds starting premises. Every person operates using a religion or philosophy whether it is consciously chosen, or not. Many people have attempted to escape this predicament. For example, someone may say “No religion is better than any other. Each is simply a different path to the same destination.” This very statement, though, represents a starting axiom. Likewise, several of the examples above from the MSR literature imply that the world would be a better place without doctrine or dogma. This claim, itself, is dogmatic or doctrinal. As Keller (2008, p. 12) notes, “skeptics believe that *any* exclusive claims to a superior knowledge of spiritual reality cannot be true.” This objection, of course, is itself an exclusive claim.

Others believe they have escaped “blind faith” by devoting themselves to science. Like any other religion, philosophy, or belief system, however, science has starting axioms that are accepted on “blind faith.” As Haught (2008, p. 45) notes, “Exactly what are the independent scientific experiments, we might ask, that could provide ‘evidence’ for the hypothesis that all true knowledge must be based on the paradigm of scientific inquiry?” Science makes a number of starting assumptions such as that all explanations are purely natural, that the universe has no purpose, that various phenomena, such as the speed of light, have remained constant throughout history, and that truth is worth seeking.

The next section explores some starting axioms of a number of common religions or philosophies such as atheist objectivism, Christianity, secular humanism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. The five offered here are selected merely for illustrative purposes. There are at least dozens of sets of starting axioms practiced by large numbers of people. Even within broad collections of starting axioms such as Hinduism or secular humanism, there is a range of additional starting axioms, or a group of proponents who may not accept an axiom listed below. Every effort has been made to ensure that what follows is the essence of the religion or worldview, the smallest number of axioms adhered to by most proponents. For example, adherents to each of these religions or belief systems have validated these starting assumptions. At one level, there may be as many different religions as there are people, because people make starting assumptions about so many different phenomena. This chapter arbitrarily includes five different religions that all have a large following. A similar analysis could be done with any type of belief system.

Atheist Objectivism

Atheist objectivism as embodied in Ayn Rand’s work is included because her book, *Atlas Shrugged* (1957/2005) is listed as the second most influential book for American readers (first is the Bible) (McGrath, 2007). Thirty years after her death her work is receiving increasing attention, particularly as the US federal government directs a higher percentage of the overall economy.

To Rand’s credit, she was more specific in laying out the foundational elements of her philosophy than many other philosophers have been (Dent, Parnell, & Carraher, 2018). Rand also makes clear that she understands that all belief systems make a priori commitments. She has written,

An axiomatic concept is the identification of a primary fact of reality, which cannot be analyzed, i.e., reduced to other facts or broken into component parts. It is implicit in

all facts and in all knowledge. It is the fundamentally given and directly perceived or experienced, which requires no proof or explanation, but on which all proofs and explanations rest.

(1990, p. 73)

Rand has identified three axiomatic concepts—existence, identity, and consciousness. What is real exists. Reality is existence. “Consciousness is the faculty of awareness—the faculty of perceiving that which exists” (Rand, 1990, p. 37). Consciousness consists of the neurological processes in the brain which allow people to have a sensation. For the purposes of this chapter, the primary aspects of Rand’s philosophy are nicely encapsulated in a statement quoted at length:

At a sales conference at Random House, preceding the publication of *Atlas Shrugged*, one of the book salesmen asked me whether I could present the essence of my philosophy while standing on one foot. I did as follows:

1. Metaphysics: Objective Reality
2. Epistemology: Reason
3. Ethics: Self-interest
4. Politics: Capitalism.

If you want this translated into simple language, it would read: 1. “Nature, to be commanded, must be obeyed” or “Wishing won’t make it so.” 2. “You can’t eat your cake and have it, too.” 3. “Man is an end in himself.” 4. “Give me liberty or give me death.” ...

My philosophy, Objectivism, holds that:

1. Reality exists as an objective absolute—facts are facts, independent of man’s feelings, wishes, hopes, or fears.
2. Reason (the faculty which identifies and integrates the material provided by man’s senses) is man’s only means of perceiving reality, his only source of knowledge, his only guide to action, and his basic means of survival.
3. Man—every man—is an end in himself, not the means to the ends of others. He must exist for his own sake, neither sacrificing himself to others nor sacrificing others to himself. The pursuit of his own rational self-interest and of his own happiness is the highest moral purpose of his life.
4. The ideal political-economic system is laissez-faire capitalism.... The government acts only as a policeman that protects man’s rights; it uses physical force only in retaliation and only against those who initiate its use, ... In a system of full capitalism, there should be (but, historically, has not yet been) a complete separation of state and economics, in the same way and for the same reasons as the separation of state and church.

