An Existential Framework of Spirituality for Education

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Declaration

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signed ............................

R Scott Webster

May 2003
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Abstract

The research reported here addressed the questions ‘what is spirituality?’ and ‘how should spiritual development be provided in education?’. The literature reviewed indicated confusion and uncertainty over the meaning of the concept spirituality, and the only guidance as to how spiritual development should be facilitated, was mainly from a religious perspective. This however, proved to be problematic for adoption into state-run educational institutions, where religious education is not provided for.

As spiritual development is an aspect of the overall educative development of individuals, attention was given to what is meant by both ‘education’ and the ‘educated person’. This initial research provided the context by which spiritual development could be understood and grounded in accepted and well argued notions of what interventions into the development of the individual are to count as educational. This also clarified the context for which the formulated framework of spirituality was to have implications.

The major approach of this research was philosophical, in that an existential perspective was sought to develop a framework of spirituality that was able to embrace both religious and secular contexts of education. The major works examined were those written by Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger, because these were argued to have most relevance for spirituality and spiritual development of the educated person. While these works were analysed one philosopher at a time, the existential
perspective that was relevant for spirituality was developed using common themes found in their writings. Consequently this approach produced a rather eclectic view of Existentialism that down-plays the many differences that exist between these philosophers.

An existential framework of spirituality was then formulated using the philosophy of these contributors as the foundation. This framework is argued to be more effective than the other frameworks of spirituality that were identified in the literature reviewed. Its implications for education practice were developed and argued. The evaluative applicability of the framework was then illustrated and tested through a critique of an educational project in Queensland. It was beyond the scope of this thesis to test the framework any further than this particular case. However, further research is recognised as being required to test other aspects of the framework.
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Preface

Perhaps the greatest wrong we have done our children is not the fractured families or the scarcity of jobs, but the creation of a culture that gives them nothing beyond themselves to believe in. It is a culture whose main effects are to encourage demoralisation, cynicism, and self-centredness. It is imperative to create a culture (through parenting, education and the media) that gives people, especially the young, faith in themselves, hope for the future, and meaning and purpose to their lives. (A participant’s response to “Australian-ness” in Campbell et al., 1992, pp. 31-32)

As a secondary science, maths and physical education teacher, I was most impressed with the philosophy of education course I studied as a strand to the Masters degree I completed at Oxford. Through these philosophical sessions, I was most inspired with the notion of ‘the educated person’. While doing this study, I noticed that the concepts of ‘spirituality’ and ‘spiritual development’ appeared in England’s Education Reform Act 1988. The debate that was initiated as a result of this inclusion attempted to define spirituality and how it should be developed. However, it was apparent that there was a great deal of uncertainty and confusion as to what spirituality means and how it is to be developed for students. I came to appreciate that this spiritual dimension is a most fundamental aspect for the ideal of the educated person.

I understood spirituality to be the dimension of the individual that addresses the fundamental questions of existence. It is not religious in the sense that students are to be bound to doctrinal dogma, nor is it to be found in formal philosophical courses such as in the ‘History of Ideas’. Spirituality is something that involves the personal, passionate responses of individuals to the issues of their existence. I therefore considered it to indicate a dimension of education that I believed was especially being neglected in the State school system of Queensland, with which I was familiar. In addition, a search into spirituality was
timely in my own personal life, as I was coming to terms with the meaning and purpose of my own existence through leaving a religious organisation that I now consider to have been rather fundamentalist.

This prompted me to conduct some after-school sessions on spirituality for senior students at the high school when I returned to work in Queensland. We covered issues that had significance for the personal identities, meanings and purposes of the lives of these students. Emphasis was given to clarifying personal views and engaging in dialogue with each other, exploring differing viewpoints and the means by which we could verify and critique these. The responses from the students were extremely positive.

This thesis has been inspired by these experiences, which led me to question the effectiveness of the State education system in Queensland and those education programmes in general that neglect to address the spiritual development of students. I have been prompted to examine what the purposes of education are and how ‘the educated person’ is being conceptualised. I began reading works on Existentialism in education by authors such as William Barrett, George Kneller, Van Cleve Morris and Donald Vandenberg. While these were helpful in stimulating my interest further, the research for this thesis required that I should study philosophical works of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Heidegger, with which I was initially unfamiliar. As a result of doing this research, I believe that I am now able to add clarity to the concept of spirituality, and through formulating an existential framework of spirituality, to understand and argue how necessary the spiritual dimension is for the overall development in the ideal of an educated person.
Introduction

This thesis sets out to achieve two main purposes – firstly to clarify the meanings of spirituality and spiritual development, and secondly to recommend how such development may effectively be provided through education. This introductory chapter identifies the current confusion that exists regarding the meanings of spirituality and spiritual development, and identifies some implications for education. There is some uncertainty as to whether spirituality should be included at all in education as argued by Rodger (1996) who states that -

To recognise that spirituality is a fundamentally human phenomenon and that it is crucial to human fulfilment is one thing. To establish that it ought to be a part of the school curriculum and to show that it may be so in an educationally sound way is quite another. (Rodger, 1996, p. 56)

In contrast, it is argued by Myers that –

I also know many people in the secular world who sense that there is a spiritual dimension to child development in addition to the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive aspects. Although they are working to put their thoughts about spirituality and the young child into words, they are struggling to do so. Until there are ways to understand and name spiritual life within the secular world, a dynamic component of development will remain ignored. This severely limits our ability to address issues related to the "whole child" - even as we claim that this is what we do. (Myers, 1997, p. xi)

The challenges then, if indeed spirituality is to be considered important to human flourishing, are firstly to clarify what it amounts to, and secondly to establish whether indeed it should be a concern for education, before determining how to provide for its development within educational settings. In making a case here for this study, emphasis is given to the situation in Queensland as this is the local area of the researcher. The nature and importance of the study are then identified, before a brief overview of the argument in the thesis is presented.
Lack of Clarity Regarding ‘Spirituality’ and ‘Spiritual Development’

‘Spirituality’ has become a popularised notion in recent years in western societies, especially through the New Age movement, which has, as its underlying primary principle, the pursuit of holistic health that includes the dimensions of mind, body and spirit (Thompson, 1999, p. 7). Terms such as ‘spirituality’ and ‘spiritual development’ have now made their way into education. ‘Spiritual development’ is present in the preamble to the Adelaide declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the twenty-first century (Australian Ministerial Council of Education, 2000). The term, though, is limited only to the preamble of these national goals and does not appear in any of the agreed goals themselves, which tend to be extrinsic and utilitarian in nature. There is no indication as to what this development means nor how it should be cultivated for students. It is acknowledged that the Australian Ministerial Council of Education does not even have a definition for ‘spiritual development’ and that the term was only incorporated into the preamble “from consultation with the denominational systems” (Levin, 2000, p.1). This gives the impression that its inclusion has politically satisfied the requests from the denominational sector without an understanding of what this particular development entails. It also implies that spirituality only has relevance for education in a religious context.

The term ‘spirituality’ is also evidenced in Queensland’s State education. In the booklet Principles of Effective Learning and Teaching (1994) published by the then Queensland Department of Education, the holistic development of the learner is described as including the spiritual dimension. When questioned as to what this dimension actually entails, a departmental senior policy officer replied “that there are no explicit definitions or background readings” for this dimension and that it was used “to convey common or everyday definitions for [sic] which teachers or educators would be aware” (Thurlow, 1996, p. 1). However, no
A consensus as to the everyday meaning of spirituality is recognised either in any of the departmental literature or in any materials used in pre-service and in-service teacher education.

More recently the term ‘spiritual’ has been included in a discussion document for the Queensland State Education 2010 project (Education Queensland, 1999a, p. 22). Upon an inquiry as to the meaning given to this concept the manager of this 2010 project replied that “There is no research or justification available for the use of the word ‘spiritual’”, noting also that it had not yet been included in the final defining purposes of education (Bannikoff, 1999, p. 1). Since that time the term has, indeed, been dropped entirely from the final version of the published strategy (Education Queensland, 2000a).

It appears that educational policy and literature are including ‘spirituality’ and ‘spiritual development’ only as politically favourable terms, without any clarity of understanding as to their meanings. There is no explanation as to the ‘everyday definition’ of spirituality that permits educators to engage with it as a dimension to be developed for all students. Indeed it is questionable if there is a dimension of the ‘educated person’ that can be regarded as spiritual. If it were readily recognised should it not be pertinent for the holistic development of all students, both religious and non-religious?

In England the term ‘spiritual’ first appeared in the Education Act in 1944, where it was at that time thought to be synonymous with a Christian view. The term is endorsed by the Education Reform Act 1988 where the central aim of the school curriculum –

(a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and
(b) prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
(1988, Section 1(2) as quoted by Rose, 1996, pp. 173-174)
This holistic approach indicates that spiritual development is relevant for all students and not just for those who have a religious background. However, debates in England surrounding spirituality in education generally locate it within the religious domain (Blake, 1996; D. Carr, 1995; 1999; Isherwood, 1999). Conceptualising it in such a way tends to deny access to this development for non-religious students. It is argued in the present research that the concepts of spirituality and spiritual development should be conceptualised as (universally) intrinsic to education and to a notion of an educated person in order to determine its appropriateness and to contend that spiritual development should be available for both religious and non-religious students.

It has been reported that there are no current definitions of 'spirituality' that offer any effective notions by which the development of the spiritual dimension can be usefully understood in education (Nye & Hay, 1996, p. 145). It is necessary to conceptualise it as much broader than something that pertains only to a Christian view or to religion in general because it is seen to be an important aspect in the holistic understanding of an educated person, irrespective of whether he or she is religious. The spiritual dimension is included in the psychotherapy and counselling fields, being understood to be a part of holistic wellness for all persons. Overall health has traditionally considered the body and the mind, but recently now extends beyond this traditionally dualistic approach to include the spirit too. Within the New Age movement spirituality refers to a number of things including ancient mythologies, the powers of nature and also journeys of self-discovery (Drury, 1999). Consequently those within the religious sphere are having to redefine what spirituality means for theology because, through its recent and broader usage, it is becoming to be understood
as “ambiguous, illusive and ill-defined” (Hull, 1995, p. 130) and can no longer be assumed to have a specifically religious meaning.

**Reforms within Education**

The reason for placing ever increasing emphasis in educational reform upon the technical aspects of learning and skill development is related to meeting the perceived challenges of globalization (Rumberger, 1998) and economic utility. The attempted justifications to bleach out certain value aspects of education by these reforms often refer to a need to regard “education as an economic input” (Department of Education, Queensland, 1996, p. 16). Values intrinsic to liberal education should be justified in terms of “their place in and contribution to the furthering of the values and value frameworks of modern society” (Bagnall, 1990, p. 46). Therefore the liberal notion of individual flourishing, well-being, fulfilment of potential and the development of the educated person should be understood to have value in an economically competitive market, and is neither diametrically opposed, nor irrelevant, to it. Such liberal ideals however are not readily justified in current pluralistic environments where the demand is upon performativity (Kiziltan et al., 1990, p. 366). Training for job specific skills and attributes are readily grounded in the arena of the competitive globalized market and therefore are a much more popular reform for those held accountable at the political level. However, personal well-being is argued to be foundational to moral development (Reid, 1998, p. 328) and the very decisions that determine the future of society and the quality of life are argued to be essentially moral decisions (Hughes, 1991, pp. 38-39).

‘Education’ is an intervention in the development of an individual that attempts to make him or her better, from the perspective of both the individual and society. Conceptualising what persons ought to be requires drawing upon an
understanding of the meanings and purposes of human life (Allen, 1991; O’Hear, 1981). If individuals are to be improved through education how is this to be defined and understood? This becomes all the more challenging - though all the more necessary - when our current societies experience rapid change and great uncertainty. Individuals within Western societies in particular are experiencing levels of angst and feelings of meaninglessness that diminish their overall well-being. This can result in psychopathy, depression, drug abuse and even suicidal ideation (Reker & Chamberlain, 2000).

There is a need therefore to re-examine the very aims of education (Delors, 1998), both nationally and at the state level in particular. If the holistic development of human individuals is no longer being recognised as a central value of education, then all the economic and technical advances may amount to little in the long run because essentially the quality and meaning of life is determined by decisions of a moral and spiritual nature. In this age of uncertainty it may be argued that the apparent nihilistic conditions of meaninglessness and angst need to be recognised and responded to by education, if individuals are to make sense of their lives. Spiritual development, then, if it can be clarified sufficiently so as to be provided for more effectively in education is seen as one means of being able to offer significant personal meaning to lives that suffer from the above mentioned concerns characteristic of the economically globalized and post-traditional era.

The Research Concern

From the foregoing situation, there emerges the need to clarify what is meant by spirituality and how it may best be developed through education. The concept of spirituality requires elucidation in such a way that makes it relevant for all students, as it is argued in this thesis to be a universal dimension for an
educated person, regardless of denominational backgrounds. If education is to nourish the holistic flourishing of the individual, to enable her or him to live well in this world with its particular challenges, then it is claimed in this thesis that spiritual development is central to this enterprise.

This thesis, then, seeks not only to offer a clarification of what spiritual development might be, but also to argue that this development is an essential component for the well-being of individuals. It is argued that becoming a spiritually educated person is particularly crucial for being able to live well in this current post-traditional era, as it is claimed to enable one to have a healthy self-identity and meaningful and purposeful life within a potentially nihilistic universe, rife with angst and meaninglessness.

Through formulating a framework that offers effective provision for spiritual development in education, this research also seeks to offer criteria by which educational ideologies, policies, curricula and programmes can be evaluated. The purpose of this is to encourage a balanced approach to education which is perceived to be essential for sustaining the well-being of humankind in this age of globalization, rapid change and potential meaninglessness.

**Brief overview of Argument**

The various components of the argument that is presented in this thesis are contained within the individual chapters. The following overview of the argument accordingly follows the chapter structure.

Chapter One examines conceptions of ‘spirituality’ and ‘spiritual development’ in educational policy documents, with a particular focus on Australia and England. Both the English *Education Reform Act, 1988* and the *Adelaide*
Declaration on National Goals for Schooling, refer to a spiritual dimension that is to be developed in learners. A review of the relevant literature reveals, however, that there is confusion regarding how spirituality and spiritual development are to be understood. When the term ‘spiritual’ appeared in England’s Education Act in 1944, it was understood to equate with a Christian view. However, such a narrowly religious view of spirituality can no longer be legitimated in the contemporary post-traditional era, in which a pluralistic view of spirituality is needed to provide educative development of the spiritual dimension as a right of all students, whatever their religious commitments or lack of them.

It is argued that there is confusion surrounding the meanings of spirituality and spiritual development, and that these concepts need to be clarified before their implications for education can be examined. Such a clarification requires a more encompassing conception than those based on the narrowly religious perspectives that have traditionally and all too readily been associated with spirituality.

In Chapter Two the concept of spirituality is explored in a number of diverse fields, including religion, psychology, the New Age and the workplace. Drawing upon this diversity is argued to be helpful for the development of an appropriately inclusive conception. Across these various fields it appears that spirituality pertains to *procedure* rather than to objects such as bodies of knowledge. This procedural aspect is often characterised as a search or quest, or the manner in which personal meaning and significance is given to experiences. It is argued that a conception of meaning, as inherent to messages that are transmitted from external sources for individuals to passively accept is inadequate to the task. Rather, individuals must be seen as *making* meaning as they relate to their encounters in the world. A ‘meaning of life’ cannot be
adequately transmitted from authoritative frameworks, such as religious ones, to people, as individuals may fail to establish any personally significant meaning in such messages.

It is argued that all persons, not just those who are religious, are spiritual. Spirituality is considered to be an aspect of what it is to be human and is often related to individuals ‘reaching out’ to a ‘greater self’ - sometimes thought to be divine. It is an aspect that involves raising one’s conscious awareness of the meaning of one’s interactions and relations in the world, and bringing these into question. As such, the spiritual dimension is also argued to be an essential element of a person’s well-being, as individuals strive or search for significant meanings that enable them to make sense of themselves and their place in life.

In order to make sense and meaning of one’s life one must exercise choice. This experience often involves anxiety as one’s meaning of existence is brought into consideration and questioned. The individual making a choice and committing himself or herself to that decision can alleviate such anxiety. Development of this spiritual dimension is argued to enhance personal wellness and to enable individuals to live more purposefully in the world in which they find themselves. Such development enriches the sense of personal identity and meaning that one has for one’s life. Because it is the meaning of one’s being or one’s existence that is of issue, it is argued that this spiritual dimension can usefully be considered to be existential.

It is argued that the formulation of a clearer and more useful conception or framework of spirituality may be achieved through an existential perspective. Such a perspective engages with personally significant issues that deal with the meaning of one’s existence as it can transcend the religious/secular divide.
In Chapter Three it is argued that Existentialism incorporates a variety of philosophies and philosophers and that an existential perspective should be embedded within that diversity and should reflect the characteristics of spirituality as identified above. The particular existential perspective that is developed here draws mostly, but not exclusively, upon the works of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Heidegger.

Kierkegaard’s works are considered useful particularly because they challenge the Enlightenment project of Hegel and offer a more postmodern perspective of the individual and the way an individual lives a purposeful life. One of the main claims made by Kierkegaard is that the individual is spirit and is described as a relation who relates. Kierkegaard’s notion of subjective truth is important in identifying the focus one has on the way that one relates to the meanings of other entities. His notions of Angst and the ‘leap’ are important for examining the role of anxiety at the interface between actuality and possibility.

There are similar themes found in Nietzsche’s works, including the (postmodern) demise of the traditional metanarratives through his ‘death of God’. The values through which individuals make sense of their lives are brought into question and ‘touched with a hammer’ to sound them out. Through his works, Nietzsche challenges the foundations upon which values are often based - his writings taking his readers ‘beyond good and evil’. Such works are useful for bringing individuals to question and doubt taken-for-granted meanings of life, to evoke the Angst to which Kierkegaard refers, in order to provoke individuals to re-evaluate the values they draw upon in making sense of and giving purpose to their existence.
Some of Heidegger’s works also address these same themes found in the writings of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. His notion of Dasein is useful in indicating the nature of the individual-in-the-world, and the concern regarding the meaning of his or her being. His reference to the Greek term Aletheia to explain ‘truth’ engages usefully with Kierkegaard’s notion of subjective truth. Both of these approaches draw attention to the way in which one is in relation with other entities. Incorporating such elements into a framework for spirituality argues against the work of Sartre with his rather different portrayal of the individual.

In Chapter Four the compatibility of this existential perspective with religious views is examined. At face value, a framework of spirituality that employs an existential perspective is liable to be taken as opposing, or at least as failing to embrace, religious views. Such a condition would be, at best, unhelpful in the formulation of a framework of spirituality that is argued to have relevance for all learners.

Contrastively, it is argued here that the particular existential perspective adopted here is one that embraces both secular and religious views, and which therefore lends to serving as a framework through which spirituality can be understood in both contexts. While spiritual ‘meaning-making’ is argued to be existential it does not occur in isolation from the more formalised frameworks found in religions. The emphasis here is not on the ‘correctness’ of such formal frameworks, but on the ways individuals relate to them.

In Chapter Five a framework of spirituality is developed from the ten key concepts as identified through the articulated existential perspective. These concepts include a centring of the individual’s concern for the meaning of his or her existence. The individual is understood holistically as a relation, culturally
embedded and yet having the freedom to choose how significant meanings are to be made. The framework portrays the development of spirituality as increasing personal authenticity and as being facilitated through experiencing existential crises, where assumed and taken-for-granted meanings are brought into question.

This existential framework of spirituality allows the development of useful understandings of spirituality and spiritual development. It therefore provides a way forward through the confusion as identified in the literature as presently surrounding these concepts. In addition to clarifying the concepts of spirituality and spiritual development, it was also an aim of this research to understand the implications that such concepts may have for education. This aim presupposes an understanding of the nature of ‘education’. In Chapter Six, then, the nature of education is examined. It is identified as having various meanings, in its most general sense as referring to enabling the learner to live well and to serve the public and/or personal good. Notions of ‘living well’ and ‘good’ indicate the evaluative aspect of its nature. Education is identified as being not descriptive but prescriptive, not as describing what ‘is’ but rather what ‘ought’ to be the case.

It is argued that the prescriptive and evaluative aspects of education are effectively represented through some of the work of R. S. Peters. His Transcendental Argument offers useful guidelines to determine what can be regarded as educational. His serious question - ‘how ought I to live?’ – provides an orientation for determining what should comprise the curriculum. Peters argues that the curriculum should consist of activities that are deemed to be ‘worthwhile’. The criterion used to determine the ‘worthwhileness’ of such activities is strongly that of the extent to which a contribution is made to the learner’s quality of living. The ethical nature of education thus emerges through
the types of judgements that need to be made in determining what activities are ‘worth while’ and how the learner ‘ought’ to live a ‘good’ life.

Among the many aims that are often associated with education is the idea of an educated person. Through education, such a person is to be enabled to live well. In the postmodern world, though, education enables persons to learn to live effectively in various and often competing frameworks and narratives. It is argued that postmodern life is meaningless, in the sense that ‘life’ is not able to deliver ‘meanings’ which individuals can clearly understand. Congruently Peters argues that the ‘meaning’ of moral terms such as ‘goodness’ and ‘rightness’ cannot be assumed, against the assumption that ‘meaningfulness’ is an inherent aspect of words, messages or ‘life’ lying external to individuals.

It is argued here that a useful conception of education must identify the meaning-make role that the learner has as she or he engages with the curriculum. Education should promote greater authenticity, rather than just autonomy, because an educated person must authentically be able to make his or her own existence meaningful. Personal meaning-making is thus a central concern of education which relates the individual to the curriculum.

In Chapter Seven, implications of this existential framework of spirituality for education are identified. The idea of a spirituality-educated person is seen as involving such a person in recognising his or her own spirituality and in developing a sense of personal identity. This person would have a critical attitude towards his or her spirituality and would be willing to evaluate it. Such spiritual development is to be authentic and, importantly, learners should have a developing awareness (ethically) towards other selves with whom they are in-the-world.
To promote any concept of an educated person attention needs to be given to how learners relate to, and therefore make sense of, the curriculum. It is argued that there should be an engagement with the spirituality of learners because it is through this dimension that learners make sense of their experiences and their existence. It is argued that a failure to engage with the educative development of the spirituality of learners risks disenfranchising them from the curriculum altogether - limiting how such learners may choose – or not to choose – to engage with life in general.

Three types of educative activities are argued to be worthwhile in promoting spiritual development. The first type is the *disclosive*. Based upon the premise that individuals generally live their lives in everyday inauthenticity, their existing spiritualities need to be disclosed to them. Secondly, *confrontational* activities are necessary to foster the development of an attitudinal disposition that encourages learners to engage critically with their existing beliefs and not simply to accept them as ‘given’. The third type of activities is *re-evaluational*, which enables learners to choose authentically, to create their own personal meanings and to offer purpose in participating effectively in various curricula.

In Chapter Eight criteria that are particular to the concept of a spiritually educated person, are identified and are argued as being useful in evaluating other educational programmes. These criteria are based upon principles such as a holistic view of the learner and Peters’s Transcendental Argument. To demonstrate the evaluative applicability of the existential framework, Education Queensland’s ‘2010 Strategy’ is examined. This particular evaluation raises the concern that this program does not identify any clear aims regarding an educated person. In it, the individual learner has not been recognised as a
meaning-maker who needs to make personal sense of her or his relation to the curriculum. The 2010 Strategy is thus argued to promote a sense of nihilism.

In Chapter Nine it is concluded that an existential perspective provides clearer conceptions of spirituality and spiritual development that are suitable for both the religious and secular contexts. It is acknowledged that further testing and refinement of the particular perspective developed here are needed and that there may well be other perspectives that are of equal or greater value to the task. The great diversity within Existentialism suggests the possibility of developing even more useful existential perspectives than that presented here or of extending and refining this conception to better embrace diverse spiritual realities. Further research is suggested, therefore, to refine or strengthen the particular framework of spirituality as developed in this research.
Chapter One

Spirituality in Education

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of the scholarship that pertains to the provision of spirituality and spiritual development in education which are often observed to be vague and confused. The articulation of these concepts (spiritual, development and education) is challenging in itself. This compounds their lack of clarity (Chater, 2000, p.194). Aligning ‘spiritual’ with ‘development’ is also problematic because of the latter’s “linear and hierarchical connotations” (Erricker, 2000, p. 197) which suggest that maturity in this dimension implies an end point of a completely developed person. It is contended by Moffett (1994, p. 17) that the term ‘spirituality’ should be dropped altogether in relation to education, because of the perceived negative connotations which relate to some dubious forms of religious practice.

The Waldorf Schools, which are based on the works of Maria Montessori (1870-1952) and Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), provide an example of how spirituality in education has been equated with the religious (Montessori 1989a; Steiner, 1970a). Montessori, who worked closely with the Theosophists in Madras, adopted a dualistic position, especially promoted through her analogy of the child being like a ‘spiritual embryo’ and described it as “a spirit enclosed in flesh in order to come into the world” (Heelas, 1996, p. 77). An individualistic approach is promoted through her works. In such
an approach, the child must “live for itself in the environment” and “must shape himself” (Montessori, 1989b, pp. 10 & 13).

Steiner’s ‘science of the spirit’, termed anthroposophy, strives for a more holistic perspective to child development, seeking “the inner harmony between knowledge, religious devotion and artistic creation” (Steiner, 1970b, pp. 53-54). His descriptions of education are couched in humanistic terms, hearkening back to the ancient Greek concept of ‘harmony’, and his focus on the spiritual appears in part to be a mixture of Western, Eastern and Mystic religions. His emphasis seems in part to be a reaction against the apparent highly rational approach to education that was becoming evident even in his time. He argued, “In adding the spiritual aspect of life to the purely material, the science of the spirit leads one from the totally unreal conception of ordinary life to the actual, concrete reality of life (Steiner, 1970b, p. 66).

While both Steiner and Montessori argued that the spiritual is a dimension of the holistic development of the child, their views discourage secular education from seriously considering spirituality (Blake, 1996) because they chose to identify it from a religious perspective. If this dimension is to be considered seriously by mainstream education, one of the first points that needs to be clearly identified is that spiritual development does not presuppose a religious frame of reference. Because spiritual education is not synonymous with Religious Education, it is relevant for both the religious and the nonreligious (Beck, 1986). It is argued by Laird (1995) and Yob (1995) that it may be necessary to conceptualise spirituality as mainly secular in order for it to be incorporated more readily into public schools.
However, this thesis seeks an understanding that encompasses both the religious and the secular, because it is an aspect of the universally ‘educated person’. While spiritual maturity is not religious in the traditional sense, religious ‘realism’ need not necessarily be dead forever according to Newby (1996, pp. 96-98) who argues that it may offer a source for personal meaning.

Queensland has been selected as the most immediate focus of the researcher’s concern and because it is a system now seeking to grapple with major curriculum reform. Before investigating whether spirituality is a recognised aspect of education here locally, it is useful to examine how it is evidenced in England.

1.1 England as a Case Study

England was selected as a case study in virtue of the history of its attempts to integrate spirituality into educational provision, as well as its obvious cultural links with Australia. Spirituality was specifically included in the English 1944 Education Act, which has affected both the public and private systems of schooling.

Spirituality

The term ‘spiritual’ first appeared in English educational legislation in the Education Act in 1944, where it was at that time regarded as synonymous with Christianity. It was understood as being a dimension distinct from morality and was listed separately, indicating that one did not necessarily presuppose the other. The 1944 Act stated that “...it shall be the duty of the
local education authority for every area, as far as their powers extend, to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental, and physical development of the community” (quoted by Gilliat, 1996, p. 161). The promotion of spirituality in schools in the post-war period was to foster “a law abiding and decent society” of citizens who were “aware of God” (Isherwood, 1999, p. 80).

Spirituality is endorsed in English schooling by the *Education Reform Act 1988*, where it is included with the moral, cultural and social dimensions of development. The central aim of this Reform Act requires -

- a balanced and broadly based curriculum which
  - a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and
  - b) prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. (1988, quoted by Gilliat, 1996, p. 161)

It is notable that the emphasis of responsibility for spiritual development in the 1944 Act is placed upon local education authorities, while the 1988 Reform Act places the responsibility upon the curriculum (Gilliat, 1996, p. 162). This shift of emphasis demonstrates that spirituality is no longer to be ‘imposed’ upon persons as a state religion, but is to be an inherent aspect of the educational curriculum itself.

Priestley (1985) notes that spirituality appears in the 1944 Act at the head of the list of subjects to be taught, and interprets this positioning to argue that it is intended to permeate the whole educational process. Previously the term ‘religious’ had the meaning of pervading the entire person, giving overall purposes for the life of the individual (Robertson, 1944). However, ‘spirituality’ has been chosen to replace ‘religious’ *because* of its elusive
meaning in that it diffuses the contentious debate over ‘religion’ of which there is much disagreement (Priestley, 1985). The vagueness of spirituality as a concept, made it particularly suitable as a substitute term, allowing diverse interest groups to at least agree that this is what they had in common - at least on the surface.

The introduction of the term into the 1944 Act was largely the work of Canon J. Hall who chose to use spirituality "Because it was much broader... If we used the word 'religious' they would have all started arguing about it" (quoted by Priestley, 1985, p.113). According to Priestley this process of including spirituality continued with the document *Supplement to Curriculum 11-16* (1977), and he remains in favour of the description of spirituality given by the document which is -

> The spiritual area is concerned with the awareness a person has of those elements in existence and experience which may be defined in terms of inner feelings and beliefs; they affect the way people see themselves and throw light for them on the purpose and meaning of life itself. Often these feelings and beliefs lead people to claim to know God and to glimpse the transcendent; sometimes they represent that striving and longing for perfection which characterizes human beings but always they are concerned with matters at the heart and root of existence. (Priestley, 1985, p.114)

Another of the earlier descriptions of this dimension was produced by the Working Party of Christians and Humanists. They argued, “Education in spiritual growth is that which promotes apprehension of ultimate reality through fostering higher forms of human consciousness” (Lealman, 1986, p. 68). The wording in this description was carefully chosen to respect the integrity of the various religious denominations as well as Humanists. It is noted that this group did not attempt to find agreement on what is meant by
'ultimate reality', but at least they agreed on the "need to foster the higher forms of consciousness" (Lealman, 1996, p. 33).

With such vague notions submitted there was a need to have a more rigorous description in order for schools to be able to facilitate effectively spiritual development and for inspectors to understand more clearly what sort of evidence they should look for, in order to be satisfied that this was occurring. Consequently, a National Curriculum Council (NCC) discussion paper produced the description that depicts spiritual development as -

applying to something fundamental in the human condition which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses and/or expressed through everyday language. It has to do with relationships with other people and, for believers, with God. It has to do with the universal search for individual identity -- with our responses to challenging experiences, such as death, suffering, beauty, and encounters with good and evil. It is to do with the search for meaning and purpose in life and for values by which to live. (NCC, 1993, p. 2)

This description however does not completely satisfy the critics. Lambourn for example, addressing the practical implications of dealing with a dimension 'outside' of everyday language, asks -

As a teacher, am I to concern myself, and the students, with something we cannot detect, nor speak about, and presumably not whistle either? Whatever these things are, will they cease to be 'spiritual' when they do come to be described in everyday language? (Lambourn, 1996, p. 155)

The characteristic search for individual identity which is often attributed to spiritual development is argued by Yates (2000, p. 27) to be "at odds with most theological, anthropological, historical and psychological understanding", while being "consonant with neoconservative notions of the primacy of the individual". The implied notion here is that the individual is a
separate entity from others, who are themselves individuals rather than a community. This is demonstrated for example in the statement that students should recognise “the existence of others as independent from oneself” (NCC, 1993, p. 3). This promotion of independence appears to be at odds with much of what is understood as being spiritual, where the individual’s ‘greater Self’ is very much in-the-world. As an alternative to this notion of independent individuality, spirituality is also argued to be about “filling the space between self and others” (Thatcher, 1991, p. 23). In this sense spirituality can be seen to consist of “a profound communal dimension”, having little to do with an inner life dealing with the central core of a singular unattached self (Gobbell, 1980, p. 418). These views seem to be forcing a conception of spirituality into an either/or situation between the inner core of an unattached individual or the relational dimension with others.

The NCC discussion paper identifies other various aspects which may be seen to compose elements within spirituality. These include beliefs: a sense of awe, wonder and mystery; experiencing feelings of transcendence; a search for meaning and purpose; self-knowledge; relationships; creativity; and feelings and emotions. With such broad descriptors, it would appear that this NCC document attempts to de-fuse potential criticisms from various interest groups by appealing to an all-inclusive description. However, some of these descriptors may not be appropriate. For example, David Carr disagrees with the idea that spirituality should focus upon the aspect of ‘awe and wonder’ claiming -

...the truth that spiritual development is not infrequently about struggle, anxiety, temptation, loss, alienation, defeat, and even despair - about, precisely, the dark night of the soul - is prone to dissipation in a
saccharine vision of teaching pupils how to go about smiling sweetly at flowers. (D. Carr, 1996b, p. 462)

In defence of this particular aspect, the NCC discussion paper argues that students would be condemned to live “in an inner spiritual and cultural desert” if they were not “moved by feelings of awe and wonder” (NCC, 1993, p. 3) by such experiences as the world’s beauty, artworks and music. It would appear that spirituality does not just consist in addressing the ultimate questions in a more reflective and even philosophical sense, but can also refer to a ‘sensitive awareness’. This is similar to the empathetic aspect of the dimension discussed earlier in this chapter.

Andrew Wright (2000) has developed a model of spirituality for educational practice in English schools. He is in agreement with David Carr regarding the idea of ‘spiritual truths’, and claims that “if spiritual education is to have any chance of being effective it must engage with concrete spiritual traditions rather than with an inclusive hybrid” (Wright, 2000, p. 96). He also argues that “critical spiritual education must take account of the specific traditions within which the spiritual has its home” (Wright, 2000, p. 107). In accordance with this view of the primacy of cultural traditions, he has formulated a religious framework by which his model of spirituality is developed, where students are expected to study these traditions and to be able to engage in dialogue about them. However, Wright’s justification for adopting such a perspective is argued here to imply that without these traditions there would be no spirituality. Wright himself suggests that “spirituality is the relationship of the individual, within community and
tradition, to that which is - or is perceived to be - of ultimate concern, ultimate value and ultimate truth” (Wright, 2000, p. 104). It is argued here, that the emphasis of spirituality should be upon the relational aspect experienced by each individual, rather than upon the formal frameworks of the traditions themselves.

It appears, then, that one of the common descriptions of spirituality in English education, whether occurring in Religious Education classes, a school’s ethos or collective worship, would be an active engagement by the students in a search for meaning and purpose (Gill, 2000, p. 115). This is also demonstrated through the policies of local education authorities. For example, the Surrey County Council (1997) describes spiritual development as “a search for meaning and purpose, the essence of being human, and the sense of identity and self-worth which enables us to value others” (Bainbridge, 2000, p. 7).

**Spiritual Development**

The question ‘What does spiritual development mean?’ is identified by Best (1996a) as a question that has been rarely asked from within education. The lack of rigour invested in describing spiritual development has led to various definitions which neither sufficiently encompass the area of children’s spirituality nor offer directions to ‘operationalize’ it in a practical sense (Nye & Hay, 1996, p. 145). Up until the late 1980s, the term spirituality was synonymous with traditional religions and it therefore had its place in religious and cultural education.
However, in the present study, spirituality and spiritual development are to be understood as being much broader than any particular religious connotation and as having their own identity outside of religion. Their meanings are to be understood from a perspective that does not necessarily imply a restricted focus on traditional religion. It is therefore argued that spiritual development may be taken seriously as an important aspect of education.

While the spiritual domain can be portrayed as being ‘broader’ or ‘deeper’ than the religious realm, this does not imply that it is in any way against the religious, but rather that spirituality is the means by which the religious may be contextualised. While religion can be a product in the sense that one becomes ‘bound to’ an institutionalised form of doctrine, spirituality in contrast is more of a process (Cully, 1984, p. ix). It is the process-like search which may be philosophical, theological and psychological in character and which is argued here as being relevant for both secular and religiously oriented education. Nevertheless, the majority of the literature on spirituality and spiritual development in education continues to be written by scholars with a theological or religious background.

As an alternative to a religious perspective, spiritual development is often argued to have cross-curricular relevance, with each subject in the curriculum ideally defining objectives that relate to spiritual development (Hill, 1989). The effectiveness of such an approach is questioned by David Carr who argues that -
It is misleading to the point of eccentricity for proponents of spiritual education across the curriculum to suggest that spiritual education may occur whenever or wherever young people have an opportunity to contemplate the miracle of life in biology or the mystery of infinity in mathematics since the ultimate inexplicability in natural scientific terms of the former and the absolute inability of the finite human mind to grasp the latter are precisely the sort of phenomena which force us to seek beyond science and mathematics for some other sort of account of things. (D. Carr, 1995, p. 95)

This particular criticism of a cross-curricular approach aims to address the vagueness that is often associated with the dimension. Carr's (1994; 1995; 1996a; 1996b) proposal to describe the spiritual dimension as consisting of specific 'truths', reduces its cross-curricular applicability to a content that is specifically related to the Religious Education context. Such a proposal fails to incorporate the process characteristic of spirituality which enables it to be relevant for other contexts outside the religious. Indeed, this cross-curricular approach involves the process of making sense of the particular subject within an individual's world-view and does not necessarily make the dimension so nebulous as to be meaningless - which is a major concern in Carr's argument.

There is some contention over whether spiritual development presupposes moral development. It is a false syllogism to assume that because religion is about both morality and spirituality, they then must be inseparable (Best, 1996b, p. 3). Spiritual development in education must be morally appropriate, which thereby negates certain immoral forms of spirituality. For example, the values of Nazi Germany can hardly offer an acceptable form of spirituality that is appropriate for education (D. Carr, 1995, p. 89). It appears that there was a Nazi spirituality even although non-Nazis would claim that
This spirituality was immoral. The disapproval of Nazi spirituality on moral grounds does not negate the reality of a Nazi spirituality. So, while some (D. Carr, 1995; Long, 2000) would prefer spiritualities to be moral, by definition, spirituality and morality are distinct dimensions and indeed may oppose each other in certain cases. The Schools Advisory Committee for Religious Education (SACRE) for Oxfordshire acknowledges that even militant disciples of the Devil have a spiritual dimension. However, they stress that for educational purposes there should be a link that is emphasised between the spiritual and the moral dimensions (Webster, 1995, pp. 52-53). Therefore, in order for spirituality to be educationally worthwhile, this link with the moral dimension should be an obvious one.

In addition to being morally appropriate, spiritual development is also seen to include the development of a sensitive awareness. This can be understood as “a delicacy of appreciation for poetry or music, or perhaps a compassionate concern for people around them” (Hay, 1998, quoted in Pike, 2000, p. 178). This description is somewhat akin to empathy, being understood as not just ‘putting oneself in the shoes of another’ but as referring to a “deep and meaningful relationship through which might come personal growth, mutual support and shared enrichment” (Best, 2000, p. 212) with sense experiences, other people and world-views. This empathetic aspect of spiritual development assumes its relational characteristics to the world within which the person is embedded. Spiritual development focuses upon how individuals relate to the aspects of their world to which they are inescapably.
The spiritual development of children involves an attitudinal sensitivity and a process - a search - to make meaning of the world in which they find themselves. Erricker et al. (1997, p. 12) describe the collection of personal narratives or stories which make these meanings as 'children's world-views', but making meaning also involves the process of self-identity formation. These characteristics appear to be represented in the description given by Mott-Thornton who argues that -

Spirituality is that quality of being, holistically conceived, made up of insight, beliefs, values, attitudes/emotions and behavioural dispositions, which both informs and may be informed by lived experience. The cognitive aspects of our common spirituality can be described, at any particular time, as being a ‘framework’ of ideals, beliefs and values about oneself, one's relations with others and reality/the 'world'. Logically intrinsic to this framework, and rooted in a notion of what is real and ultimately significant, is some conception of the good life (possibly, but not necessarily, related to a supreme will and agency), which informs (implicitly, via rational justification), but may not determine, all action. (Mott-Thornton, 1996, p. 78)

It is argued here that the ‘frameworks’ described are an essential component of self-identity, as they provide the background and unity from which individuals make sense of who they and how they judge and act (C. Taylor, 1989). In turn, these frameworks play a foundational role in informing world-views and how people see their place in the larger scheme of things. Spiritual development can refer to the creative aspect of the coherently unified inner person, which needs to be exercised in order to establish personal well-being (Newby, 1996, pp. 96-98). Spiritual development appears to include the development of self-identity involving ‘frameworks’ that provide sense of one’s place in the world, which may or may not be informed by a religious world-view.
The NCC description addresses the issues of individual identity formation and making sense of experiences, as well as constructing or finding meanings by which to live one’s life. These particular descriptions are also evident in an Ofsted discussion paper (1994) that was produced to provide an understanding of spiritual development for school inspectors. Spiritual development in this document is described as relating -

to that aspect of inner life through which pupils acquire insights into their personal existence which are of enduring worth. It is characterized by reflection, the attribution of meaning to experience, valuing a non-material dimension to life and intimations of an enduring reality. ‘Spirituality’ is not synonymous with ‘religious’; all areas of the curriculum may contribute to pupils' spiritual development. (Ofsted, 1994, p. 8)

Although this document is claimed to be “the single most propelling influence on schools’ reconsideration of their values endeavours” (M. Taylor, 1998, p. 6 quoted by Best, 2000, p. 4), it is argued by Lambourn (1996, p. 150) that spiritual development has no useful remainder when distinguished from the ‘personal-social’ and is “unnecessary”, “confusing” and “counterproductive”. This is because, as the Ofsted paper itself explains, education is about personal development as well as the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and spirituality has little to offer outside of these categories.