(Rand, 1962, p. 35)

Some have argued that aside from Aristotle, Plato, and Kant, Rand is the only person to have offered a complete philosophy (Locke, 2007). As will be seen in the next section, others would include Christianity in this list (Schaeffer, 1976/2005).

Christianity

As with many religions, Christianity has had a long history and many people have written about it, so in some ways, it is difficult to encapsulate. For this chapter, anything referred to as Christian will have a base in the Bible and will hold to what are considered “essentials.” As Keller (2008) notes, all Christians accept the great ecumenical creeds of Christianity but no Christian believes *only* these things. Such creeds include:

- God in three persons or essences (commonly labeled Father, Son, and Holy Spirit or Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer) created the world.
- Humanity has fallen into sin and both good and sinful tendencies are within each person.
- God became incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth to allow sinful people to have a personal relationship with God.
- In his death and resurrection Jesus made possible salvation for everyone so they can elect to be received by grace.
- Jesus established the church, his people, as the vehicle through which he continues his mission of rescue, reconciliation, and salvation.
- Finally, “that at the end of time Jesus will return to renew the heavens and the earth, removing all evil, injustice, sin, and death from the world” (Keller, 2008, p. 117).

This panoramic view of history together with other scriptural passages results in several axiomatic statements including:

- Every human being has innate dignity: “So God created man in His own image” (Genesis 1:27).
- Each person’s character is of great importance: “Man looks at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart” (I Samuel 16:7).
- God loves people and consistently acts in their long-term best interests.
- Human beings are fallible and will often make decisions not in their long-term best interest.
- Humankind is responsible for taking care of the planet and its life.
- People should stand against injustice wherever it is found: “Hate evil, and love good and establish justice” (Amos 5:15).
- The goal for Christians is to strive for perfection. “Be perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).
- The source of knowledge is revelation in Scripture and in creation. “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made” (Romans 1:20).

Logically flowing from these starting principles are notions of private property, working and prospering from one’s work, investment and risk-taking (the Parable of the Talents). Moreover, Christianity condemns laziness (Proverbs 12) and certainly doesn’t advocate socialism (“For to everyone who has shall *more* be given, and he shall have an abundance” (Matthew 25:14–30 and Luke 19:12–27)). As Yang (2000, p. 259) notes, “the Scriptures neither argue against self-interest nor disparage prosperity. Christianity advocates a form of egoism, which ... merely means the pursuit of an individual’s ‘good.’”

Secular Humanism/Scientific Naturalism/Atheism

Perhaps, one “benefit” to organized religions is that most keep track of their members and any foundational documents are well known. These characteristics are less clear with secular

humanism, although its adherents represent a small but growing body of individuals in the world. Although many people may not be accustomed to thinking of secular humanism as a religion, over 50 years ago it was identified as such in the decision in the United States Supreme Court case *Torcaso v. Watkins* (1961). Two organizations who are providing structure for secular humanism are the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) and the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH). At the 50th anniversary World Humanist Congress in 2002 the IHEU unanimously passed the Amsterdam Declaration, a delineation of the fundamental principles of modern humanism that they have declared to be the official statement of World Humanism. One of the key differences between this type of atheism and Objectivist atheism is that the former will frequently believe that truth is relative, although this difference is not specifically explicated in the statement of secular humanism, below. According to the Amsterdam Declaration of 2002 (“Amsterdam Declaration 2002,” n.d.), the fundamentals of modern humanism are:

1. Humanism is ethical. It affirms the worth, dignity and autonomy of the individual and the right of every human being to the greatest possible freedom compatible with the rights of others. Humanists have a duty of care to all of humanity including future generations. Humanists believe that morality is an intrinsic part of human nature based on understanding and a concern for others, needing no external sanction.
2. Humanism is rational. It seeks to use science creatively, not destructively. Humanists believe that the solutions to the world’s problems lie in human thought and action rather than divine intervention.... Science gives us the means but human values must propose the ends.
3. Humanism supports democracy and human rights ...
4. Humanism insists that personal liberty must be combined with social responsibility.... Humanism is undogmatic, imposing no creed upon its adherents ...
5. Humanism is a response to the widespread demand for an alternative to dogmatic religion.... Humanism recognizes that reliable knowledge of the world and ourselves arises through a continuing process. of observation, evaluation and revision.
6. Humanism values artistic creativity and imagination and recognizes the transforming power of art ...
7. Humanism is a lifestance aiming at the maximum possible fulfilment ...

It is interesting to see, within a statement that is essentially a creed, the statement that no creed is imposed upon adherents. This is an example of the importance of clarity around starting assumptions. The next religion discussed, Buddhism, is noteworthy for never extolling an explicit creed.

Buddhism

“Life is suffering—escape it,” (Jones, 1931, p. 80) says Buddhism. The central teaching of the Buddha (which means “Awakened One”) is that life is difficult and painful, just by its nature (the First Noble Truth). Suffering occurs when people grasp after anything other than what is (the Second Noble Truth). This assumption is squarely in opposition with atheist objectivism, for example, which assumes that striving is one of life’s greatest virtues. Buddhism teaches that the way to remove suffering is to stop the need for grasping and striving. A popular form of

Buddhist practice today is mindfulness (Scherer & Waistell, 2018), which is the first of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment.

Although Buddhism makes a number of underlying assumptions, it may be an incomplete philosophy because the Buddha believed that several questions are unanswerable, and among these questions are those that philosophers see as the cornerstone of any philosophy. The Buddha, for example, taught that whether the world is finite is an unanswerable question and that people should not bother to speculate on unanswerable questions.

Buddhism is perhaps best known for its psychological assumptions. The notion of consciousness is central to Buddhism. Consciousness is seen as a construct that is ageless, essentially existing outside time. The human body interacts with consciousness but does not generate it. In fact, Buddhism teaches that, in contrast to Descartes' great claim (I think, therefore, I am), the self "is actually a figment of the imagination" (Prothero, 2010, p. 179).

There is a universal unconscious and turning awareness to it fosters freedom and understanding. Consciousness connects all human beings. In fact, Buddhism contends that all things are connected and that there are no distinctions between worldly and spiritual problems. Compassion is at the core of the human experience and it arises when people connect their consciousnesses with all things (Kornfield, 2008). Buddhism considers states of consciousness to be far more important than external circumstances. What people visualize changes their bodies and their consciousnesses. Buddhists are encouraged to visualize wisdom, love, and generosity and to avoid grasping, aversion, and delusion.

Other important assumptions of Buddhism are that experience trumps belief (Prothero, 2010), that the universe is "made of stories, not atoms" (Kornfield, 2008, p. 138), that the whole world of earth, plants, animals, and humans is holy, and that all human beings have inner nobility and beauty.

Although Buddhism is on the decline worldwide, its adherents are increasing in the West, partly because some see Buddhism as most consistent with science. Capra's (1975) book *The Tao of Physics* popularized the notion that the two fields shared notions such as nonduality, and described quantum mechanics in terms consistent with Buddhism. Buddhists, for example, suggest that consciousness has both a sky-like function and a particle-like function (Kornfield, 2008, p. 39).

Hinduism

Of the great religions of the world, Hinduism is the oldest (Prothero, 2010) and, perhaps, the most complex. It has the third largest number of adherents, approximately 900 million or about 15% of the world's population. Hinduism does not have a "unified system of belief encoded in declaration of faith or a creed" (Flood, 1996, p. 14) but rather is "what Hindus do and think, and what Hindus do and think is almost everything under the sun" (Prothero, 2010, p. 135).

Hindus see the primary human problem as *samsara*, a perpetual cycle of life, death, and rebirth. Consequently, the status and condition of one's birth circumstances are not a matter of fate, but are determined by the good and bad actions taken in a prior life. The end of this cycle is *moksha*, which means *release*, a liberation from the unsatisfactory state of *samsara*. Some describe this experience as merging with the Impersonal, while others see it as the joining of an individual soul with a personal God. Other Hindu assumptions are that the aims of life are *dharma*—personal duty, ethical behavior; *kama*—sensual pleasure; and, *artha*—power and wealth. Hinduism's complexity and diversity is expressed in the various pathways to achieve these goals. The organized religion of Hinduism has no hierarchy providing a leadership structure and no shared creed.