This Ofsted publication continues with the comment that -

Spiritual development, then, is concerned with how an individual acquires personal beliefs and values, especially on questions about religion, whether life has purpose, and the basis for personal and social behaviour - questions which are 'at the heart and root of existence'. (Ofsted, 1994, p. 8, my emphasis)
This would indicate that spiritual development does not just pertain to any body of knowledge but that it relates to how students engage with what they know. Spiritual development is the most fundamental and central core to educational development of the individual, not simply one dimension amongst many equals.

It would appear that this background review on how spiritual development is understood in English education reveals tensions of difference such as whether it is religious or secular, an inner core of individuality or the relational, and truths or processes. Nevertheless in spite of these issues regarding the meaning of spirituality, it is evident that, in England at least, it is a widely claimed dimension of the holistic development of the educated person. Provision for this development is made within the Education Act and is an outcome that is expected to be demonstrated in every school. Consideration is now given to how spiritual development is being engaged by education in Queensland.

1.2 Queensland as a Case Study

Unlike England, Australia has no Educational Act to oversee a national policy on education. However, Queensland is a signatory along with the other five States, to the Adelaide declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the twenty-first century (Australian Ministerial Council of Education, 2000). This document emphasises ‘schooling’ rather than ‘education’, implying that the focus of concern is upon what schools are responsible for delivering, rather than what the overall development and flourishing of the students might entail - as would be depicted by the broader term ‘education’.
The preamble to these national goals states that “Schooling provides a foundation for young Australians’ intellectual, physical, social, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development” (Australian Ministerial Council of Education, 2000). These dimensions are listed in such a way that they almost reflect the inverse of the list in England’s Education Reform Act 1988. Unlike the English Act, it cannot be suggested that spirituality is the most fundamental dimension that pervades the others. The inclusion of the spiritual here is limited to the preamble only, and is not included nor described further in any of the eighteen nationally agreed goals.

Within the national goals document, the statement is made that when students leave school, they should -

1.3 have the capacity to exercise judgement and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of their world, to think about how things got to be the way they are, to make rational and informed decisions about their own lives and to accept responsibility for their own actions (Australian Ministerial Council of Education, 2000)

The phrase “to make sense of their world” may be assumed to imply the type of ‘framework’ that has been described with regards to spirituality. However, because the statement is so vague it cannot be assumed to mean spirituality specifically here, as the phrase could also be equally applicable for other studies such as astronomy, ecology, geology, anthropology, history and economics. Therefore it must be concluded that spiritual development is not a recognised nationally agreed dimension of education (Levin, 2000) - or more specifically, ‘schooling’.
The *Education (General Provisions) Act 1989* of Queensland and subsequent amendments do not attempt to define education, let alone acknowledge spiritual development. ‘Spirituality’ however, is listed as one aspect (although the *last* listed) of holistic development (Queensland Department of Education, 1994, p. 5). However, no description is offered as to what this might mean. The inclusion of spirituality in this context does not draw upon any specific understandings, but is meant to convey the “common or everyday definitions for which teachers or educators would be aware” (Thurlow, 1996, p. 1). While the assumption is made that teachers and educators should have an understanding of this dimension, spirituality is not defined by any pre-service, in-service or departmental publications.

The case study of Queensland in this research is focussed upon state schooling, because the majority of students study in this system. Also, spirituality is seen as more problematic in the secular context of state education compared with the religious environments that are predominant amongst the private schools. Therefore, an attempt to elucidate what spirituality in education might mean for a secular context (as well as a religious one) offers something more valuable that is argued to be relevant for both the state and private sectors. A brief overview of the Catholic vision for education is given here, as this denomination forms the largest segment of non-state schools, and its inclusion offers a useful point of comparison for the state system.
Catholic Education

Education in the Catholic system comes under the overall aims of the Catholic Church. The *Archdiocesan Mission Statement 1987* states that “We the Church... exist in order to build and sustain a Catholic Christian Community” (quoted in Catholic Education Council, 1992a, p. 8), and the schools are to be a part of this very mission. The vision for schooling is summarised in six points as follows -

- live and spread the Gospel message
- promote faith learning that is lifelong and life-giving
- nourish and co-operatively support through education the faith life of families
- pastorally prepare and inservice all involved in the Church’s educational mission
- provide education that supports wholistic development ensuring a balance between individual and societal needs
- educate for Christian leadership that is participative and collaborative. (Catholic Education Council, 1992b, p.1)

It is identified in the fifth point that education is to be holistic, developmental, social and personal. The aim is for the “integral formation of the entire person”, which is to benefit the individual. Education is also to be social, in that the ‘good of society’ and the well-being of the community are promoted. While catechesis is an aspect of the education within the Catholic system, it appears that the ‘needs’ of the individual and of society are taken into consideration.

Teachers within this system are considered to be a part of the ministry, in the sense that their work is seen to contribute to the overall mission of the Catholic Church. Teachers are expected be virtuous, to incorporate the Gospel message and values across the whole curriculum, and to be committed to ongoing professional, personal and spiritual development.
It would appear that the personal aspect of the teacher is recognised as
being an essential element to the overall effectiveness of education. This is
identified by the aim to have teachers establish quality relationships with
students, demonstrated through the principle of care. This indicates that the
idea of social capital, not just human capital (Bourdieu, 1997; Coleman,
1997), is considered of importance, where the relations between teachers
and students are as significant as the particular professional skills of the
teachers themselves. Social capital is beginning be recognised in the work
place as an essential element, as indicated in the previous chapter. The
aims of education within the Catholic system address the nature of the
Christian mission, education and teaching as well as individual
characteristics of the learners, although no specific descriptions are offered
for spiritual development.

State Education
The Government department in Queensland responsible for State education
- Education Queensland - has embarked upon a major curriculum reform
called the ‘2010 Strategy’. It could be perceived that this reform was a
response to UNESCO’s call for “all people with a sense of responsibility [to]
turn their attention to both the aims and the means of education” (Delors,
1998, p. 14). This call was grounded in what UNESCO considers to be -
foostering “personal development and building relationships among
individuals, groups and nations” (Delors, 1998, p. 14) for the purposes of achieving a world free from war and poverty. However, it can also be observed that State education in Queensland is responding to the issues of competition and the alarming downward spiral of the socio-economic demographic indicators challenging political leaders (Education Queensland, 1999a, pp. 5-13). The content found in the purposes of education as developed by Education Queensland would suggest that these latter concerns have exerted a far greater influence than have UNESCO's principles of peace and well-being.

In April 1999, Education Queensland published the 2010 discussion paper *The next decade: A discussion about the future of Queensland State Schools* (Education Queensland, 1999a). In this initial discussion paper under the heading 'The purposes of education', it was contended that a “new consideration of the purpose of education is necessary due to the changing complexity of work and social values”, the knowledge economy and digital communications (Education Queensland, 1999a, p. 21). The UNESCO report *Learning: The treasure within* (Delors, 1998) is frequently referred to in this section, and the Four Pillars - learning to live together, learning to know, learning to do, and learning be, are all included. The inclusion of the four pillars appears to be a response to Schofield’s (1999) consultation paper which recommended that they be considered.

The fourth Pillar, ‘Learning to be’, emphasizes the development of the whole person and is described by Schofield as follows -
Learning to Be: This type of learning leads to self-knowledge. It should contribute to the development of the whole person - mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation and spirituality. Learning to be develops an independent, critical way of thinking and judgement so that individuals can make up their own minds on the best courses of action in different circumstances throughout their lives. (Schofield, 1999a, p. 17)

Spirituality is identified as one component of the whole person. The description of this Pillar by Schofield contrasts with its portrayal in the 2010 discussion paper. There the first sentence of the two-sentence description reads, “learning to be: the development of individual personalities to be creative, independent and responsible, with opportunities for aesthetic, artistic, scientific, cultural and social discovery” (Education Queensland, 1999a, p. 22). Schofield however has more accurately preserved the original description as found in the UNESCO document (see Chapter Six) compared with that of Education Queensland. The ontological concept of the ‘whole person’ being understood as consisting of various dimensions is replaced in the 2010 document by the concept of a ‘personality’ that would have “opportunities for... discovery” (Education Queensland, 1999a, p. 22).

The second and final sentence used in the 2010 discussion paper to describe ‘Learning to be’ states, “These skills are a building block for economic progress” (Education Queensland, 1999a, p. 22). This second sentence appears to originate from the departmental authors of this discussion paper, as this notion is not to be found in Schofield (1999a), Delors (1998) or Fauré et al. (1972), and in effect it misrepresents how this Pillar appears in these other sources. In Delors (1998, p. 80), the Pillars are identified as describing attributes, not skills, and are stated clearly as going beyond “an instrumental view of education”. The agenda of the 2010 project
appears to be primarily one of economic interest, rather than a concern for the development of the whole person. Queensland State education is not alone in creating this imbalance between the pursuit of economic goals over the development of the individual as a social being, as “economic goals have dominated discussion and policy initiatives both in the US and in virtually all advanced industrial countries” (Rumberger, 1998, p. 7). However, it is not suggested here that spirituality is unable able to offer utility for an economically competitive environment.

Within the section on ‘purposes of education’ of the 2010 discussion paper, the six tensions in The Delors Report are all included. The 2010 document consists of much shorter descriptors, but it is interesting to note some subtle changes of emphasis. For example, the first tension between the ‘global and the local’, identifies the need for a sense of identity. However, whereas The Delors Report emphasises the individual, who should participate in both community and global life, the 2010 paper emphasises communities, with no reference to the individual. This could imply that the emphasis of education is upon the social ‘needs’ only, without attention being given to those of the developing individuals. The sixth tension between the spiritual and the material, is discussed in The Delors Report as follows -

often without realizing it, the world has a longing, often unexpressed, for an ideal and for values that we shall term ‘moral’. It is thus education’s noble task to encourage each and every one, acting in accordance with their traditions and convictions and paying full respect to pluralism, to lift their minds and spirits to the plane of the universal and, in some measure, to transcend themselves. (Delors, 1998, p. 18)

Maintaining that inspirational tone, the report then completes this paragraph with the sentence, “It is no exaggeration on the Commission’s part to say
that the survival of humanity depends thereon”. This philosophical élan is lost somewhat in the brief description given in the 2010 document, which simply states, “moral values - the spiritual - and the desire for an education which yields material benefits” (Education Queensland, 1999a, p. 22; original emphasis). Unlike Delors, Education Queensland appears to present the moral as assuming or equating with the spiritual. However, there is no further description of the spiritual in the document and the departmental officer in charge of the 2010 project was unable to expand further on the concept when asked directly about it (Bannikoff, 1999).

Besides the policy literature from Education Queensland, some syllabuses have incorporated the term ‘spiritual’. For example, in the draft syllabus for Studies of Society and Environment (1998), ‘peace’ is identified as being one of the four key values. This document states -

The key value of peace is based on the belief that to promote life is to promote positive relations with others and with the environment. This implies the need to maintain and develop hope, spirituality and optimism, a sense of belonging in local, national and global communities, cooperative and peaceful relations with others, and a sense of a shared destiny and custody of the earth”. (quoted by Bailey, 2000, p. 25)

Following this statement comes a list of concepts, including hope, optimism and interdependence, but not spirituality, which are described further. Bailey (2000, p. 25) questions “If it [spirituality] is so important, why is it not included?”. She argues from the context of Queensland that, outside of religion, spirituality is difficult to define and is therefore not engaged with by secular education. Her view of religion does not limit spirituality to the doctrinal and authoritarian descriptions given earlier, but is one that addresses “the mysterious experience of being a self-conscious person”
which prompts the asking of philosophical questions. She continues, “These questions concern the nature of life and human understanding; the source of meaning and purpose; and the formulation of values and ethical principles” (Bailey, 2000, p. 25). She refers to “an intrinsically meaningless existence” (Bailey, 2000, p. 25) as the condition that prompts the search for meaning and purpose in order to fill this existential void. Accordingly, within Queensland education, she recommends that global ethical principles be taught, in order to promote a sense of wholeness, of which students can see themselves as a part, in order to give sense and purpose to their lives.

Survey of Pre-Service Teachers

As part of this research, a small empirical investigation was conducted in order to gain information to identify any programs aiming at spiritual development that were being undertaken in schools, and to compare State schools with denominational schools in that regard. The investigation was also undertaken to gain an appreciation of the attitudinal disposition of pre-service teachers towards the inclusion of spiritual development in schools.

This investigation consisted of a survey questionnaire, which is included with the results in Appendix A. The in-class survey was conducted with 94 students studying the first year subject “Introduction to Teaching” at The University of Queensland in Semester One, 2000. Before answering the questions, a description of spiritual development was offered to these pre-service teachers on an overhead transparency, which included the definitions from the NCC and Ofsted documents noted earlier in this chapter.
The questionnaire asked students whether their spiritual development was provided for when they attended high school (Question 3a). There was a significant difference between the responses from the graduates of non-state religious schools and graduates from state schools. Of the former, 87 percent claimed they had spiritual development provided for, compared with only 28 percent of state school graduates.

The students from religious schools indicated that their spiritual development was provided in a number of ways. Most of the sources of this development were identified as Religious Education, teachers, chapel services, school in general, Christian living classes, life skills/personal development classes and the pastors, chaplains and Brothers. The thirteen students from the state system who claimed that they had received some provision for their spiritual development, identified the sources as teachers, Religious Education, pastors, chaplains, guidance counsellors, and classes on life-skills and human relationships education. The provision of Religious Education and access to religious representatives provide much of the spiritual development in both systems of schooling, and without this aspect in state schools, little else appears to be providing spiritual development for students.

For the students who claimed that they did not have spiritual development provided for, 83 percent of the non-state and 91 percent of the State graduates indicated that they wanted to have this provided (Question 3c). Such a high percentage (i.e. 91 percent) of interest in spirituality is contrasted with the 1991 estimated national average of 76.6 percent of the
population who indicated that they were affiliated to a formal religion (Australian Bureau of Statistics, accessed 2001). It may be the case that there is a greater interest in spirituality than in religious affiliation, although further research is required if this is to be confidently asserted. The responses to this question indicate that spiritual development was seen as a ‘need’ for and by these students and was not being addressed sufficiently within the state system in particular.

Only about 15 percent of these pre-service teachers responded that they did not want to be able to provide spiritual development for their students (Question 7). The reasons provided for this were mainly that they regarded it to be the job of parents, that it was not their business to tell students what they should believe in this regard, and that it should be left to someone with experience. A fine legal line was assumed to exist between spiritual development and pressing one’s own views on others. This group of 15 percent of respondents who did not want to provide spiritual development were not against spiritual development being provided for as such, just as long as they were not held to be responsible for it. However, 71 percent of the class responded that they did want to provide spiritual development for their students. The reasons cited for wanting to do so focused variously on its importance in individual development as a person, in holistic development, in identity formation, in the development of purpose, in being a citizen, in providing the foundation for self-respect, and in respecting others and understanding who one is. It was seen as providing a foundation on which to build later thinking and development, while helping to deal with life, improving society and relationships, and in inspiring/motivating students.
When asked if they had given any thought to how they might actually provide for this spiritual development (Question 6a), only 37 percent indicated that they had done so. The ideas on how this might be done include developing friendships with students, being a role model, providing Religious Education classes, and encouraging self-confidence, self-esteem, self-expression, morality and values. A comment from a former nurse was that “We [nurses] were taught to take on a holistic approach so I feel it [spirituality] is almost second nature to me now”. This is quite significant, because she identified the spiritual dimension as an accepted part of the holistic understanding of the patient. However, understanding the spiritual dimension as part of a holistic understanding of the learner does not appear to be so readily acceptable, especially in the State education system where spiritual development is not clearly understood nor provided for.

Conclusion

UNESCO, through the Delors and Fauré reports, encourages a broad notion of education and the educated person. Emphasis is placed on the development of the individual first and secondarily on the commitment that the individual gives to the global community. In England emphasis is placed on the curriculum rather than on ‘education’, but spiritual development is clearly regarded as one component of this, and the government there expects this development to be occurring in every school, whether denominational or state. In Queensland State education, the emphasis is upon ‘schooling’ but there is very little state or national policy that recognises spirituality as a developmental need of students. Indeed development of the individual person is only a minor aim of Education Queensland compared
with the participation that is required by all for the greater good, expressed in terms of economic competitiveness.

Through the survey it was concluded that graduates from high schools desired to experience spiritual development, and as pre-service teachers, they considered it to be an important aspect of the educational development of their future students. There are no materials available for practising teachers or teacher-trainees in Queensland that are able neither to offer a description of spiritual development nor to assist with its provision.

The conceptualisation of spirituality developed here is one which enables a case to be made as to how spiritual development can be effectively provided in education both in the religious and the secular contexts. This conceptualisation aims to overcome the tensions that surfaced in this research, particularly the tension between religious and secular perspectives, and between denominational and state school systems.
Chapter Two

The Nature of Spirituality

Before researching how the development of spirituality can be understood specifically within the context of education, this chapter aims to provide a broad-brush review of contemporary concepts of spirituality. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a background to the subsequent analysis of how spirituality can be recognised in education from an existential perspective.

This broad approach involves an etymological examination of ‘spirit’ from which spirituality is derived, as well as a literature review of the various descriptions of spirituality as found in the four fields which have the most important implications for spirituality in contemporary society. These four fields are religion, psychology, the New Age movement and the work place. The common themes found amongst these four sources will provide an overall description of this dimension which is accordant with these various areas.

2.1 The Meaning of ‘Spirit’

The term ‘spirit’ is often regarded as too elusive and mysterious to be defined. This is due largely to differing understandings since primitive times as to whether the human spirit (often referred to as ‘soul’) is a distinct component of one’s nature, differentiating Homo sapiens from other species, or even whether it is a divine-like personality. Etymologically, ‘spirit’ is derived from the Latin spíritus, meaning breath, courage and vigour or life.
This is based upon the Vulgate where the term is a translation for the Greek *pnêuma*, meaning 'a current of air, breath or a breeze', which contributes to establishing an image rather than an abstract concept. With specific reference to human life it also can mean ‘the rational soul, vital principle, and mental disposition’.

The Greek term *pnêuma* corresponds with the Hebrew *rûwach*, which adds to the understanding of vital principle by incorporating the emotions of ‘anger’ and ‘courage’. As a ‘breath’, the spirit can be seen to move or *motivate* animate beings, it “is the manner of living a life, of being a material being or body, but one which is alive as opposed to being dead” (Grosch, 2000, p. 233). Being the vital principle, it is also seen to be that aspect which “gives meaning, direction and purpose to human life” (D. Carr, 1995, p. 87).

Etymologically there is little basis that permits spirit to represent a ‘substance’ of sorts, and its usage in regards to certain alcoholic beverages is a more recent evolution. From such an understanding ‘spirit’ is seen as a *presence* that can be demonstrated via its actions, such as the effects of a wind or breeze of air. It is often contrasted with matter and is sometimes considered to exist in a distinct realm from the physical. However the interaction between the two realms is apparent through the etymology of the term that indicates that the spirit works *within* the physical elements.

‘Spirit’ is also given a ‘personality’ characteristic through the persona of The Holy Spirit as found in Christian theology as well as its use in such
phrases as ‘that horse has spirit’ or ‘he has a rebellious spirit’. It is sometimes considered to be a part of an individual as when ‘my spirit is down’, and sometimes it is part of a community such as ‘team spirit’, ‘Christmas Spirit’ and ‘the Spirit of the age’. So to consider it in polarity to the material unnecessarily imputes ‘spirit’ as an immaterial ‘something’. While not a ‘thing’ in the form of a substance, it is seen as part of the personality of entities such as individuals and communities.

The early Stoics used the term *pnēuma* in such a way that the spirit did not exist in a different realm from the physical and material life forms. It was Plato’s use of *psuche* (soul) that contributed to the idea of the immortal soul as being superior to the physical body (Grosch, 2000). While dualism has introduced the idea that the spirit somehow has a separate identity to the physical body, it is contended that, like “other terms, such as ‘soul,’ ‘heart,’ ‘mind,’ and even ‘body,’ ‘spirit’ is not a designation of some part of the human person but of the person viewed from particular aspects” (Simpson, 1988, p. 599). The individual and community are understood to be inspired or moved/motivated by spirit, which is understood to be that particular aspect which refers to their life principle - their inner vitality - with emotions and motivations, as well as their possible relationship with God.

The difficulty in understanding the term ‘spirit’ is compounded by some French and German words. The French *esprit* and German *Geist* are both general terms, and when translated into English mean both ‘mind’ (i.e. reason *logos* and intellect *nous*) and ‘spirit’. Descartes identified the human spirit (consciousness) as being separate from the physical body. His
dualistic view labelled this separate ‘consciousness’ as the thinking ‘mind’. The ‘I’ in his *ego cogito* means reason, spirit and person, together as one. However, Tillich (1980, p. 82) has lamented that this replacement of ‘spirit’ by ‘mind’ took place because “the element of vitality which is present in ‘spirit’ was separated and interpreted as an independent biological force”.

The German philosopher Hegel (1983) used spirit (*Geist*) in three different ways, but always retained the ideal of a dynamic reality expressing itself through a physical ‘thing’. One way is the Subjective (psychological) Spirit which represents the individual mind. The second is the Objective Spirit that pertains to the political and cultural self-awareness on the part of a community, and the third is the Absolute Spirit that is the mysterious spirit that moves world history. He attempted to show that there is continuity of spirit from the individual psyche to the transcultural - one *Geist* breathing through all. Although Hegel tried to differentiate it from that of the ancient Greeks by referring to the Holy Spirit, he still reflected the Greek understanding of a spiritual breath moving the human and the cosmos into motion as the ultimate meaning for the life of the individual (Allen, 1991, p. 48). He maintained that it is no ‘soul-thing’ that exists independently from ourselves, but since the beginning of self-consciousness he argued that this *Geist* has been alienated from itself, including the world around us, and that it is philosophy’s task to help it find itself again.

Rebelling against this effort to develop a system based on the notion of the absolute and the thought of an *Objectiver Geist* (Wild, 1955, p. 55), a student of Hegel’s, Søren Kierkegaard, focused upon the subjective spirit and
argued that “there can be no system of existence” (Kierkegaard, 1992, p. 112). Historically referred to as the Father of Existentialism, he stated, “The human being is spirit” (Kierkegaard, 1989, p. 43). The individual is a synthesis of body and soul joined by spirit. This spirit is understood to be the relation by which one relates to oneself. Kierkegaard explained this as “The self is a relation which relates to itself, or that is the relation which is its relating to itself. The self is not the relation but the relation’s relating to itself” (Kierkegaard, 1989, p. 43).

Kierkegaard argued that this relation is an unbalanced one for the individual, who, in time, becomes aware of the eternal/temporal tension. It is through this tension, or despair - because “despair is the imbalance in a relation of synthesis” (Kierkegaard, 1989, p. 45) - that brings one to recognise a need to include the eternal (God) aspect to their becoming. He made the point that to become one’s true self one must stand alone before God, and not take the easier alternative of becoming lost in a crowd. He argued, “It is easier to conceal oneself in the crowd, and to drown one’s own guilt in that of the race, easier to hide from oneself than to stand revealed before God in sincerity” (Kierkegaard, 1941b, p.33).

In addition to being spirit, Kierkegaard also described the self as freedom. This is understood not as meaning a freedom to do anything at all, but rather ‘true freedom’ is being one’s true self in a meaningful sense. In spite of the variety of social roles, freedom, also understood as ‘possibility’, is what one should be passionate for, as it is necessary for becoming an authentic person. Freedom of choice means being actively involved in a self-reflective
manner, mainly in the exercising of individual decisions on which values and beliefs are to be adopted. These form the foundation on which one's actions are to be based. Through exercising this choice, one can develop through Kierkegaard's three stages of existence, which are reflected somewhat in Kohlberg's stages of moral judgement.

The first of Kierkegaard's stages is termed the Aesthetic, which is basically hedonistic in character. The second is the Ethical stage, where the individual submits to rule-following behaviour for the good of others. The highest stage is the Spiritual or Religious, which extends beyond the ethical, and beyond reason itself - through a leap by faith. Because life is so full of paradoxes, no choice comes with a guarantee, and so all of them are risks. Kierkegaard claimed that life itself is a risk. In his works the question “What is the meaning of life?” is a repetitive one, which indicated that his desire was for the individual to make sense of life by exercising responsible choices towards ultimate beliefs and values, and not just becoming dutifully obedient through a rule-following behaviour to a moral code.

The existential philosophers share some common ground in their understandings of the ‘spirit’. Friedrich Nietzsche called himself the first immoralist in order to challenge the ‘free spirits’ to be creators and revaluators of their own values. He expressed the need to examine the origins of morals, and to go beyond their apparent ‘giveness’ and supposedly rational foundations. He stated, “Let us not undervalue this: we ourselves, we free spirits, are already a ‘revaluation of all values’, an incarnate declaration of war and victory over all ancient conceptions of ‘true’ and
‘untrue’ (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 123). These ‘free spirits’ that he mentioned are not naturally existing individuals but are described as “not yet existing”. His reference to ‘freedom’ refers to those who have cut themselves free from cultural restraints and the demands of others. There is a higher calling, so to speak, for individuals truly to be themselves, apart from manipulated ‘things’ of society.

He identified an inner core in individuals - a will - which he called “a spiritual fate deep down” (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 162). This will was identified as needing a purpose and a meaning for life, but Nietzsche emphasised that the focus should be upon the process by which one decides upon a value or goal, rather than the goal itself (Nietzsche, 1998, p. 67). Thus, there is a connection here between Kierkegaard’s idea that the spirit is a relationship, and Nietzsche’s idea of the will of the free spirits.

Martin Heidegger (1996, p. 110) replaced Kierkegaard’s use of the term ‘spirit’ with ‘existence’, to refer to the substance of being for the individual (who is referred to as Dasein). For Heidegger, ‘spirit’ is of the ‘world’ in which the individual is immersed, and provides unity for Dasein-in-the-world. Human beings are not spiritual things placed in a space. Heidegger’s use of Geist is “opposed to the thing, to the metaphysical determination of thing-ness, and above all to the thingification of the subject, of the subjectivity of the subject as supposed by Descartes” (Derrida, 1989, p. 15).

Heidegger’s main concern in most of his earlier writings was the meaning of the being of Dasein, and he was against any reductionist approaches that
attempted to divide the individual into separate components. He stated, “in the question of the being of human being, this cannot be summarily calculated in terms of the kinds of being of body, soul, and spirit which have yet to be defined” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 45). He did, however, examine this concept of spirit more closely.

Heidegger argued that “World is always world of the spirit” and from this proclaimed in a rather Nietzschean description that, “We have said that the world is darkening. The essential episodes of this darkening are: the flight of the gods, the destruction of the earth, the standardization of man, the pre-eminence of the mediocre” (Heidegger, 1959, p. 45). For him the spiritual world referred to the deep forces that keep humankind and the environment together as one. He positioned this spiritual unity that humans have with their environment as being at odds with the idea that spirit should only be regarded as a component of human life. He argued that such a view that falsifies spirit as intelligence reduces it “to the level of a tool in the service of others, a tool the manipulation of which can be taught and learned” (Heidegger, 1959, p. 47). According to Derrida (1989, p. 96), “The degradation of the spiritual into the rational, intellectual, ideological is indeed what Heidegger was condemning”. For Heidegger, “spirit is the sustaining, dominating principle, the first and the last, not merely an indispensable third factor... [it] is a fundamental, knowing resolve toward the essence of being...the mobilization of the powers of the essent as such and as a whole” (Heidegger, 1959, pp. 47, 49). He contended that this is an important issue, and declared, “the asking of the question of being, is one of the essential
and fundamental conditions for an awakening of the spirit” (Heidegger, 1959, p. 50).

As with many terms found in language today, ‘spirit’ has not always maintained the same meanings over time. The etymological investigation above has recognised that spirit does not evidently refer to some objective substance that transcends the individual. Nor is it necessarily a religious concept although it can refer to the relationship that one has with God. It is the relationship aspect that appears to be particularly characteristic of this term and through it the identification can be made that one exists in a sort of holistic relation to oneself and the world. ‘Spirit’ refers to one’s very being, involving a dynamic life-force which gives meaning and unity within a holistic relation between others and the environment. In this sense it is not simply a mystical immaterial concept, but has some very practical implications for how one should exist with others in this world with all of its environmental features.

2.2 Spirituality as a Dimension

Attempting to describe spirituality is a complicated task, because it is argued that there is no coherent language that is able to speak clearly on such a matter (Rodger, 1996, p. 45). Describing this dimension has also been likened to trying to literally ‘catch the wind’ (Priestley, 1985). The term ‘spiritual’ is derived from the Greek \textit{pnēumatikos}, and is closely related to the term ‘inspiration’ (\textit{thēopnēustos}). This characteristic of being inspired can refer to the way one commits oneself to what one regards as the truth. It refers to that which is not only physical or literal, but is also ethereal and for
example, portrays the ideal of the Christian life by reference to that ‘which is brought into being or altered by the presence of the Spirit of God’. In such a context it can be described as implying “interaction at a fully personal level” (Lambourn, 1996, pp. 150-151).

Spirituality is a concept that many can talk about and around but there has not been a clear and generally accepted agreement as to what it is and is not. Many confuse it with moral development, religion and values, but there are few parameters offered by which spirituality can be differentiated from these other three. This section therefore aims to clarify this dimension by elucidating what is meant by ‘spirituality’ in the different fields of religion, psychology, the New Age movement and the work place, as these provide much of the currently important material on the subject.

**Spirituality in Religion**

Within religious writings there has long been an acknowledged difficulty in defining the concept of spirituality. In an editorial to the *British Journal of Religious Education* (Hull, 1995, p. 130), it is accepted that the understanding of spirituality is “ambiguous, illusive and ill-defined”, and Gobbell (1980, p. 409) reports, “the question of spiritual formation will loom as a priority issue of the early seventies in theological education”. This statement has proven to be the case as evidenced in the literature of this time and up through the 1990s. Due to the increased interest in the topic in recent times, Williams (1997) argues that it is a most useful exercise to differentiate between theology and spirituality in order for theologians to avoid being tainted by the ‘anti-intellectualism’ that seems to be attached to
so much of the modern usage of spirituality. After differentiating between these two terms, it is also helpful to contrast them with what is understood by ‘religion’.

Macquarrie (1972b, pp. 62-72) states that on the surface, theology and spirituality do appear as a contrast, because theology is intellectual, involving rational discourse (logos), while spirituality involves “the feelings and the will”. However, he indicates that it is only their methods that differ because eventually their paths do converge in the sense in which people come to have communion with God. Spirituality is not opposed to rational discourse, but rather may be disposed towards methods that are inclusive of alternative non-rational modes of understanding and experiencing, such as through feelings and intuition.

Spirituality is able to inspire “young people to live for others” because it exists “not inside people but between them” (Hull, 1995, p. 132). This view draws upon the dynamic and transcending aspects of the dimension, without attempting to reduce it to a ‘thing’ that is one part of each individual. Offering some clearer parameters, spirituality is described as including “prayer, worship and whatever other practices are associated with the development of the spiritual life” because fundamentally “it has to do with becoming a person in the fullest sense” (Macquarrie, 1072b, p. 40), and therefore lends itself to a holistic approach to the spiritual development of the individual.
Some scholars who attempt to contribute to the difference between ‘spirituality’ and ‘religion’ fail to achieve this perspective adequately. For example, Huddleston (1995) describes spirituality as “the manner, mode, or way in which a group lives its religion”. She describes spirituality as -

putting into practice in the concrete conduct of life specific proclamations, doctrines, ideas, values, hopes, commandments, instructions, traditions, or habits of Christian (or other religious) faith by a particular way of living. (Huddleston, 1995, p. 20)

However she describes religion (Christianity) as “the graced, culturally conditioned, holistic response of the human individual or group to the gratuitous self-bestowal (love) of God...” (Huddleston, 1995, p. 21). While religion can be identified here with the individual or the community, there is little distinction made between the manner or practice of spirituality and the holistic response of religion, making the meanings of the terms quite unclear.

The term ‘religion’ is understood to imply the sacred, the holy and the ultimate concern, and in a rather loose way in the West, is sometimes used to refer to a belief in, or worship of God or gods. However, religion is etymologically derived from ‘to bind’, and is seen more accurately to refer to the systematising of belief and worship as in a formal institutional religion, and also the binding of oneself to something through reverence and devotion. This latter aspect allows for a wider application of the term to incorporate such things as even football becoming someone’s religion. Bush (1988, p. 2) appears to draw upon both of these understandings of religion by stating, “religion is a configuration of doctrine and practice related to that which a community regards as sacred or fundamental to its way of life”. Its more common use implies a community or social construct rather than an
individual one, although the converse can also be evident too from the above.

It is assumed nevertheless by some that the terms ‘religion’ and ‘spiritual’ are synonymous (Blake, 1996; Hay, 1982). While the word ‘religion’ does not have a singular meaning (Hick, 1983, p. 2), it generally – though not necessarily - contains a soteriological element. Intellectually defining the term, A.J. Ayer (1950, p. 218) argued that religion offers “an explanation of the world’s existence...an assurance that life is worth living; and an answer to the question of how one ought to live”. On a more personal level, Cox (1966) states -

Religion is fundamentally a man’s attempt to explain to himself the meaning and purpose of his own existence. Yet since he is part of a much greater creation, he can discover purpose for himself only by reference to the purpose of the whole creation. (Cox, 1966, p. 24)

The term religion is more commonly adopted to refer to the narrower definition of “an established, theistic framework of beliefs” (Nye, 1996, p. 110). So religion can provide a ready-made and institutionalised world-view that offers a message for a better life (usually through some form of salvation) by which individuals may gain meaning and purpose in understanding themselves and how they should live. It is usually considered to be institutional, to refer to something to which devoted members are bound, although it can also include personal devotions.

Gobbell (1980, pp. 412-413), considering ‘spirituality’ within the Christian world-view, indicates that it is “‘life lived under and interpreted by the Christian Gospel’... it is neither ‘something’ added to Christian life nor some
‘substance’ infused into the Christian”. Rodger (1982, p. 5) describes the very nature of humankind as being inherently spiritual, as demonstrated by the spiritual concerns that people express. He regards the spiritual questioning and searching for meaning as ‘impossible to relinquish’, because it is a universal aspect of human nature, of what it is to be a human being.

There is a notion of ‘spiritual truths’, which originates from the idea that the spirit in scripture promotes meaning as well as life, and which is expressed through divine truth (D. Carr, 1994; 1995; 1996a; 1996b). These spiritual truths are “those judgements or propositions upon which the spiritual life of a given faith purports to be constructed”, as for example the Christian Gospel sayings that ‘no man can serve two masters’ and ‘man does not live by bread alone’ (D. Carr, 1996a, p. 171). Such a notion of spiritual truths in this context ‘essentialises’ spirituality and, due to its concentration on doctrinal aspects, can miss the point of the experiential characteristic (Blake, 1996; Mackenzie, 1998). These mind-independent truths can also be seen to promote the idea of “an independent order of reality” (Radford, 1999, p. 169). Certainly some religions consider that they can gain access to the realm of God through revelations and through their theologies (Polkinghorne, 1991), and this experience of engagement can be understood to be spiritual.

It would appear then that spirituality is not synonymous with theology or religion. For example, atheism can be seen as a denial of a belief in a deity, but it is not a denial in the existence of the spiritual dimension of human life (Priestley, quoted in Beck, 1986). Moffett (1994, p. 22) supports this view, arguing, “Even in its most sacred sense, spirituality does not depend on
religion. Spirituality may be what all religions share, but religions are human-made and partake of particular cultures”.

It is argued by Brian Hill (1990) that there are two routes for engaging with spirituality - the ontological and the phenomenological. The former refers to a spiritual plane that is above that of the material - somewhat akin to Carr’s idea of spiritual truths - and is bound within particular world-views. It offers deeper notions of the spiritual because of the web of connections within a singular world-view. It has been argued (Baroness Cox, as quoted in Bates, 1996; Wilson, 1993) that England’s schools should just teach the single religion of Christianity (Church of England in particular), in order to foster this idea of one world-view that is able to provide a unitary sense of everything. However, this approach is obviously contentious in a multi-faith society where the claimed pre-eminence of one particular world-view over others can be problematic.

The other method that Hill identifies is the phenomenological, which begins with “what we know about ourselves” (Hill, 1990, p. 9) and can be explored from a more anthropological perspective. This second view of Hill’s is built upon his argument that what makes humankind unique is more than just rationality, because individuals are able to attach such meanings to their experiences. He argues that the spiritual domain can be considered to be those qualities that are “distinctively human” as opposed to those that are evident amongst the animals. The four “marks of spirit” he identifies as endurance, transcendence, creativity and dialogue, of which only
transcendence is pursued as the linch-pin. He describes this transcendence as -

Human beings have a distinctive capacity to rise above the feelings and rhythms of animal life and become conscious of personal identity. This begins with the act of becoming aware of one's self as an entity, distinguishable from the external world. Then follows the act of reflection, whereby one is able to look back in memory, anticipate the future, dissociate one's mind from the objects directly present to the senses, and develop ideas and emotions about the world and one's self. (Hill, 1989, p.171)

Hill is criticised by Minney (1991) for describing the spiritual domain as 'distinctively human', because this can be seen as an attempt to make this dimension a form of humanism, thus removing both transcendence and spirituality from the disputable realm of religion in order to conceptualise it within education. But transcendence is described by Hill as experiential, and does not refer to the transcendent as if it were an entity existing in a different realm. This phenomenological view asserts something quite different from a realm of spiritual truths, as it does not need "to embrace a particular theological explanation", and it therefore is able to avoid the "objectifying tendency" of another reality that comes through systems of doctrine (Lealman, 1996, p. 24).

Transcendence is also claimed to be rooted in human consciousness, giving all people, no matter what their disposition to religion might be, a spiritual dimension (Phenix, 1974, p. 122). Through spiritual transcendence people can move beyond their "own consciousness of an event (and what it ought to look like) and connect to what that experience might mean" (Myers, 1997, p. 11). While such a notion appears to draw upon Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, there appears nevertheless to be a
distinction between simply experiencing a transcendent event with all of its feelings, and thoughtfully exploring the meaning(s) of such an experience. While a Husserlian phenomenological view asserts that the meaning needs to be gained from the experience itself, an existential phenomenological view - which is argued for here - claims meaning is made by one’s relation to the experience. It is in this respect that an experience is able to be revisited through reflection, allowing alternative meanings to be explored.

Transcendence is a holistic involvement incorporating both the non-rational attributes such as feelings and rational cognition used to explore the meanings of existence or experience.

This capacity to self-transcend is what the existential philosophers call existence, and is characterised by man’s mode of being that ‘stands out’ or goes out from itself. Following up on this theme, Macquarrie (1972b, pp. 44-45) argues that just as the persona of The Holy Spirit ‘goes out’ from God, so being spiritual means to be “continually going out from itself”. This going out can include a ‘reaching out’ toward the infinite (Long, 2000, p. 147) or towards the ‘spiritual truths’ as mentioned earlier. Hill (1990, p. 13) states that the term ‘spiritual’ is most useful “because it is the most holistic of the possible terms. It spotlights the unity of the self”. This dimension draws upon the distinctive human capacities or powers which include transcendence (and a sense of personal identity), reflection, a moral sense and a religious urge “to search for ultimate meaning, purpose and deliverance in the midst of our ambiguous environment” (Hill, 1990, p. 11).

Spirituality allows individuals to make sense of their selves and their lives by making meaning out of personal experiences. This meaning-making is
possible through reflection and possible engagement with the ‘spiritual truths’ that are found in world faiths. It would therefore appear that both the ontological and the phenomenological routes that Hill describes are necessary for an effective spirituality.