Hindus do mostly share various other assumptions such as that of *karma*, the moral law of cause and effect. At the root of Hindu thinking is the expectation that every action has a consequence, and that the actor will ultimately, in this life or another one, experience the consequence of that action. Hindus engage in good works with the expectation that these will accumulate and result in a more fortunate circumstance at the next rebirth. Hindus also incorporate *yogas* (paths or practices) although these vary considerably depending on the type of Hinduism practiced. The term *yoga* is itself one of the six orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy.

Hindus have sacred texts including the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas, and the Upanishads. Many Westerners are familiar with another sacred text, the Bhagavad Gita, which is a small portion of the Mahabharata. Hinduism is also filled with gods, the most prominent of whom is the elephant-headed Ganesha, who is revered as the remover of obstacles. Other gods include Agni (the god of fire and the acceptor of sacrifices) and Indra (the god of war, storms, and rainfall).

As noted below, many scholars claim that most religions are essentially the same. Such a claim may arise from that fact that many religions emphasize ethical action, for example. What becomes significant, then, is the priority given to that prescription in one religion compared with others. In the case of Hinduism, “doing your duty does take precedence over knowing your dogma, and right ritual (orthopraxy) is more important than right doctrine (orthodoxy)” (Prothero, 2010, p. 157). Consequently, in Hinduism, story and ritual are integrated and elevated in importance over doctrine, which is quite different from the priority in Judaism or Christianity.

Axioms Should Be Explicit

These brief sketches will not be acceptable to the adherents of any of these religions. Each religion is much more complex than what can be portrayed succinctly here. Still, this overview has demonstrated the wide range of starting axioms in operation among those who believe each religion. Prothero (2010, p. 1) notes that

at least since ... the 1960s, it has been fashionable to affirm that all religions are beautiful and all are true. This claim, which reaches back to *All Religions Are One* (1795) by the English poet, printmaker, and prophet William Blake, is as odd as it is intriguing... Yet scholars continue to claim that religious rivals such as Hinduism and Islam, Judaism and Christianity are, by some miracle of the imagination, essentially the same.

Many of the starting axioms conflict with each other, so it simply cannot be the case that both are true. For example, secular humanism assumes that the universe was created without any purpose or intelligence, while Christianity assumes that the universe was created for a purpose by intelligence. Objective atheism assumes that human striving is, perhaps, the noblest of all human actions. Buddhism, on the other hand, assumes that human striving is the cause of suffering.

The role of scholars, in particular, should be to continue to explore starting axioms and determine which are “true.” (That is a starting axiom for this author.) Scholars also have a responsibility to make explicit what is implicit. Popular sources may allow writings to be published that don’t make definitions clear or that include surface-level analyses, but academic scholarship must dig deeper. In the case of the spirituality/religion dichotomy, scholars need to “dig” to the level of the starting axioms and make explicit their own assumptions in writing. Scholars must also insist that published statements adhere to generally accepted criteria for

comparison by nearly all belief systems and scholars. Popper (1968), for example, argues for internal consistency and empirical adequacy as uncontroversial criteria. In the case of internal consistency, researchers would rule out, for example, philosophical assumptions such as “there is no absolute truth” because it is a statement offered as an absolute truth, and is, consequently, self-defeating. Empirical adequacy suggests that any data collected pertaining to a starting axiom or underlying assumption should be consistent with that axiom or assumption. For example, if someone held that belief that “people will commit more crimes during difficult economic times,” that belief is not consistent with data about crime in the United States through 2010 (Vicini, 2010). The US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reported a 2.8% drop in crimes against property in the first six months of 2010 (when economic times were much worse than usual). There could be other explanations for why these data don’t match the underlying assumption, but the burden would be on the person holding the assumption to provide evidence for why the assumption is still valid.

MSR 2.0

Kuhn (1970) has noted that chaos is a “precondition for the emergence of novel theories” (p. 77) and the foundational concepts for the study of MSR are certainly in that seminal, chaotic phase in which, for example, workplace spirituality can be defined as disparately as “a framework of organizational values” (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003, p. 13) and as wonder, play, ignorance, spontaneity, joy, imagination, celebration, discernment, insight, and creativity (Mason, 1994). Kuhn’s (1970) second edition also included the important addition of a post-script where he introduces the disciplinary matrix that helps define a field in terms of its symbolic generalizations, shared commitments to beliefs, values, and exemplars.

I propose that for MSR to experience the “emergence of novel theories” (Kuhn, 1970, p. 77), the field must push toward greater shared commitments. However, to this point, there are few shared commitments because each author is free to simply stake out positions such as “spirituality is good and religion is bad” or “all spiritual paths lead to the same destination” or “there is only one true God.” If authors would go beyond staking out a position and also make explicit the underlying assumption of that position, the field would be able to more easily compare commitments and determine which are more trustworthy than others. That would allow what could be called MSR 2.0.

The “2.0” moniker has been employed to connote the next version, the quantum leap of improvement over what has come before (simple “upgrades” are labeled as 2.1, 2.15, etc.). A quick Google search reveals everything from Gov 2.0 to Classroom 2.0. Perhaps, the most well known of these 2.0 labels is Web 2.0 which was coined by O’Reilly (2005) and incorporates the social media experience into the use of the world wide web. MSR 2.0 would mean that each author would make explicit the underlying assumptions of his work, and going beyond defining how he uses terms such as *religion* and *spirituality* to revealing starting axioms. Idiosyncratic definitions should be strongly discouraged, and, if by necessity they are employed, they must be appropriately validated. For example, Zaidman et al. (2009, p. 617) include an implicit definition of *religion* that “is not concerned with deeper motivations and with existential moments in the life course.” It is really incumbent on these authors to justify a definition that is at such great odds with the vast majority of practitioners of organized religions. The broader field of Management still has this problem with terms such as *communication*, *quality*, and *leadership* being employed liberally without definition and validation in many articles.

In considering the state of a field such as MSR, visualize a continuum with one pole labeled “without readily accepted core definitions” and the other pole, “widely accepted

core definitions.” If various fields were placed along this continuum, it is likely that the more stagnant fields are at the polar ends. In the first case, the published works often read as editorials. At the other end of the spectrum, there are few places to “push the envelope.” The ideal position is somewhere between the poles where there are common definitions on essential terms, but enough variance elsewhere to allow for multiple and fresh perspectives. This illustration is analogous to what chaos theory offers, that there is an “edge of chaos” (Dent, 2003) that is the “zone of creative adaptability” (Lewin & Regine, 2000) that lies between stability and chaos. At the moment, the MSR field, in terms of chaos theory, would be considered in chaos.

MSR 2.0 would also mean providing better evidence for claims made in articles and books. Mitroff and Denton (1999, p. 48) write that “religion is more concerned with perpetuating itself than with helping humankind.” Such a statement is inconsistent with centuries of data throughout most of the world. As noted in the previous paragraph, it would be helpful to know how these authors define *religion* in this sentence, but assuming they are referring to the major, organized religions of the world, consider the most widely practiced, Christianity, and its role in the United States over the past two centuries. Because of its starting axiom that God revealed Himself in nature, Christianity has been the primary religion promoting science and innovation (Stark, 2005). The Christian church was the primary motivation behind the end to slavery. The Christian church established nearly every college and university founded before 1900. The Christian church founded nearly all of the long-serving benevolence organizations including the American Red Cross, the YMCA, and the Salvation Army. MSR scholars need to provide evidence for important claims in their works or they run the risk of being seen as introducing their own biases and ideologies (which may be appropriate if they are made explicit).

MSR 2.0 also means studying what is real rather than what is supposed. Meta analyses, such as Dent et al. (2005), have shown that the MSR literature lacked empirical studies, although the number of such studies has certainly increased since 2005. Yet, many of the articles published at this stage of the field’s development are abstract, conceptual, and theoretical. That may be appropriate for this point in time, but will need to change as the field matures. As Giacalone (2010) noted in his editorial upon assuming the editorship of *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion*, “approaches that were acceptable even five years ago become inappropriate due to advances in the field of study” (p. 3). The MSR community of scholars should consider employing the techniques of the evidence-based management (EBM) “movement.” EBM approaches began in medicine but got visibility in Management with the publication of *Hard Facts, Dangerous Half-Truths, and Total Nonsense: Profiting from Evidence-Based Management* by Pfeffer and Sutton (2006). Recent work using an EBM perspective has raised serious concerns about some of the most well-read books in management such as *In Search of Excellence* by Peters and Waterman and *Built to Last* by Collins and Porras. It is reasonable to assume that similar critiques of well-read MSR sources will likely question the methodology and decisions of those sources. The Academy of Management began sessions specifically designated as evidenced-based at its conference in 2010. EBM approaches should be especially attractive to the MSR community because they do not insist upon a logical positivist approach, but simply require evidence in whatever form most makes sense. But, there must be evidence of some form.