The process of ‘faith’ can be seen to represent a quest for a purposeful life that is a distinctively human trait. ‘Commitment’ is certainly also associated with the notion of faith, but it is argued here that commitment is likened to a ‘leap’ which Kierkegaard describes as a leap by faith (rather than a leap of faith). Faith is described by Fowler (1995, p. 11 & 14) as “a mode of knowing” and as “giving purpose and goal to one’s hopes and strivings, thoughts and actions. It is therefore considered to be dynamic as it strives to make sense of one’s understandings in light of one’s experiences. Phenix (1964, p. 245) describes faith as “the light that shines from the whole… the Comprehensive that comprehends or holds together all things in a transcendent unity”. More creatively, Fowler (1995, p. 25) argues that faith is the imagination that is able to grasp “the ultimate conditions of our existence, unifying them into a comprehensive image in light of which we shape our responses and initiatives, our actions”. Describing faith as an ‘imagination’ does not denote that it is “fantasy or make-believe”. All of one’s knowing begins with images (Fowler, 1995, p. 25). It is argued by Polanyi (1958) that people always know more than they are able to express to others. Such inexpressible knowledge is described by Wittgenstein (1922, p. 151) as ‘mystical’. Faith is able to escape the reducing effect of rationalism. It requires one, as Kierkegaard argued, to leap through to a decision of commitment from where rational thinking leaves off. It involves the whole
person, not just cognitive reason, but one’s very will, interest and passion. Faith provides a way of seeing life in relation to holistic images of what is termed the “ultimate environment” (Fowler, 1995, p. 28). This ultimate environment is understood as a comprehensive frame of meaning, by which people commit themselves to the value and power that is able to order their lives and enable them to make sense of their own lives and the lives of others.

In this regard spirituality is both rational and non-rational (as opposed to irrational). It is rational in the sense that it can be employed to produce religions with world-views and consistent sets of doctrines. In this sense, religion is the formal expression of spirituality. Spirituality, like faith, is also non-rational because it is experiential and is unable to “be described by exact terminology or by concepts” (Minney, 1991, p. 391). As a result, feelings that are experienced cannot be communicated succinctly by strictly rational methods, but demand that individuals reflect in order to be able to explore them further. This activity offers the opportunity for meaning-making (or re-making) as experiences are given sense in the light of some unifying purpose for one’s life. Experiences can be immediately meaning-sensing, while later through reflection a more cognitive meaning is able to be given to them (i.e. meaning-making). This meaning-making reflection is therefore both rational and non-rational.

Although it has been assumed that the spiritual is synonymous with the religious, it would appear that spirituality has its own meaning, quite independent from religion. It has been argued that it can be the ‘higher’
realm of reality, where ‘truths’ exist and can be engaged with via the theologies of religions. It is also the personal responses to experiences where meanings are not always readily supplied but which need to be produced by reflection. Rather than spirituality being in an either/or relation to higher truths and personal responses, it is understood as inclusive of both, because an individual who ‘makes’ a personal response is already in-the-world with its various claims of ultimate truths. The refusal of both Hill and Gobbell to contain the spiritual solely within the Christian or religious domain indicates that the dimension is also relevant for non-Christians, and broader still, the non-religious.

Spirituality in Psychology

Recognising that spirituality is a dimension which is beyond religion is indicated in the works of many humanist psychologists, including Abraham Maslow who states -

I want to demonstrate that spiritual values have a naturalistic meaning, that they are not the exclusive possession of organized churches, that they do not need supernatural concepts to validate them...therefore they are the general responsibility of all mankind. (Maslow, 1970, p. 33)

Others like Beck (1986, p. 150) propose that this dimension of spirituality “is largely the same in religious and nonreligious people”, and is common to both Eastern and Western cultures. Having a more secular view of the spiritual dimension is not necessarily at variance with religion, as evidenced earlier, but does indicate that spirituality may be just as relevant for the non-religious as it is for the religious. The lack of universal definitions can be seen to complicate the matter. Religion, as argued by Peck (1990, p. 208), need not be formally institutionalised, but can be quite personal. So
distinguishing religion from spirituality by describing it as the “formal
description of spirituality” as in the previous section is not meant to provide
the difference between the two concepts.

‘Spirituality’ is sometimes assumed to have a specifically religious
connotation, and Ardell (1996, p. 16) argues the phrase “secular spirituality”,
used in psychological wellness is an oxymoron, because ‘spirituality’ cannot
be both religious and secular. Ardell’s point is argued to be problematic here
because he has assumed that the ‘spiritual’ equates with the ‘religious’,
which is not a dominant presumption within psychology. In applied
psychology, and especially in the field of mental health, the spiritual
dimension is not equated with the religious, and is acknowledged, amongst
others, as being necessary for wellness. Psychology is commonly
understood to refer to the study of the ‘mind’, however due to its
etymological origins it can also be understood to include the ‘soul’. The term
‘psychology’ is derived from the Greek psuchô, (soul) which like pnêuma,
means ‘a current of air, breath or a breeze’.

Spirituality is understood to be the central core in various models of holistic
well-being or ‘wellness’ (Chandler et al., 1992; Witmer and Sweeny, 1992).
In these models the spiritual centre interacts with and provides the
inspiration, motivation and the meanings and purposes for the other
dimensions - such as the intellectual, physical, occupational, emotional and
social. Spiritual well-being is often described as meaning-making as well as
spiritual, and has been identified to be a strong and consistent predictor of
psychological well-being (Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). The empirical
research associated with psychological functioning, “strongly supports the importance of meaning in people’s lives” (O’Conner and Chamberlain, 1996, p. 461). Meaning-making (spirituality) is also reported to correlate with self-esteem (Lindemann & Verkasalo, 1996) and the lack of it as correlating with depression, substance abuse and even suicide ideation (Devogler-Ebersole & Ebersole, 1985; Harlow et al., 1986; May, 1991; Yalom, 1980; Yarnell, 1972), although researchers report that it is not the indicator, but only one of a variety of factors.

The understanding that spirituality is largely a meaning-making dimension is predominant in the literature. For example, ‘spiritual wellness’ is described as “a continuing search for meaning and purpose in life: an appreciation for depth of life, the expanse of the universe, and natural forces which operate: a personal belief system” (Myers, 1990, p. 11). This particular description lacks “the experience of relationship to a higher power, as well as the experience of ‘no-thingness’” often associated with Eastern traditions. Part of the description of spiritual wellness should refer to a capacity to “transcend one’s current locus of centricity” (Chandler et al., 1992). It is recognised within this field that spiritual development usually requires crises of sorts, described as episodes or periods of upheaval. It is also recognised that spirituality does not necessarily differ in any great degree from how it is understood within religion. Consequently the personal belief system of the individual, which involves making-meaning and purposes in life, may or may not include faith in a deity or religious order.
Spirituality appears to be multidimensional and is identified by Ingersoll (1994) as consisting of seven dimensions of meaning: conception of divinity, relationship, mystery, play, experience and as an interactive dimension which relies on a systemic force to make sense of the other dimensions. It is argued here that this description of Ingersoll’s really outlines only six dimensions in a horizontal fashion, with the seventh (the interactive dimension) operating as a ‘deeper’ function, providing the unifying relationship between the others, somewhat akin to Kierkegaard’s spiritual ‘relation relating to itself’. The models of both Witmer and Sweeny (1992), and Chandler et al. (1992), differ slightly to Ingersoll’s (1994) in that they allow the meaning aspect of spirituality to integrate and make sense of the other dimensions, rather like Ingersoll’s described integrative dimension. Through these models, it would appear that the spiritual dimension is recognised as involving the composition of meaning(s) and purpose(s) for one’s life, providing the inspiration and motivation that are an essential aspect of holistic wellness.

This foundational role of meaning-making is described as the “spiritual centre” (Tillich, 1980, p. 47), which provides the motive that makes life worth living (C. Taylor, 1989). This spiritual aspect of human nature is described by Taylor as a ‘strong evaluation’ and as such it lies ‘deeper’ (or ‘higher’ - depending on how it is viewed) than one’s moral sense. This is because this evaluation provides the criteria by which right and wrong are to be determined, much like Nietzsche’s argument to re-evaluate existing morals. It could be argued that the sixth stage of Kohlberg’s (1984) model of moral development could be called spirituality, in the sense that it empowers one
with a motivating incentive to be moral - it provides the *meaning* behind one’s morality. It is argued that in order to address the question, ‘Why be moral?’ one needs to go beyond the limits of morality itself, where a world-view or ethic can provide the "conscious response to, and expression of, the quest for an ultimate meaning for moral judging and acting" (Carter, 1986, p. 17).

Meaninglessness and nihilism - the opposite of spirituality and Fowler’s ‘faith as imagination’ - are argued here to be the crisis of this contemporary era. This characteristic can also be described as ‘a loss of myth’ (Lesser, 1999; May, 1991). It is myth (i.e. ‘grand narrative’) that can give lives a purpose but is now lost in the present fragmented world where personal unifying narratives are said to have been replaced by multiple personal identities (Lyotard, 1991). However, the quest to provide a response to the question ‘what is the meaning of life?’ is argued to be a matter of life and death (Yalom, 1980, pp. 419-420). This importance is reflected in the view of the existentialist Albert Camus, who states, “I have seen many people die because life for them was not worth living. From this I conclude that the question of life’s meaning is the most urgent of all” (Quoted by Yalom, 1980, p. 420).

Yalom differentiates between the questions ‘what is *the* meaning of life?’ and ‘what is the meaning of *my* life?’. He refers to the former as the ‘cosmological’, noting that it can be addressed by a world-view as found in various religions. The latter he terms ‘terrestrial’ and includes a purpose, a reference to an intention, aim or function, and as more personal and even
secular. This latter description is similar to Hill’s phenomenological approach to engaging with this dimension. It is from within this latter terrestrial understanding that Yalom refers to the works of the humanists and existentialists. This understanding is based upon the Western premise that there is a telos, a point to one’s life, which contrasts with the Eastern view, where “Existence has no goal. It is pure journey” (Yalom, 1980, p. 470). It is this terrestrial or phenomenological view of one’s meaning of life that has come to be regarded generally as the dimension of holistic wellness called spirituality. It is argued here to be the most relevant approach for a multicultural secular context, although there is still a recognised important contribution to be made by a cosmological approach too.

Spirituality in the New Age

The third source of spirituality examined here is the New Age movement. This is a difficult phenomenon to describe, because it is understood to be “a gather-place of many concentrations, beliefs, and practices” (Frost, 1992, p. 1). The term ‘New Age’ is contended to be a possible misnomer, due to the fact that many of the practices which come under this movement’s name have been practised in past millennia. The New Age movement is linked to Astrology’s ‘procession of the equinoxes’, that is, a time when the Earth points to a different Zodiac sign about every 2,100 years. The Age of Pisces has just been completed and the ‘new’ Age of Aquarius has begun. This is “supposed to be an age of human harmony, mutual understanding and spiritual growth” (Ferguson, 1980; Raeper & Smith, 1991, p. 191).
The New Age movement is associated with some ancient mythologies, alternative medicines, journeys of self-discovery and holistic views of humankind and the environment. Common themes include the transformation of consciousness, holistic and organic world-views, spiritual oneness and some integration with the paranormal. This has led to the inclusion of a plethora of practices including the more ‘serious’ notions of acupuncture, biofeedback, chiropractic, nutrition, herbs and homeopathy, as well as the ‘not so serious’ numerology, astrology, aromatherapy, Unidentified Flying Objects, mystics and tealeaf reading. In addition, the New Age movement includes self-helps such as meditation, inner peace, harmony and ‘natural’ healings, to facilitate holistic health.

The term ‘New Age’ should be dropped altogether, according to Drury (1999), because of discredited aspects of incorporating the paranormal and appearing narcissistic and hedonistic through certain practices. Raschke (1996, p. 220) for example, describes the New Age as a “generational psychodrama” and “a colossal return of the oppressed”. The term ‘self-spirituality’ is more suitable because New Agers often conceive of their being in spiritual terms (Heelas, 1996, p. 20). Drury argues that the ‘New Age’ should be replaced by the term ‘New Spirituality’, where spirituality is contrasted with ‘religion’, understood here as being specifically doctrinal and authoritarian.

Consequently, this vast array of topics makes the understanding of spirituality within this field much more complex. A frequent inclusion in New Age descriptions is spiritual development (Jack, 1976), where ‘spirit’ is
understood to reside in every individual and in every element of the environment. Humankind is holistically to be ‘at one’ with the rest of the environment, and descriptions imply spirituality to be a dimension of the individual, where there is an individual search or quest to find meaning for oneself (Hill, 1990, p. 7). New Age spirituality can be likened to operating like a ‘personal religion’ (Ferguson, 1980), representing “our lifelong search for meaningfulness and purpose in the world. In short, it refers to how we make sense of our selves and the universe” (Hutchinson, 1998, in Bosacki & Ota, 2000, p. 206). Meaning is able to be constructed by the active engagement of the individual, rather than being accepted unquestioningly from the formal institutions of authoritative religions.

The spiritual dimension has already been contended in the previous section on psychology, to be an essential component of holistic wellness. Health within the field of the New Age consists of ‘spirit’ as well as the traditional ‘mind’ and ‘body’, although these are often ‘one’ rather than differing ‘parts’. In order to be healed, some sources encourage the individual to engage with a spiritual power beyond herself. In this context, Deep Ecology is sometimes referred to as transpersonal ecology (Fox, 1990). Transpersonal healing contrasts with traditional medical thinking in that “Unlike the present practice of defining disease in terms of measurable cellular dysfunction, the transpersonal approach includes ways to identify spiritual and emotional precursors” (Lawlis, 1996, p. 9). This concept of transpersonal medicine which addresses the core of humankind, includes the very meaning of human existence as part of holistic health.
In addition to the rather disputed source of Astrology, the New Age movement coincides with a recent paradigm development in scientific thinking, which is providing it with a greater momentum and acceptability within society. This recent development is described as 'systems thinking' (Capra, 1996; Ferguson, 1980; Lesser, 1999) which is somewhat different from the traditional and more linear 'cause and effect' type. Systems thinking moves the focus from involving only the rational, analytical, reductionist and linear, towards an inclusion of intuition, synthesis, holism and nonlinear thinking (Capra, 1995, p. 24). This paradigm shift indicates, though, a change in emphasis, rather than a replacement of these former ways of thinking. The recognition of this changing paradigm and shift in values is sometimes argued to connect into ‘something greater’ than oneself and one’s own ego-centric way of viewing the world. This is described in the following analogy -

Everyday human consciousness may be compared to a passenger on a ship. The passenger can see only as far as the horizon. But what lies beyond the horizon is greater and mightier by far than everything in front of it. Our ego-consciousness recognises only the reality accessible to reason and the senses. What lies beyond this capacity for knowledge, however, is far greater and more powerful. (Jäger, 1995, p. 7)

Ironically, it is observed that, in countries where science is most advanced, people are searching more intently for alternatives to the linear and analytical ways of thinking (Mathew, 1998).

This new paradigm draws upon Chaos Theory, Quantum Physics, Gestalt Psychology and Ecology. All of these imply a form of holism, and assert that the ‘whole’ is always greater than the individual parts which compose it. They also promote models that are more ‘living’ than mechanistic. Chaos
Theory has been described as “the global nature of systems” (Gleick, 1988, p. 5), and is present in the various aspects of ‘nature’ as well as systems within human societies. Through quantum physics, it is suggested by Pylkkänen, (1989, p. 18) “that the universe is more like a living organism than a dead machine”, where the apparently hard and solid realm of particles ‘dissolve’ at the subatomic level. It is argued that “subatomic particles, cannot be understood as isolated entities but must be defined through their interrelations” (Capra, 1996, p. 30), because it implies that the identity and nature of these particles are dependent upon their situational contexts. Birch (1990, p. 44) gives the example that even “an electron in a lump of lead is not the same as an electron in a cell”.

David Bohm claims that “consciousness may be fundamental to the very structure of the universe” (Drury, 1999, p. xii), because of the ‘mysterious’ forces that constitute matter. He states, “In the view that I have been proposing, the mental and the material are two sides of one overall process... So there is only one energy which is the basis of all reality” (Bohm, 1989, p. 51). This new paradigm of scientific thinking also includes Stapp’s proposal that the world is not structured by independent identities, but by a “web of relationships”, and Bell’s theorem that the “ultimate stuff” of the universe is assumed to be the force that holds separate parts together over huge distances, and is able to act faster than the speed of light (Frost, 1992, p. 127).

In a similar fashion, Gestalt Psychology also argues for systems and relationships beyond the particular, stating that people “do not usually
perceive events as individual or disparate elements, but as whole, unified patterns” (McInerney & McInerney, 1998, pp. 90-91). Ecology has always been about networks (Patten, 1991) and is now being extended by Deep Ecology to enlarge the sense of self and have it integrated with the rest of nature. Deep Ecology does not simply promote a view of how things ‘hang together’, but recognises “the fundamental interdependence, richness and diversity [that] contribute to the flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth” (Naess, 1995, p. 214). Like education, ‘human flourishing’ is an important notion for Deep Ecology, which aims “to find a form of togetherness with nature which is to our own greatest benefit” where “our own” is not the lesser self of the individual ego or even human societies, but rather the greater Self of all living things (Naess, 1989, p. 168). This greater Self is similar to the idea of Gaia as proposed by James Lovelock (1991), who proposes that the Earth’s planetary ecosystem is ‘alive’. This is partly based on the view that the Earth “behaves like a living organism to the extent that temperature and chemical composition are actively kept constant in the face of perturbations” (Lovelock, 1991, p. 6).

These views appear to incorporate some of the work of Heidegger, and especially his notion of care, where the concept of the ‘self’ integrates much more meaningfully with the rest of nature. The self is already in the environment as one’s whole being is in-the-world. Deep ecological awareness recognizes the interdependence of the self with all the other aspects of the ‘world’, where all individuals and societies are embedded in the cyclical processes of nature (Capra, 1996, p. 6). This view contributes to the notion that deep ecological awareness is spiritual in character.
Ultimately, *deep ecological awareness is spiritual or religious awareness.* When the concept of the human spirit is understood as the mode of consciousness in which the individual feels a sense of belonging, of connectedness, to the cosmos as a whole, it becomes clear that ecological awareness is consistent with the so-called ‘perennial philosophy’ of spiritual traditions, whether we talk about the spirituality of Christian mystics, that of Buddhists, or the philosophy and cosmology underlying the Native American traditions. (Capra, 1996, p. 7, my emphasis)

The New Age aspect of the ‘spiritual-self’ appears to draw upon Chaos theory, quantum physics, Gestalt psychology and ecology. This view within the new scientific paradigm, described as systems thinking, conceives the self as being spiritually connected to something greater than only the individual agent or ‘particle’. This understanding would suggest that, for spirituality, the cosmological and terrestrial approaches described earlier by Yalom, may be inseparable.

**Spirituality in the Workplace**

The recent interest in spirituality in the workplace has become “the latest in corporate trends” (Posner, 1999, p. 72). The workplace is coming to be recognised as one aspect of a meaningful ‘whole’ for the people involved, where spirituality in this context is often understood as “the quest for meaning”. Conlan (2000) states -

> Spirituality has been explored in a range of disciplines. No longer the sole preserve of religious systems and theology, the contemporary business and industrial world has realised the significance of spirituality for a meaningful engagement in occupation among its leaders and workers. (Conlan, 2000, p. 63)

Having a meaning for one’s work is seen as central to spirituality (Cacioppe, 1999, p. 30), as employees are asking the spiritual questions such as ‘What do I want to do with my life?’, ‘Why do I go to work? and ‘What is important to me?’ (Neal, 1997, quoted in Cacioppe, 1999).
Occupation is often linked to wellness (Johnson, 1986; Wilcock et al. 1998), although ‘life-work’ as a source of meaning for adults has appeared last in studies of almost twenty years ago (De Vogler & Ebersole, 1981; McCarthy, 1883). The ‘workplace’ as a source of meaning is contrasted with the most frequent source of ‘relationships with people’ (O’Connor & Chamberlain, 1996), and this has remained consistent over quite a number of studies (De Vogler-Ebersole & Ebersole, 1985).

These categories for sources of meaning may have a gender bias. Women have been identified as having more relational sources, and men as having more public and private sources (Hardcastle, 1985, p. 62). Supporting this view, Baum & Stewart (1990, p. 8) report on categories of meaningful life events, and report that “the most commonly mentioned categories for men were Work (72%), [and] Love and Marriage (61%) ...while for women the Births of Children (78%), Love and Marriage (77%) and Work (72%) were the most frequently mentioned categories”. Whilst debate could address the significance of such empirical findings, it is identified here that Work is a significant source of meaning for both men and women. This is possibly because self-esteem is so often reflected in an individual’s work performance, and “self-esteem correlates highly with experienced meaning in life” (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 1996). Sources of meaning change over the period of a person’s life (Zika & Chamberlain, 1992) and so work may, at particular times of a person’s life, actually offer more meaning for certain individuals than has been indicated in some of these studies. At least it has been identified as a source of some meaning for many people.
Spirituality has become a recent phenomenon in the workplace due to recent downsizing and because, as the baby boomers enter their 50s, they ask difficult questions concerning life (Posner, 1999). It has been argued that the question of spirituality will have to be addressed eventually by a society that is experiencing abundance through an ethic of wealth creation (Weigel, 1990, p. 101). This is because the attention of many people is no longer being absorbed by the pressing need to eke out a ‘survival’, and therefore has the opportunity to question matters of importance. This contextual condition for addressing this dimension is described by Handy who states -

I am angered by the waste of so many people’s lives, dragged down by poverty in the midst of riches. I am concerned by the absence of a more transcendent view of life and the purposes of life, and by the prevalence of the economic myth which colours all that we do. Money is the means of life and not the point of it. There must be something that we can do to restore the balance. (Handy, 1997, p. 3)

He argues that what is needed is a philosophy for business organisations and institutions which is able to address what they are about. He argues that employees should not be considered only to be human capital, but also a community of people with the need to have a meaning and purpose by which to live and work. He advises that business corporations have responsibilities to both their individual employees and also the community at large, arguing that “Corporations not only have citizens, they are citizens” (Handy, 1997, p. 166).

While it is argued by Henricks and Ludeman (1996) that successful corporate leaders should also be “spiritual leaders”, spirituality is not easily embraced by workplace management in general. It is however being made
explicit as an example in Curtin University’s new Masters Degree of Leadership and Management, which emphasises the “social, spiritual and environmental well-being of the nation” and not just the well-being of the economy (Cacioppe & Lambert, 1999, p. 20). The need to include a much more holistic approach is recognised as essential if organisations are to be successful, because “individual well-being and organizational performance are inextricably linked” (Bloch, 1999, p. 15). Recognising spirituality in the workplace is a very recent development, so there has not been a great deal reported on it. However, what has been argued here is that spirituality is important for people in the workplace because work is not an isolated and independent fragment of life, but is one aspect of the whole or ‘greater’ self, which is to be meaningfully united with the other dimensions.

**Conclusion: Spirituality as Meaning of Life**

Attempting to draw together a particular conceptualisation of spirituality that remains representative of these differing fields reviewed is a complex task, due to the variety of views researched. Such an undertaking will of course not completely satisfy any of the particular views that have been covered. However, to do so is necessary in order to provide some criteria that can be used to better conceptualise, understand and argue what spirituality can mean for education.

Etymological investigations have provided some notions of the nature of spirit from which spirituality is derived. It is noted that, just as spirit itself is ethereal and difficult to grasp, so too it is difficult to define clearly the meaning of spirituality. Attempting a definition is fraught with complexities,
because language itself is not objective and literal, and therefore is unable to provide any accurate ‘reference’ for understanding spirituality (Priestley, 2000). Rather than attempt to provide a strict definition, it is recommended that “the pursuit of meaning should be viewed as essentially a search for conceptually relevant or significant distinctions and differences in the labyrinth of usage regarding” the term (D. Carr, 1995, p. 86). This chapter has endeavoured to provide such a search by identifying some of these distinctions and differences.

Most of the literature reviewed argues that spirituality is not synonymous with religion, but is something much broader that can incorporate religion. Therefore, the dimension does not lend itself to identification as a ‘body of knowledge’, although the issue of a ‘realm of spiritual truths’ appears to be one claim, and would come under the cosmological category as described by Yalom. Spirituality mostly appears to be procedural, focusing on the manner in which information and experiences are engaged. It is Yalom’s terrestrial category that would appear to have greater presence throughout the different fields studied, as it deals with the individual quest to make meanings and purposes by which to motivate one’s life. Consequently its methods (if it can actually be referred to as having any ‘methods’ as such) draw upon feelings and intuition as well as cognitive activities. Spirituality is not irrational in the sense of working against rationality but, like faith, it includes a non-rational aspect.

It would appear that spirituality cannot be contained solely within the individual, but is transcendent in nature. It involves the individual becoming
a ‘greater Self’ by ‘reaching out’ to sources such as deities, religions, world-view ideologies, nature, a greater consciousness, occupations and other people. The self is not an isolated particle or atom, but is *in* the world that already contains these various other elements. Transcendence is accomplished in such a way that the individual finds significant meaning by relating to such sources in a meaningful and purposeful way. These significant meanings, which are both sensed and made, are an essential component of holistic wellness.

One characteristic associated with spirituality appears to be the searching that an individual or community has for meaning and purpose of life. Such meanings and purposes are categorised by Yalom (1980) as being either *cosmological* or *terrestrial*, with the former represented by world-views and religions, and the latter through holistic models of psychological wellness. It is this terrestrial characteristic of spirituality that seems to pervade the majority of understandings that were researched, particularly through psychology and the workplace. However, the religious and New Age areas indicate that the terrestrial view is inseparable from the cosmological realm.

Conceptualising spirituality in such a way acknowledges that this ‘reaching out’ and ‘searching for meaning’ is of apparent growing concern within present societies. The increasing interest in spirituality, in the sense of a search for meaning, appears characteristic of a consequent growing awareness that human life may be potentially inherently meaningless, as revealed through the loss of traditional mythical metanarratives. Advancing standards of living are increasing quantitative aspects of life such as material
wealth and longevity, but the quality of life does not follow in parallel and often the material abundance can be seen to be “just a waste of time” (Adams, 2000, p. 24). This has been perceived to produce a state of national pessimism in Australia for which spirituality is seen as a key to addressing the situation (Buttrose, 2000, p. 83). This state may be a product of Western thought that has largely viewed the Earth and its resources as separate objects to be manipulated and exploited by humankind. Such a way of viewing the world can be seen as “destroying the spiritual dimension of our own lives” (O’Sullivan, 1999, p. 162). The rationality of Western culture has all too often been leaving the agent out of the picture in major economic and scientific theories. However, free agency is a “part of our nature to find coherent meaning because we are meaning” (Bohm, as quoted by Pylkkänen, 1989, p. 13). The meaning of life for individual human agents appears to be neglected in the pursuit of system theories, which ‘dehumanize’ and ‘engulf’ individuality through global efficiency programs for mainly economic expansion.

It is argued here that spirituality is becoming of increasing concern for those who are experiencing an anguish that appears to alienate the agent from having purposeful meanings by which to live and commit him or herself. In a society where these meanings are not readily provided, a crisis seems to be produced in which individuals must actively search for meanings by which equilibrium can be restored to their lives. Holistic wellness, or well-being, is seen to depend to a large extent on this unity and stability being attained, and therefore spirituality as conceptualised here, is argued to be an essential dimension if flourishing of human life is to be attained. As
education implies aiming towards the flourishing of humankind, it is argued here that spiritual development should be a major element of concern for the educational enterprise.

The framework to be developed in this thesis is based upon this conceptualisation of spirituality and adopts an existential perspective. Accordingly, the next chapter provides a general overview of existential philosophy. This examination is argued to be necessary before continuing with the development of the framework because the concept of ‘Existentialism’ is understood in various ways, some of which are contradictory and unhelpful to the notion being proposed in this thesis. Grounding an understanding of this philosophy in the works of the Existentialist philosophers themselves provides a basis from which a more rigorous perspective can be conceived, in order then to formulate a particular existential framework of spirituality for education.

Spirituality has suffered from ‘anti-intellectual’ implications as a result of its associations with some dubious religions and New Age movements. Spirituality for mainstream education as conceptualised here, is argued to be a dimension that gives meaning and purpose to life, providing intention and an ethos in the way that one lives one’s life. It affects the manner in which students engage with the entire curriculum - the whole educational experience as offered by schools. Being regarded by many as an important aspect of education, it is, however, a dimension that is largely neglected in educational provision.
Chapter Three

An Existential Perspective

The particular perspective being argued for in this thesis is described as being existential. In the previous chapters it was noted that some sources referred to characteristics of the spiritual dimension that are existential. Few however, offer a clear elucidation as to what is meant by the term *existential*. It is evidently based upon Existentialism, but because this is often misunderstood it is necessary to examine the philosophy itself.

Existential philosophy has never been recognised as having had great influence upon the ideologies, curricula, policies or pedagogies of educational practices for English-speaking people. It has been said to have some ‘implications’ (V. Morris, 1969b, pp. 359-60); however, specific and practical applications have been somewhat thin-on-the-ground. It has consequently remained in the background of theoretical discussions, and is potentially problematic since the individual subject has come to be seen as ‘de-centred’.

There have been some scholars within education who have engaged with Existentialism. Some of these have argued that the purpose of existential philosophy is to encourage the individual to become ‘fully human’, and not to succumb to the spiritual poverty (Barrett, 1990, p. 45) and dehumanizing forces of society which tend to reduce people to things (Kneller, 1971, p. 72). The philosophy is described by V. Morris (1969a, p. 283) as “a theory of
individual meaning” where the individual is asked “to ponder the reason for his existing”, and is challenged to do so through via a result of alienation. In education, the philosophy is understood to offer a revolt against highly technical approaches to the curriculum which lose the individual (Niblett, 1954, p. 107), and to offer a spiritual medicine (V. Morris, 1990, p. 2) by promoting a sense of awareness of one’s human dignity (Vandenberg, 1987, p. 5). In short, an existential perspective provides “an alternative paradigm for schooling that places the developmental needs of students as persons ahead of the materialistic concerns of a consumer nation” (Yob, 1995, p. 104).

While such as the references cited offers a potential source for developing an existential perspective of spirituality, they nevertheless remain only as a set of secondary sources for the philosophy itself. It is necessary to research works of the existentialist philosophers themselves, as these provide a more rigorous basis for any existential framework of spirituality. It was not within the scope of this research to investigate all the major contributors to this school of philosophy. Focus has been given to what is argued here to be the work of three of the most important philosophers to have conceived and developed Existentialism - Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger, and some attention is given to Jean-Paul Sartre. It is not possible to research all of the works of these philosophers, so just their major works regarded as most relevant for spirituality are included.
It is the aim of this chapter to clarify and explain a useful perspective of Existentialism, which may be employed to form a framework for understanding spirituality. The first section aims to provide a general overview of this philosophy, with emphasis placed on particular aspects that have relevance for spirituality. The sources used draw mainly upon the work of the above-mentioned philosophers, even although it is acknowledged that their works sometimes differ from one another over certain aspects, and the individual philosophers themselves even adjusted their own views over the period of time in which they wrote. The analysis then focuses on elucidating an existential perspective that can provide a framework for spiritual development for non-religious as well as religious students. This perspective not only offers a clarification as to the meaning of spiritual development, but also considers how this development may be effectively facilitated within educational settings.

It is argued here that the primary characteristics of spirituality include a search for meaning and purpose in life and for personal identity in the light of challenging experiences. This conceptualisation allows for consideration to be given to the question of how spiritual development may be encouraged in education using an existential perspective. The chapter also examines the concept of the existential crisis and the methods of existentialism, which address other concepts such as subjectivity, authenticity, Angst, freedom of choice and phenomenology.
3.1 Existentialism

Existentialism became popular in Europe after the Second World War by catching the imagination of many, especially the students who participated in the 1968 revolt. Existentialism, however, should not simply be reduced to the level of a fad (Cooper, 1999, p. 13; Macquarrie, 1972a, p. 13). It is argued by Barrett (1990, p. 18) to be “a major movement of human thought that lies directly in the main stream of modern history”. There is a need to clarify what this philosophy is in order to distinguish it from some common assumptions which misrepresent it as something else.

Existentialism is not always recognised as being a singular philosophy, due to differing accounts being given by the different theorists who are associated with it. Amongst the best known are Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre. Other important contributors include Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, Paul Tillich, Martin Buber, Miguel de Unamuno and writers of literature such as Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Leo Tolstoy, Franz Kafka and Joseph Conrad. The term ‘Existentialism’ itself has been used to refer to common themes found amongst these and other thinkers, but it does not contain any of these individuals. Due to the differing contributions, no one definition could provide a doctrine to which all of these thinkers would adhere. It has even been argued that an attempt to define Existentialism would actually work against the very purpose of these philosophies (Oaklander, 1992, p. ix). However, it is claimed that Existentialism is able to stand as an integrated system of philosophy in its own right (Cooper, 1999).
‘Existentialism’ is not a term to be found often in the works of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Heidegger. It appears to have been introduced by Gabriel Marcel not long after the Second World War and has suffered from various interpretations and misinterpretations to such a degree that Sartre (1948, pp. 25-26) wrote that “the word [existentialism] is now so loosely applied to so many things that it no longer means anything at all”. As a term, it is derived from the word existence, implying that the individual has presence-in-the-world. Heidegger included the hyphen in his term Ek-sistenz to accentuate the Greek and Latin origins which mean ‘to stand out from’, and applied it to mean that the individual stands out from, or beyond, his or her present. He described this as ‘possibilities’ or ‘ways to be’, and explained it as, “The analysis of the characteristics of the being of Da-sein is an existential one. This means that the characteristics are not properties of something objectively present, but essentially existential ways to be” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 126). Heidegger drew upon the etymological roots of Existentialism to indicate that the individual has possibilities of being, beyond his or her given present conditions. He (Heidegger, 1996, p. 301) even stated that the primary meaning of existentiality “is the future”.

Heidegger used the term existential to refer to the structure of the individual in general. He designated his term existentiell to mean self-understanding, how an individual understands himself or herself. But this self-understanding is only possible through existence itself, as Heidegger often emphasised the practicality of his lived philosophy. He argued that “We come to terms with the question of existence always only through
existence itself. We shall call *this* kind of understanding of itself *existentiell* understanding” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 10).

**Subjectivity**

The first concept of Existentialism to be examined here is individual ‘subjectivity’. The focus upon the role of the individual creating and choosing meaning is a central theme for the existentialists, so much so that Kierkegaard (1992, vol 1, p. 203) declared, “subjectivity is truth”. By ‘subjectivity’ Kierkegaard did not mean arbitrariness but rather *inwardness* where an individual is able to penetrate into her or his personality in an effort to determine the source of her or his values and actions. His method was not so much an attempt to deny objective truths, because objectivity is not a concern for his perspective. He claimed that the objective *what* of knowledge could only ever be an approximation anyhow, and asserted that the emphasis should be on the *how*. He stated “*Objectively the emphasis is on what is said; subjectively the emphasis is on how it is said*”, and argued that “An objective uncertainty, held fast through appropriation with the most passionate inwardness, is the truth, the highest truth there is for an existing person” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, pp. 202-203). As summarized by Wahl (1969, p. 20), “this doctrine is related to what Kierkegaard calls the doctrine of how. The crucial thing is not what I believe in - not in the object of my belief - but the way in which I believe that object”. Existential inwardness is not inward looking, but is rather founded upon its *relations* as it exists in-the-world.
As no criteria are available to verify claims to ‘objective truth’, the existential focus is upon the notion of ‘subjective truth’ - that is how one relates to what one believes, or the horizon of one’s understanding. All truth, in this sense, is related to the being of the individual, but because being is described as ‘subjective’, Heidegger (1996, p. 208) went to great lengths to explain that this is not to be understood as arbitrariness of the individual. Rather than consider ‘truth’ from the traditional epistemological perspective as the correspondence between statement and ‘fact’, truth here is understood in terms of the Greek *aletheia*. This term refers to the uncovering of hidden things, thereby “taking them out of their concealment” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 202). One’s subjectivity can be “in” truth (Heidegger, 1988, p. 18) in this regard through how she or he relates. Heidegger (1988, p. 217) argued that truth and being true both have the individual’s mode of being. Belonging to the truth of being is referred to as authenticity. Therefore an authentic understanding of one’s own subjectivity is in truth, by how a meaning, a phenomenon, is understood in relation to oneself by the how through which one relates. To construe one’s subjectivity as being solely composed of conceptual propositions makes it as ‘abstract’ and uncertain as abstract objectivity itself, and fails to grasp the inwardness and certitude of will that “are indeed subjectivity” (Kierkegaard, 1980, p. 141).

Kierkegaard often wrote through pseudonyms and requested that they, rather than himself, be referred to in any referencing. His pseudonym Climacus discussed the importance of subjective truth when compared with objective truth. He stated that -
When the question about truth is asked objectively, truth is reflected upon objectively as an object to which the knower relates himself. What is reflected upon is not the relation but that what he relates himself to is the truth, the true. If only that to which he relates himself is the truth, the true, then the subject is in the truth, When the question about truth is asked subjectively, the individual's relation is reflected upon subjectively. If only the how of this relation is in truth, the individual is in truth, even if he in this way were to relate himself to untruth. [emphasis removed] (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 199)

Climacus followed this statement using God as an example, and explained that the issue was not God - the object himself - but the God-relation from the perspective of the one who has faith. The implication of this view is that spiritual development is not so much a pursuit to investigate and verify the existence of things (such as beings, deities, even ideas and beliefs) in an objective manner, but rather an investigation of how one relates to these.

One of the key questions for Existentialism is ‘Who am I?’. If it is asked objectively, it could be construed to ask more appropriately ‘What am I?’ as in ‘What is my being?’. However, Heidegger concluded that, objectively speaking, being cannot be defined ontologically any more accurately than with the statement that ‘being is being’, or just ‘being is’. Rather than the what, however, people are much more interested in the who, as in ‘Who am I?’ and ‘What is the meaning of my very being?’. This is characteristic of how Heidegger defined the individual, through his notion of Dasein.

Dasein

Heidegger endeavoured to identify the subjective perspective of the individual through the use of his term Dasein (translated “there being”) as man relates to being. He argued -
But man’s distinctive feature lies in this, that he, as the being who thinks, is open to Being, face to face with Being; thus man remains referred to Being and so answers to it. Man is essentially this relationship of responding to Being, and he is only this. (Heidegger, 1969, p. 31)

Heidegger’s writings never seem to go beyond this idea that man’s essence is this relationship, or the thinking about this relationship. His works refer to the whole man and often demonstrate his aversion to approaches used to reduce humankind to an animal rationale. He replaced Kierkegaard’s term ‘spirit’ with his ‘existence’ in order to avoid any connotation of a substance, although Kierkegaard did not use the term to refer to any ‘essence’ as such. The being of being cannot be examined objectively. The individual can only attempt to examine the meaning of her or his own being.

The term Dasein also permitted Heidegger to evade terms such as subjectivity, consciousness, spirit and soul with their associated awkward meanings. The coherence of the structures of Da-sein is called existentiality, and its analysis is the first concern of Heidegger’s question of being. Time is the horizon upon which all understanding and interpretation of being takes place. Time is not linear but past and present are together and the future is projected out of possibility. This led Heidegger (1996, p. 22) to state that “Beings are grasped in their being as ‘presence’; that is to say, they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time, the present”. ‘Being’ then, is not a substance, a what, but is a presence in-the-world whose relations with other entities can be studied. The relations associated with one’s presence are similar to Kierkegaard’s doctrine of how.
In addition to this characteristic of temporality, Dasein is also being-in-the-world (the hyphens indicate that Dasein cannot be separated from the world and is therefore not atomistic). The self and the world are unified in the entity of Dasein. Therefore Dasein cannot be a detached observer but is related to all other entities, mainly through the meanings that they have for Dasein. As entities in the world include other people, the world for Dasein is largely a social one as it is also a being-with-others, which has important implications for ethical theory. Heidegger (1996, pp. 64, 81) argued that these other entities in the world do not reveal themselves by themselves, but Dasein firstly provides the context by which they are to be discovered. Consequently a reference to Dasein’s being needs to be made before a discovery is made, and therefore a self-referencing circle becomes evident and will be discussed later as constituting the hermeneutical circle.

This interpreting ability allows Dasein to understand and to have a ‘world’. As an entity, it is quite different from the inanimate objects that are present, which are there by ‘fact’ and have no ‘world’. Heidegger referred to these objects as having factuality, which he contrasted with Dasein which has facticity. He argued that “the concept of facticity implies that an ‘innerworldly’ being has being-in-the-world in such a way that it can understand itself as bound up in its ‘destiny’ with the being of those beings which it encounters within its own world” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 52). Dasein is not however, totally independent from these inanimate entities, but finds itself ‘thrown’ into their presence, which for example, include such things as culture, language and whether one is male or female. Therefore one’s
facticity or ‘thrownness’ has great influence upon how an individual makes sense of himself or herself, and the world in which he or she has presence.

Against this background of facticity, where Dasein is understood as being-in-the-world, there is a choice that can be exercised to determine what interpretation is to be made of one’s past and present, and to understand - or to make a stand - in the establishment of that interpretation and the projection of a possibility of one’s future. For spirituality, these relationships also include how one relates to one’s own past experiences. These experiences do not necessarily offer a meaning in some objective manner, but are always open to be given new meanings as their implications are extended into future possibilities. Taking a stand on the essence (in the sense of facticity, not factuality) of one’s being, in response to the question ‘who am I?’, allows one to become authentic. However, if the interpretation is made according to the assumed public understanding of simply doing ‘what one does’ or is expected to do, then one chooses in an inauthentic way.

Sartre too contrasted the fixed and inert in-itself (en-soi) - the what of being - with the free consciousness of for-itself (pour-soi), the latter being somewhat similar to Heidegger’s (1988, p. 170) view that Dasein exists “for the sake of its own self”. The use of Sartre’s expression pour-soi highlights the freedom of the individual to question and creatively give meaning (choice of possibilities) for his or her very being. Thus Sartre’s (1969, pp. 78, 102) idea of ‘nothingness’ is simply the empty distance between one’s presence (ontology) to oneself and one’s being of consciousness. This consciousness
allows the world to have unity and meaning for the individual. Therefore such an existential perspective of spirituality encourages the *individual* to employ personal freedom to give meanings to her or his past and future - all of which remain open to change.

**Authenticity**

According to the existentialists, being *authentic* allows one to determine how things are to count towards one’s situation and how one is to act in relation to them. This term ‘authentic’ is derived from the Greek *autos*, referring to ‘one who does a thing for himself’. Derived from this is the German *eigen* meaning to ‘own’, and by implication, ‘to have, possess’. Heidegger (1996, p. 40) combined this with *eigentlich*, meaning ‘real(ly), actual(ly)’, to describe the authentic Dasein as being ‘my own’. The degree of voluntariness associated with this mode of being is not always entirely clear.

Generally the existentialists consider authentic individuals to take responsibility for determining and choosing possibilities and not to simply become a determined product of a cultural moment. Heidegger stated that the ‘*existentia*’ have priority over the ‘*essentia*’, and this view has been made popular through the works of Sartre, although it appears that Heidegger did not always agree with Sartre’s interpretations. Heidegger argued that -

..the existent Dasein can *choose itself on purpose* and determine its existence primarily and chiefly starting from that choice; that is, it can exist authentically. However, it can also let itself be determined in its being by others and thus exist *inauthentically* by existing primarily in forgetfulness of its own self. (Heidegger, 1988, p. 170)
The concepts of *authenticity* and *inauthenticity* are built upon the works of Kierkegaard (1987, vol.2, p. 259) that state when becoming authentic, “the individual has known himself and has chosen himself”. This is necessary to prevent one simply ‘losing’ oneself, which is so much easier to let happen than to becoming authentic. Kierkegaard warned -

The biggest danger, that of losing oneself, can pass off in the world as quietly as if it were nothing; every other loss, an arm, a leg, a wife, etc. is bound to be noticed... such a person [who sees himself surrounded by the multitude] forgets himself, in a divine sense forgets his name, dares not believe in himself, finds being himself too risky, finds it much easier and safer to be like the others, to become a copy, a number, along with the crowd. (Kierkegaard, 1989, pp. 62-64)

Kierkegaard’s writings call the individual back out of the crowd to live an authentic existence. By living authentically, one can choose one’s own identity and possibilities rather than have these dictated by the crowd. For Kierkegaard, this was where one’s meaning of life is to be found.

Like the ‘crowd’ for Kierkegaard, Heidegger referred to the ‘others’ and the ‘they’ as the cultural mass to which no particular individual can be identified. If Da-sein is subservient to these others, dependent upon them for its identity, it could then only have an identity that could be defined in terms of difference from them. That is, Dasein’s identity needs to be referenced to the appearance of the *they*. This potential superficiality can be recognised in many contemporary youth cultures that emphasise being different, rather than making a particular stance for which one becomes responsible. Heidegger argued that this form of identity formation could be an *inauthentic* existence for Dasein because it is an average everydayness in which the decisions of the *they* take “the responsibility of Dasein away from it” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 119). Authentic existence is “an ‘ecstatic’ relation of
the essence of man to the truth of Being” (Heidegger, 1993, p. 236), requiring Dasein to distinguish itself in an independently valuable way. This is achieved by establishing a personal stance for the possibility of one’s future and accepting responsibility for it. Such a theme can be identified within Nietzsche’s work, especially through such statements as Heidegger’s “Thus the existential analytic constantly has the character of doing violence, whether for the claims of the everyday interpretation or for its complacency and its tranquillized obviousness” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 288). Even Heidegger’s choice of expression ‘doing violence’ is quite Nietzschean in character.

To summarise, individuals cannot understand their own being ontologically, because this requires knowing objectively what is. This is described as being in-itself, which Kierkegaard claimed one can only know in part and Heidegger added that it is indefinable anyway. At best Sartre described this knowledge as nausea and boredom. However, individuals described as beings for-itself, are able to engage with the questions ‘Who am I?’, and ‘What is the meaning of my being’. This consciousness apprehends itself as a freedom to choose a way of being from among certain possibilities. These possibilities however, are not limitless imaginations but are situationally contingent, and the exercising of personal freedom leads to an increasingly authentic existence.

3.2 An Existential Crisis

The nature of an existential crisis, which enables the existential perspective to be recognised, is one in which the very existence and meaning of one’s
being comes to be questioned and challenged. An existential crisis thereby brings to one’s attention how existence is to be valued, and what one’s personal existence means for one’s self. Existential crises do not always need to be near-death experiences; they may only involve a reflection on the questions which refer to the ‘heart and root of existence’. These crises with their associated questioning produce an Angst which throws the individual back onto his or her own subjectivity, away from the security of the public understandings of ‘what one does’ in order simply to be a part of the crowd. During these occasions the meanings of beliefs and rules of the society that have been accepted as ‘givens’ are brought into doubt.

**Angst**

An existential crisis that produces the moment of decision is characterised by a condition of Angst (sometimes described also as anxiety, anguish, dread or doubt). This is experienced as consciousness of oneself as alien to a world that has received its meaning from the crowd and not from oneself. The term ‘consciousness’ itself is based upon ‘doubt’, where in Danish (as in the English to a degree) the word doubt is etymologically related to **doubleness**. This reflects the uncertainty of the tension between actuality and possibility. This phenomenon of anguish - as an important characteristic of the existential crisis - is regarded as a rarity and can be described as “the manifestation of freedom in the face of self” (Sartre, 1969, p. 35).

Experiencing Angst individuates, hence ‘death’ as an issue readily lends itself to this crisis because only oneself can die one’s own death.
Deciding upon meanings and purposes for oneself cannot be readily supported or affirmed to be correct from external sources. No decision or interpretation can be made with a guarantee that it is the ‘right’ one, and therefore all decisions contain an element of risk. Consequently a leap is recommended to demonstrate the necessary commitment to work through uncertainty rather than to shy away from it. The leap is able to posit “the real ‘self’” (Kierkegaard, 1980, p. 79) and is described as “the category of decision” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, pp. 99, 102) and can only be done by the individual alone. It is, however, usually prompted by reflection upon the existential Angst that accompanies existential crises.

Existentialists acknowledge that one can fear the personal freedom of making choices, and many regard the responsibility of personal decision-making to be threatening, thereby encouraging the individual simply to be a part of the crowd and be told what duties to follow, passively accepting what one is expected to do. Kierkegaard’s pseudonym Haufniensis described this fear of personal freedom as a type of dizziness. Because the exercise of it is full of risk, there is no safe way through it. He stated that -

One may liken dread to dizziness. He whose eye chances to look down into the yawning abyss becomes dizzy... Thus dread is the dizziness of freedom which occurs when the spirit would posit the synthesis, and freedom then gazes down into its own possibility, grasping at finiteness to sustain itself. (Kierkegaard, 1957, p. 55)

Sartre likewise referred to this liberty as ‘terror’, labelling individuals to be in bad faith if they chose to surrender this freedom of being for-itself. This freedom to choose oneself is expressed by anguish and responsibility, because it “is the escape from an engagement in being; it is the nihilation of a being which it is”. Therefore, “To choose ourselves is to nihilate ourselves;
that is, to cause a future to come to make known to us what we are by conferring a meaning on our past" (Sartre, 1969, pp. 464, 465, 486). The fear of freedom, this Angst, is really a fear of nothing. Hence it is understood as either dread, anguish or anxiety because it refers to nothing specifically whereas fear is understood to refer to an existing something. Haufniensis stated, “If then we ask further what is the object of dread, the answer as usual must be that it is nothing. Dread and nothing regularly correspond to one another” (Kierkegaard, 1957, p. 86). Heidegger (1996, pp. 174-175) reaffirmed the point that “the fact that what is threatening is nowhere characterizes what Angst is about”, and noted that “What Angst is anxious for is being-in-the-world”, and yet this is considered to be a necessary condition in order to produce an authentic existence.

When Heidegger’s Dasein is confronted with the structure of its existence, it experiences Angst - or anxiety. This experience individuates, it acknowledges the thrownness by which one is in the world with its entities, including language and culture. An Angst is “nothing and nowhere” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 175). In Angst, Dasein is anxious for itself. Heidegger argued -

What Angst is anxious for is being-in-the-world itself... It throws Dasein back upon that for which it is anxious, its authentic potentiality-for-being-in-the-world. Angst individuates Dasein to its ownmost being-in-the-world... Angst reveals in Dasein its being toward its ownmost potentiality of being, that is, being free for the freedom of choosing and grasping itself. Angst brings Dasein before its being free for.... (Heidegger, 1996, pp. 175-6)

This individualizing experience lays before Dasein the choice of authenticity or inauthenticity as possibilities of its being.
In summary, the existential crisis produces an anxiety, or in Heidegger’s term, an Angst that “fetches Da-sein back out of its entangled absorption in the ‘world.’” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 176). The experience individuates, one feels alienated, and through one’s freedom a personal meaning and a possibility for oneself can be projected. The experience of Angst discloses to Da-sein its own possibilities, for which one has the freedom to choose and to grasp. An Angst is necessary in order to turn to one’s subjectivity. Rather than simply accepting the values provided by external sources as ‘givens’, one is encouraged through the crisis to exercise one’s ability to make a choice and decide what meaning to assign not only to experiences, but to one’s very being. It is through an existential crisis then that the meaning of one’s existence can be examined at a deeper and more profound level, since one experiences Angst as one confronts one’s freedom to decide the meaning of one’s life and who one is in spite of the views of others, and then invests one’s whole being into the project. This freedom of choice even extends to the establishment of values, as Sartre (1969, p. 38) claimed, “My freedom is anguished at being the foundation of values while itself without foundation”.

**Values**

Existential crises generally force the individual to face important and difficult decisions, in which there is no way to know conclusively what the ‘right’ ones should be. The individual must decide for himself or herself what is right/wrong, good/bad, what beliefs are to be accepted/rejected and what actions to do or not to do. These decisions must be made without the guarantee that any of them are the best ones to make, even although
recommendations may be offered. The individual then is forced to make choices out of her or his own subjectivity, from how she or he has come to value the relations she or he has as a result of being-in-the-world. One is forced to consider going *beyond good and evil*, as Nietzsche (1989) used in the title of one of his books, to consider how one understands the criteria that would make something one or the other. Nietzsche (1989, p. 55) called this a “dangerous formula” because it allowed the individual to *create* her or his own values regardless of what the commonly accepted ones were. In short, one could apply one’s own meanings to the terms *good* and *evil*.

Nietzsche’s works were aimed to address the apparent nihilism of his age, a time of meaninglessness, which is understood to be postmodern in the sense that no one world-view, with its systematised values, can be legitimized. Nietzsche claimed that there are no such things as absolute values that can be appealed to once ‘Truth’ (in the absolute sense) is understood to be no longer attainable. Consequently Nietzsche argued that, in order to recognise meanings in a nihilistic context, the individual must re-evaluate all values. One must become a creator of one’s own values by which one is then to be held accountable. One must determine for oneself what is of value, what is good and what is true.

Nietzsche (1998, p. 85) argued that there is no ‘Truth’ (absolutely) but only interpretations, and asserted that there is “only a perspectiveal seeing”. He asked -

> What then is truth? A moveable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and
which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins. (Nietzsche, 1979, p. 84)

His writings go further than simply to address particular truths that were once held in high esteem, to explore deeper levels by asking why one chooses to value truth at all? This is identified to be difficult, because, as Nietzsche (1998, p. 110) observed, “truth was simply not permitted to be a problem” and that now it “is in need of a critique”.

When Nietzsche’s character Zarathustra states, “Nothing is true, all is permitted” (Nietzsche, 1954, p. 274), he claims that out of freedom this statement renounces belief in truth itself. By implication it can be inferred that immoral acts are permitted by this condoning statement because the truths and goods that would lead one away from such behaviour are now gone. However, this line of argument would be an unfair criticism. His ‘immoralism’ often refers to a self-overcoming and is not to be taken as licence to renounce all morality. Instead it allows one to critique for oneself a re-evaluation of all values, an examination of one’s own (rather than the) morality - in short, to develop individual responsibility. So although Nietzsche attacked the values of the day by turning ‘morality up on its head’, he did not actively promote immorality as is commonly understood, but rather he argued that individuals should be actively engaged in the values around them. He was after all a moral philosopher.

An existential perspective of spirituality depends upon a crisis to encourage one to confront one’s own existence, who one is and what the
meaning of one’s life is to be. The crisis causes one to doubt commonly accepted meanings and values and face the possibility of exercising one’s own freedom into taking the risk to establish for oneself a personal identity and a meaning for one’s being. This dilemma causes Angst, as it also implies that the individual can question the values of society that she or he has simply accepted as givens. Now one is able to take a stand on how one’s identity is to be constructed, what the meaning of one’s life is to be, and even what one believes is to be the meaning of good and evil. In short, the individual has choice.

**Individual Freedom of Choice**

In order to work through the anxiety that can be produced via the existential crisis, the individual needs to exercise freedom of choice and make decisions in order to become authentic. However, many people are considered by the existentialists to be too fearful to exercise their personal freedom. One of Kierkegaard’s main purposes in his works was to encourage the individual courageously to choose his or her own subjective truth. Kierkegaard focussed upon “the most basic choice faced by human beings ..whether to acknowledge their freedom or attempt to evade it” (D. West, 1996 p. 122).

One of the tensions here is between the possible (freedom) and necessity. Kierkegaard did not offer freedom to the individual as an ‘arbitrary selection from a cafeteria of alternatives’. He only offered the choice of oneself. Considering the above-mentioned tension, if one pursued only the seemingly endless array of possibilities in all of their fantastic illusions, then a return to
the self, the necessary, can be difficult. The self can be lost. It can also be
lost if alternatively the individual sees herself or himself as being determined.
Heidegger (1996, p. 265) argued that the authentic individual chooses
herself or himself when she or he “listens to its ownmost possibility of
existence”, and Kierkegaard (1989, p. 70) argued that “To lack possibility
means either that everything has become necessary or that everything has
become trivial”.

In addition to being spirit, Kierkegaard’s other pseudonym Anti-Climacus
also described the self as ‘freedom’. He did not mean, as was mentioned
before, a freedom to be or do anything. Rather, true freedom is
contextualized to being one’s true self in a meaningful sense. In spite of the
variety of social roles, freedom - also understood as possibility - is what one
should be passionate for, as it is necessary for becoming an authentic
person. This freedom of possibility is described as having a “multiplicity of
shadows...The personality is not yet discovered, its energy announces itself
only in the passion of possibility” (Kierkegaard, 1964, p. 58). Kierkegaard’s
works often advise the reader to choose himself or herself, thereby
encouraging an awareness of his or her possibilities. The exhortation “to
choose oneself” is more appropriate for Kierkegaard compared with the
more ancient (Socratic) proclamation “to know oneself”, because he argued
that this latter quest cannot be the beginning as well as the end, and the
individual cannot be defined by this as a necessity (Kierkegaard, 1987, vol.2,
p. 258).
The freedom to choose the meaning of one’s being is also demonstrated in Sartre’s (1969, p. 85) statement that, “My possibility can exist as *my* possibility only if it is my consciousness which escapes itself toward my possibility”. This indicates that one can project oneself to a possibility that is beyond one’s existence at the present moment, to a future way of being. Sartre defended his concept of freedom from the criticism that it was just an arbitrary and endless array of possibilities, by making the statement -

This does not mean that I am free to get up or to sit down, to enter or to go out, to flee or to face danger - if one means by freedom here a pure capricious, unlawful, gratuitous, and incomprehensible contingency. ...this does not mean that my act can be anything *whatsoever* or even that it is *unforeseeable*. (Sartre, 1969, p. 453)

He clarified this (further) by arguing that freedom is really the same thing as choice, and he demonstrated this frequently through his literary works. For example, his character Mathieu, the ineffective intellectual hero in *Iron in the soul*, had been informed that freedom was simply being able to do the opposite of what one instinctively wants. He then seemed to have accepted and internalised this as he chose to shoot at German soldiers in an act that caused him to die for *no reason*, as opposed to seeking the more sensible option reasoned by his friends to seek self-preservation. Mathieu asked “have I any right to die for nothing? ...no one can make up my mind for me... I have lived for the sole purpose of dying” (Sartre, 1985, p. 203). While this depicts a rather extreme example, it serves to illustrate how Sartre’s works aim to ‘jolt’ the individual to consider exercising choice in the face of accepted norms that tend to resist such attempts.

In addition to freedom there is responsibility. The existential perspective developed here considers that the individual who exercises personal
freedom of choice, must also be willing to accept responsibility for these decisions. From this perspective, it is understood that decisions cannot come with a guarantee, as living itself is a risk. One can fear the freedom of making choices, which makes it easier to relinquish this responsibility and simply be a part of the crowd, being told what duties one must follow and what one must value. Heidegger (1996, p. 119) argued that the appearance of the they was an average everydayness in which Dasein most frequently operates. The decisions of the they take responsibility away from the individual.

Kierkegaard addressed this same relinquishment of responsibility by arguing that courage was required to be exercised, in order for individual freedom to be able to make sense of a risk-filled existence. This theme was taken up by Tillich in the title of his book The courage to be, where he argued that “Since anxiety is existential, it cannot be removed... Courage is self-affirmation ‘in spite of,’ namely in spite of nonbeing” (Tillich, 1980, p. 66). Courage contributes a part of the notion of passion for Kierkegaard, who through Climacus (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 197) claimed that decision is “rooted in subjectivity”, and that subjectivity is intensified by passion. Climacus argues that, “...pencil-pushing modern speculative thought takes a dim view of passion, and yet, for the existing person, passion is existence at its very highest - and we are, after all, existing persons” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 197). Therefore, passion is an essential component for subjective inwardness which defines a self. In the introduction to Kierkegaard’s book Either/Or, there is a quotation from Young which asks; “Is reason then alone baptized, are the passions pagans?” (Kierkegaard, 1987, vol.1, p. 1).
notion is supported by Climacus who identifies the importance of passion in the statement that "Christianity is spirit; spirit is inwardness; inwardness is subjectivity; subjectivity is essentially passion, and at its maximum an infinite, personally interested passion for one’s eternal happiness” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 33). This demonstrates how interconnected Kierkegaard’s notions of subjectivity and spirit are, together with his concept of passion. However, the term ‘passion’ in English carries the negative connotation at times, in the sense that it can represent unbridled emotion.

Kierkegaard used *Lidenskab* (passion) and *Pathos* (pathos) and their cognates interchangeably to represent both emotions and concern. But it is the *concern* aspect of the individual that is found in inwardness which gives so much personal significance and meaning to one’s self. It is this belief - or passion driven attitude - which is found in the core of the self that has been likened to Aristotle’s idea of the human telos with its enthusiasms, concerns and interests - its passions. To reveal something of the real self, the English *concern* is more suitable therefore than *emotion* as this latter term can refer to whatever temporal state the individual may be feeling from time to time. *Concern* identifies what the individual is infinitely interested in; it is a result of choosing a purpose by which one would live and for which one might possibly die. To reinforce this difference, Kierkegaard (1987, vol.2, p. 199), through his Judge Wilhelm, added that passion, unlike emotions, “never blinds you but only makes you see better”.

This passion of Kierkegaard’s can be likened to Heidegger’s *care*. Heidegger (1996, p. 179) showed that Dasein is a *being-ahead-of-itself-in-
already-being-in-a-world, where this "being-ahead-of-oneself-already-in (the world)" is signified by care. Existence for Dasein is integrated into a unitary whole where the structure giving this unity and meaning to Da-sein is identified as care. This term is also not to be confused with the commonly used emotional meaning in English, but is simply the holistic manner in which one gives sense to one’s existence. Consequently Heidegger identified that care, this Being-ahead-of-itself, as not an innate urge, contrary to the suggestion in Nietzsche’s will to power.

The freedom to choose one’s self could be crudely summarised to mean that one freely and passionately chooses who one is, rather than passively being the victim of circumstances. The acceptance and choice of one’s self and circumstance is demonstrated by Kierkegaard’s analogy of a lily. Here a beautiful lily grows up on a dunghill hidden behind a run-down chicken coop, but in the face of this situation states, “I myself have not been able to determine the situation and the circumstances, and so it is not in the remotest way my affair; that I stand where I stand is God’s will” (Kierkegaard, 1987, vol.2, p. 208). This stance to one’s adverse conditions was the sort of situation in which Victor Frankl found himself, as a Jewish prisoner in the Nazi concentration camps of the Second World War. Frankl (1959, p. 87) observes, “..in the final analysis it becomes clear that the sort of person the prisoner became was the result of an inner decision, and not the result of camp influences alone”. One’s choice in such an extreme situation influences how one relates to being in a particular context. One can only choose oneself, not anybody else, nor at times different circumstances, but one can choose how to relate to these.
Nietzsche on the other hand appears to have argued that the individual is both free and determined. His works support the idea that one has the freedom to be master of one’s shadow, to overcome the will to fear that the state employs to conform individuals to a mass. He likened this power to overcome as being ‘dangerous and evil’. These terms are used to portray the relativity of their nature, where ‘good’ and ‘evil’ do not have clear absolute meanings, but are often employed in everyday understandings from the perspective of the ruling elite. For example he argued that -

High and independent spirituality, the will to stand alone, even a powerful reason are experienced as dangers; everything that elevates an individual above the herd and intimidates the neighbor is henceforth called evil; and the fair, modest, submissive, conforming mentality, the mediocrity of desires attains moral designations and honors. (Nietzsche, 1989, pp. 113-114)

He claimed that the individual is almost an author of his or her own life through his statement that “you could re-create yourself” (Nietzsche, 1954, p. 86). This opportunity to overcome Man is seen as a freedom for, not a freedom from (Nietzsche, 1954, pp. 63, 267). There are similarities here with this sort of freedom and Kierkegaard’s concept that one has freedom to choose - not anyone - but oneself alone. Zarathustra demands “lose me and find yourselves” and later declares “I am who I must be”, echoing the earlier statement that “We, however, want to become those we are” (Nietzsche, 1974, pp. 78, 249, 266). This appears to be a recurring theme throughout Nietzsche’s works, possibly because, as he described at the beginning of one of his works, “We are unknown to ourselves, we knowers: and for a good reason. We have never sought ourselves - how then should it happen that we find ourselves one day”? (Nietzsche, 1998, p. 1). He also frequently referred to a ‘free spirit’ whom he described as one who “thinks otherwise
than would be expected, based on his origin... He is the exception” (Nietzsche, 1996, p. 139). Like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche argued that one does not have the freedom to be who one is not; one is who one is and cannot get free of oneself. Therefore freedom can only be exercised in becoming who one is (Nietzsche, 1954, p. 239; 1998, p. 87).

Nietzsche also argued that the individual is determined by a will to power. This will is an unchangeable spiritual “I” which lies deep down within each individual’s being. He argued that -

Learning changes us; it does what all nourishment does which also does not merely “preserve” - as physiologists know. But at the bottom of us, really “deep down,” there is, of course, something unteachable, some granite of spiritual fatum, of predetermined decision and answer to predetermined selected questions. Whenever a cardinal problem is at stake, there speaks an unchangeable “this is I”; about man and woman, for example, a thinker cannot relearn but only finish learning - only discover ultimately how this is “settled in him.” At times we find certain solutions of problems that inspire strong faith in us; some call them henceforth their “convictions.” Later - we see them only as steps to self-knowledge, sign-posts to the problem we are - rather, to the great stupidity we are, to our spiritual fatum, to what is unteachable very “deep down”. (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 162)

This unchangeable spiritual “I” should not be taken as making Nietzsche appear to be a dualist, as indeed a major emphasis in his work is the dismantling of many dualisms of modernity. However, this seizing possession of oneself does paradoxically appear to conform to the will to power.

Nietzsche stated that freedom of the will is expressed by those who feel as if they are in command, and who can exercise their own volition. But he asserted that these individuals are simply being obedient to the will to power that is already deep down within them. He likened this to Descarte’s ergo sumata where he questioned why the ego I should be linked to the verb think.
and argued that it was surely the *thought* which does the thinking, and it is
the thought which comes to the ego *I* - it is not commanded by the ego itself.
Consequently Nietzsche (1989, p. 29) was against the notion of a *free will*,
and argued instead that there were only *strong* and *weak* wills. The active
force often referred to as the *instinct for freedom*, is what he identified as the
will to power (Nietzsche, 1998, p. 59).

The will to power was argued by Nietzsche (1954, p. 115) to be more
fundamental than even the will to existence. This psychological drive is used
to explain all behaviour and uses values and morality for its own functional
gain. In effect, the individual, if able to overcome the will to fear, could
ultimately find himself or herself by no longer conforming to the mass but
instead obeying this will to power, which would raise him or her above the
‘herd’, as a creator of a unique creation. This is somewhat similar to
Kierkegaard’s call to *choose thyself*, but it denies the conscious freedom of
choice.

**Meaning and Purpose**

When the question regarding the *meaning* of life is asked, it refers inevitably
to the meaning of human life. Heidegger began his book *Being and Time* by
examining the question of the meaning of being (as opposed to the ontology
of being itself), where being itself was reduced to that of the being of humans
and reduced again to the being of the individual human identified as Dasein.
He stated, “At the outset (section 1) we showed that the question of the
meaning of being was not only unresolved, not only inadequately formulated,
but despite all interest in ‘metaphysics’ has even been forgotten” (Heidegger,
1996, p. 19). He therefore concluded, “it is fitting that we should raise anew the question of the meaning of being” (Heidegger, 1996, p. xix).

Existentialists maintain that life itself has no inherent meaning - at least until the individual gives it one. This is supported by the view that individuals come into this world with no obviously apparent meaning being provided to them by an authoritative source. Even if the ultimate meaning of life is provided, it would not necessarily be a meaning for all individuals, as many could reject it and claim that it had little meaning for them personally.

According to Sartre (1969, p. 539), “meaning can only come from subjectivity”, in order for it to be the individual’s meaning. The question ‘What is the meaning of life?’ is not necessarily an existential question as it looks to an objective external source to provide an authoritative answer. However, the question ‘What is the meaning of my life?’ is more existential because it relies upon the subjectivity of the individual. In doing so it requires the individual to look to his or her relations in the world, create possibilities, make choices and then to become passionately committed to those choices.

Kierkegaard stressed the necessity of the role that the individual has in addressing this ultimate question. He argued that, even if one were to study and understand ‘The System’ (in Kierkegaard’s time it was the system of Hegel), it “still makes individual existence meaningless to the existing individuality himself” (Kierkegaard, 1967a, p. 633). This view is accentuated in an earlier work in which Kierkegaard stated -
What matters is to find my purpose... the crucial thing is to find a truth that is true for me, to find the idea for which I am willing to live and die. Of what use would it be to me to discover a so-called objective truth. Of what use would it be to me to be able to formulate the meaning of Christianity, to be able to explain many specific points - if it had no deeper meaning for me and for my life? (Kierkegaard, 1987, vol.2, pp. 361-362)

The question ‘What is the meaning of life?’ was a recurring one for Kierkegaard. He claimed that no meaning is available to individuals from an external source (at least, he argued, not until the Second Coming of Jesus). He stated that, “Even if someone gave me ten rix-dollars, I would not take it upon myself to explain the riddle to existence. Indeed, why should I? If life is a riddle, in the end presumably the one who has proposed the riddle will himself explain it” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 451). Therefore, in the meantime the individual is encouraged to develop his or her own meaning(s) of life, through relating to the existing relations one has by being present in the world.

Nietzsche too claimed that no ultimate meaning of life is to be accepted as given. He was against a grand teleology for humankind and through Zarathustra claimed, “A thousand goals have there been so far... the one goal is lacking. Humanity still has no goal” (Nietzsche, 1954, p. 60). Zarathustra observed that only humankind could create a meaning for things - a human meaning. Therefore, he encouraged the individual to create a meaning in which he or she would become responsible. He declared -

He, however, has discovered himself who says, “This is my good and evil”; and “this is my way; where is yours?” - thus I answer those who asked me “the way.” For the way - that does not exist. (Nietzsche, 1954, pp. 194 - 195)

This reference here to the way is a play on the claim Jesus made in the gospels to be the way.
To search for a personally significant meaning for one’s own life, is argued by Frankl (1959, p. 121) to be the primary motivation for an individual’s life and is not a “secondary rationalisation’ of instinctual drives”. Frankl claims that the need for humankind to have a meaning and purpose by which they can make sense of their being is all the more pertinent in contemporary societies, which he describes as nihilistic. He refers frequently to Nietzsche’s principle that ‘he who has a why to live for can bear almost any how’, and this was profoundly demonstrated through Frankl’s personal lived example, as a prisoner in the Nazi concentration camps.

Through Frankl’s method of “logotherapy”, which he developed from surviving the experience of these camps, meaning-making is understood to have cognitive, motivational and affective structural components which pertain to making sense of one’s experiences in life. Several years ago existential neurosis was regarded to be the meaninglessness experienced by a patient (Maddi, 1967, p. 311), but more recently existential meaning is described as the creating and/or discovering of meaning and a sense of purpose in life (Reker & Chamberlain, 2000). This requires the ‘disclosure’ to the individual of the value system and feelings of satisfaction and fulfilment that he or she has (Reker and Wong, 1988).

This primary motivation that people have, according to Frankl, is argued by Rollo May (1991) to be driving ever increasing numbers of people to visit psychotherapists. In an interview, May makes the claim that -

The crisis in psychotherapy is that therapists, psychiatrists, and social workers, who should be dealing with the deeper aspects of the human being, with what I call “being,” instead deal only with the particular
problems of the client. ...what we are concerned with is the meaning of life, not whether or not he has a job. ... Life is not superficial. The real problem is how you exist in a world that is antagonistic... Therapists and counselors don’t talk much about that. (Rabinowitz et al., 1989, p. 439)

Supporting this view, Debats (1996, p. 503) adds, “the neglected meaning of life issue deserves greater therapeutic and scientific consideration”.

Although this may cause some to react by labelling psychotherapists as providing a “secular priesthood” (London quoted by Jones, 1994, p. 184), this dimension is an essential component of what is now understood to be holistic wellness.

The inclination to search for a meaning for one’s life may be an innate one for humankind. Nietzsche (1998, p. 67) argued that the human will “needs a goal, and it would rather will to nothingness than not will”. He also stated that it is an instinct to eliminate the feelings of danger, disquiet and anxiety, by producing a purpose and an explanation for life - of any sort - because any explanation is better than none. In short he argued there is no ideal to be attained by humankind because “We invented the concept ‘purpose’: in reality purpose is lacking” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 54). What he put forward here is that it is in the psychological makeup of people to make up a purpose just to cope with living in a nihilistic world. The idea of a purpose is uniquely human. The elimination of the feelings of anxiety is accomplished by creating a meaning and purpose - any purpose, which becomes a personal construct and not part of reality beyond one’s subjective knowing. He acknowledged the difficulty of this project though understanding the inclination of individuals to appeal to some universally approved set of
values, rather than succumb to the accusation of relativism by justifying one’s life only subjectively.

3.3 The Existential Method

An existential perspective of spirituality involves bringing a meaning-bestowing procedure to one’s experiences, being and indeed one’s life. The searching is a rare activity for the individual who lives most of her or his life in the day-to-day activities of just doing what one does without any authentic examination into her or his existence. However, when in the mode of authenticity, one can apply meaning to one’s life, and especially to one’s future - one’s way of being. The procedure for meaning-making has come to be understood as phenomenological, but this is not necessarily understood to be a method as such.

Existential Phenomenology

It is often assumed that phenomenology goes hand-in-hand with Existentialism as existential phenomenology. This is based upon both Heidegger’s Being and Time - that is described as a work of phenomenology, and the subtitle to Sartre’s Being and Nothingness that is - An essay on phenomenological ontology. However, phenomenology is mistakenly assumed to be the method of Existentialism, due in part to Edmund Husserl’s earlier method of transcendental phenomenology. Therefore it is most important to differentiate between these two types.

The term ‘phenomenology’ has its roots in the Greek phainomenon, and has traditionally meant ‘that which shows itself, the manifested, revealed’. It
means, then, to allow things to reveal what they are, rather than categories being forced upon them. The method, according to Husserl, involves *perception* rather than observation and uses pure intuition to reveal the essence of phenomena. Husserl (1982, p. 136) argued, “phenomenology is, in fact, a *purely descriptive* discipline... *To avail ourselves of nothing but what we can make essentially evident by observing consciousness itself in its pure immanence*”. He used this as a method to analyse consciousness, where the objects (objects, ideas, etc.,) and acts (perceiving, believing, thinking, etc.,) were both considered to be phenomena. The way in which the consciousness intended its objects revealed the nature of the phenomena. Husserl presupposed a neutral transcendental ego which lay beneath all acts of consciousness and hence he considered ‘being’ as objectivity. His method assumed induction and was an attempt to rid the individual of presuppositions in order to see an experience for what it (the phenomenon) really was, of and by itself without any prejudice by which to interpret it. It was an attempt to ‘go back to the things themselves’, the pure and true experiences without the influence of *a priori* beliefs.

As a method, Husserl’s phenomenology requires a *bracketing* out from other experiences and established judgements, including even the common sense notion of any past existence of the phenomenon. The phenomenon must be disconnected from any theoretical assumptions. This practice of bracketing or suspending belief is known as his phenomenological reduction (or *epoché*), and it attempted to extend *a priori* into the present experience itself. Consequently, Husserl’s phenomenology is referred to as *transcendental*, where the ego could play the role of a detached spectator.
All understanding of the phenomenon is to be doubted (in a manner somewhat akin to Descartes’ methodological doubt) as evidence is reduced to what is presently experienced. The purpose is to reveal the structures of consciousness (the meaning making basis) to the individual, allowing him or her to get to the thing as it really is. The purpose is not to reduce a thing to a pre-existing category, but to reduce one’s perception to what it really is. To sum this up, the Husserlian phenomenologist -

attempts to describe purely (i.e., without preconception, prejudice, or ideological bias) what he sees because he is endeavouring to get to the beginnings of the activities of consciousness: he is, indeed, researching the data of consciousness as he attempts to explicate and elucidate the processes whereby the phenomena that he sees make their appearance to and within consciousness. He attempts to be loyal to the data of consciousness in his effort to establish the foundation for valid cognition. (Vandenberg, 1971, p. 30)

Husserl’s phenomenology is unattainable because one cannot simply bracket out all preconceptions to witness a present phenomenon in its pure state. One enters every situation as a product - to some degree - of past experiences with one’s history, culture and language. Thomas Kuhn referred to the particular understandings with their laws and theories which are produced within such historic and cultural settings, as paradigms. He claimed they regulate the way in which individuals interpret, and argued that a paradigm even determines how the data of an experience will appear (Kuhn, 1962, p. 121). There are no such entities as data, facts, or experiences that are able then to speak for themselves. As Karl Popper (1992, p. 139) described, “there is no uninterpreted visual sense data, no sensations or ‘elements’ in the sense of Mach: whatever is ‘given’ to us is already interpreted, decoded”. A non-prejudiced view, then, is unattainable.
The later Husserl realised the difficulty of attaining pure phenomenology (D. West, 1996, p. 95), and the term took on a different meaning in existential phenomenology, through the work of his student - Heidegger. According to Husserl, phenomenology referred to the thing revealing itself to the transcendental ego, whereas according to Heidegger, it referred to the meaning that Dasein gave to the phenomenon. Husserl’s application made the subject submit to the thingness, whereas for Heidegger, the subject (Dasein) has a more active role in interpreting the meaning of the thing in light of one’s previous judgements. He breaks down the dichotomy between subject and thing, and declared that the subject-is-in-the-thing as it is also the world. The thing can even be a personal judgement and can therefore be examined through reflection in order to transcend one’s present context and beliefs. Sartre (1969, pp. xxv - xxvii) added, however, that “the being of the phenomenon can not be reduced to the phenomenon of being. In other words, the phenomenon of being is ‘ontological’", and it refers to what is more than just being, as humans can project possibilities into the future that are not part of their presence at the temporal moment.

Sartre described Husserl’s transcendental ego as a ‘consciousness of consciousness’, where the object of consciousness was able to be examined by the non-objective (but equally real) consciousness. This he claimed was absurd; one cannot escape from oneself in this sort of infinite regress that is implied if one (another consciousness) were to then examine the non-objective consciousness that was examining the original object of consciousness. He concluded that “If we wish to avoid an infinite regress,
there must be an immediate, non-cognitive relation of the self to itself”
(Sartre, 1969, pp. xxvii-xxix). He explained further that -

Consciousness can always pass beyond the existent, not towards its being, but toward the meaning of this being. This is why we call it ontic-ontological, since a fundamental characteristic of its transcendence is to transcend the ontic toward the ontological. The meaning of the being of the existent in so far as it reveals itself to consciousness is the phenomenon of being. (Sartre, 1969, p. xxxix)

Sartre’s “being of consciousness”, who has its being in question, is not its own foundation. Rather its foundation is “its presence to the world”.

Similarly, Heidegger takes as his starting point Dasein as a being-in-the-world that is an already interpreted world at the temporal moment, providing the horizon by which all understanding can be constructed. The term horizon is also used by Husserl to mean simply the context within which the individual perceived. However, Heidegger and Sartre argued that phenomenology cannot be pure and therefore existential phenomenology is understood to incorporate the already existing beliefs of the individual.

When defining existential phenomenology, Heidegger included a study of both phenomena and logos. He declared that the expression phenomenon never refers to appearances, and is for him ‘self-showing itself’. That is, the phenomenon remains hidden in being until it reveals itself and becomes uncovered. He combined this with the concept of logos, which when referring to speech, “means déloun, to make manifest what is being talked about” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 28). In Greek, lόgοs refers to an exceptionally wide field, including reason, explanation, utterance, discussion and debate. Its emphasis is upon the meaning conveyed and not just the word itself with some objective definition. According to Heidegger (1988, p. 206), “The
complete constitution of the logos includes from the very beginning word, signification, thinking, that which is thought, that which is”. From this he criticised the idea that Dasein is totally subject to the words of language as if they were objective signs which implied a signified meaning to the reader or hearer. This he argued was a “fundamental wrongheaded approach” (Heidegger, 1988, p. 207) that formulated the problem of truth or objectivity. Through this he argued that the hermeneutical aspect is necessary for the phenomenological process. Existential phenomenology involves the logos of phenomena, and Heidegger (1988, p. 20) concluded, “Phenomenology is the name for the method of ontology, that is, of scientific philosophy. Rightly conceived, phenomenology is the concept of a method”, but it is not a method itself, it is a procedure. He stated that “Phenomenology is the way of access to, and the demonstrative manner of determination of, what is to become the theme of ontology. Ontology is possible only as phenomenology” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 31, original emphasis). He never mentioned phenomenology as perception but described it instead as circumspection.

Da-sein (the being of consciousness) then must always refer to itself for an encounter in the world, where its past becomes present within its horizon. However, this constant self-referencing produces a circular process, which is unable to establish itself in a pre-ontic origin. Heidegger referred to this as the existential fore-structure of Da-sein itself, and stated that, “The ‘circle’ in understanding belongs to the structure of meaning, and this phenomenon is rooted in the existential constitution of Da-sein, in interpretive understanding” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 143).
Heidegger’s concept of *hermeneutical phenomenology* is understood to have replaced Husserl’s concept of *transcendental phenomenology*. As Heidegger stated, “The phenomenology of Dasein is *hermeneutics* in the original signification of that word, which designates this work of interpretation” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 33). Traditionally, via the Enlightenment, hermeneutics was defined as correctly understanding speech (especially written text found in religious works), to reveal what was hidden. The author’s intent could be understood by a careful and *rational* analysis of the grammatical structure. As language is now understood not to be purely rational - and hence universal - hermeneutics is no longer used to refer to *true* interpretation.