This chapter has intended to be persuasive in suggesting that everyone operates with a belief system that contains unproven starting axioms. If the term *religion* has been overly provocative, paradigm (Schwartz & Ogilvy, 1979), *weltanschauung* (Slife & Williams, 1995), narrative identity, worldview (Dent, 1999), philosophy, or related terms can be substituted. The main point is to surface and realize that a

view of the world and human nature informs everyone's life. Everyone lives and operates out of some narrative identity, whether it is thought out and reflected upon or not. All who say "You ought to do this" or "You shouldn't do that" reason out of such an implicit moral and religious position.

(Keller, 2008, p. 15)

It is the "ought to do" and the "shouldn't do" beliefs that need to be included even when spirituality, for example, is discussed.

Consider two examples of making explicit a religion or worldview, Gaia Spirituality and Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Both claim to be spiritual, but not religious. The essential elements of the Gaia Spirituality religion can be readily surfaced. These practitioners believe the earth is "a living being, our ultimate mother, and not to do all we can to preserve and protect her is not only criminally ungrateful, but terminally stupid" ("Gaia Spirituality," n.d.). Using Keller's (2008) criteria for explicating a religious position by looking for what "you ought to do" or "you ought not to do," the website makes these positions clear. Those who inquire if they are a good fit for Gaia spirituality are asked, "Do you care for yourself?" (Do you strive to consume only clean, pure, non-genetically modified food?) "Are you working on your mental and emotional health?" "Do you participate in the life of your community?" (Are you active—and an activist—in the political life of your city, state, nation, and world?) "Are you comfortable working closely with diverse kinds of people—diverse racially, nationally, sexually, etc.?" "Do you care for your mother Earth?" "Do you honor the feminine face of the Divine as well as the masculine?" (Do you honor the solar, lunar, and terrestrial cycles of the natural world)? It is not difficult to see quickly that there are several starting axioms that comprise the religion of Gaia Spirituality.

Likewise, if one views the AA website or its foundational documents such as "A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous" the following starting axioms jump out—there is a power greater than humans; an individual can turn her or his will over to that power; making amends to people wronged helps maintain sobriety; prayer and meditation improve conscious contact with God (the power); God has a will and people should want to learn it and enact it.

Finally, in the spirit of "walking the talk," I would like to make perfectly clear some of the foundational assumptions of this chapter. Please note that the topic of this chapter has been how MSR research has been conducted, rather than a topic such as spirituality, so these foundational assumptions will be quite different from an article about religion, spirituality, mindfulness, and so forth. Some key assumptions I have made throughout the chapter are that truth is knowable and it is the job of scholars and researchers to investigate and reveal truth (such a statement appears in the founding mission of many universities, such as Harvard University), that clarity in definitions leads to greater understanding, that claims should be substantiated with evidence of some sort, and that the field of MSR will advance more effectively and quickly if researchers surface the underlying assumptions and starting axioms of their investigations.

Notes

1. Note that respondents were asked "What are the main *differences* between religion and spirituality for you?" (p. 191, italics added) but were not asked a comparable question about similarities between spirituality and religion. Moreover, the questionnaire also asked people to rate *religion* and *spirituality*, separately on a 1–7 scale with the polar ends being—tolerant/intolerant, close-minded/open-minded, inclusive/exclusive, and so forth. Consequently, it isn't clear if this "finding" is a result of the methodology employed or a true difference in the respondents.

2. Interestingly, they seem not to have followed their own advice because they didn't make explicit their own ontological and epistemological assumptions about definitions of "religion" and "spirituality." They essentially forced a delineation between religion and spirituality citing Ashmos and Duchon (2000) who merely "conceptualized" a difference. They then also cited the Dalai Lama, as I do here. This forced delineation, though, would be completely foreign to most of the Muslim faith, for example. So, in being clear about their ontological and epistemological assumptions, these authors should make clear that they have "chosen" this delineation, although others could equally legitimately choose otherwise.

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