Heidegger developed hermeneutics beyond the work of the life philosopher Dilthey who earlier used it as an application to assist the reader/interpreter to understand his or her own life via a reflexive type of method. Heidegger, like Dilthey, upheld the centrality of the subjective domain. However, he did not consider the efforts of the life philosophers as adequate to break away from the excessive scientific rationality of Western ontology. He argued that the dualistic notions of “subjectivism and objectivism are contrasting symptoms of the same underlying disorder of Western thinking” (D. West, 1996, p. 99). He pursued his question of being to gain a truer understanding of life, as an attempt to bring the ontical and the historical together.

According to Heidegger (1996, p. 10), Dasein is ontically distinguished amongst all other beings because, as a being, “it is concerned *about* its very
being”. As a presence-in-the-world, Dasein’s being cannot be understood piecemeal, as its nature is unified. Individuals are not seen to be fragmentary, but to retain a strict identity through time. Understanding, then, “always operates within a set of already interpreted relationships, a relational whole” (R.E. Palmer, 1969, p. 131). Meaningfulness or meaning-making, is possible due to something operating at a deeper level than the grammatical structure of language. As Ebling (quoted by R.E. Palmer, 1969, p. 139) describes, it “is not understanding of language, but understanding through language”.

Dasein and its ‘world’ are hidden, due to their familiarity with each other, and therefore need assistance to be disclosed. Butler (1996, p. 171) provides a description of this condition when he states that “Most of us live our day, do our work, taking little notice of our inner thoughts, beliefs, values, knowledge”, because these are what individuals think with and tend therefore not to make themselves readily available to be thought about. The disclosure of these to our conscious thought is argued here to be dependent upon an existential crisis as mentioned earlier, to encourage deep questioning of a reflexive nature. Hence the term hermeneutical phenomenology.

Hans-Georg Gadamer extends this concept by building upon Heidegger’s idea that Dasein’s understanding is founded upon the historical character of existential understanding. As a humanist, he focuses more attention on self-understanding than does Heidegger. To Gadamer, the existential dimension of the subject is of utmost importance, as is the historical-cultural dimension,
but he is opposed to the self-centred tendencies of radical constructivism and self-conscious subjectivity (Kerdeman, 1998, p. 260-261). He juxtaposes the two terms to form the title of his major work, *Truth and Method* (Gadamer, 2000) to show that there was no method to obtaining the truth. Ingram (1984, p. 69) notes that true understanding is not reductive for Gadamer as truth is understood not to be “reached methodologically but dialectically” (R.E. Palmer, 1969, p. 165), making it comparable with the dialectic of Socrates.

Contemporary hermeneutics, especially as it has developed through Heidegger and Gadamer, is not understood to be a method to restore an author’s true meaning. It is a way of integrating both the individual and the subject matter. This subject matter could, for example, be a text, a speech, a work of art, or another person, or some other entity in the world of Dasein. The integration then is a *fusing of horizons* through what is referred to as a dialogue. The person reading, watching or listening is not simply present as a passive audience, but is actively making meaning of the encounter, in order to participate in the event in such a way as to allow meaning to be made - or learning to occur. Gadamer (2000, p. 361) states that the individual must be *open*, and especially so in human relations where the ‘other’ is to be experienced as a ‘Thou’. Heidegger (1996, p. 154) described this ‘openness’ (*Offenheit*) as the place for “presencing” other beings. By being ‘open’, one needs to acknowledge one’s existential dimension with all of its uncertainties and tensions, and have the discipline to question and inquire as to the appropriateness of one’s understandings as one engages with others. In a sense, it can be described as thinking philosophically.
Gadamer argues that “We cannot have experiences without asking questions” (as quoted by Graybill, 1997, p. 44). From this historically produced horizon that one has experienced, or understood, one is then open to integrate with other horizons. “To understand, rather, is to participate in an event of time and tradition in which common meaning comes to be realized in the “to-and-fro” of language and dialogue” (Kerdeman, 1998, p. 259).

Portraying the individual as being unable to escape from his or her own horizon or life world, does not reduce hermeneutics to subjectivism or relativism. Gadamer defends against a potential accusation of such subjectivism by describing hermeneutics as *intersubjectivity*. Intersubjectivity is dependent upon the two-way flow found in dialogue, as opposed to the one dimensional - or monological - flow of information transmission. Gadamer argues that there is a close relation between hermeneutics and dialogue, describing it as an “existential encounter” (Michelfelder & Palmer, 1989, p. 5). Heidegger (1996, p. 151) argued that this dialogue, or discourse, “is existential language”.

The individual is able to connect with other horizons via dialogue. But, to move beyond the comfort of one’s own familiar horizon to seek the challenges that other horizons bring, is not of itself an attractive activity for the individual. What is required, suggests Vandenberg (1974, p. 215), is “Some novelty...to enable [one] to break through the closed world of the hermeneutical circle”. The novelty that Gadamer argues as useful here is *doubt*. Gadamer argues that confronting questions and challenges can
cause personal beliefs to be doubted. The value he sees in this doubt is that it is able to loosen rigid thinking thereby allowing the clarification of personal views and the exploration of alternatives. Kierkegaard (1985, p. 158) claimed that "there is no frame of mind less appreciated by a teacher in his pupil than doubt". It is argued in this thesis that a primary aim of education is to foster the kind of development that fosters a critical attitude, which is characterised by being able to question and doubt, as well as being open and present. The overall purpose of this disposition is to allow the individual to participate successfully in dialogue, where the opportunity of doubt - or Angst - can arise. This in turn can reveal the unitary nature of the individual as care, thus enabling her or him to become authentically aware of her or his ownmost possibilities.

Indirect Communication

As can be surmised, neither existential phenomenology nor hermeneutics offers a method as such that can be employed by an existential perspective of spirituality. The problem remains in how to produce doubt and anxiety through an existential crisis that encourages the individual to break out of the everydayness and examine the very meaning of his or her existence, towards an authentic life that is developed spiritually. It is helpful at this juncture to examine the method used by some of the existentialists themselves.

Kierkegaard’s favourite philosopher was Socrates and he often elaborated on his method of dialogue - described as maieutic - considering it to be the ideal method for the philosophical investigation of human existence.
Kierkegaard too described himself to be a gadfly like Socrates, but with his own modern and Christian style. This influenced his writings, which often consisted of forms of indirect communication. He wrote that “in a Christian country it is not information that is lacking; something else is lacking, and one human being cannot directly communicate this something else to another” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 614). So his task was an educative one, where self-education was the only appropriate means for the existing individual. Consequently he used pseudonyms such as Johannes de Silentio (John the Silent), Constantin Constantius (Constantin the Constant), Johannes Climacus (John Climax), Anti-Climacus, Hilarius Bookbinder, Judge Wilhelm and simply ‘A’. He stated, “My pseudonymity or polyonymity has not had an accidental basis in my person...but an essential basis in the production itself... Thus in the pseudonymous books there is not a single word by me. I have no opinion about them except as a third party” (Kierkegaard, 1992, pp. 625-626). The use of these authors was so important to him that he requested that “Therefore, if it should occur to anyone to want to quote a particular passage from the books, it is my wish, my prayer, that he will do me the kindness of citing the respective pseudonymous author’s name, not mine” (Kierkegaard, 1992, p. 627).

Using indirect communication required that his pseudonymous authors not brutishly tell something, but rather inquire of the reader ‘What do you think?’. He did not want the author to distract from what he was trying to achieve through his writings. Through Climacus he argued that “...for when a teacher has a doctrine, then the doctrine is eo ipso [by virtue of the fact] more
important than the teacher” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 326). He never even claimed to teach, noting in his journal -

Far be it from me, the vain and empty thought of wanting to be such a teacher... With respect to existing, there is only the learner, for anyone who fancies that he is in this respect finished, that he can teach others and on top of that himself forgets to exist and to learn, is a fool. In relation to existing there is for all existing persons one schoolmaster - existence itself. (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.2, p. 107)

His purpose to encourage his ‘dear reader’ to think for himself or herself via a hermeneutical adventure was inspired by the examples of Socrates and Jesus who, by unbalancing their listeners, destabilized the latters’ complacency. However, unlike Jesus, who said that his use of parables was to prevent his hearers from understanding clearly (Matthew 13:10-15), Kierkegaard’s writings were to provoke his readers to reflect upon their own inwardness, their own freedom and subjective truths. The teacher in this case would be the “ambiguous art of thinking about existence and existing” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 622). Kierkegaard claimed that his age “needed a jolt” (1987, vol.2, p. 228), but he aimed to achieve this for the individual, not the crowd.

A reflective self-consciousness with an accompanying sense of individuality and responsibility were essential for Kierkegaard, if his reader was to create for himself a meaning. The importance of reflection is made by Climacus (Kierkegaard, 1941a, pp. 4, 9), who suggested that “without stillness, conscience cannot exist” and “reflection concentrates the mind”. In addition, Climacus (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 421) argued, “But existence itself is the sphere of reflection, and an existing person is in existence and therefore in reflection”. Reflection allows one to examine the how behind the
immediate sensing experience. “The ‘how’ of the individual’s existence is
the result of the relation to the eternal” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 574).
Reflection is the means, then, of initiating choice within an individual.

Kierkegaard emulated the styles of Socrates and Jesus through his
pseudonymous writings. He argued indirect communication to be the only
appropriate method to lead his readers to recognise their need to examine
their own inwardness. As a gadfly, he explained that he wanted to provoke
his readers to reflect upon who they really were deep inside, and how they
came to hold the beliefs that they hold.

Nietzsche (1989, p. 50) made the point that he endeavoured to be hard to
understand in his writings and justified this by making the claim that
“whatever is profound loves masks”. He even subtitled his Thus Spoke
Zarathustra as “A book for none and all”. He appears to have adopted the
approach to hide behind a mask so that, rather than setting his views out on
the table clearly for all to examine, he, like Kierkegaard, provoked his
readers to experience aesthetically and reflect upon what values they held,
and why they had come to possess them.

To challenge his readers, Nietzsche made his writings like “fish-hooks”
(Nietzsche, 1992, p. 82) and called himself the “the first immoralist” for the
101). It was his purpose to offend. He declared, “I am by nature warlike. To
attack is among my instincts. To be able to be an enemy, to be an enemy -
that perhaps presupposes a strong nature... for a philosopher who is warlike
also challenges problems to a duel... I attack only causes against which I would find no allies, where I stand alone... I never attack persons” (Nietzsche, 1992, pp. 16-17). Consequently he advised in his foreword, “do not above all, confound me with what I am not”, which indicates that he may be easily misconstrued as a “bogey-man” or “moral monster” (Nietzsche, 1992, p. 3). As with Kierkegaard, he kept himself hidden in his works to achieve a desired effect on his readers.

In a Socratic fashion, Nietzsche too considered that the unexamined life was not worth living, and this included the examination of morals and values. Through questioning, he explained that he wanted to challenge the apparent nihilism of his age. He also challenged the trend that he reported existing then among the German academics of his time as to become so abstract that they missed the practical and more human dimension that provided relevance to living life in the world. One of his central issues of concern was how one could come to terms with one’s existence once one grasped how to exercise personal freedom.

Nietzsche claimed that individuals are prisoners to grammar, as it gives the illusion that something can be described, or that a truth can be discovered. In his own writings, he intentionally broke the rules of grammar by various means, including the insertion of colons and question marks in mid-sentence, and often used “...” within and to conclude sentences. Although God was announced by his madman to be dead, God and Christian morality continued to exist due to the belief in the current rules of grammar. He
argued that the grammar of the day, due to its origins, was bound and subject to Christianity.

Rational thinking was also argued to be subject to grammar and the pursuit of rationality was viewed as a force that ‘undermined life’. Nietzsche, like other existentialists, was very much against a philosophical system. This is because, he argued, no system could be true; all were founded on the assumptions of the individual philosopher. He argued that -

Gradually it has become clear to me what every great philosophy so far has been: namely the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir... [Philosophy] always creates the world in its own image; it cannot do otherwise. (Nietzsche, 1989, pp. 13, 16)

Nietzsche was equally critical towards methods that are regarded to be rigorous. Physics, for example, was not so much a scientific explanation, but operated upon a belief in the senses and was only “an interpretation and exegesis of the world” (Nietzsche, 1989, pp. 21-22). Indeed the so called objectivity of the natural sciences was severely questioned by Nietzsche. He argued that -

There is, strictly speaking, absolutely no science “without presuppositions,” the thought of such a science is unthinkable, paralogical: a philosophy, a “belief” must always be there first so that science can derive a direction from it, a meaning, a boundary, a method, a right to existence. (Nietzsche, 1998, p. 110)

In spite of these statements, Nietzsche declared himself to be a type of philosopher - not in the sense of trying to formulate a system, but one who was an enemy of the ‘ideals’ that were unquestioningly accepted as givens. His own understanding of philosophy can be gained from the following passage, where he stated that -
More and more it seems to me that the philosopher, being of necessity a man of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, has always found himself, and had to find himself, in contradiction to his today: his enemy was ever the ideal of today... By applying the knife vivisectionally to the chest of the very virtues of their time, they betrayed what was their own secret: to know of a new greatness of man. (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 137)

His view of the role of philosophy was that it needed to challenge commonly accepted beliefs. He understood that it was a personal engagement and, consequently, he often referred to the activity as being more psychological than philosophical. This is supported by his lack of demonstration and interest in arguments of universality and necessity, compared with his analyses of why people hold the beliefs that they do. He examined the origins of belief both via the cultural forces such as grammar, and the individual convictions such as exercised through the wills of fear and power.

There is no evidence that Nietzsche had direct contact with the work of Kierkegaard, though he was nevertheless familiar with the Norwegian playwright Henrick Ibsen. Ibsen was a great admirer of Kierkegaard and quoted him at length in his works. It is not clear how much this may have influenced Nietzsche’s own thoughts - if at all. He employed many styles of writing, most are indirect forms and include many aphorisms. His experimentations could be regarded as existential, in that they acknowledged the importance of aesthetic experiences and challenge his readers to draw their own conclusions.
If Kierkegaard and Nietzsche are the gadflies to society, then Heidegger is a gadfly to the philosophers. If a philosopher is described as one who unsettles the complacency of the layman, then Heidegger can be described as the philosophers’ philosopher. Heidegger (1959, p. 10) stated that philosophy is aimed “at the first and last grounds of the essent, with particular emphasis on man himself and on the meaning and goals of human being-there”. He promoted metaphysics as “the pivotal point and core of all philosophy” and argued that “being is the proper and sole theme of philosophy” (Heidegger, 1988, p. 11). He did not regard philosophy’s task as being the formation of a world-view for Dasein, but rather to play a fundamental role in all world-view formations. Philosophy was to help support the understanding that the formation of a world-view belongs to the essential nature of Dasein.

Conclusion
An existential perspective is able to be founded upon Heidegger’s notion of the question of the meaning of being. Such a perspective characterises a framework for spirituality derived from it, as addressing the meaning of one’s life and one’s identity. This existential perspective does not include investigations of an objective nature but focuses upon the relations to entities that an individual has as a result of being-in-the-world. Consequently, this perspective involves a phenomenological procedure by which the individual comes hermeneutically to understand the world and his or her relations to it. One is able to question the meaning of one’s being and to acknowledge and exercise one’s freedom in order to choose and make decisions. This, however, is not an easy task, but it can be facilitated with
the aid of an existential crisis. The nature of this crisis is to produce an
Angst that is able to individuate, and to draw one away from unquestioningly
doing what others have come to expect from one.

Becoming an authentic person can be likened to becoming spiritually
developed, in that one is able to take an individual stance on what are to be
one’s own values, meanings and purposes of being. One is able to establish
an identity for oneself that is not totally dependent upon how others may
dictate what this should be. Living authentically, from an existential
perspective, implies a good for the individual that should be encouraged
through education, although the manner in which this is best achieved has
not been directly dealt with and will be addressed further in Chapter Seven.
The purpose of this chapter is to examine whether, and if so, how compatible a framework of spirituality based upon Existentialism, may be with religious views. If this philosophy were unable readily to lend itself to an acceptance of a deity and were unable to be seen as being able to embrace religious views, then opposition towards the adoption of an existential framework of spirituality for education could fairly be raised, not least because many educational institutions in Australia are affiliated with Christianity.

Sartre’s views have often made Existentialism appear inherently atheistic and indeed the research on the philosophy reported in the previous chapter may appear also to support this view. A well-known connotation imputed to the philosophy is its denial of the existence of a deity who in turn might otherwise able to provide meaning to the lives for individuals. Christian theologians such as Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Paul Tillich and Rudolf Bultmann, who have used existential philosophy as a basis for their interpretations, often tend to demythologise religion, giving little notice to the deity as an aspect of their particular world-views. In this chapter, the religious perspective that will be addressed specifically will be a Christian one, because this is the most relevant one for the Australian context, where over 74 percent of the population (as of 1991) have nominated themselves as being at least nominally Christian (Australian Bureau of Statistics, accessed 2001).
4.1 The Difficulty with Existentialism from a Religious Perspective

It is important initially to clarify what existentialists generally mean by ‘religion’ (or specifically in this case - Christianity), before being able to judge whether Existentialism can embrace a religious view. Existentialism opposes systems that force individuals to live what they regard as an inauthentic existence. ‘Christendom’ is a term used by Kierkegaard to refer to such a system, and he often contrasted it with the more authentic ‘Christianity’. Climacus accused Christendom of “attempting to make one forget what Christianity is”, claiming therefore that it was his “resolution”, or task, to find out the misunderstanding between Christendom (often described as modern Christian speculative thought) and Christianity (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, pp. 384, 241). He was opposed to formalising Christian religion into a dehumanising institution which operated in such a way that the whole notion of an authentic Christian existence was annulled - but he certainly argued for Christianity as a way of life for each individual.

He stated that -

But if what one sees all over Europe is Christendom, a Christian state, then I propose to start here in Denmark to list the price for being Christian in such a way that the whole concept - state church, official appointments, livelihood - bursts open. (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.2, p. 145)

This challenging stance has provoked criticism of himself and his philosophy, which has often misconstrued his intent.

Nietzsche was also against the systemisation of Christianity for various reasons. He likened Christian morality to ‘slave morality’, where people are urged to abolish their individual characters and adopt the apparent weak and
obedient attributes according to the gospel message frequently preached. He argued that, “From the start, the Christian faith is a sacrifice: a sacrifice of all freedom, all pride, all self-confidence of the spirit; at the same time, enslavement and self-mockery, self-mutilation” (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 60). He not only singled out Christianity in his attacks but claimed that “all religions are in their deepest foundations systems of cruelties” (Nietzsche, 1998, p.38). As for Buddhism, he claimed that it was more realistic than Christianity, yet he also referred to it as being simply a “system of hygiene” (Nietzsche, 1992, p. 16). However, it is Christianity that bears the brunt of much of his most vehement accusations.

Nietzsche did indicate however that it is not individual Christians towards whom he is so disagreeable, and he did not argue seriously about the existence or otherwise of the Christian God. His famous proclamation announced by his madman that “God is dead” (Nietzsche, 1974, p. 181) was not stated to be an objective fact, but existentially was aimed at how individuals related to this idea (Tanner, 1994, p. 37), arousing the awareness that “the ground of obligation can only be found, if at all, in the individual himself” (Gerhardt, 1993, p. 293). He did not argue that atheism is an outcome of reasoning but claimed that it arises from instinct alone (Nietzsche, 1992, p. 21). His antagonism against institutionalised religion appears to be aimed towards the system, the institutionalizing Churches (both Catholic and Protestant) which operated as oppressive political states (Nietzsche, 1954, p. 132). He claimed that the term ‘church’ is best referred to as the “crowding together and organising of the sick” (Nietzsche, 1998, p. 92). Therefore his main points of contention appear to be that Christian
religion, as an oppressive system of the state, attempted to take individuality (in a powerful and creative sense) away from people and replace it with compliant weakness, and through its morality hold the population captive by taking control of language itself. This last point refers to his argument of how terms such as ‘good’ have been historically captured by the church with its ‘slave morality’ and given other meanings quite different from the original in order to ‘control’ the masses.

Existentialism opposes any sort of system that opposes the individual and can therefore be described as nonorthodox from a religious perspective.

Nash (1990) criticises the existentialist view by claiming that -

The theological agnosticism that is such an important feature of contemporary nonorthodox theology marks a dramatic break with a major tradition of historic Christianity... The contemporary eclipse of God can be seen in Sartre’s ‘silence of God,’ in Heidegger’s ‘absence of God,’ in Jaspers’ ‘concealment of God,’ in Bultmann’s ‘hiddenness of God,’ in Tillich’s ‘non-being of God,’ and finally in radical theology’s assertion of ‘the death of God.” In Tillich’s version of theological agnosticism, all that is left of Christianity is a ‘religion’ that is neither objective, rational, miraculous, supernatural, nor even personal. Why should one be surprised that this vacuum has been filled by systems that deny everything that the New Testament stands for? (Nash, 1990, pp. 186-187)

It is argued in this chapter that, contrary to Nash’s view, Existentialism can be understood to have a close kinship with much that is found in the New and Old Testaments. One existential philosopher not included in this list of Nash’s is Kierkegaard, who, although claiming to be a Christian, is not easily accepted by orthodox Christianity. In fact, paradoxically, he is more readily embraced by atheists. David Breese (1990), president of Christian Destiny Ministries, objects to Kierkegaard’s attempts to make things difficult and subjective, and for announcing that there is no objective truth. Breese asks -
What was the effect on society of Kierkegaard’s theological and philosophical concepts? The best word for that effect is the word diffusion. Kierkegaard appeared to take many contradictory points of view. He almost sounded like an agnostic when he denounced the State Church of Denmark and inveighed against religious establishments in general. (Breese, 1990, p. 215)

Kierkegaard did claim that his approach in many of his indirect writings was to adopt the position of a non-Christian. The purpose of this was to arouse a restlessness in his readers “toward inward deepening”, because his stated intention was “to make it difficult to become a Christian” (Kierkegaard, 1998, p. 161; 1990, p. 21; 1992, vol.1, p. 557). Breese’s argument against Kierkegaard does not refer to any of his works directly, but relies instead on interpretations provided by Walter Kaufmann. Kaufmann described the heart of Existentialism as that which refuses “to belong to any school of thought, the repudiation of the adequacy of any body of beliefs whatever, and especially of systems, and a marked dissatisfaction with traditional philosophy as superficial, academic, and remote from life” (Kaufmann, 1956, p. 11).

With reference to Kierkegaard’s idea of the ‘leap’ and its relation to faith, Kaufmann (1956, p. 17) argued that “Kierkegaard rashly renounced clear and distinct thinking altogether” because he proposed that it goes ‘beyond reason’. Kierkegaard’s Climacus claimed that “reason does not comprehend what faith believes” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.2, p. 98), but some regard this leap by faith to take one away from rational thinking as problematic, because “faith must be anchored in objective fact” (Kilpatrick, 1983, p. 51). John Mackie (1982, p. 216) argues that this assumed irrationality of Kierkegaard has “fathered a whole family of existentialisms, whose common quality is just
this advocacy of the making of dramatic choices unbacked by reasons”. He contends that Kierkegaard failed to show that a “belief without reason could, paradoxically, be intellectually respectable” (Mackie, 1982, p. 216).

4.2 Existentialism as able to Embrace a Religious View

Kierkegaard is not alone in his conceptualisation of faith as being non-rational. Nietzsche (1968, p. 120), although he argued that religious faith is “seeing falsely”, also stated that -

There are questions whose truth or untruth cannot be decided by man; all the supreme questions, all the supreme problems of value are beyond human reasoning....To grasp the limits of reason - only this is true philosophy ... For in order to lie one would have to be able to decide what is true here. But this is precisely what mankind cannot do. (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 174)

Kierkegaard’s concept of ‘religious faith’ is not rational in character, but this does not therefore make it irrational. Being similar to spirituality as described in Chapter Two in this regard, it is argued in this thesis to be non-rational. Criticisms against Kierkegaard in this regard are argued by Priestley (2000) to be largely based on misunderstandings. He states that -

Kierkegaard himself was never anti-scientific but his concern was for human affairs and in that he determined to be absolutely constant even though, to do so, was to encourage misunderstanding and rejection. ...As a consequence he has frequently been dismissed as illogical and irrational. (Priestley, 2000, p. 100)

It is necessary to clarify further Kierkegaard’s position on Christianity, because an existential framework of spirituality, based on his works, is not found to be in opposition to religious views of spirituality. An existential framework is needed to offer an alternative to a religious framework of spirituality as has been described earlier, but it must be capable of
embracing secular and religious views. Kierkegaard’s concepts of faith and existential subjectivity in religion can be clarified using what he calls his three stages of existence. This model of the three stages will provide further material to contribute to the formulation of an existential framework of spirituality as outlined in the next chapter.

Kierkegaard’s Three Stages of Existence

There are three main stages of existence according to Kierkegaard - the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious. The aesthetic stage is characterised by both an immediate phase and a reflective phase. The immediate one is comparable with Freud’s oral stage of development, where consciousness is absent. The reflective stage is a continuation of this development except that there is a form of consciousness in adults, but at this level the reflection is upon immediate pleasures such as recalling a piece of music or a play or some other experience that was basically hedonic. Pursuit and focus upon the pleasures means that life is controlled by external contingencies and arbitrariness.

Kierkegaard argued that at this stage of selfishness one is living a ‘fantasy-existence’ and is not truly human, because one is outside of life - like a spectator - never questioning one’s motives. Even reflections of interpersonal relationships tend to be fanciful and abstract rather than meeting with the existing people themselves. For example, in Mozart’s opera Don Giovanni Don Juan is portrayed as only pursuing the fanciful category of femininity rather than particular persons. Kierkegaard stated that this aesthetic character -
desires total femininity in every woman, and therein lies the sensuous idealizing force with which he simultaneously enhances and overcomes his prey... This is why all the finite differences vanish for him in comparison with the main point: to be a woman. (Kierkegaard, 1987, vol.1, p. 100)

Don Giovanni portrays the aesthetic, who preys on every object in the category 'woman', and does not consider the existing individuals themselves. This sensuous 'love' is contrasted with love of a higher type, which recognizes what is truly human, personal and uniquely individual in the beloved. This latter and higher type "moves precisely in the rich variety of the individual life, where the nuances are the really significant" (Kierkegaard, 1987, vol.1, p. 95).

The person in the aesthetic stage has only limited responsibility, is passive and considers himself or herself to be determined. Never attaining anything truly meaningful, their decisions are only 'either/or' with regard to which pleasures one wishes to pursue. However, there needs to come a point where, through reflection, one should 'choose' oneself. This is part of the process of becoming an authentic person, described as "When the individual has known himself and has chosen himself he is in the process of actualizing himself" (Kierkegaard, 1987, vol.1, p. 259). Becoming subjective is Kierkegaard's suggested way to moving beyond the aesthetic stage. This would produce meanings that were much more personal, because the external basis for constructing a life view is destroyed by the fragmenting of social relationships.

The ethical stage begins with this 'choosing yourself', which is quite individualistic in nature. Climacus argued, "The ethical deals with individual
human beings and, please note, with each individual” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 320). However, the individual here is not detached from the social relations of which he or she is a part. The object of this choice forms the underlying unifying identity of the individual being called together from the fragmented roles of social relations. The aesthetic is fractured into “a multiple of relationships” (Kierkegaard, 1987, p. 347) and roles, which individually or collectively can never compose the ‘real’ person. Kierkegaard warns, however, that “it is dangerous then to have become so fragmented” (Kierkegaard, 1987, vol.2, p. 327), and therefore one is to seek the unifying power of one’s personality through choosing oneself. The ‘choice of oneself’ means that freedom of choice is always contextual to one’s situation, and to know oneself is always contingent on this. One is never free to choose to be some other.

With regards to the self-identity that is being chosen, Kierkegaard’s Climacus argued -

But the principle of identity is only the boundary; it is like the blue mountains, like the line the artist calls the base line - the drawing is the main thing. Therefore, identity is a lower view than contradiction, which is more concrete. Identity is the terminus a quo [point from which] but not ad quem [to which] for existence. (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 421)

Relinquishing the pursuit of trying to find meaning in external sources allows one to choose a meaning for oneself, which is argued as being the only way actually to have an authentic meaning. Meaningfulness can only be found through the realisation of one’s own freedom, choice and will. Otherwise the individual will remain unsatisfied if continuing to seek meaning and self-identity elsewhere.
In addition to choosing oneself, the ethical person seeks good for others by exercising moral responsibility and fulfilling ethical duty. Thus there is a universal aspect of a person’s existing at this stage, in that all individuals would conform to the ‘role’ of a good citizen. Hence the pseudonym of a ‘Judge’ is used to speak about this somewhat characteristically Kantian stage. The many ‘roles’ that one has in relations can become coherent through the identity’s exercising ethical duty.

The third stage - the religious - is best depicted in Kierkegaard’s work *Fear and Trembling*. The example of the patriarch Abraham is used here to demonstrate a ‘teleological suspension of the ethical’. When God commanded that Abraham sacrifice his son Isaac, Abraham was in conflict between ethical duty (not to murder) and the religious (to obey his God). “He believed by virtue of the absurd; for there could be no question of human calculation, and it was indeed the absurd that God who required it of him should the next instant recall the requirement” (Kierkegaard, 1941b, p. 47). The choice to proceed with the sacrifice - which is upheld by New Testament writers as the supreme example of faith - confounds the author, Johannes de silentio, who argued that such an act of faith required the loss of one’s reason. Through the use of this satire, Kierkegaard highlighted the non-rational character of religious faith. Kierkegaard did not condone any abandonment of moral duty in favour of ‘doing your own thing’ under the guise of living in a ‘higher’ existence. He pointed out through the example above that this move should only be made in ‘fear and trembling’.
Kierkegaard addressed faith a great deal through his works on subjectivity, where similarities with Kant and Pascal can be noticed in regard to the limits of reason. In this religious stage the universal role of the ethical must be abandoned by a 'new self' who understands himself or herself as being entirely alone in a faith relationship with God. The movement into this third stage is not an easy one as it requires a leap from universal reason to a particular faith. One cannot authentically have faith in God by hiding amongst a crowd of believers. The “leap is the category of decision” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 99) and must be done alone. It is however, usually prompted by reflection upon an existential anxiety.

Regarding faith, Kierkegaard’s Climacus argued that it “requires that he [the individual] relinquish his understanding” which makes Christianity (or religion) “the most terrible of all decisions in a person’s life” because it is “not as a doctrine but as an existence-contradiction” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, pp. 372, 377, 383). Entry into the religious stage requires a leap by faith taking one beyond (not necessarily in opposition to) reason. The ethical is therefore annulled, not by any moral justification, but by faith that is entirely subjective. That is why Kierkegaard’s pseudonym Johannes de Silentio (John the Silent) explains, in a most exasperated tone, that “Abraham enjoys honor and glory as the father of faith, whereas he ought to be persecuted and convicted as a murderer” (Kierkegaard, 1941a, p. 80).

Kierkegaard referred quite often to the importance of suffering in its being able to produce an existential crisis for the individual. He argued that “Essentially, the religious address has [the task] of uplifting through
suffering” because “life lies in suffering” and that ”The aesthetic hero is great for the fact that he conquers, the religious hero is great for the fact that he suffers” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 436; 1967b, p. 411). Climacus added that, “The invitation to a religious address is quite simply this: Come here, all you who labor and are burdened - and the address presupposes that all are sufferers” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 437). Suffering is not just identified as the basic expression of the existential pathos and as representative of “the highest life”, but also as universalized in the statement that “all human beings suffer as long as they exist” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, pp. 440, 448). This suffering is a response to being unable to find a fully satisfactory meaning for life.

Kierkegaard claimed that this religious stage is to be understood in two parts – Religiousness A and Religiousness B, where the descriptions given so far apply to the former. Religiousness A is immanent, experienced by an “inward deepening which is dialectical” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 556) as the individual (existing in temporality) pursues the eternal. Climacus (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 557) argued that when existing in the stage of Religiousness A, this quest for eternal destiny can be present in paganism. But he claimed that Religiousness B, as the intensification of Religiousness A, is a necessary stage if one were to be a Christian.

Climacus (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 560) argued that Christianity could only be participated in “by immersing oneself in existing” and that through Religiousness B one’s existence-communication is not only inward as in Religiousness A, but extends outside the individual towards the hidden
presence of God. As such, it goes beyond one’s understanding so that one must ‘experience’ rather than ‘know’, because a relation with the divine is ‘unknowable’. He argued “that this cannot be thought is precisely the paradox (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 561).

Religiousness B is differentiated then from Religiousness A by being dialectical beyond the individual and is even more paradoxical than Religiousness A. It is therefore a greater “challenge to the rationalist project of rendering the whole of reality intelligible to human understanding” (Westphal, 1996, p. 180). Climacus was opposed to Hegel’s notion that the Zeitgeist can make rational sense of the world possible, thereby enabling opportunity to experience a sense of wonder by recognising one’s existence as absurd and as a paradox. While Kierkegaard may not have been entirely consistent with the distinction between Religiousness A and Religiousness B (D. Wood, 1998, p. 71), he did point out that he never referred to Religiousness A as Christian, even although Religiousness A is a prerequisite for Religiousness B, but he did describe the latter as specifically Christian.

Kierkegaard (1998, p. 41) made clear that the total thought present in all of his works was “becoming a Christian”. The expressed intention of his pseudonym Climacus was “to make it difficult to become a Christian” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 557). The stage of Religiousness B appears to facilitate such a purpose of becoming more ‘authentic’ as a Christian, because it requires the understanding of the individual to be crucified. One cannot play the part of a being a Christian in a crowd nor find God through
inward deepening alone, but must accept that Christianity entails reaching out to the unknowable in a relationship that is established on divine terms rather than human terms.

People do not experience only one of these stages at any moment and in fact can reside in more than one at any time of their lives. Within each of these stages there are further developments, but in general terms the aesthetic deals basically with a hedonic orientation, somewhat akin to Freud’s ‘Pleasure Principle’. The ethical stage involves ‘choosing yourself’, which is the non-contradicting element that lies deeper below the fragmented social roles that one may have. This level includes ethical duty and it also allows a meaning of life to be made. Lastly the religious stage, being paradoxical, is entered via a leap by faith which is made possible by a relationship with a divine being. Suffering provides the catalyst by which one reaches this point. Overall, Kierkegaard argued that the highest stage of existence for humankind is a religious one.

**Existentialism’s Embrace of a Religious Point of View**

While Kierkegaard’s stages of existence appear to have a religious *telos*, his philosophy, and indeed Existentialism in general, is often regarded as being opposed to the promotion of a religious point of view. If an existential perspective of spirituality is to be appropriate for providing a universal model for education, it must be demonstrated that it is able to embrace a religious world-view as would be required in the context of religiously based schools.
It is argued here that there is a certain kinship between Biblical scripture and Existentialism. However, Macquarrie (1955, p. 21) warns us from reading into sacred text what is not there, discouraging against reading “existentialism in biblical thought”. While religion is a call to believers to bind themselves to a formal framework, a doctrine of belief, there are clear themes with existential characteristics in both the Old and New Testaments. While it is not the purpose here to engage in a detailed study, some examples are helpful to support this claim.

After God dictated the terms of the Covenant to the tribes of ancient Israel, he then asked them to choose (Deuteronomy 30:19). This choice was to involve the whole person in a passionate commitment described as ‘love’ (Deuteronomy 30:16). This aspect of devoted commitment is developed further in the New Testament (Matthew 6:24, 22:37-40) where God himself is also described as love (I John 4:8). What is understood then is that the existing individual can choose whether or not to accept a relation with God that is personally meaningful. However, as Christianity is the ‘most terrible of decisions’ - as described by Kierkegaard - if this choice is made, by definition the individual must be fully and passionately committed to it because the choice (leap) involves one’s very existence. This holistic commitment through faith is one of relation, where the presence of God is understood to be present with the presence of the individual.

This last is not to be understood as an atomistic human individual coming to know an atomistic God. As with Kierkegaard’s description of the self being a relation that relates, so the ‘oneness’ of God (Deuteronomy 6:4) can
be described through the Trinitarian concept of *relation* (as opposed to ‘essents’ which would imply a concept of ‘Gods’ as in three ‘persons’) between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So God himself is understood as a relation, akin to how the existentialists describe the nature of the human individual.

Other examples of a kinship between the Bible and Existentialism include Job’s existential crisis and the *individuating* teachings of Jesus that require *authentic* individual responses (Matthew 10:39). On many occasions the recipients of the epistles are referred to as *strangers* in the world (I Peter 1:1) - a phrase that arouses an awareness of inauthentically existing as part of the crowd and is a reflection of the existential theme of alienation. The Apostle Paul’s call to “work out *your own* salvation” (my emphasis, Philippians 2:12) demonstrates the existential theme of *personal responsibility* for oneself and one’s walk of faith, which cannot be simply conforming to ‘what one does’ as part of the *they*.

Upholding the *humanity* (with its freedom) of the ‘other’ is a particularly strong message proclaimed by Existentialism. It is exemplified particularly through Martin Buber (2002) who argued that the relation with others should be understood as ‘I-Thou’ rather than ‘I-it’. This preference draws attention to the other existing individuals with whom one is in relation with rather than demeaning them to the forms of abstract categories as does Mozart’s Don Giovanni. Buber also argued that the issue of individual existence is one of relationships with ‘Thous’ in a community of relationships much like
Heidegger’s notion of being-with-others. These however, should not be regarded as being bundled in a collectivity of the they. He argued that -

Collectivity is not a binding but a bundling together... but community, growing community (which is all we have known so far) is the being no longer side by side but with one another of a multitude of persons. And this multitude, though it also moves towards one goal yet experiences everywhere a turning to, a dynamic facing of, the others, a flowing from I to Thou. (Buber, 2002, p. 37)

This principle is also evidenced by Kierkegaard’s Climacus, who stated that “As in the highest form of religion. The individual is primarily related to God and then to the community, but this primary relation is the highest, yet does not neglect the second” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.2, p. 90). Therefore, while the primary concern is for the individual, and in this section, the individual’s relation with God, there does remain the important aspect of exercising ethical responsibilities and also participating as part of a community.

Accordingly, the notion of community in a religious setting is not objected to by the existentialists, as long as it retains the characteristics of community as identified above, rather than just becoming a collective arm of a state, opposing individual authenticity.

While many other examples and parallels could be included, it would be wrong to conclude that the philosophy of Existentialism could in any way be regarded as Christian, because the modes of philosophy and of religious faith are quite distinct - though not contradictory. Heidegger (1959, p. 7) himself did not approve of the concept of a ‘Christian philosophy’, and called such a notion “a round square and a misunderstanding”. However, it is argued that an existential perspective “can be interpreted in a way that is compatible with Christian faith, and it can yield important insights into the
faith” (Macquarrie, 1994, p. 108). In other words, an existential perspective of spirituality is not understood to be necessarily secular in nature; it can actually embrace a religious view.

**Conclusion**

It has been argued here that an existential faith that is subjective in nature is not irrational in the sense that it works against reason or empirical evidence. It must go beyond the limits of reason, as is seen in Kierkegaard’s religious stage of individual development, which deals with a dimension that involves individual authentic faith and individual responsibility. According to the Apostle Paul, one works out one’s own salvation. It is argued in this thesis that Existentialism can indeed embrace both religious and secular positions on spirituality. Consequently, Existentialism is argued to be an appropriate perspective for formulating a universal framework for spirituality which can be applicable for both denominational and state run educational environments. However, this may be disputed by some such as Nash, Breese and Kilpatrick, who, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, insist on the notions that absolute truth, objective facts and the primacy of belonging to an institution are necessary in order to justify a religious faith. Nevertheless, an existential perspective can embrace a religious view, and it is therefore suitable for using in a framework of spiritual development in religious as well as non-religious school settings.
Building on the foregoing argument, this chapter aims to flesh out an existential framework of spirituality. In doing so, ten key concepts of Existentialism are identified as having particular importance. A brief overview of these concepts is initially presented, drawing from the more detailed examination of the philosophy itself as presented in Chapter Three. The balance of this chapter is then made up of the implications that each of these ten concepts has for spirituality. The implications for education of this framework will then be examined in the following chapter.

5.1 A Brief Overview of Existentialism

Existentialism is not a singular philosophy. The term ‘Existentialism’ is used to refer to common concepts found among various existential perspectives. There is no singular ‘existential perspective’, although one is here crafted by selectively emphasising particular views of some theorists at the expense of others, and by maintaining a degree of conceptual generality. For example, some of Sartre’s popular notions of individual freedom are not included within the existential perspective given in this thesis, because his description does not integrate well with the other concepts. Drawing on the more detailed examination of Existentialism in Chapter Three, ten concepts are here identified as central: the individual as relation; as culturally embedded; as freedom; as holistic; as meaning-maker-in-the-world; as maker of self-
identity; and the concepts of authenticity; existential crisis; understanding as hermeneutical phenomenology; and the centring of the individual.

The concept of the individual as relation is derived from the notion that one is in-the-world. The individual cannot be understood in any condition outside or before being constituted by the relations of being in-the-world (Heidegger, 1959, p. 74; 1996, p. 2). The individual is not understood as atomistic or detached from the world, because each entity is already historical in her or his being. The notion of the 'existing individual' refers to a being that is inseparable from her or his relation with the social and physical environments. The self is described as “spirit” and as the “relation which relates to itself” (Kierkegaard, 1989, p. 43), a purposeful spiritual will (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 162) and the relationship “of responding to being” (Heidegger, 1969, p. 31). This individual is inseparable from these relations and is understood as being constituted by them.

The second concept - that of the individual being culturally embedded - flows from the notion of facticity. It is the notion that one is already an historical being composed of relations with a particular culture. The ‘world’ into which one finds oneself thrown is social and cultural. It provides the meanings and understandings for how one conducts one’s life in order to comply with what is expected of the norm. Existentialism contends that the individual is greatly influenced by these relations in the world yet, far from becoming totally determined by them, is able to exercise a degree of agency that enables the formation of personal views and commitments. The individual in other words, has choice.
The third concept - that of the individual as freedom - addresses one’s ability to make choices and to create. This is not a contradiction to the foregoing concept of cultural embeddedness, since Existentialism regards the individual both as having agency and as being a product of social reproduction. The choice available though one’s freedom is always one’s own choice. One understands oneself as being culturally embedded, but if one so chooses, one can make the values and meanings of society to be one’s own, or one can choose otherwise. Freedom allows one to project from one’s own present situation to choose possibilities for the future. With this freedom however also comes personal responsibility.

The fourth concept - that of the individual as an holistic entity - is fundamental to what is understood to be the ‘truly human individual’. Existential philosophy insists that the individual is irreducible. It does not support dualistic notions such as mind/body, rational/emotional or subject/object, but portrays the individual as a presence whose essence is ‘existence’ (Heidegger, 1996, p. 213). Human entities certainly have attributes, such as being a body and being rational. However, individuals are always more than any or all of these and cannot be reduced to simply being these attributes.

The fifth concept - that of the individual as a meaning-maker-in-the-world - draws upon the defining characteristic of Heidegger’s Da-sein, in that Da-sein has a concern for the issue of the meaning of her or his being. The meaning of one’s being or ‘life’, is understood existentially as a subjective truth. The emphasis is not so much upon the meaning, but rather the
meaning that is made by one according to the way one relates oneself to the world one is in. A personally relevant meaning is the emphasis of concern. Before this becomes an issue, one understands oneself from a meaning assumed through a particular culture that is inherent to being-in-the-world-with-others. This understanding is inauthentic in that one conducts oneself by doing what is expected by the crowd or the ‘they’. Authentic self-understanding (existentiell) involves personal choice in meaning-making and therefore responsibility, as it seriously questions the publicly assumed meanings that one has ‘complacently’ received in one’s ‘everyday averageness’ of being a part of the crowd. ‘Understanding’ here is conceptualised using meanings that are hermeneutically constructed by the individual.

The sixth concept - that of the individual as maker of self-identity - refers to one’s ability to answer the question ‘who am I?’. One finds oneself thrown into the world, where existing relationships of being-in-the-world, exist already and contribute to what is referred to as one’s facticity. The idea of a ‘social self’ does not determine the personal sense of self-identity within a given culture. This is created and made by each authentic individual. The freedom to which individuals are condemned allows them to construct themselves (Sartre, 1969, p. 476) and re-create themselves (Nietzsche, 1978, p. 86). One’s identity is closely aligned with the personal characteristics that enable one to value and evaluate.

The seventh concept - that of authenticity - involves one in determining how meanings are to count in one’s situation and how one is to relate to
them. Authenticity is of greater value than inauthentically living in ‘everyday averageness’. To become authentic one needs to make the meanings one lives by, one’s own. To develop an authentic personal stance, one’s freedom to choose needs to be aroused. This freedom is projected from one’s present situation into the future, where one has possibilities. This requires one to take up individual responsibility for the way one understands oneself, what one values, and what one’s future possibilities (projects) are to be.

The eighth concept - that of the existential crisis - provides a means by which one can become authentic. Awareness of one’s freedom develops as a ‘crisis’ confronts the way one relates to publicly assumed meanings. It challenges whether the meanings and their accompanying values of society offer real significance for one’s own experiences, and questions whether they provide a satisfying sense of meaning and purpose for one’s existence as a whole. Angst is produced at the moment of decision when this freedom to choose is exercised to either accept these meanings as one’s own, or to make new ones by which to live. The Angst individuates, in that the meanings decided upon are one’s own for which one becomes responsible.

The ninth concept - that of understanding as hermeneutical phenomenology - describes the way in which an individual makes interpretations and meanings. This is a description and is not a method of how understanding can be developed. The publicly assumed meanings and the ways in which one relates to them become disclosed or revealed to the individual phenomenologically through a crisis. This is not to say that the
Phenomena of things become revealed as portrayed in Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology. Rather, existential phenomenology is the revealing of the meanings and interpretations that individuals give to phenomena - it is the ‘self-showing itself’ (Heidegger, 1996, pp. 27-28). These meanings and interpretations are projected from the horizon that one has, the way one already understands the world. The horizon of self is always referred to as one engages in any meaning-sensing and meaning-making, and so is hermeneutical in character.

The tenth concept - that Existentialism centres the individual - identifies the focus of concern of the philosophy. Such a centring does not work against contemporary notions of ‘decentring the subject’. Rather the interest is upon the authentic self, whose horizon is of central concern when it comes to the matter of understanding, especially understanding the existential concerns of who one is and what the purpose of one’s own life is. These concerns, being existential, require the authentic agent to play a central role, because it is from such a position that understandings, decisions and choices are made.

The foregoing ten concepts are now taken up in the following sections of this chapter where their implications for spirituality are drawn out and discussed. It will be seen that each concept is not discrete from the others. Discussions within each of the sections will often refer to the other concepts, as they form an integrated set.
5.2 The Individual as a Relation

The ‘existing individual’ is understood to be a “relation that relates to itself” (Kierkegaard, 1989, p. 43). Being a relation-in-the-world, one’s facticity makes one a part of a given culture. The individual is composed partly of the established meanings of a culture and partly from the way that he or she relates to these meanings and their associated values. One may acknowledge society’s norms that ‘this is what one does’ and is expected to do as part of the normal everyday dealings with one another, but these meanings may not hold any personally significant value. It is in this context that the notion of ‘subjective truth’ refers not to the truth criteria of a particular belief or meaning, but to the way that an individual relates.

Truth for Kierkegaard is subjectivity - an existential subjectivity that is not inward looking but is founded upon its relations as a result of existing in-the-world. ‘Truth’ is not understood in the way a belief about reality stands in relation to ‘objective’ reality itself, but in how one relates to the meanings of one’s existence. While rational efforts to verify knowledge do have a place, the emphasis of concern for Existentialism is how one relates to meanings and understandings. “The crucial thing is not what I believe in - not in the object of my belief - but in the way in which I believe that object” (Wahl, 1969, p. 20). While this is the emphasis of the philosophy, it does not imply an acceptance of relativism where any object of belief is as good as any other. Existentialism does not take a relativistic view of knowledge but simply understands its contingency.
The meaning that has most concern for spirituality is basically the meaning of one’s life, which can be established either through the frameworks of a culture or can be created by the individual. It is impossible to verify that one’s understanding of the meaning of life is objectively true, because one cannot transcend one’s subjectivity. Therefore, no universal meaning of life can be assumed. As Ellin (1995, p. 325) argues, “giving meaning to your life is something you must do for yourself. And you must do it, as the existentialists quite correctly point out, without any sure proof that what you are doing is correct”. The emphasis upon the relation that one has towards meanings implies that one can “hold firmly to what I believe to be true, even though I know it might conceivably by false” (Polanyi, 1958, p. 214). As Kierkegaard has argued - 

What matters is to find my purpose, to see what it really is that God wills that I shall do; the crucial thing is to find a truth that is truth for me, to find the idea for which I am willing to live and die. (Kierkegaard, 1987, vol.2, p. 361)

The approach that aims to verify such meanings themselves would be more theological than spiritual. Existential spirituality focuses on the relation one has to relevant and personal meanings from such frameworks and does not place as great an emphasis upon seeking meanings about frameworks, although this latter aspect must still play a part in the contingency of one’s spirituality.

Spirituality from an existential perspective does not primarily aim at the status of meanings, but rather it emphasises how the individual relates to them. The individual can be “in truth” if her or his “how of this relation is in truth” (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 199). This is demonstrated through
Victor Frankl’s (1959) writings about his experiences in Nazi concentration camps. The important existential issue of identity that he raised in this instance was how one related to and made sense and meaning of the facticity of being a prisoner, and not from the fact of simply being categorised as a prisoner.

As the individual is understood to be in relation, the major emphasis according to this existential framework for spirituality is how she or he relates to the meanings that are provided by cultural frameworks (e.g., religions) or by the self. One’s spirituality is found through the quality of one’s relations to these meanings. As the individual is uniquely situated among relations-in-the-world, his or her sense of identity can be gained from such a position. However, more revealing of one’s identity is the value that one places in these relations, whereby one identifies the criteria by which one can prioritize and value each of the relations that one has in the world. These criteria form a basis of what one is willing to stand for - or even die for. They identify who one is.

5.3 The Individual as Culturally Embedded

Existentially, all individuals are understood to be in-the-world, where the ‘world’ includes the ‘external’ frameworks found in formal religions and world-views. From an existential perspective of spirituality there is the potential to embrace an engagement with formalised religions and world-views, in such a manner that one evaluates one’s relation to them, and the reasons upon which these evaluations are based. The individual is already an historically and culturally embedded being, but can re-evaluate how he or she relates to
the things that have been received from society as particular meanings become disclosed.

As an individual attempts to make sense of the world he or she is in, personal identity and the meaning of life operate from an already existing horizon of understanding. This horizon consists to a large extent of meanings received from one's culture. One cannot ‘think’ or reason without these because they constitute what one thinks with. These meanings may often not consist in accurate representations of formal frameworks, but they nevertheless represent the ‘world’ as interpreted and understood by the individual.

As a consequence of people’s not committing themselves to a dichotomy between ‘objective’ cosmological world-views and ‘subjective’ personal meanings, an existential model of spirituality is able to present a view that is not tied to religiosity. One advantage that this model has over the ‘religious’ ones that Long (2000), Wright (2000) and others propose, is that it does not just involve imposing an external framework of meanings upon the individual, in the assumption that spiritual meanings can be transmitted from without to within. As Ellin (1995, p. 304) remarks, “no new information” or ‘external’ body of knowledge, could count as the meaning of life.

In addition to claiming from this existential framework that spirituality is not something that can be developed by imposing information from the ‘outside’, there is also a rejection of the Platonic view that meaning can be developed simply by drawing it out from ‘inside’ the individual. While ‘subjectivity’,
‘subjective truth’ and ‘inward looking’ are terms often referred to by this perspective, they do not indicate that personal inner truth can ‘emerge’ independently from being-in-the-world. The individual is not atomistic nor exists in a detached way from the world, and so there is no independent inner realm to be accessed. The self is a relation that relates and therefore is inseparable from the cultural world of its facticity.

5.4 The Individual as Free to Choose

While the individual is understood to be embedded within a particular culture, this does not negate agency. As has been previously argued, a certain freedom can be exercised with regards to how one relates to the meanings that one receives from a culture (Wertsche, 1998). A certain ‘space’ can be created between the frameworks provided by a society and the individually created meanings that offer personal significance. This space can be described as presenting a “dangerous” tension between “the upper millstone of its traditional definition, as a particular path given by a tradition or community, and the lower of its modern and post-modern definition as the individual’s exalted or transcending experience” (Chater, 2000, p. 194). The dangerous existence between these two ultimate concepts is one of struggle, and it is argued by Chater that spirituality is in this encounter. He describes this as “The pain-filled struggle with the contradictions in and between personal life-experience and received, authoritative wisdom. It is a place of contradiction, conflict, pain and growth” (Chater, 2000, p. 200). Spirituality is similarly described by Carr (1999, p. 462) to be “about struggle, anxiety, temptation, loss, alienation, defeat, and even despair”. From an existential perspective there is no support for the metaphor of a ‘space’ that
exists between these apparently polar opposites. However, it is argued here that spiritual development does require this sort of anguish and struggle as one strives to exercise one’s sense of freedom and decide which meanings offer greater personal significance, and therefore how one relates to these.

According to this existential framework, all individuals have a degree of autonomy, where the ‘self’ is often referred to as ‘freedom’ (Kierkegaard, 1987, vol.2, pp. 214-215). But it is argued that people do not readily employ their freedom and indeed tend to dread it. This has implications for the development of spirituality. While the existing individual is already spiritual, this spirituality can be developed further through exercising her or his freedom. ‘Spirit’ refers to a dynamic presence, so the spiritual dimension is also dynamic, being “the disciplined path along which ‘existence’ is enhanced” (Macquarrie, 1972a, p. 71) via ‘moments of decision’. The individual operates from a set of intentions based upon certain meanings gained from frameworks inherent in the world in which she or he has presence. However, the life that does not - and may even refuse to - accept the freedom to decide for oneself and become personally responsible for what meanings are to count as significant is said to be “inauthentic”, and is ‘lost’ in the crowd. Therefore, development of the spiritual dimension is understood to involve the freedom to choose.

There is encouragement from this existential framework of spirituality for one to choose authentically (Heidegger, 1988, p. 170) oneself (Kierkegaard, 1987, vol.2, p. 259), and to create and own one’s possibilities. Consequently, this model is quite different from those that emphasise the
immersion of the individual in particular traditions of various world-views. Such models only consider the internal consistency offered by formal frameworks or the diversity of world-views ‘out there’, without including the aspect of personal relevance being made with its associated ownership and commitment. These models could potentially promote only inauthentic spirituality. The existential model goes beyond this, and addresses the aspect of how an individual relates to and possibly finds personal significance and meanings in religious and other world-views, by exercising freedom to choose these meanings as his or her own.

5.5 The Holism of the Individual

The term ‘presence’ that is often used to describe one’s being implies a holistic concept, where individuals are argued to consist of the various relationships that they are in as a result of being a presence-with-others. These relations include the ‘not yet’ (future) possibilities that are able to be projected from one’s situation. Having presence in differing categories of relationships does not, however, necessarily fragment individuals as some claim (Bauman, 1995, p. 91; Standish, 1995, p. 121). Kierkegaard (1987, vol.2, p. 327) has argued that “it is dangerous to have become so fragmented”. The individual is a relation (singular) that relates to itself (Kierkegaard, 1989, p. 43). The individual is able to pull all these aspects together to form a connected and unified whole. Each human identity is regarded as a holistic presence that relates to these relationships, in the sense that it is the same self present in each role (Schrag, 1997, p. 17), although there may be paradoxes acknowledged between certain ‘fragments’. As argued by Heidegger (1996, p. 356), “Everyday Da-sein is
dispersed in the multiplicity of what ‘happens’ daily... So if it (Dasein) wants to come to itself, it must first pull itself together from the dispersion and the disconnectedness of what has just ‘happened’”. Existentialism portrays these ‘various presences’ as ‘one’, due to the unifying horizon of time - the moment - and also because they are united by *care* (Heidegger, 1996, p. 180). This ‘care’ or ‘passion’ (Kierkegaard) is used to describe the holistic and unified concern one has for one’s existence, and for one’s future possibilities.

One’s spirituality is certainly rational and, as such, recognises its limits. Existentialism is not opposed to rationality but is against *abstractness* (Barrett, 1990, p. 269), because abstraction is uninterested in the existing individual (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 302). As well as being rational, all the other aspects related to being a *whole person* are included. In this sense, one’s own meaning of life cannot simply be an ‘intellectual knowing’, because such a meaning is entwined with emotions, intentions and actions - one’s whole presence. Such a meaning is part of one’s *being*, and may not necessarily be clear to the conscience. This is why a model of authenticity can be regarded as superior to a model of autonomy because the latter implies only rationality while the former involves the whole person (Leahy, 1994, p. 448).

Kierkegaard referred to this holistic involvement of the individual as involving the ‘passions’. He argued that “for the existing person, passion is existence at its very highest - and we are, after all, existing persons” (Kierkegaard, 1992, p. 197). According to this existential model, choice is
certainly a rational activity, but it is also more than this. As one understands the significance of meanings that give sense to one's particular experiences, one responds holistically by forming views and commitments that incorporate more than just rational or intellectual knowing. One goes 'beyond' these by a leap, which involves the commitment of one's whole being, in a passionate sense, as one understands that one's very existence and meaning of existence rest upon this decisive choice.

5.6 The Individual as a Meaning-Maker-in-the-World

Existentialism presumes that human individuals are universally characterised by having a concern about the meaning of their being (Heidegger, 1996, pp. 10, 15), and spirituality is understood to be an engagement with the meaning of one's life. Spirituality, then, is an inherent aspect of the question of the meaning of being, which Heidegger claimed to be a part of Dasein's very nature. The individual is understood through meanings that are either found within formal cultural frameworks or created by the person. As a relation, these meanings take on a greater significance spiritually when the individual makes these meanings his or her own. The meanings that have central importance for this existential framework of spirituality are those that relate specifically to one's being and the fundamental purposes of one's life.

In Chapter Two, it was recognised that some scholars have divided the issue of one's being, that is of one's life, into two questions - 'What is the meaning of life?' and 'What is the meaning of my life?'. These have been described as the cosmological and terrestrial (Yalom, 1980), or as religious traditions and personal attitudes (Dorr, 1990). From an existential
perspective the question of the cosmological/religious tradition (the possible meaning) is not the primary one - as is apparent from the phenomenological religious view.

The question has already been discussed previously in Chapter Three as to why any ‘objective knowing’ is a ‘risk’ from this perspective (or is even possible). It is claimed by Kierkegaard that all meanings lack any absolute certainty and so are contingent. In this vein, Kierkegaard argued that even within the cultural context of his Christian Denmark, the only proof of Christianity would be the second coming of Christ himself. Until such an event, each individual is left responsible for deciding upon a faith in a meaning of life that is meaningful for him or herself, but for which there is no guarantee that it is the correct one. Thus, the spiritual dimension never ‘arrives’ at an ultimate meaning (except possibly when one’s death brings an end to the project). It is by nature always subject to further scrutiny.

However, from this existential perspective, the terrestrial/personal question (my meaning) is also not to be the only issue - as it is in the approach of psychology and psychotherapy identified in Chapter Two. Although these latter fields identify that the question is a specifically existential one, for this existential framework the importance of cultural influences - and therefore the need to recognise such sources - is also acknowledged. This framework of spirituality involves the integration of both the cosmological and the terrestrial questions into the singular issue of the meaning of self and the universe where “nothing is left out” (Britton, 1969, p. 20). According to this framework it is understood that these questions should not be reduced to
‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ concerns, because both form an holistic understanding of the issue of being for the individual.

Existential philosophy is commonly believed to take life, of and by itself, as having no inherent meaning (Murdoch, 1999, p. 75), but this does not mean that one cannot recognise a deity or formal philosophy ‘out there’ that is able to provide a meaning for life. Existentialism, after all, can embrace a religious view of life, as has been identified in Chapter Four. It is beings who have meanings and purposes, not abstract ideas such as ‘life’ and ‘education’. What the existential view contends is that a meaning of life must be contingent, although that contingency may be realised by the individual’s relations with a deity or world-view. There is seen to be no universal meaning of life that inherently emerges for all individuals from the facticity of their relationships as a result of simply having a presence-in-the-world. If there is a meaning of life ‘out there’, it can only become a meaning of life for the individual if she or he relates to it in such a way that it becomes personally significant and meaningful.

According to this existential framework, there is a certain moral obligation required of the authentic individual to his or her fellow human beings. This is based upon the understanding that the individual is a being-in-the-world-with-others. Such a notion places value on individuals as attached members-with-others rather than as detached entities (Van Cleve Morris, 1990, p. 51). Consequently, there “is an ethical relationship, a relationship of infinite responsibility for the other” (Biesta, 1998, p. 14). As such, because one can exercise a certain existentiell understanding for oneself, this is to be
projected for others, thereby acknowledging them as fellow beings and not as ‘objects’ or things. Heidegger argued that “Being-in-the-world is initially absorbed in the world taken care of” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 161), where ‘taking care of the world’ is guided by circumspection. This holistic understanding of circumspection, which includes one’s meaning of being, identity and purpose of life, acknowledges other people as fellow entities in-the-world. By definition one’s dealings with other people should not be reduced to I-thing relations (Heidegger, 1996, p. 100).

According to Martin Buber, other people are to be considered as ‘Thous’ and not ‘its’, and therefore people should relate to one another in I-Thou relationships. He argued that the notion of personal responsibility that accompanies one’s freedom must “be brought back from the province of specialized ethics, of an ‘ought’... into that of lived life” (Buber, 2002, p. 18), and it should therefore be an obligation which lies with each ‘existing individual’. Buber’s notion of the I-Thou relationship was addressed by Heidegger (1988, p. 278), who argued that each entity in the relation should be seen in terms of being-in-the-world and therefore being-with each other. Others are not to be treated as isolated egos but rather as fellow beings. There is not a requirement to ‘unself’ in order to acknowledge the ‘other reality’ of other egos (Cooper, 1999, p. 174), because there is only the one reality in which beings exist together.

The individual, according to this existential framework, should be heedful of having and acting out of concern for his or her fellow-beings. Although one is free, one is not a spectator to the lives of others, but is a fellow
participant with them. For the individual there should be no alienation from others. According to this framework, there should be recognition of the freedom of others, although the extent to which one is obligated to maximize freedoms of others cannot be universalized, as each existing individual must decide this from her or his own situation. Such decisions may lead to actions which appear unethical, as understood by Kierkegaard’s ‘teleological suspension of the ethical’, as is explained in Chapter Four. Therefore, it would appear that moral obligations can be recommended from this existential framework, i.e. one’s spirituality, from which one makes evaluations, may require the ethical to be suspended - although this is highly unlikely, especially within an educational context.

5.7 The Individual as Maker of Self-Identity

From an existential perspective of spirituality, individuals play an active role in giving meaning to their sense of self-identity. For meaning to be made of one’s self-identity, one needs to engage with the issue of ‘who am I?’. This matter of identity formation is recognised within the various fields discussed in Chapter Three specifically to be of existential concern. The identity of the who in the quest of ‘who am I?’ is more commonly not the I of Da-sein, but rather the they-self (Heidegger, 1996, p. 247). Therefore, it is the authentic ‘who’ that is of existentiell concern here. This refers to the ‘existing individual’ exercising agency to evaluate and choose between the meanings that offer personal significance.

Identity is gained by how an individual relates to and values his or her relations. It is not made through objective or abstract categories, which
relate to the ‘what’ of one’s being (for example gender, age, rationality, career, sibling status, etc.). This latter categorisation can only be an attempt to answer the question ‘what am I?’ which is an aspect of the metaphysical question ‘what is man?’ However, an appeal to such categories cannot address the existential question ‘who am I?’ Personal identity cannot be provided “by any list of properties of other ranges, about my physical description, provenance, background, capacities, and so on” (C. Taylor, 1985, p. 34). While these may offer some reference, they cannot define what makes one different from someone else. That is to say, they cannot contain one’s identity.

The notion of making or creating one’s identity does not imply that this can be achieved outside the constraints of cultural frameworks which provide so much of the meaning by which one understands one’s place in the world and one’s identity. According to Taylor -

My self-definition is understood as an answer to the question Who I am. And this question finds its original sense in the interchange of speakers. I define who I am by defining where I speak from, in the family tree, in social space, in the geography of social statuses and functions, in my intimate relations to the ones I love, and also in the space of moral and spiritual orientation within which my most important defining relations are lived out. (C. Taylor, 1989, p. 35)

Taylor recognises that self-identity involves some reference to a defining community from which frameworks are gained. These provide the necessary background for moral judgements, intuitions and relations. He argues that these frameworks are impossible for the individual to do without (C. Taylor, 1989, pp. 26-27). Frameworks provide a sense of meaning in which “we make sense of our lives spiritually”, where he defines the ‘spiritual’
as a ‘strong evaluation’, able to provide the criteria for what one regards as
good and bad, and is the basis for moral judgements and intentions.

These evaluations define one’s sense of self-identity because they form
the horizon from which individuals reflect and evaluate. They are described
further by Taylor as ‘strong’ or ‘deep’, because the individual who is a strong
evaluator “goes deeper” and “characterizes his motivation at greater depth”
(C. Taylor, 1985, p. 25). A strong evaluation generally refers to the quality of
motivations, and can be differentiated from ‘weak evaluations’, which focus
only on outcomes (C. Taylor, 1985, p. 16). Strong evaluations contribute to
one’s spirituality because they are chosen and made valuable by the
individual on the basis of what she or he considers to be worthwhile. They
identify the reasons why one does (acting, judging, etc.) what one does.
These reasons reveal both what is of importance, and the criteria by which
they are valued. However, Taylor warns that sometimes this can involve
self-deluding interpretations in order to preserve current desires, so it is
argued that these strong evaluations are more effectively formed when they
actively engage with the reasons that support the strong evaluations of other
individuals (Hedman, 1984, pp. 358-359).

Understanding self-identity in this way can explain why, when one claims
to be a different person from what one was previously, one is not referring to
the metaphysical being of the continuity of the person, but instead to a
decision to differentiate the emphasis on certain ethical and spiritual traits
used to ground one’s evaluations and intentions (Morgan, 1996, pp. 242-
243). Becoming a different person involves a developing spirituality which,
being of a dynamic nature involving the freedom to make decisions, may change as particular meanings are understood to have different relevance for the experiences of the existing individual. This accords well with the contemporary acknowledgement that the individual, within a cultural context, has an active role in crafting and unfolding personal identity. This takes place in a ‘circular’ type of discourse between one’s personal identity and one’s social identity, where neither is mutually exclusive of the other (Archer, 2000, p. 288).

Self-identity consists of both received frameworks and the individual’s stance on moral and spiritual matters - one’s strong evaluation. Therefore, from an existential perspective of spirituality, there is an attempt to examine these meanings of life and one’s self-identity that already exist within the horizons of individuals. The stance that one has from one’s horizon, is often concealed (Heidegger, 1996, p. 31), and therefore needs to become a phenomenon – an “unconcealment” - for the self to be consciously aware. Therefore, making meaning and sense of one’s self-identity, involves one in being able to articulate (C. Taylor, 1985, p. 26) what one stands for, and why one values one’s position.

5.8 Authenticity

Existential spirituality can either be inauthentic or authentic. Individuals who have inauthentic spirituality understand themselves and the purpose of life in general through public frameworks only. They have not necessarily had to make a personal commitment to them but accept them as having authoritative explanations of their being. These public frameworks and
understandings may suggest objectivity and abstraction, and appeal to the general principles of a world-view that attempt to give unity to all.

Kierkegaard called the individual away from accepting such assumptions (from an inauthentic spirituality) and argued that-

The dubiousness of abstraction manifests itself precisely in connection with all existential questions, from which abstraction removes the difficulty by omitting it and then boasts of having explained everything. It explains immortality in general... But abstraction does not care about whether a particular existing human being is immortal, and just that is the difficulty. It is disinterested, but the difficulty of existence is the existing person's interest, and the existing person is infinitely interested in existing. (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 302)

Authentic spirituality is based on freedom of choice, and involves one's coming to understand how meanings and frameworks are to count for one's own situation, and then to take ownership of this. The attempt to form a unified sense of meaning and purpose for one's life in this universe, the "connectedness of life" (Heidegger, 1996 p. 356), is authenticity.

The individual may not be consciously aware of inauthentic intentions that are based on public understandings of meaning. It is not until these are revealed through an aroused awareness that they are able to become personally meaningful and therefore authentic. However, as Heidegger argued, there is no ultimate authenticity because individuals are unable to understand any meaning totally outside public discourse. Therefore even if a spiritual development has increasing authenticity, it nevertheless always has some inauthenticity involved.

People operate inauthentically for the most part in 'everyday averageness', where the individual can become 'lost' in the crowd. However, through a
realisation (generally brought on by a crisis) that the taken-for-granted meanings by which one lives are really the meanings of others and do not necessarily have relevance for one’s own existence, authenticity can be gained by making meanings become personal. A Nietzschean re-evaluation of society’s values does not imply discarding them. It can simply describe the process of making such values belong to the person where a commitment to them is made by the individual. Authenticity does, however, make opportunity for the individual no longer to be accepting of the values and meanings of society and to adopt quite different but personally more meaningful values and meanings. From the conservative perspective of the they, this can be interpreted as presenting a threat to the social norm. This is why authenticity can be somewhat ‘risky’ for the individual and can evoke feelings of dread and Angst.

5.9 The Existential Crisis

It is argued in this thesis that through an existential crisis much more meaningful principles on which to base one’s spirituality are gained authentically, although it is acknowledged that individuals more often live their lives inauthentically. The existential crisis is the major catalyst for entering into authenticity, which thereby makes the further development of spirituality a possibility. This existential crisis is characterised by Angst, commonly expressed as feelings of doubt and anxiety. These confronting sensations are necessary to providing the means by which an individual can develop authentic spirituality.
The possibilities that one has are to be recognised and *grasped*, as one *chooses* oneself in one’s situation. A development of the spiritual dimension is then made possible through the awareness that one has of realising possibilities of meaning. These possibilities are only recognised as one’s *own* through authenticity. Therefore authenticity requires the existential crisis to call the individual out from the crowd and into her or his own individuality. The crisis individuates, it “throws Da-sein back upon that for which it is anxious, its authentic potentiality-for-being-in-the-world” (Heidegger, 1996, pp. 175-176).

This model of spirituality portrays the *development* of spirituality as depending upon the experience of a crisis. Heidegger (1996, p. 8) argued, for example, that “a science’s level of development is determined by the extent to which it is *capable* of a crisis in its basic concepts”, and he described this crisis as “the relation of positive questioning to the matter in question”. Therefore, by implication, the *development* of an individual, whose meaning of being or meaning of life is an issue, depends upon *questioning* the way he or she *relates* to the taken-for-granted basic concepts or meanings, that are disclosed to the self. These public meanings of the world are never identified as requiring questioning until an existential crisis makes one aware of their existence. The individual is confronted with how he or she relates to these meanings and their associated values, and is given opportunity to consider other possibilities either in the way to which these meanings are related, or alternatively by the creation or adoption of other meanings. These possible relations require a personal commitment
and responsibility, but they in turn offer meanings that are much more significant.

One can exercise a freedom to choose oneself and in so doing become personally responsible for one’s spirituality. Kierkegaard called this freedom to choose oneself a ‘dizziness’ and Sartre called it a ‘terror’, but Heidegger less dramatically stated that it could just refer to simply choosing what is before one. However it is perceived, it refers to a commitment with one’s whole existence (passion) to a sense of meaning for one’s situation. Without a crisis to make one become aware of public meanings that give sense to life, the spirituality of the individual would remain essentially inauthentic and under-developed.

5.10 Understanding as Hermeneutical Phenomenology

According to the existential framework described here in this thesis, the individual is not an epistemological subject who knows a way-to-be. Heidegger avoided the notion that people come ‘to know’ conceptually (begreifen) objective interpersonal norms, values and truths. Because phenomena cannot reveal themselves to the individual, Heidegger (1996, pp. 160-161) argued that he or she comes to understand (verstehen) through circumspection. Consequently one’s ‘know-how’, is embedded in the overall understanding or ‘horizon’.

For this existential framework, the human individual gains self-understanding (existentiell) by interpretation. The individual develops spiritually by making interpretations via her or his horizon, which exists
already as part of the facticity of being a historical being-in-the-world. The horizon from which one thinks contains all of one’s beliefs, values and knowledge, which remain ‘hidden’ inauthentically until becoming available for examination by becoming disclosed. It is impossible to ‘bracket out’ one’s horizon and this is why one can never become totally authentic. All understanding, from this perspective, is built on a hermeneutical circle based upon continual self-reference, and so one is unable to gain a spiritual understanding ‘outside’ the circle.

Spirituality is developed hermeneutically as one’s horizon interprets the meanings of phenomena. These meanings become more authentic when they are gained through deep, reflective questioning. That is to say, authentic spirituality is achieved when meanings that have constituted one’s horizon are revealed and reassessed, or new meanings are engaged with, in the light of how one relates to them. Components of one’s horizon can be disclosed in such a way that their unity with other components is called into question. This disclosure of hidden meanings can be achieved through a crisis as mentioned in the previous section, and the unity of spiritual understanding (i.e. of one’s existence) is increased by drawing oneself out from the fragmented roles of being a part of the crowd.

Acknowledgment of the influence of existing understandings in this ‘hermeneutical circle’ is given by an existential perspective. Understanding from this hermeneutic circle is not so individualistic that one can only interpret according to what one already ‘knows’. This would be an extreme form of subjectivity leading to solipsism. The individual is a presence-with-
others and so understanding is intersubjective and involves the ‘fusion’ of other horizons. *Dialogue* is the “existential encounter” (Michelfelder & Palmer, 1989, p. 5) through which *doubt* can emerge to disclose and confront inauthentic beliefs. The way one relates to one’s own horizon can be ‘comfortably’ inauthentic until, through dialogue, another horizon challenges one’s meanings - which can be either inauthentic or authentic.

It was mentioned that indirect communication is a means that is employed by existentialists to produce a crisis. This can be seen also to be a form of dialogue, if the reader is ‘open’ as Gadamer and Heidegger described, and *questions* (Graybill, 1997, p. 44) how he or she relates to the challenge presented by the author’s horizon. Kierkegaard often presented Jesus and Socrates as exemplars of effective indirect communication. Jesus often challenged his listeners as to what they understood personally, and how from their current horizons they related to the sometimes paradoxical and challenging encounters presented by engaging with his different and new horizon. As an example (although not specifically Kierkegaard’s), when Jesus’ disciples replied that people thought he could either be John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the other prophets, he asked “but what about you? Who do you say I am?” (Matthew 16:13-15, my emphasis). Such probing questions disclose the meanings of one’s horizon to oneself and often confront the self with a paradox, and through the encounter ask to reveal how one relates to these. One must actively engage in this sort of dialogue that is presented because to *understand* is also to *participate* (Kerdeman, 1998, p. 259).
This form of dialogue provides opportunity to reinterpret the way one understands one’s meanings and the way one relates to them. But this does not guarantee a change for further development. As an example of this, using the Gospels again (which Kierkegaard regarded as a source for effective, paradoxical and often ironic communication), Jesus, before performing a healing on the Sabbath, asked the Pharisees, “Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” (Mark 3:1-6). The dialogue in which he engaged them challenged not only their intent to kill him personally, but also confronted the question of how these religious observers related to the entire law of their religion. Their response to continue to plot for his murder serves as an example of how the disclosure of meaning in one’s horizon (in this instance both the intent to murder and paradoxically apparently to adhere to a religious law of life), when disclosed to the self, may not necessarily produce a change through the disclosure. Therefore it is understood from this existential framework of spirituality that only the opportunity can be provided, in order for the further authentic development of this dimension, but it cannot guarantee that change and development will occur. It is acknowledged that to take personal responsibility and make a stance on one’s relations to meanings by exercising one’s freedom to choose is a rarity (Sartre, 1969, p. 35). It is after all, easier to lose oneself in the crowd.

Each person, according to this framework, is already spiritual as a consequence of being an historical presence-in-the-world. However, if spirituality is to be developed, the individual must authentically engage in deep, reflective questioning and meaning-making in response to issues
being disclosed as a result of a crisis. It is contended from this existential framework that the development of spirituality depends upon the willingness of individuals to engage in re-evaluating the relations that they have with their own historically produced horizons. It is maintained in this thesis that beliefs, although contingent, become strengthened through the ‘to-and-fro’ of effective dialogue with other horizons. There is no specific method or procedure that is able to cause subjective truth to be established. Rather, this opportunity can only be provided for and is best facilitated through a dialogue with other horizons.

5.11 The Existential Framework Centres the Individual

Spirituality, according to this existential framework, centres the ‘existing individual’. It is implied by this framework that authentic meanings are more worthwhile and superior to inauthentic ones. Therefore, individual creation, choice and decision-making are of fundamental importance. This model of spirituality does not lend itself to abstractions, because it is confrontational in the sense that it challenges each individual with his or her own existence. It elevates the concerns of existence from being hidden in the ‘comfort’ of being lost in the crowd. It throws one back to one’s own individuality - from which, for example, one can only die one’s own death. According to this framework, the authentic self must be of central concern in spirituality.

As the only minds that exist are those of individuals, spirituality must address humankind as individuals and cannot appeal to a sort of Hegelian Geist that affects people both individually and transculturally. Understandings and decisions are made and created by each situated
individual, who has as his or her concern, the self in relation. Therefore, 
spirituality, according to this framework, does not specifically focus on the 
metaphysical questions such as ‘what is man?’ and ‘what is the meaning of 
human life?’ Rather it engages with the existential concerns of ‘who am I?’ 
and ‘what is the meaning and purpose of my life?’. These latter questions 
however are not without reference to the frameworks which contextualize the 
former, more metaphysical questions, as was contended earlier. However, a 
critical attitude is sought from individuals to challenge these frameworks of 
religious and world-view ‘givens’.

‘Understanding’ belongs to individuals. People are not viewed as 
‘epistemological beings’ but, because they share their presence with all other 
entities in-the-world, people have understandings produced by the ‘fusion’ 
with other horizons. As spirituality is an aspect of such understandings, 
which is, by definition, something personal, spirituality is for the individual 
and does not have as its concern a ‘knowing’ beyond that of the individual’s 
existence. The development of understanding is achieved through an 
engagement in the disclosing activities that ‘unconceal’ meanings - or 
phenomena. Therefore, spirituality according to this framework, is to be 
understood as being existentially phenomenological, in that the meanings - 
the phenomena encountered - are understood in terms of ‘what they mean to 
me’ rather than ‘what they mean’ apart from my engagement with them. 
According to this existential framework, a ‘body’ of traditional beliefs would 
not form the centre of any spirituality. It would rather be how the individual 
derstands and makes sense of such frameworks.
The centring of the individual, which allows one to make sense of what a phenomenon means to oneself, is reflected in the German term *Befindlichkeit* which means ‘how do you find yourself?’. This term can be translated as *attunement* (Heidegger, 1996), which attempts to capture the notion of the individual’s being ‘in tune’ with the entity being encountered. Dreyfus (1981, p. 168) argues that *affectedness* may be more helpful, because it represents more accurately “being found in a situation where things and options really matter”. This notion of ‘being affected’ in a situation incorporates one’s presence in an holistic understanding.

‘Attunement’ or ‘affectedness’ allows one to recognise how other innerworldly entities, such as the meanings with which one understands one’s being, count for one’s own existence. This holistic concern, as understood through Heidegger’s use of circumspection, identifies the existential aspect of centring the individual with regards to how he or she relates. Heidegger (1996, pp. 129-130) argued that, “In attunement [*Befindlichkeit*] lies existentially a disclosive submission to world out of which things that matter to us can be encountered”. This can be seen to be existentially phenomenological, as it draws attention of what the phenomenon *means* to the individual who is encountering it, that is, to how he or she *understands* it. In order for spirituality to be developed, attention must be given to *Befindlichkeit*, by which a ‘disclosive submission’ identifies what things really matter to the individual, *how* he or she relates to them, and *why*. This latter aspect necessitates an articulation of a coherent unity of meanings that contribute to an authentic understanding.
Understandings, including spiritual understandings, are developed as the individual comes ‘into’ truth (Heidegger, 1988, p. 18) by ‘opening up’ and disclosing components within her or his horizon. One is understood to have more authentic spirituality as one ventures further into subjective truth. This is described through Kierkegaard’s third stage of existence (the spiritual or religious stage), where one is willing to take a stand, a ‘strong evaluation’, by which one ‘risks’ one’s whole existence. This is described by Kierkegaard as being the most ‘terrible’ of all decisions. It is the decision and freedom of the individual that makes her or him responsible for herself or himself. It is the authentic self, which is the centre of choice and meaning-making, that spirituality must address specifically.

Spirituality, according to this existential framework, must acknowledge the centrality of the authentic self. It is this self that comes into subjective truth, makes decisions and takes personal responsibility for making and creating a sense of self-identity and purpose for life in which one’s whole existence is invested. Spiritual development refers to the continual ‘openness’ (Gadamer, 2000, p. 269) that one has to one’s understandings, being willing to engage in disclosing activities in order to re-evaluate meanings in light of new experiences. This development occurs along with the re-evaluation, where greater authenticity is also achieved.

Conclusion

According to this existential framework, spirituality is about how the individual relates to the meaning and purpose of his or her place in the universe and understands who he or she is. As individuals are universally
understood to have a concern for the meaning of their being, they are also understood to be spiritual. Therefore spirituality is not a dimension to be added to the lives of people. It is something that is already present. The notion that individuals need to be made conversant with various world-views or initiated into particular traditions in order to then be spiritual, does not receive support from this framework. It is argued rather that individuals are already historical presences-in-the-world and therefore are already spiritual because their horizons consist of variously interpreted cultural frameworks.

However, for the most part, one never seriously questions or confronts one’s spirituality and so the majority of individuals are argued by Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Heidegger to be inauthentic in this dimension. This means that they tend to adopt a complacent acceptance of publicly assumed frameworks of meanings and purposes with their taken-for-granted background of reasons. One’s spirituality does not become authentic until a crisis is able to disclose to one what these meanings are and how one relates to them.

Authentic spirituality requires a personal involvement in making a stance and forming a deep evaluation of how one relates to the meaning and purpose of one’s place in the universe. This authenticity involves personal choice, commitment and therefore responsibility. This can be the most terrible of all decisions, involving feelings of anxiety and of doubt, and will most likely include a search for meanings and purposes that offer personal significance for the individual. Accordingly, a review of frameworks that
provide world-views, whether religious or otherwise, may well be conducted and driven because of one's spirituality and not in order for it to exist.

This existential framework of spirituality seems compatible with the provisional definition of spirituality as proposed by Wright, set out in Chapter One, which is that -

Spirituality is the relationship of the individual, within community and tradition, to that which is - or is perceived to be - of ultimate concern, ultimate value and ultimate truth, as appropriated through an informed, sensitive and reflective striving for spiritual wisdom. (Wright, 2000, p. 104)

This definition recognises that the individual, as a relational being embedded within a culture or community, relates to the issues of ultimate concern. The fact that spiritual wisdom is there said to be appropriated through a horizon that consists of the traditions of society and enables the sense-making and meaning-making freedom of the individual through choice, corresponds well with the existential framework as described here.

The implications for education of this existential framework differ from those recommended by Wright, as will become apparent in the next chapter. Authentic spirituality involves one in actively disclosing the meanings and the relations one has to these meanings, and it involves a willingness to re-evaluate these meanings and relations. This process incorporates reflection and questioning, facilitated by an engagement with the horizons of other individuals, usually through a form of effective dialogue. No such development through authenticity can be guaranteed, but the opportunity for development can be provided. It is with this understanding that the
implications for education provided by this particular existential framework of spirituality can now be formulated.
The aim of this thesis is to develop an understanding of how spirituality and spiritual development may be understood within education and developed through it. This aim presupposes an understanding of the nature of ‘education’. The task to be undertaken in the present chapter is thus to articulate an appropriate conception of education: an approach that is endorsed by McLaughlin (1996, p. 16), who argues that a study of spirituality and spiritual development in education ought to “be located within an overall view of educational aims and purposes: a ‘vision’ of the educational enterprise as a whole” in order to achieve coherence for any research within it. As this vision of an educational enterprise often includes the requirement that people, individually and collectively be educated about themselves, spirituality can be regarded as being “a necessary co-requisite to the study of education” itself (Grosch, 2000, p. 229). Accordingly, this chapter attempts to clarify and justify a conception of ‘education’ and a conception of an ‘educated person’ in order to articulate a framework in which spirituality is to be understood and recognised in this context as being an essential and inherent dimension. This work will draw on readings selected particularly for the deeper aspects they identify in the general notions of education and the educated person. The concepts of indoctrination, autonomy and holistic development will be included in this analysis as they are considered here to have relevance both for education and for spirituality.
6.1 The Nature of Education

‘Education’, according to Pring (2000, p. 9), can be described as “essentially contestable”. In this postmodern era, the idea of education is open to greater scrutiny because it has lost its former assumed authority, and the societal consensus of the ‘good life’, which has for so long been used to justify education, has also been lost. Any meaning attributed to education has now been problematised to the point that a universal understanding of education can be considered to have all but disappeared (Lawton & Gordon, 2002, p. 228-9; Smeyers, 1995a, pp. 109, 113). If education is to continue to be understood as something valuable and worthwhile, it needs to be sufficiently differentiated from other concepts that have tended to replace it, such as learning, teaching, schooling, training and indoctrination. A conceptualisation of education is here articulated as the context for which the educational implications of spirituality are explored in the following chapters.

What Education is Not

Education may be understood in contrast to what it is not. For example, education here is not equated with all types of ‘learning’ or ‘teaching’, but provides criteria by which these activities may be determined to be educational or not. Education lies beyond these activities themselves, providing standards by which they can be determined to be valuable and worthwhile. Education therefore has to do with particular kinds of learning and teaching.
‘Schooling’ is often contrasted with ‘education’, where the former represents the social agency that contributes to only one part of the latter. However, there is not always a clear distinction between these two, for example Durkheim claims that it is “education [that] sets out precisely with the object of creating a social being” while schools are identified as having the purpose of meeting the ‘needs’ of society (Durkheim, 1982, p. 54, my emphasis; 1971, p. 91). Durkheim equates the idea of ‘education’ with having the same intent as do the ‘schools’ or, more accurately, the people who work in such institutions.

According to Oakeshott school is a “serious and orderly initiation into an intellectual, imaginative, moral and emotional inheritance” (Oakeshott, 1972, pp. 23-24), and offers a “detachment from the immediate, local world of the learner” (Oakeshott, 1972, p. 24) with its concerns. However, when construed in this way, as something ‘detached’ from the ‘world’, schooling and education become potentially vulnerable to accusations of irrelevance. This could lead to the creation of a bipolar tension with monastic educative learning at one extreme and learning something ‘useful’ for the ‘real world’ at the other. This need not be the situation. While schools may appear to be literally ‘detached’ from the rest of the world of society - as with monasteries - education itself does not only have value in a detached way. This monastic view of schooling, in which education is also implicated, aims to provide an environment away from the immediate concerns of the learners. Oakeshott (1972, pp. 23 - 25) suggests that it should be considered to be a place where the student “may encounter, not answers to the ‘loaded questions of ‘life’, but questions which have never before occurred to him”.

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Schools are institutions that are often funded and influenced by government, and are criticised by some for being institutions which actively maintain the power and privilege of the ruling elite (Freire, 1972), and foster abusive authority over students (Foucault, 1988, p. 18). Some therefore conclude (Holt, 1970; Illich, 1983) that societies should be ‘deschooled’ altogether.

However, such arguments do not deny that societies, or the individuals within them, should be 'educated' in this sense. Kleinig (1982) argues that such views do recognise the social and political situations in which schools are placed. In this sense they may be seen as being more realistic (but not necessarily negative) compared with the monastic view. They indicate that schools can be regarded as being anti-educational, and hence that the terms ‘schooling’ and ‘education’ cannot be invariably identical (Richmond, 1975, p. 16). Although education is often assumed to be a (or the) function of the school it is also understood that ‘schooling’ incorporates more than just ‘education’, as it is also involved with health, selection and vocational training (R.S. Peters, 1967, p. 22). Therefore, although these terms share some overlapping properties, neither can be contained by the other.

Education here is also not to be equated with ‘training’ in the sense that some specific outcome is to be developed, which is valued only for its extrinsic utility. Dewey (1985, p. 16) argues that ‘training’ has more to do with outer action and that ‘education’ refers more to the mental and emotional dispositions of behaviour - although he accepts that the distinction between the two is not as clear as this. ‘Training’ has a wider application
than simply ‘skill development’, because skills are seen to form as a result of repetitive practice only, and this does not hold for ‘training’. For example, in the case of training for honesty or for stealing, *intent* also needs to be involved (R.S. Peters, 1967, pp. 15-16). Although ‘education’ may include some skills development and training, training itself nevertheless lacks the broader implications that are associated with ‘education’. While ‘training’ refers to a particular type of process or activity, ‘education’ suggests criteria to which training must conform in order for it to be educational (Kleinig, 1982, p. 14). Again however, this is not to imply that the standards of such an education have no relevance for individuals who operate in environments that require specific training and skills development. As Pring (1993/4) has argued, there are many versions of such an educational ideal that are not averse to some forms of utility.

Education here is also not to be equated with 'indoctrination', as the two are often contrasted with each other. ‘Indoctrination’ can be regarded as an “elusive term” (Hirst & Peters, 1970, p. 85), as it is so broad in its meaning that it can include rote learning, non-rational justification being given for a belief, holding a belief in such a way that nothing will shake that belief regardless of the evidence, and direct teaching that is not child-centred ‘discovery learning’ (J White, 1967, p. 180). However its meaning can become so broad that it in effect becomes meaningless. Etymologically ‘indoctrination’ is simply to do with the inculcation of a doctrine, sometimes described as attitudes, beliefs, and teachings. So perceived, ‘indoctrination’ may appear to be akin to ‘education’, as they both involve the acquisition of beliefs and attitudes (Kleinig, 1982, p. 54). The meanings of terms change
over time, however, and in spite of its historical origins, ‘indoctrination’ now is understood to carry a pejorative, even sinister, implication, as it relates to ineffective teaching (P. Wood, 1990) and is therefore something that education is not.

With reference to its etymology, ‘indoctrination’ has been understood also to refer to the content that is taught - the doctrines themselves (Flew, 1972). It has been described in this sense as doctrines (which are ideological in nature) held without the support of publicly accepted evidence (Wilson, 1964). Religion, morality, politics and aesthetics, as beliefs that typically rely on non-rational (as opposed to irrational) justification, would, according to this view, be regarded as educationally illegitimate. However, such an argument, which reduces understanding to content, by relating the etymological connections of ‘indoctrination’ to ‘doctrination’ is weak. Many beliefs and doctrines that once were considered to have been grounded in generally and publicly accepted evidence (especially in mathematics and the natural sciences) are now understood to be problematic and not so ‘rationally justified’ as was once assumed (Degenhardt, 1976, p. 23; Kuhn, 1962). Therefore the content of all ‘doctrines’ is problematic to some extent, with regard to having ‘hard’ or ‘objective’ evidence.

Another difficulty with this position is that the meaning of ‘doctrine’ is also vague. There has not been a convincing description of what makes a belief or set of beliefs a ‘doctrine’ as such, and therefore there is no clear demarcation that can identify whether a particular view is to be regarded as doctrinal or non-doctrinal (Spiecker, 1987, p. 261). Given this lack of clarity,
it has been claimed that science, along with the more obvious areas of religion, morality and politics, can also be ‘doctrinal’ and therefore subject to being a source for indoctrination (Thiessen, 1982, p. 15).

‘Doctrinaire’ rather than ‘indoctrination’ is argued by Spiecker (1987) to be a more suitable term to represent the suppression of the ability and willingness to reflect critically upon one’s own doctrines. He claims that doctrines play a fundamental and important role for individuals in that they determine the conduct of the adherents, and states -

Doctrines that to a large extent permeate the individual’s existence, that completely define the meaning of life, suffering and death, are most suited for making a person doctrinaire and incapable of reflecting critically. This does not mean that beliefs or certainties that form the ‘heart of our existence’ cannot also serve pre-eminently to sharpen our critical dispositions. (Spiecker, 1987, p. 262)

Therefore, ‘doctrines’ can relate to one’s very being, the way one gives meaning to life, and they can determine whether the individual is to have a critical disposition or not toward the claims for their fundamental beliefs.

The areas of religion, morality, politics and aesthetics, which are particularly prone to being construed as doctrinaire, cannot therefore be judged as such simply because of the nature of their content. Indeed, many statements of belief, including ‘scientific’ ones, cannot readily be evidenced ‘objectively’. It may be argued that any discipline “will contain many false theories or doctrines, and many theories that cannot be adequately justified” (O’Hear, 1981, p. 91), because, as Thiessen notes, “the characteristics assigned to doctrines do not clearly and unproblematically distinguish paradigm cases of doctrine from paradigm cases of non-doctrine” (Thiessen, 1982, p. 8).
As an alternative to the view that indoctrination should refer to content, it is suggested that it can be the method by which doctrines are taught, and so similarities with ‘brainwashing’ are alluded to. Such methods may involve rote learning and unquestioning recitation. However, these particular methods have also been considered to be legitimate means of teaching, for example, spelling and multiplication tables (Degenhardt, 1976, pp. 21-22). So methods that aim at the ‘truths’ themselves, without reference to the claims that make them so, are not by themselves sufficient to mark approaches to indoctrination. Indoctrination can even incorporate the ‘reasons’ and ‘claims’ for particular beliefs, indicating that it does not depend upon there being ‘no evidence’. Kleinig (1982, p. 58) argues that “not all indoctrination by-passes a person’s reasoning processes. Indeed, those who are most indoctrinated can generally produce an impressive defence of this position”. Therefore, indoctrination is not specific either to particular teaching methods or to particular doctrinal content of and by themselves. It is difficult then to identify clearly the demarcation between what content or what methods of teaching may be educational or indoctrinatory.

Some educationalists have argued that indoctrination refers to the intent of the indoctrinator. This can be referred to as the task (Neiman, 1989), but is a weak descriptor because it does not omit the activity of unintentional indoctrination. Referring to possible unintentional indoctrination that can occur within an open society, Rodger (1982, p. 31) claims that students “may, however, have been conditioned and thus effectively prevented from feeling the importance of a whole range of questions, and therefore of acting upon them”. As a consequence of this lack of sensitivity, Robinson (1977, p.
concludes “that an essential element of growth can hardly begin”. So an unintentional outcome - be it an ‘indoctrination’ or ‘condition’, may not necessarily involve the imposition of a doctrine, but may foster a lack of awareness of other important issues not directly engaged with.

Rather than trying to define indoctrination as either a form of content, or method or intent, it can also be described using a combination of all three. However, a fourth - results, or achievement (Neiman, 1989) - is another helpful way to identify indoctrination. This outcome is demonstrated by the student who holds a belief in a fixed and unquestioning way, so much so that she or he cannot be shaken by reason or evidence (Degenhardt, 1972, p. 25) and is simply not willing to engage in a full rational assessment of her or his views. This condition is described as having “a fixation with truth that divorces truth from claims to truth, thus failing to recognise that knowledge is a social product” (Kleinig, 1982, p. 66). So the indoctrinated persons could have reasons for their belief, but are simply not willing to call these presuppositions into question for closer examination (Rodger, 1982, p. 41).

The implication here for spirituality in the educational context is that it should not be seen as potentially indoctrinatory simply because of the content that it may contain. There are also no apparent methods that, a priori, are to be avoided on this basis, although effective pedagogy would recommend some over others. Educational teaching aims to provide an awareness of the grounds upon which beliefs are based and does not seek conviction by itself, while indoctrinational teaching exploits the person as a means only, having conviction as the only aim (Atkinson, 1965, p. 172).
would appear that indoctrinating in the area of spirituality may only be recognised in the outcome - the particular attitudinal disposition of the students themselves. Such an undesirable outcome could not relate to any content within the dimension of spirituality but would rather be the result of other factors that do not comply with the standards associated with ‘education’. Indeed, it could be argued that not to include spirituality may be indoctrinatory because, as Rodger (1987) argues, learners could be conditioned not to appreciate the importance of the whole range of questions and issues that are associated with it. In order for spirituality to be educational it should contribute to an attitudinal disposition within students, encouraging them to engage critically with their beliefs and understandings.

A Conception of Education

What has preceded is a discussion of what education is not. Now a closer examination shall be made as to what education is, or at least, how a more general conception of education may be understood. The term ‘education’ is derived from the Latin *edūcēre* meaning ‘out’ and *ducēre* meaning ‘to lead’. Hence this notion has traditionally implied that education is the process of nourishing or rearing a person, to ‘lead out’ of his or her potential for development. This notion of ‘bringing out’ a person’s potential is associated with Plato’s Idealism. Plato argued that educational experiences are to ‘draw out’ from the student, by the *maieutic* (from the Greek *maieutiké*, meaning childbirth) method of dialectical assistance, what he already ‘knows’ inside. The dialectic is seen as “the coping-stone” of the educational system (Lee, 1955, p. 304). Some theorists, such as Plato and Rousseau therefore have argued that educational development is not something to be imposed
upon the individual, but rather it should foster the inherent goodness that resides within human nature.

More recently education’s task has been understood to ‘bring out’ individuals to becoming fully autonomous, capable of exercising their individuality and intentional agency (Usher & Edwards, 1994, pp. 24-25). John Dewey’s encouragement of experimentation promotes a notion of ‘leading out’ from the students their own understandings. This is not entirely what Dewey asserted, however, as his main concern was that the then subject matter, as presented in school systems, had little connection with the real life experiences of the students. It is almost an extreme form of monastic schooling about which he was concerned (Dewey, 1963, pp. 17-19) and which he saw to be irrelevant for the ‘real world’ of learners. Correspondingly, his ‘technical definition’ of education states that it should be the “reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience” (Dewey, 1985, p. 82). Education then, should be both relevant and valuable for the lived experiences of individual learners.

Dewey promoted critical thinking amongst students and his meaning-making aspect is akin to Lev Vygotsky’s (1986, p. 100) ‘concept formation’, where new concepts are formed to make sense of new experiences rather than being the accumulation of new information alone. While the socio-cultural view of Vygotsky (1986, p. 36) holds that “thinking is not from the individual to the social, but from the social to the individual”, Dewey (1985, pp. 152, 170) maintained nevertheless that thinking “is the intentional
endeavour to discover specific connections” as a result of experiencing through trial and error experimentation, and reflecting upon and sharing understandings. Thinking is “the method of an educative experience” and therefore has a “phase of originality” (Dewey, 1991, p. 198) where the agent thinks in unique ways. Dewey encouraged students to take a leap from the known to the unknown, in order to make hypotheses and inferences. It is argued here that educative thinking and learning, as portrayed by Dewey, involves a perspective in which the learner is centred. That is to say, the learner gives or makes meanings from the perspective of her or his current world view.

Education, for Dewey, involves the disciplining of one’s mind that leads to personal freedom. He argued -

If a man’s actions are not guided by thoughtful conclusions, then they are guided by inconsiderate impulse, unbalanced appetite, caprice, or the circumstances of the moment. To cultivate unhindered, unreflective external activity is to foster enslavement, for it leaves the person at the mercy of appetite, sense, and circumstance. (Dewey, 1991, p. 67)

Central to his whole notion of education is that learning should not be reduced to the ‘learning’ of things, but rather is to be understood as the making of the meanings of things (Dewey, 1991, p. 176). Meaning, then, involves the individual agent actively making sense of his or her experiences. It is to be the consequence of ‘negotiating’ individual meanings with others and involves the disciplining of the mind to resist impulses emanating from ‘basic’ instinct and ignorance. The gaining of a critical disposition through this disciplining, and the whole approach to educative thinking and learning is philosophical in nature. Dewey (1985, p. 338) even regarded philosophy, in essence, to be “the general theory of education”. 
Similarly opposed to the conception that education is to ‘lead out’ what already exists naturally within the student, is the notion that education refers to certain criteria external to human nature, to which all activities and goals must conform if they are to be educational. R.S. Peters claims that education is more than just processes (e.g., experimentation) and more than just products (e.g., the skill of critical thinking). For him, education includes the setting of criteria or standards that are worthwhile, to which the processes of ‘initiating’ students should comply. Being educated implies “(a) caring about what is worth-while and (b) being brought to care about it and to possess the relevant knowledge or skill in a way that involves at least a minimum of understanding and voluntariness” (R.S. Peters, 1965, p. 97). His criteria of being ‘worthwhile’ “depends upon its contribution to the development of someone as a person” (Pring, 2000, p. 14). According to Peters’s view, educational development is not something that occurs as the outgrowth of a ‘natural’ predetermined end, but is produced via an initiation into the existing ‘world’ or civilisation with its public and established ‘forms of knowledge’.

Such ‘forms of knowledge’, according to Hirst (1965, p. 131; 1973, p. 103), are able to “be distinguished by their dependence on some particular kind of test against experience”. Hirst identified several of these knowledge forms, including mathematics, physical science, human science, history, religion, literature and the fine arts, and philosophy. However, he has been criticised for failing to establish the objectivity of these ‘forms’ and for not justifying them on educational grounds as having greater significance over other possible means of categorisation (Leon, 1987). It is also evident that Hirst’s position consists of two separate arguments, namely a formalist and a
teleological one, where only the latter offers any relevance for education but is unsupported because of the irrelevance of the formalist argument (Scarlett, 1984, p. 155). Just because knowledge can be categorised is no justification for the inclusion of these categories into the curriculum. The way in which knowledge is to be divided into discrete categories has also been criticized because of the lack of a clear and identifiable relation which is able to be used to do the partitioning (Evers & Walker, 1983).

These forms of knowledge, according to Mackenzie (1985, pp. 199-200), are not independent from the means by which they may be partitioned, and remain only partially independent from one another. Hirst himself argues that -

It was no part of the thesis even in its earliest formulation that the forms of knowledge are totally independent of each other, sharing no concepts of logical rules. That the forms are inter-related has been stressed from the start. (Hirst, 1974, p. 89)

A more helpful way to describe these forms of knowledge may be to classify them using Wittgenstein’s “family resemblances” (Brent, 1982, p. 266). However, attempting to divide knowledge into categories in an educational context is objected to by Crowther (1981, p. 21) because such division “misrepresents the unity and continuity of Being”, and assumes that the human capacity for understanding is to be regarded as an epistemic capacity, thereby marginalising individuals’ “practical competence as agents at purposive action” (Okshevsky, 1992, pp. 6, 10-11). Hirst claims that he did not advocate discrete “collections of information” (Hirst, 1965, p. 122) but rather ways of knowing, or understanding experiences, through public understandings. Consequently a form of knowledge could be understood as
a way of “making sense of experiences” (Hirst & Peters, 1970, p. 32). It is argued here is that forms of knowledge are more usefully represented as ways of knowing, where understanding rather than the logical structure of the ‘object’ being encountered, is emphasised. This is demonstrated using Mackenzie’s (1998, p. 31) example of text, in which he claims that the encounter with it involves the interaction, in the form of a discussion, and cannot be represented merely by the text itself. The text then, is not understood for what it objectively is, but rather there is a relation of learner-and-text in which understanding is developed.

In spite of the disagreements as to the how and whether of these forms of knowledge, they are only secondary to what is understood by ‘education’. The purpose, according to Hirst and Peters, of initiating students into these forms of knowledge - or ways of knowing - is to provide a cognitive awareness as to what they are doing. The development of ‘mind’ could thus be seen as the hallmark of education (R.S. Peters, 1965, p. 96). The elements of knowledge are seen as the means for developing the aptitudes and attitudes of the mind being aimed for (Hirst, 1965, p. 117). This is based on the notion that what makes humankind unique is the mind, and that through education this state of mind becomes more ‘valuable’ in that, through it, there should be a “change for the better” (R.S. Peters, 1965, p. 91).

Peters and Hirst have been criticised for over emphasising such a cognitive and theoretical approach to the ‘mind’ and to the educated ‘man’ rather than ‘person’. Mays (1970) and Fitzgibbons (1975) question the public traditions
and the ‘correctness’ used by Peters as criteria to help analyse the concept of education. Not only is his approach to the concept of education seen to be emphasising ‘theoretical’ cognition at the expense of its evaluative nature (Clark, 1976), but it also appears to rely on a rather unambiguous “modernistic belief in the autonomy of ethics” (Blake et al., 1998, p. 28). The concept of the educated ‘man’ promoted by both Hirst and Peters is argued by Martin (1982) to be specifically a male dominated one. She suggests that the educative development of persons should not simply promote rational cognition, but should “join thought to action, and reason to feeling and emotion” (Martin, 1982, p. 105), which does not avoid the assumed ‘feminine’ aspects of our being.

Nevertheless, some of the characteristics identified by Peters and Hirst regarding education and of the educated person, are still considered to be valuable (Blake et al., 2002, p. 41; Lawton & Gordon, 2002, p. 196). For example Peters’s (1970, pp. 151–166) Transcendental Argument offers some useful lines of thinking about what activities and characteristics of the person are to be considered as ‘worthwhile’ and therefore educational. His ‘serious’ question “what ought I to do?” is maintained here to be one that educators will always need to address. The responses given will certainly change for each context of the ‘world’ that persons are to live well ‘in’, but the question itself remains. For example, rather than aiming simply to develop the cognitive abilities of the ‘mind’, it is here argued that the task of education is largely to focus on the beliefs of individuals - the ways in which they understand the world. If spirituality is to contribute to the educational enterprise, it must have value that goes beyond simply being a ‘unique’ form
of knowledge. It must be worthwhile for learners as a way of making sense, of giving meaning and constructing understandings, of themselves and the particular world in which they have presence.

Learners are argued here to not be coming out from a Platonic metaphorical cave, because even if there were an ‘unchangeable reality’ beyond the cave - a realm of ‘Truth’ - there are no reliable criteria with which to recognise particular understandings as being only either ‘shadows’ or actual attainments of the ultimate. With reference to the etymology of the term ‘education’, it could be implied that the learner is coming out of his or her ‘natural’ state of ignorance and impulse based upon appetite and caprice. However the ‘world’ is obviously something that the student is already in, and therefore education should offer an initiation in to understandings. The nature of the educational enterprise, as argued for here, is one that encourages the critical and creative exercise of individual intentionality for the purpose of allowing one to take a responsible stand for the way one holds beliefs about oneself and the world (Young, 1992, p. 8).

Contrary to the Idealism of Plato, human nature can be understood as naturally ignorant, subject to appetite and caprice - a condition from which one is liberated by the disciplining of the mind by developing critical capacities for understanding oneself and the world. The concept of educational development is not necessarily a process which attempts to ‘lead out’ as such, but is able to initiate the student into particular ways of thinking and meaning-making. The development of particular attitudes and aptitudes of mind enables the student to give critically justified meanings to
all his or her experiences. This development is argued here to be cultivated particularly effectively through an engagement with challenging questions and situations.

Persons can be considered as beings who experience *meaning* where ‘meaning’ is understood to unify rationality and reason with other aspects of experience such as feeling, conscience and imagination (Phenix, 1964, p. 5, 21). For Heidegger, ‘meaning’ refers to the relations of entities to a structural whole of meanings and intentions (Palmer, 1969, p. 133) and constitutes part of his concepts of self-understanding, care and significance. This ‘subjective meaning’ is an *understanding* of self-in-the-world and therefore has a degree of ‘objectivity’ associated with it as the ‘world’ is not of the individual but of the public (Pring, 2000, p. 100). Betanzos argues that Wilhelm “Dilthey has a strong sense for existential concerns” too where an individual is considered by Dilthey to have an “overwhelming need to put together a pattern of *meaning* for his life as a whole emerges a *Weltanschauung*, or ‘worldview’” (Betanzos, 1988, p. 29). According to Dilthey this is how life can be made sense of or comprehended as a whole, where “meaning is the special relationship which the parts have to the whole in a life” (Dilthey, 1976, p. 235-6).

Meanings are generally socially constructed with others, and so an understanding of others is an important contribution in being able to appreciate critically the various facets of cultural meanings. Personal beliefs regarding one’s self and the world contribute to a personal world-view that consists of a morally responsible approach to others. Therefore, in addition
to encouraging students to be creative and critical towards generally accepted cultural knowledge (Fritzman, 1990), education should also foster sensitivity to differences. The individual is not an indifferent detached ‘atom’ from the rest of humanity, but is in-the-world with others and can therefore be referred to by the more inclusive concept of “the individual-subject-and-others” (Smeyers, 1995b, p. 407). Education should therefore place an emphasis upon understanding and accepting the ‘Other’, which fosters “a tolerance of uncertainty, ambiguity, and change, and a humility with respect to one’s own identity and beliefs” (Bagnall, 1995, p. 92).

Drawing upon the notion of ‘meaning’ as conceptualised by Dilthey, Heidegger and Phenix, it is argued here that persons can be understood as “meaning-making creatures” (Hill, 1992b, p. 9). This meaning-making characteristic can take the form of a personal narrative, where one is able to make sense of one’s place in the whole scheme of things (Erricker et al., 1997). Such a claim accords well with the views of Dewey, who maintained that education must be meaningful for individuals personally, in order for them to engage with the curriculum. Education is not just to be understood as the subject matter or even the activities, but also as meaningfulness that is considered to be valuable, worthwhile and significant for the individual learners. It is attempted sometimes to reduce these worthwhile values down to specific identifiable and therefore measurable aims and purposes. The nature of such educational aims and purposes shall now be examined.
The Aims and Purposes of Education

The terms ‘aims’ and ‘purposes’ appear interchangeable at times when educationalists write about education, and the researcher chooses not to differentiate between them here. When addressing aims or purposes of education in general, it is necessary to acknowledge that ‘education’, being an abstract concept, does not have purposes or aims. This is recognised by Dewey (1985, p. 114) who stated, “it is well to remind ourselves that education as such has no aims. Only persons, parents, and teachers, etc., have aims, not an abstract idea like education”. Purposes then, belong to persons and not to concepts.

However, it is argued that there may well be general and universal aims that are generic to educators and these can usefully be identified. Some educationalists argue that, due to the practical realities of students changing between schools and teachers, “there are good grounds for having aims of education to give coherence and continuity to the process” (Higginbotham, 1976, p. 49). Even those who strongly advocate the notion that an educational aim should not be a terminal objective that lies external to the activity, it is nevertheless maintained in this thesis, that engaging with aims is a most useful exercise to clarify what is believed to be worthwhile. As is argued by Wringe (1988) that –

An understanding of our own aims is the sine qua non of both consistency and progression and may make the all-important difference between purposeful, effective teaching and desultory, pointless activity. However precise our specific objectives, it may be said that without some clear conception of our various aims, we simply do not know what we are doing. (Wringe, 1988, p. 16)
‘Education’ does not necessarily aim to achieve anything beyond itself, being understood as providing the values and criteria by which manners of proceeding (rather than specific content) should comply (Atkinson, 1965, p. 180; R.S. Peters, 1965, p. 92). The notion that education should be necessarily contributing to something extrinsic to itself is objected to (R.S. Peters, 1967, p. 5), because education stands for something that in itself is intrinsically worthwhile, the search for extrinsic ends is like seeking the purpose of morality or the good life (R.S. Peters, 1964, p. 17; 1970, p. 29).

Although the criteria found in R.S. Peters’s Transcendental Argument can be used to determine whether an activity is ‘educational’ or not, for others the argument is not persuasive that the educational enterprise is in anyway opposed to achieving extrinsic and utilitarian goals. Both Plato (Lee, 1955, p. 144) and Aristotle (Chase, 1911, p. 1) argued that education can be a means for particular ends, which thereby contextualise education beyond itself. It is more appropriate that educational goals “should be justified by sound arguments for their place in and contribution to the furthering of the values and value frameworks of modern society” than by only appealing “to their self-evident intrinsic good” (Bagnall, 1990, p. 46).

It is argued that the purposes of education, as formulated by educators, cannot avoid drawing upon beliefs about human nature and the meanings of life (Freire, 1972; Higginbotham, 1976; O’Hear, 1981; R.S. Peters, 1973; J White, 1990). The meaning(s) of education can be seen to be entwined in the meaning(s) of life itself, as Allen (1991) states -
May we conclude that the central task of education is to initiate the young in the meaning or meanings of life, whatever it or they may be? Perhaps the suggested relationship could be inverted: whatever is taken as the central task of education is thereby presupposed to be the meaning of life...To my mind it is axiomatic when read either way. If life has any meaning of any sort, then so does the education of the young. And the meaning of education is primarily that of initiating them into the meaning or meanings of life. (Allen, 1991, p. 51)

Similarly Kneller (1958, p. 42) states that, “no teacher or school system is so innocent as to believe that educational functions are performed without reference to ideas on the nature of man’s existence and his ultimate purpose in life”.

When addressing the question ‘What is the aim of education?’, R.S. Peters, in one of his later writings, responded that it resembles the reply to the question ‘What is the aim of life?’, in that “It has not got one”. He argues further that -

Our basic predicament in life is to learn to live with its ultimate pointlessness. We are monotonously reminded that education must be for life; so obviously the most important dimension of education is that in which we learn to come to terms with the pointlessness of life. (R.S. Peters, 1973, p. 1)

To enable education to fulfil this most important dimension, he recommends that it should be -

concerned with developing knowledge and understanding which is relevant to peoples’ lives, in the sense that it should enable them to grasp how they are placed in the world and to be at a better vantage-point for determining what they and their fellows are to become. It should provide them with a range of activities that give point to life and so come to terms with its seeming pointlessness. (R.S. Peters, 1973, pp. 3-4)

A universal aim, or task, of education may be seen as the initiation of people critically into ways of knowing, to enable them to make sense of their lives in a universe that is apparently, or at least potentially, inherently
pointless or meaningless. In this context the forms of knowledge - or ways of knowing - can be understood as public ways of understanding life’s meaning. It would seem then that aims of education do not necessarily lend themselves to any sort of specific outcomes as such but relate to the fundamental concerns of making life itself much more understandable and meaningful.

Meaning may have greater critical potential if the learner develops in the various dimensions associated with a holistic approach. These dimensions include the personal, social, intellectual, moral and spiritual, as recognised in the England’s Education Reform Act 1988 (Best, 1996b, p, 345; Erricker et al., 1997; Ungoed-Thomas, 1996). Such an approach is intrinsic to what has been described in education as the liberal arts. An important and central aspect of the whole enterprise of education is often identified by the aim to produce an ‘educated person’ who is able to make meaning from life’s experiences (Pring, 2000). Spirituality is argued in this thesis as a significant dimension that is central to this educative development.

6.2 An Educated Person

The concept of an ‘educated person’ has been used to refer to educating a whole person and is contrasted with a uni-dimensional approach such as purely knowledge acquisition or cognitive development of the mind. Buber (2002, p. 123) has argued that “Education worthy of the name is essentially education of character”, of “always the person as a whole…that is, as a unique spiritual-physical form”. This section deals mainly with the development of autonomy and wholeness as they relate to the concept of an
educated person. This analysis provides an important context for the relevance that spirituality is argued in this thesis to have for the ideal of an educated person.

**Personal Autonomy**

An often expressed dimension of an educated person is that she or he be able to demonstrate personal autonomy (Allen 1982; Cuypers, 1992). The development of such personal autonomy is argued by Snook (1989, p. 64) to be a universal ideal although others have attempted to place it specifically within the political views of a liberal democracy (Marshall, 1997, p. 33; Wringe, 1995, p. 49). While personal autonomy may be regarded as a universal ideal of the educational enterprise, there is no general agreement as to what exactly it entails (Kleinig, 1982). Being such a central dimension for the development of an educated person, it has some direct implications for spirituality. This section therefore aims to explore how this characteristic of autonomy may usefully be understood.

The term ‘autonomous’, as described by Dearden (1972), originates from ‘myself’ (*auto*) and ‘rule’ (*nomos*), meaning that the person (or the institution, group, etc.) is able to exercise self-rule. He states that -

An autonomous agent must be independent-minded. He must not have to depend on others for being told what he is to think or do. Again, he needs a motivational independence shown in not having to depend on others for constant encouragement or reassurance to overcome timidities, anxieties and fears... A person is autonomous, then, to the degree that what he thinks and does in important areas of his life cannot be explained without reference to his own activity of mind. (Dearden, 1972, pp. 452 - 453)
The phrase ‘activity of mind’ refers to the idea of reason, in that one has “reasons for what one thinks and does” (Dearden, 1972, p. 456). For Alan White (1964, p. 94), personal autonomy means to have “inclinations with reasons” rather than just impulses. Having reasons for one’s actions is argued by R.S. Peters (1970, p. 196) to be the “hall-mark of the autonomous person”, but he has been criticised (e.g. by Clark, 1976; Mays, 1970) for overemphasising cognitive ability.

While ‘rational autonomy’ or rationality was once regarded to be a universal human trait that transcended culture (Morse, 1997, p. 41), this is no longer generally taken to be the case. Different forms of rationality are now recognised, which do not necessarily transcend culture (M. Peters & Marshall, 1993, p. 20). Another problem associated with the universalist view of rationality is the recognition that the term ‘rational autonomy’ can be regarded to be an oxymoron, in the sense that the freedom of choice associated with ‘autonomy’, is at odds with the constraints of ‘rational’ thinking, from which the agent is not ‘free’ to diverge. This paradox is recognised by Diorio (1982, p. 29), who uses the example that “Jones chooses by reasoning: Smith reasons and then chooses” to demonstrate this difference. He goes on to conclude that “no decision can be both rational and autonomous at the same time” (Diorio, 1982, p. 31). It would appear then that for this view rational thinking and freedom of choice are two distinct modes of thinking. This conclusion indicates that the autonomous person is able to engage in rational thinking and then must exercise his or her freedom of choice between two or more rationally produced alternatives. This choice cannot be ‘rational’ as it operates in a non-rational situation (i.e. alternatives
which have equal relevance rationally). It is suggested by Allen (1982, p. 203) that the emphasis on choice amounts to the advocacy of *irrational* autonomy although the term *non-rational* is argued here to be more accurate because such a choice is really neutral with respect to rationality, rather than counter to it.

With regards to this non-rational dimension engaged by autonomy, Quinn argues that there should be greater prominence given to choice in the sense of “the affective aspects, and to inclination, at some expense to reason, particularly formal logic, rule, and the etymologically vestigial ‘law’” (Quinn, 1984, p. 268). Assigning reason less prominence here in relation to autonomous choosing is reflective of the current understanding “that there is no basis in truth or reason upon which sound choices may be made” (Wringe, 1995, p. 60). The choices associated with autonomy, according to Quinn, mean freely deciding *beyond* the constraints of rationality etc., and are therefore not fully constrained by external criteria.

Choices can be either heteronomous or autonomous (Kleinig, 1982, p. 73), which is apparently well understood and employed by advertisers (Barrett, 2000) who endeavour to persuade the individual to adopt the choice of the heteronomous ‘they’. Choice itself is not crucial to autonomy (Morgan, 1996, p. 247; Quinn, 1984, p. 268), although freedom is. However ‘freedom’ is a highly contested concept when used to describe human nature. At the minimalist end of the spectrum of individual freedom, it is simply understood to be the choice between already existing alternatives, while at the other
more absolute end it is sometimes described as *existential* and is used to refer to the notion of “criterionless choosing” (Dearden, 1972, p. 450).

The notion of absolute freedom is not a tenable one (M. Peters, 1997, p. 12) and so Jonathan (1997, p. 168) recommends that the philosophy of Existentialism be rejected because it is often associated with the notion of ‘absolute’ free agency. A middle position where “agency and contingency are intertwined” seems to be the favoured ground on which to ‘place’ the subject (Jonathan, 1997, p. 168). This positioning recognises the perceived tension between the liberal state constraining its citizens to become autonomous, and the ideal of autonomy conceived as a freedom.

Allen (1982) also objects to the notion of existential criterionless choosing. He describes Sartre’s view of man as “a self-defining and self-determining nothingness who faces no independent values (which otherwise would authoritatively be taught to him) and who thus creates them by choosing them” (Allen, 1982, p. 201). After criticising Sartre’s position, Allen supports his own view with the claim that “Man’s choice is thus situated in a context, limited within that context and in respect of what can be made explicit regarding oneself” (Allen, 1982, p. 202). However, this statement of Allen’s is similar to the position of Sartre who stated that -

I am absolutely free and absolutely responsible for my situation. But I am never free except *in situation...* We are not dealing here with a limit of freedom; rather it is *in this* world that the for-itself must be free; that is, it must choose itself by taking into account these circumstances and not *ad libitum*. (Sartre, 1969, pp. 509, 520)

Allen’s aversion to Sartre’s Existentialism (which is argued here to be based upon Allen’s misunderstanding of it) leads him to conclude that “The
autonomous man cannot be relied upon” (Allen, 1982, p. 205) as he apparently does not readily accept, and is not committed to, the standards of society. So from society’s perspective, this so called ‘absolute’ freedom of Sartre’s is completely free from commitment to norms, and may therefore be considered as dangerous (Sigad, 1996, pp. 18, 24-25). Consequently Allen argues that “What a free society requires is a moral education that instils the young - 'indoctrinates' them if you insist - with traditional civilities... based upon the need to accept what we historically are and to pass on our heritage” (Allen, 1982, pp. 205-206). Allen’s use of the term ‘free’ seems to be reserved exclusively for society only and does not appear to extend to the individual through the notion of personal autonomy. Because of his promotion of ‘indoctrination’ as educationally sound, his concept of the individual can not be regarded as freely autonomous (Morgan, 1996, p. 241), nor therefore, as educated.

It is argued by Bonnett (1978) that existential freedom is not opposed to commitment and in fact the two should coexist for the individual in the face of a nihilistic world. Understanding Sartre’s views quite differently, Bonnett states that -

‘autonomy’ refers to how one acts in particular lived situations. It picks out the making of one’s own choice in light of what one sees to be relevant within the context of that particular concrete situation: ‘situation’ here being defined by one’s present concerns which indicate not what is merely objectively or ‘intellectually’ relevant, but what is motivationally, or, better, existentially relevant. (Bonnett, 1978, p. 54)

This concurs with Mackenzie’s (1998, p. 148) argument that “there is no such thing as a wholly autonomous choice” because all individuals operate within a given socio-cultural context. Some recent comments on autonomy,
however, do not readily recognise that this freedom of self-rule is always limited by the context. For example, Hatton and Elliot’s (1998, p. 76) claim that the individual “who is prevented from pursuing certain lines of intellectual inquiry or experimenting with certain modes of conduct, lacks autonomy”, does not indicate an appreciation that there are constraints to this freedom inherent in the particular situation experienced. ‘Absolute freedom’ is thus unattainable in personal autonomy, as it is always constrained by the cultural construction of the situation.

As quoted above, Bonnett refers to the motivational aspect of autonomy as being existential and as also within a situation. Dearden also describes autonomy in terms of ‘motivational independence’ but does not describe this as being existential - which could relate to its misrepresentation by Allen (1982). According to Cuypers, motivation, or volition, conceived existentially, is seen to contribute towards an unfavourable conception of personal autonomy - one that is opposed to children becoming “devoted and sociable people” (Cuypers, 1992, p. 15). Thus ‘caring about oneself’ may be a more appropriate educational ideal than ‘extreme personal autonomy’, which may foster ‘detachment’ (Cuypers, 1992, p. 15). While ‘care’ is readily recognised to be a feminist concept (Noddings, 1992), it also has origins within the existential concept of ‘authenticity’.

An ethic of personal authenticity is qualitatively different from one that promotes personal autonomy. The authentic person is described as having “a personal attitude that aims toward taking responsibility for freedom and obligation; one’s choices integrate reason and emotion through dialogue,
reciprocal recognition, intimacy, and caring to construct one’s self as a moral individual” (Leahy, 1994, p. 447). However, looking into this more deeply, it can be understood that there need not be a contradiction between ‘autonomy’ and ‘care and commitment’ (Aviram, 1995, p. 61). Understanding the ‘absolute’ freedom often associated with autonomy through misunderstanding the existential position, unjustly sets educational aims at odds with care and commitment. Freedom, care and commitment can all coexist in the existential concept of authenticity. Allen, Jonathan, Dearden, Cuypers and others who refer to the existential position as being able to choose oneself, in an absolute sense that doesn’t involve any contextual criteria, misunderstand not only Sartre, but also the views of many other existentialists.

The aspect of motivation is seen as having greater importance than is implied through choice, because, as a political being, the agent must be able to create alternatives and not just simply choose between them (Kaplan, 1991, p. 364). Personal autonomy should comprise “complementary elements of motivation and cognitive ability” (Callan, 1994, p. 41, my emphasis). If one is to be fully autonomous, one should be motivated by one’s own world-view (Crowther, 1981, p. 18) from which one can create possibilities as well as make choices between already existing ones. Pring (1995, p. 130) likens this authenticity to the “daunting and painful task” of the “seriousness of living”, where one is searching “for a meaningful and significant life”. The emphasis of autonomy – or rather authenticity therefore, should not be on choice but rather on an overall coherence of one’s various identities (Morgan, 1996, p. 246), which Child et al. (1995, p. 17) describe in
Levinas’s terms as “the feat of remaining the same”. This process of identity formation which takes place within the multiple roles one has in the social context (Franzosa, 1992), should nevertheless result in a coherent kind of world-view that gives meaning and purpose to one’s various identities.

The implication for education is that for a person to become educated, s/he must develop coherence in his or her overall identity (Morgan, 1996, p. 250). The educated person is to be more than autonomous, being also authentic with respect to having the capacity and willingness to exercise freedom not only to choose, but also to create and recreate his or her innermost self - that aspect which provides meaning and direction to life (Hillesheim, 1990, p. 213). If persons are to be educated they should, among other things, be authentic in such a manner as to contribute to the creation of a sense and purpose in their lives. Education should incorporate procedures by which this attribute of authenticity can be realised (Rich, 1986, p. 38), and it is here that spiritual development is considered here to have a particularly important role.

An Holistic Approach

With reference to an holistic approach to education, it is suggested by Lealman (1996, pp. 26-27) that there is a relation between ‘healing’ and ‘wholing’ through the Old English word ‘haelan’. However, this comparison with medicine is here objected to because to ‘cure’ means to restore to the standard of ‘health’, while ‘education’ has no such notion. ‘Curing’ is also seen by R.S. Peters et al. (1973, pp. 49-50, 57) to be purely a means to an extrinsic end and consequently has more consensus about what constitutes
it as opposed to what being ‘educated’ entails. However, Lealman (1996, p. 27) contends that “the healing/wholing approach is integrative: it recognizes the whole as greater than the parts; it reaches out to a greater whole and relates diverse parts to each other within the whole”. She concludes that education that aims to address the ‘whole person’ should consist of a curriculum that is integrated in such a way that the various activities and subjects are given relevant meaning for the students through a greater underlying and unifying ethos which is able to engage with their own personal narratives.

This ideal of wholeness is argued by Ungoed-Thomas (1996) as being all too often, reduced to the various aspects of the intellect only. He states that -

The notion of wholeness, in practice, is visualized mainly in relation to the person as a thinking being. In so far as the focus of concern is on training the intelligence, and this is particularly true of policy at national level. (Ungoed-Thomas, 1996, p. 135)

Plato’s educated subject has a holistic and harmonious aspect, where the learner’s ‘true’ nature, being understood as virtuous, needs to be ‘led out’ through education. So through Plato’s Socrates, knowledge and virtue are assumed to be part of a person’s nature. The concept of holistic education has thus traditionally dealt with a broader notion than knowledge acquisition or development of the intellect only - ethical development also being essential. A holistic approach has to do with the whole person in the sense that he or she is multidimensional, and the purpose of education therefore “is to assist in the formation of better people” (Bosacki & Ota, 2000, p. 217, my emphasis). Such a purpose conceives education as broadening more than just cognitive abilities.
Richard Pring offers a description of wholeness with regards to the person, which, while including reference to the mind, indicates many other aspects. He describes the educated person as follows -

First, one characteristic of being a person is the capacity to think, to reflect, to make sense of one’s experience, to engage critically with the received values, beliefs and assumptions that one is confronted with - the development, in other words of the *powers of the mind*....

A second characteristic of being a person is the capacity to recognise *others* as persons - as centres of consciousness and reason like oneself...

Third, it is characteristic of being a person that one acts *intentionally*, deliberately, and thus can be held responsible for what one does...

Finally, what is distinctive of personhood is the consciousness not only of others as persons but of *oneself* - a sense of one’s own unity as a person, one’s own value and dignity, one’s own capacity to think through a problem, to persevere when things get tough, to establish a platform of values and beliefs whereby one can exercise some control over one’s own destiny. (Pring, 1988, quoted by Best, 1996a, p. 4)

So while the abilities of the mind appear to be the predominant aspects that have relevance for education, there are other important elements to being a person that need to be developed through education, such as a moral disposition towards others, the responsible exercising of freedom and experiencing an autonomy that allows one to know oneself and the meaning of one’s life. It is observed by Best (1996a) that, in this description there appears to be an absence of spirituality. However, although the term ‘spirituality’ is not present, the concept of the dimension itself can be seen to be contained within the description - as will become evident through the accounts given in the next two chapters.

Although holistic implications are implicit within the concept of education, their comprehension does not necessarily follow and they need to be conscientiously articulated (McLaughlin, 1996, p. 10). England’s *Educational...*
Reform Act 1988 describes the individual as having spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical dimensions. Ungoed-Thomas offers what he sees is a working model of the ‘whole’ person that is evident in this Act and in other educational policies in England. His model consists, to a large extent, of the characteristics of imagination and creativity -

In creating, persons give identity and meaning to themselves, and to their world. Through what they shape and become, they reveal what it is they value. Intrinsic to acts of creation are questions of worth. Through the free play of the imagination and openness to reality, individuals have the opportunity to develop a self and an environment which they believe to be worth working for. (Ungoed-Thomas, 1996, p. 130)

What appears to be fundamental here is the point that the imagination and creativity of each person is involved in meaning-making. This model appears to involve the individual more actively than merely ‘initiating’ her or him into social norms or understandings.

A further example of holism is given in Fauré et al’s (1972) report to UNESCO which recommends that ‘learning to be’ should be the foundational aspect to education. This fundamental aim is described as involving “the physical, intellectual, emotional and ethical integration of the individual into a complete man” (Fauré et al., 1972, p. 156). More recently, the Delors (1998) report reinforces this aim as the major ‘pillar’ for education, stating that -

education must contribute to the all-round development of each individual - mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic sense, personal responsibility and spiritual values. All human beings must be enabled to develop independent, critical thinking and form their own judgements, in order to determine for themselves what they believe they should do in the different circumstances of life. (Delors, 1998, p. 94)

It would appear that the ‘complete’ and ‘all-round’ development of the individual does not necessarily presuppose the whole person, in the modernistic sense that one can be totally completed. What these
descriptors indicate is that education should engage with much more of the person than just the intelligence that is to receive knowledge in its various ‘forms’. Being a person is identified as including emotions, values and freedom through agency and responsibility. These aspects, it would seem, enable people to engage effectively and critically with various discourses and their frameworks, which are integral aspects of one’s culture and ‘world’.

The individual person has been argued in recent times to be fragmented (Bauman, 1995; Lyotard, 1991), and contingent upon various traditions and discourses that lie external to him or her (Bagnall, 1995, p. 82). The notion of the educated person has been problematised because of this, as it is seen to imply that an aspect of personhood can be ‘finished’ in some ‘unitary whole’. As a consequence, reference to the idea of a holistic person can “invite attack and derision” (Erricker et al., 1997, p. 17). Fragmentation is argued by some to have replaced the ideal of holism (McLaughlin, 1996, p. 11), thereby suggesting that the meaning-making subject has disappeared altogether (Sarup, 1993, p. 181). The agency and autonomy of the subject are brought into question because ‘meaning’ is established through social norms rather than through individual, authentic creativity.

The disappearance of the individual with agency, or the ‘subject’, “stabs at the very heart” of the ideal of personal autonomy as an educational goal (Løvlie, 1992, p. 121). The subject is no longer to be the originator of meaning or even intentions, and so the notion of an educated person that is disciplined into the ways of critical meaning-making is problematised and the project of education itself is threatened (Smeyers, 1995a, p. 115). However,
the claims of fragmentation and the disappearance of the subject do not
necessarily incapacitate educators by announcing an end to education, but
they do encourage the recognition of aims of education that are more
modest (Standish, 1995, pp. 127, 133). The role of the subject, and hence
the educated person, does not need to disappear altogether. Kearney
(1987) warns that educators should be wary of slipping from a healthy
scepticism to denying the creative human subject any role whatever in the
shaping of meaning. The previous metanarratives of education, that
included the holistic notion of the educated person, now need to be critiqued

The intentional aspect of the agent, while largely conditioned by
surrounding discourses, can still be exercised in making a stand based upon
principles that she or he has come to value. There still may be a place in the
curriculum for such things as the Great Books, because they initiate the
students into the questions that matter. Kearney (quoted by Smeyers,
1995b, p. 410) argues that “What should be aimed at, however, is a personal
way of dealing with ‘what matters’: how people have struggled in the past
with what troubled them most and how they dealt with it”. It is the questions
rather than the answers that are seen as being “central in all areas of human
being” (Margetson, 1998, p. 9) and which are necessary to allow students to
be initiated into frameworks, and to encourage them to be creative. The shift
to problematise the educated person and the frameworks in which
discourses occur is argued here to have produced a realisation that many
fundamental human concerns are based upon questions that matter, rather
than answers which have attempted to totalize.
The underlying assumption that educational development should address the potential of the whole person and not only the intellect is reflected in the idea of ‘flourishing’. While the ‘flourishing’ of a tree does not leave any room for disagreement as to what this entails, this is not the case for the flourishing of a human being (Mott-Thornton, 1996, pp. 80-81). Flourishing for an educated person, according to John White (1990, pp. 8-9), can refer to three broad categories - personal well-being, a sense of others (morality) and personal autonomy. This personal well-being component can be interpreted to mean “the satisfaction of informed wants or desires” (Reid, 1998, p. 322), with the emphasis placed on the informed aspect as being relevant for education. However, this particular interpretation of well-being assumes education to be epistemologically-oriented, which may be at odds with ethical presuppositions (J. White, 2000, p. 705).

Whether well-being is viewed from an epistemological or an ethical perspective, it can be understood that part of the educator’s task is to teach the ‘desire’ for education. This aspect includes “teaching the soul - including fears, attitudes, will and desire” (Fendler, 1998, pp. 54-55), where the ‘soul’ is understood as ‘the private self’. Education, then, involves the flourishing of personal well-being, which includes having desires ‘improved’ to become more worthwhile by being informed and ethically guided. It would appear that the epistemological emphasis for informing and the ethical presuppositions are reflected together in Aristotle’s statement that “human excellence is of two kinds, Intellectual and Moral” (Chase, 1911, p. 26, my emphasis). Human well-being is understood to flourish through education if
both of these aspects are fostered, along with the third element of meaning-
making which includes one’s place and purpose in the world, which can be
used to contextualise the other two. An education that aims to enhance a
learner’s well-being, increasing his or her ability to live well in a particular
‘world’, must necessarily carefully take into consideration the nature of the
‘world’ in which the learner has presence.

6.3 Living Well in a Postmodern World

Many commentators claim (May, 1991, p. 16) that contemporary society is
facing a crisis induced by an apparent sense of meaninglessness. It is
argued by Purpel (1989) that there is also a crisis in education which he
describes in Nietzschean terms as an -

“age of anxiety” and has produced a number of gloomy descriptors and
concepts - “alienation,” “anomie,” “angst” - it is a time when we have been
challenged seriously to confront suicide and the death of God. It has
been called a time of spiritual and moral crisis - a time when words like
“anxiety,” “despair,” and “absurdity” are part of everyday vocabulary, a
23)

This age is also described as post-traditional (Giddens, 1991) because there
has been a loss of the grand metanarratives (Lyotard, 1991) that have
typically guided peoples through times of changes and uncertainty.

The postmodern “collapse of high culture into mass culture” (Kiziltan et al.,
1990, p. 352) may be considered to be an inevitable aspect of globalization
and an outcome of modernity (Scott, 1997). However it has evolved,
assimilation into a common mass culture and the decrease of high or
traditional culture are considered to produce an apparent loss (or at the very
least, a fragmentation) of personal identity and the consequent feelings of
alienation (Brown et al., 1997, p. 3; Gergen, 1991, pp. 15, 73-74). In certain contexts, humanity is being valued only in economic terms, either as market labour or as 'human capital'. This tendency can be seen to be occurring to such an extent that “large segments of the population everywhere are becoming irrelevant” (Chauvin, 1998, p. 9).

According to Castells (1996) the key ingredients required for our western societies to survive globalization are economic competitiveness and profitability. Consequently education has been argued to be a “key to future economic prosperity” (Brown et al., 1997, pp. 7-8). There is the suggestion that a tighter relation between education and work is needed to ensure economic prosperity, but that this may result in the subordination of education to ‘performativity’ (Lyotard, 1984). This criterion of performativity is argued by Lyotard (1984, p. 51) to reduce the value of knowledge in education to its usefulness, efficiency and commercial value. While Lyotard refers specifically to ‘knowledge’, it is also argued here to be relevant for the notion of ‘ways of knowing’ and by implication, ways of existing. The impact upon our national schooling systems as a result of prioritising economic goals over those that develop individuals to becoming more fully human is likely to be immense. The whole notion of education is now under threat due to the ever-increasing demand for training in competencies. We have witnessed both education and training occurring concurrently within our schooling systems, although it would now appear that the educative aspects are becoming marginalised (Margetson, 1997).
Including Spirituality as an Aspect of Education

The anxiety identified here as a characteristic of contemporary society can be alleviated by spiritual development according to Purpel, who claims that this is a neglected aspect of education. Tillich (1980) also describes the issues of this age as ‘spiritual’. By categorizing peoples’ concerns as anxieties, he describes the ancient civilizations as having a predominantly ontic anxiety, the Middle Ages as having a moral anxiety and the modern period as experiencing a spiritual anxiety. This anxiety about one’s spirituality arises, he argues, from “the victory of humanism and Enlightenment as the religious foundation of Western society” (Tillich, 1980, p. 60). Charles Taylor (1989, p. 18) adds that this evolution of the spiritual crisis is a result of humanity’s inability to reach the new world order as predicted in part by the legacy of the Enlightenment. However it has come about, spirituality is currently observed to be a neglected issue, which appears to be a concern within various spheres of interest, including education.

Spirituality is understood to involve a search to establish meaning(s) for lives that suffer from the above mentioned anxieties, and education likewise has an important role to play in providing this for students. However, Noddings (1992, p. 81) argues that “Possibly the greatest lack in modern public schooling is spirituality”. She observes that -

The more I think about the centrality of spirituality in our lives, the more concerned I become about its shameful neglect in the public undertaking we call “education.” Surely our responsibility to educate includes attention to matters of the spirit. (Noddings, 1992, p. 85)
Her concern is echoed by others who argue that contemporary education is diminished “by its eclipse of the spiritual dimension of our world and universe” (O’Sullivan, 1999, p. 159). These scholars imply that spirituality should be seen to be an inherent aspect of education and should not be regarded as something to be added on to it. Noddings argues that:

“Through most of human history, questions about the existence and nature of gods, about the meaning of life, about the role of religion in societies, and about moral life with or without gods have been recognized as paramount in any examined life and, therefore, central to education. (Noddings, 1993, p. xiii)"

She claims that the study of spirituality is of concern for individuals and communities, and describes it as “a center of existential care” (Noddings, 1992, p. 85). She stresses this aspect in existential terms as she presents the challenge of existential care as having an important spiritual understanding for education. She argues that:

“Finally, we must consider Heidegger’s deepest sense of care. As human beings, we care what happens to us. We wonder whether there is life after death, whether there is a deity who cares about us, whether we are loved by those we love, whether we belong anywhere; we wonder what we will become, who we are, how much control we have over our own fate. For adolescents these are among the most pressing questions: Who am I? What kind of person will I be? Who will love me? How do others see me? Yet schools spend more time on the quadratic formula than on any of these existential questions. (Noddings, 1992, p. 20)"

Noddings’s view is based on Heidegger’s idea that persons are immersed in-the-world, and therefore have a disposition to caring about their place in it. Care is also an aspect of citizenship, which is able to transcend both the private and the public spheres (Dam & Volman, 1998, p. 232), enabling a greater effectiveness in social interactions, which in turn lead to “better” selves (Schultz, 1998, p. 381). This approach reflects Heidegger’s (1959, p. 53) assertion that schools should have a spiritual atmosphere, not
scientific one. It is an appeal that can be heard from many who claim that there is a need to focus more on the value of such things as the mind and spirit rather than material and economic gains (Young, 1992). For example, Hill argues that -

there is a danger that a technological society, characterized by an increasing addiction to social engineering, will set its sights too low, focusing on the satisfaction of material needs without sufficient regard for the spiritual nature and needs of human beings. There is already evidence that this can lead to people becoming one-dimensional beings, crippled in their transcendent powers, trapped in consumerism, naive about the political forces which manipulate them, and exploitive in human relationships. (Hill, 1989, p.174)

The pressing questions listed above by Noddings are described as existential and are identified as including the questions “Who am I? Where do I belong? What is my purpose? To whom or what am I connected or responsible?” which are also described as spiritual questions by Nye and Hay (1996, p. 151). Nye and Hay report that these questions are raised by children when examining issues of personal identity. Education alludes to facilitating the development of a sense of self-identity and to encouraging meaning-making in the sense of what one’s place in-the-world means. This aspect of education is argued here to be spiritual in character.

The research reported in this thesis was aimed at elucidating a meaning of spiritual development in order to offer a more effective notion of education for the whole person, but it would appear that spiritual development is absent from or impoverished in many current provisions of education. In addition to having particular relevance for addressing the challenge that postmodern life is inherently meaningless, spiritual development is also argued to be
necessarily intrinsic to the enterprise of education itself. If education is to assist people to flourish within this postmodern world, then development in the spiritual dimension is an essential aspect of this task.

Spirituality is not necessarily religious or even moral, but its development within education needs to be moral and may or may not involve religion. Spiritual development involves a process, a search, which may be philosophical, theological or psychological in nature (Erricker & Erricker, 2000, p. 125), aiming at *meaning-making* to give purpose to one's life. Spiritual development is also *sense-making* in that it is evidenced as an empathetic awareness of how one relates through the network of associations that exist as a fact of one's place in-the-world. It is argued here that the notion of holistic development through education must include this dimension of spirituality if the learner is to make sense of the world as a whole, and of his or her life. It is a development that engages with various frameworks of understanding life and the world, and it includes the process of self-identity formation that is often expressed as to ‘know thyself’.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has endeavoured to clarify a conception of education, in which spirituality is to be understood. This context involves recognising that, in order for an activity - namely spiritual development - to be ‘educational’, then some values and standards that are worthwhile, are to be met. This activity, if occurring within a genuine educational environment, should not result in any form of indoctrination. If the spiritual dimension is recognised as one
aspect of the ‘whole’ person, then its development would appear to be of necessity if the whole person is to become ‘educated’.

It is argued that education has a role to initiate students into the ways of knowing in such a manner that they desire to care about and value the things that matter. This role encourages the asking of R.S. Peters’s serious question ‘how ought I to live?’ An important ‘aim’ of education is to produce an educated person who is developed (but not in a ‘completed’ sense) in various dimensions (intellectual, moral, emotional, social, physical and spiritual) in order to facilitate meaning-making. Such an educated person is characterised by being able to exercise a degree of authenticity in making meanings that can be critically justified. To be able to make meanings and purposes by which to live, it has been suggested here that engaging with questions that matter is a major key.

The ‘world’ in which an educated person must be enabled to live well may be understood as postmodern, ever changing, uncertain and, potentially at least, inherently nihilistic. Personal well-being or ‘flourishing’ is only possible through being able to surmount the potential anxieties that these conditions evoke. Personal meaning-making of a spiritual nature is argued here to be a central and intrinsic concern of an appropriate conception of education. This conception of education now makes possible an examination of the possible implications that the existential framework of spirituality has for education, and this shall now be addressed in the following chapter.
Identifying implications for education associated with any existential framework is inherently difficult. This is because existential philosophy, by centring on the existence of the individual, can be seen to legitimate only self-education (Johnston, 1998, p. 70; Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, p. 345; Rosenow, 1989, p. 10). Consequently there are significant challenges for identifying and recommending guidelines for institutional education, because this existential framework lies ‘outside’ the traditional concerns of epistemology. However, this difficulty is not limited only to existential models, because spirituality itself, when developed within education, tends to be “full of peril” (P.J. Palmer, 1993, p. 10) as identified in Chapter One. The existential framework should not be criticized for adding to the complexity of spirituality in education. It is argued here that this existential framework can clarify the dimension of spirituality and can be used to identify ways in which it can be developed effectively in education.

In order to analyse the implications of this framework of spirituality for education, a general model of education that consists of five elements has been formulated. These elements are: the purposes of education; the spiritually educated person; the learner; learning activities; and the curriculum. Figure 7.1 provides a diagrammatic overview of the model to indicate how the elements interrelate with each other. The numbered sections in which the elements are discussed in this chapter are indicated in
their boxes. The three aspects of subject content, critical attitude, and place, are addressed separately in the section that examines the fifth element - the curriculum.

The first element of this model is the 'purposes of education'. These are usually formulated in broad terms and are often stated as 'aims' in educational policies. There are many particular purposes that have been identified for education, which all attempt to identify something valuable and worthwhile achieving. Purposes identify the goals to be aimed for and also the strategies by which it is appropriate to engage the learner. This is the first aspect of the model of education to be examined, as it is the most fundamental.
Purposes of education, as argued in Chapter Six, are directed towards an ideal of ‘the educated person’. In relation to the present study, this notion focuses specifically on what it means to be ‘a spiritually educated person’. This forms the second element of the model of education to be addressed in this Chapter. This ideal of the spiritually educated person provides the goal for which spiritual development is to aim. While the beneficiaries of education are understood to include both the individual learner and society, this existential framework focuses only upon the former, while the latter experiences worthwhile educative change indirectly. Particular details of this goal of the spiritually educated person can be identified through specific learning outcomes. These are never exhaustive of the educational ideal, but point to desirable characteristics argued to be worthwhile, for which specific learning objectives can be planned.

The third element of the educational model is ‘the learner’ who is to become a spiritually educated person. As argued through the first six concepts of the existential framework of spirituality in the previous chapter, the individual has certain characteristics. These depict the individual as in relation, culturally embedded, free, holistic, a maker of meaning and a maker of self-identity. The implications that each of these have for educational development need to be considered.

The fourth element of this educational model comprises the learning activities that provide for the educational development of spirituality. These activities enable the learner to develop the learning outcomes, characteristic of the ideal of the spiritually educated person. The learning activities argued
to be the most suitable for achieving spiritual development are described as disclosive, confrontational and re-evaluative.

The fifth and final element of this model of education is the ‘curriculum’ designed to promote those learning activities identified above. This broadly involves subject content, a critical attitude and the environment or ‘place’ for learning. Each of these elements in this overall general model of education will now be considered individually, in identifying the implications that this existential framework of spirituality has for educational practice. It will be recognised that each element is not clearly exclusive of the others, as they all overlap with each other.

7.1 Purposes of Education
The first element of the model of education is its purposes. This is the most foundational element, determining to a large extent the nature of the other elements in the model. By identifying what is valuable and worthwhile, these educational purposes formulate the ideal ‘goal’ for educational development and determines therefore what to provide (curriculum) and how to provide it (learning activities), in order to facilitate in the development of the learner towards such a goal. It is recognised in Chapter Six that education, as an abstract concept, does not have any aims or purposes in and of itself. People have purposes and with regards to models of education these are often articulated as the aims of education as stated in policies. Not all forms of education are so formally systematised. For example, children are educated by parents who seemingly have no articulated ‘policies’ regarding the education that they provide. Nevertheless, it is argued here that even in
this instance parents do have purposes for education although they may well be inauthentic.

Education can be argued to have a multitude of purposes but, according to this framework of spirituality, there are some purposes that need to be particularly identified. Spiritual development is specifically aimed at the education of the individual and is not necessarily concerned with changing society. The one overarching aim is to enable individuals to have their spiritual dimension developed authentically. Spirituality should not simply be seen as something to be developed from a condition lacking altogether. This general but fundamental aim can be more coherently grasped through outlining five other more specific purposes that are as follows.

The first of these more specific purposes is to have one come to know oneself, and then to choose oneself. As the self can be understood as freedom, this purpose involves one recognising and accepting one’s creative agency. Through personal freedom come possibilities. The first purpose of education then is for the individual learner to become aware that he or she has a freedom with respect to choosing himself or herself and also the possibilities for himself or herself.

A second purpose that follows from creative freedom is the development of the awareness that the individual learner is a meaning-maker, both of understandings and possibilities. Consequently, understanding is not a process that involves forgetting one’s own existence and absorbing unquestioningly ‘knowledge’ and ‘truth’ provided from external sources. As
a meaning-maker, one is an active agent in constructing one’s own understandings. One becomes an active learner in whom understandings are made with reference to one’s existence.

A third purpose that is implied from these first two is for the individual learner to have a developed meaning and purpose for her or his existence. Living a purposeful life means that one is oriented to the future, that is, one creates and chooses possibilities for oneself. While the universe may appear essentially meaningless, the learner is able to exercise her or his freedom by making a meaning and then choosing to own it. This does not necessarily mean that the individual must be the originator of such a meaning, but rather that the emphasis is upon the individual as a chooser.

A fourth purpose is for the learner to be passionately committed to a purposeful life. This develops from the personal responsibility that emerges once the third purpose - making a personal meaning for life - is realized. Not only does the learner need to be committed to this purpose for which he or she is responsible, but this commitment should also be made passionately. This does not describe a purely emotional state but, using Kierkegaard’s and Nietzsche’s usage of the term one’s whole existence is committed to, and is even dependent upon, this purpose for life.

A fifth and final purpose is to have the learner develop a critical attitude towards his or her identity and purpose for life. While one is totally committed to a meaningful existence, the disposition of being a critical thinker allows one continually to re-evaluate values and meanings. Through
taking a stance in life for which one is wholly passionate, one does not become ‘closed’ to re-evaluating one’s position in the light of new experiences. One remains ‘open’ to disclosing activities and to possibilities, and indeed seeks challenges to one’s spirituality in order to strengthen it and make the meaning of one’s life more worthwhile. As various developments are recognised for their quality and for being worthwhile, there are certain forms of discipline that are required. The discipline associated with the development of the spiritual dimension is the process of establishing a coherent meaning and purpose of life that is able to be articulated, verified and re-evaluated through engagements with other horizons.

These five specific purposes of education stem from the main overarching aim - to have the learner develop an authentic spirituality. Such a general aim shares certain similarities with the notion of ‘learning to be’ as described in The Delors Report (1998) to UNESCO, where the meaning of individual existence is one of four central concerns. This development is never completed but is an ongoing process of maturation that never ‘arrives’ at an end point. However, the ideal that is aimed at that of is the educated person. For this framework, the particular characteristic ideal of interest can be described as ‘the spiritually educated person’. This ideal articulates the end of educational goals.

7.2 The Spiritually Educated Person

The second element of the model of education is the notion of the ‘spiritually educated person’, which is the idealistic end for educational development in this context, identified through the first element - the purposes of education.
All individuals are considered to be spiritual, even though they may not be well educated. The educational development of the spiritual dimension enables the learner to become more authentic and less inauthentic. The spiritually educated person will therefore have a developing critical attitude towards his or her understandings, especially how experiences are made sense of, from a unified and purposeful meaning for existence. One possessed of this critical attitude is cognisant that one always has some inauthenticity, and therefore it demands that one be a life-long learner in order to achieve greater authenticity. There are four characteristics associated with this ideal of the spiritually educated person, which include that one should recognise one’s spirituality, be authentic, have a critical attitude and also a sense of personal identity. These will now be examined in more detail.

Recognition of One’s Spirituality

The first characteristic of being spiritually educated is that one has an awareness of the unity of meaning underlying one’s life. While it has been argued that everyone is already spiritual, it is recognised that few have a coherent understanding of their spirituality. Without the spiritual dimension’s becoming developed educationally, one may not recognise the unified meaning of life from which one draws, to give meaning, value and purpose to all of one’s experiences. The awareness of this already existing dimension through ‘disclosing’ is an essential aspect of the spiritually educated person.

Having consistency toward the various experiences of one’s existence is argued to be a characteristic of a spiritually ‘mature’ person. From this
unified spiritual core - this ‘strong evaluation’ - one is able to make sense of, and give value and purpose to, all experiences. One is aware of the presence that one has in various roles. These roles may be superficially understood to be fragmented, but through becoming spiritually educated, one is able to draw oneself together, and recognise the unity of one’s spirituality that gives meanings to the presence that one has in these various life roles. Being aware of this spiritual core provides an essential understanding for the educated person as to how she or he is able to make experiences meaningful, and able to form judgements as to what is and is not to be valued.

**Authentic Spirituality**

The major contribution that an education of the spiritual dimension has to offer is to provide greater authenticity. Educational intervention does not simply provide an awareness of the coherence of one’s spirituality, but also enables this dimension to become *authentically* developed. Therefore, a second characteristic of the spiritually educated person is that she or he chooses or makes her or his life to be meaningful, and does not just passively inherit a spirituality. As was mentioned earlier, however, authenticity is never total. Therefore one is never completely able to authenticate, or even to recognise, *all* the meanings one has gained from being culturally embedded.

Generally people live their lives inauthentically in ‘everyday averageness’, doing what society (the crowd) expects of them. The meanings of society that are accepted as ‘givens’, make for the *facticity* of the individual.
Constituting one’s facticity, these meanings of society are described by Heidegger (1996, p. 204) to be ‘concealed’, ‘covered’ and ‘hidden’ and, as inner-worldly entities, they are not encountered by the individual living inauthentically. According to the existential framework, it is argued that to exist inauthentically in this “superficially civilized” (Niblett, 1954, p. 102) condition is something to be avoided.

Through becoming authentic, the spiritually educated person recognises his or her personal freedom, meaning-making ability and responsibility. What makes one’s life meaningful and purposeful is not accepted as a given, but is chosen or made to be one’s own. Even if one adopts an institutional framework, such as a religion, to give sense to life, the framework is not inauthentically accepted to be an authority in one’s life simply because of one’s facticity within a particular community, but rather, because one actively chooses it to be one’s own. Through authenticity, there is personal ownership for one’s spirituality.

The authentic use of one’s existential freedom enables one to recognise and make possibilities for oneself. The exercising of one’s agency is understood to be contingent, and is not absolute. Cultural and institutional frameworks which offer universal meanings should be engaged with by the individual, who authentically is able to contextualise them with regards to his or her own experiences. Possibilities can be produced through such encounters, which are then understood to be personally owned. Consequently as one chooses one’s possibilities, with regards to how one gives meaning and purpose to all of one’s activities, one accepts ownership,
and therefore responsibility, for committing one’s existence, and therefore all of one’s decisions to the spiritual understanding that one has. Through this authenticating of the educated person’s spirituality, a passionate commitment that gives meaning and purpose to the way that one exists is developed.

**Critical Attitude**

The description of the spiritually educated person given up to this point could also apply to those who commit themselves to causes such as are found in demonic cults and terrorist groups. Members of such organisations may be regarded to have a developed spirituality, as has been previously mentioned in Chapter One. However, the notion that such persons are ‘educated’, in the sense that they have embraced a worthwhile framework, is not supported. Consequently, in addition to developing a spirituality that is necessarily moral - as argued for earlier in Chapter Six - the education of one’s spirituality requires that there be the development of a critical attitude.

Having a critical attitude indicates that persons appreciate that they have a certain degree of unquestioned meanings which constitute how they make sense of, and give value and purpose to life. Aspects of their being are recognised to be inauthentic through this awareness. It is recognised that the spiritually educated person must be necessarily a life-long learner. Through having one’s spirituality developed authentically, one appreciates the nature of understandings and what it is to be ‘in’ subjective truth. Such an understanding of the nature of spirituality provides one with the need to validate one’s spiritual dimension through constantly engaging with other
‘horizons’ in order to increase one’s authenticity. The horizon is ‘open’ to possibilities at the same time that one is passionately committed to particular meanings. This disposition generates of course a life-long task, and is a characteristic of the being of a spiritually educated person.

The characteristic of being ‘open’ to possibilities includes a willingness to allow others to re-evaluate those aspects of one’s spirituality that can be articulated. This is therefore only possible once one is able to grasp coherently the unity of one’s own spirituality. Being disposed to offering one’s spirituality to others for their re-evaluation provides an ongoing authentication and ‘validation’ of this dimension. If one chooses to ‘close’ oneself off from the criticisms of others, one is no longer educated. Having an ‘openness’ in this regard allows one to come to an understanding of self and others, which according to Fauré (1972) is necessary if one is to learn to be.

**Sense of Personal Identity**

Understanding, creating and choosing one’s personal identity - who one is and what one stands for - is a fourth characteristic of the spiritually educated person. Existential spirituality is to be understood as involving the whole person, the values, beliefs, understandings, emotions, motivations and actions. All of these aspects impinge upon how one understands one’s identity and makes sense of everything one thinks, feels and does. Therefore, as well as having implications for the awareness to be developed within individuals, their actions are also imputed to be part of the responses
that are sought, because these are an essential aspect of one's *whole* being.

One should be able to live one's commitments.

Personal identity may refer to historical, sociological, religious and biological frameworks, but spirituality needs to go beyond any system of categorisation and reach to the personal significance found in these. For example, an individual can understand himself or herself through a biological framework in the sense of what it is to ‘be’ a human being in the sense of this category. However, relating this to personal existence is quite different. If one lacks a structure of the body such as an arm or a leg, or a function such as sight, one is not any *less* of an existing person as a result. As was indicated earlier, much of one's sense of personal identity is established through one's *values* and the *reasons* for having such values. Spiritual education centres the individual. It demands that one clarify to oneself what one's 'strong evaluation' is, and the justifications for how one relates, evaluates, believes, feels, acts and exists.

The spiritually educated person 'knows him/herself', and does not just a spectator on various issues, but is aware of his or her *Befindlichkeit*, that is, how he or she is 'attuned' in relation to, and is 'affected' by various meanings and their associated values. This forms part of the critical attitude that is sensitive to understanding *how* one stands in relation to certain meanings. More than just an acknowledgement of how one relates, the learner is also able to identify the reasons for his or her position, and *why* he or she relates in particular ways. The critical attitude is demonstrated by being able to re-evaluate how one stands in various relationships, and the reasons for doing
so. Consequently, one’s values are not sacrosanct, but are always open to being critically reflected upon and re-evaluated.

Empathetic Awareness towards Others

An important characteristic of spiritually educated persons is that they have the ability to make judgements with regards to what is worthwhile and valuable in themselves and in others. This should be demonstrated by an empathetic awareness for others whom they are in-the-world-with. This is more than having sympathetic ‘feelings’ or a moral disposition in the sense that one is *obliged* to follow certain behaviours because the culture – the ‘they’ – have determined that those behaviours should be ‘what one does’.

The spiritually educated person has an added depth beyond being simply obedient to a moral code. He or she knows *why* living morally and having empathy towards others is important for his or her very being. One’s concern for one’s existence is not restrained by the limits of one’s physical body because one’s *presence* necessarily extends beyond this to be with others. The spiritually educated individual does not only have *care* or concern for the self, but he or she also extends an empathetic awareness to other fellow humans. This is because one is part of a world that consists of these other entities, and one’s very identity and meaning of existence is to be found in this world that is embedded amongst these entities of ‘others’.

This characteristic is found repeatedly in the works of Nietzsche (1989, p. 44; 1998, p. 36), where he argues that ‘the sovereign individual’ is free from ‘the morality of custom’ where traditional morals negate both the intention,
and therefore the responsibility, of the individual. After the death of God, the sovereign individual can only find the ground of obligation to others in himself or herself alone. One must have a ‘why’ to live by, and from this one comes to know oneself and one’s relation to ‘the earth’ in which one finds meaning. Through his educator Zarathustra, Nietzsche (1978, p. 77) argues that the individual should “serve the sense of the earth”, and by helping yourself, “you help your patient too”. The notion of care is inclusive of others with whom one is in the world.

It may be construed that, through Kierkegaard’s notion of the teleological suspension of the ethical, operating in the spiritual and highest stage of existence may imply that one is beyond any ethical obligation to others. However, Kierkegaard argued that one may be present in more than one stage of existence at any moment, and so the spiritual is not exclusive of the ethical and second stage of existence. His reference to Abraham as having intent to murder his son Isaac was given as an example of the teleological suspension of the ethical. But this action is justified as a suspension of the ethical imperative not to murder, only through the direct and confronting intervention of an almighty deity. Kierkegaard warns his readers that their intentions to act while operating in this spiritual stage of existence should only be made ‘in fear and trembling’, because one is to be held responsible for all that one does.

7.3 The Learner

The learner is the third element identified in the model of education. The learner is to develop towards the second element (the ideal of the spiritually
educated person) through the fourth element of ‘learning activities’. The characteristics of the individual learner have largely been argued for in Chapter Five, and will be reviewed here with regards to their implications for education.

Most importantly, the learner is by nature spiritual. Therefore appropriate learning activities are to develop this existing dimension rather than attempt to construct it upon an assumed tabula rasa. The learner is spiritual and does not need to receive an education in order to become spiritual. The existing spirituality of the individual learner is able to be developed and educated, but not to be created ex nihilo.

The learner is also characterised as culturally embedded. Educational development aims to increase the authenticity of the learner’s spirituality, allowing the learner to become aware that many of the meanings that she or he lives by belong to the surrounding culture and do not necessarily have significance for her or him personally. It is argued that, from this existentialist framework, the purpose of disclosing inauthentic meanings “is to enable the individual to understand his own culture so thoroughly he is no longer swayed unconsciously by its premise” (Bowers, 1965, p. 226).

Becoming aware of the cultural meanings by which one operates, through disclosing, is necessary if one is to make meanings authentically one’s own, for which one can develop a commitment. ‘Unconcealment’ belongs to understanding as represented by logos, and is demonstrated through one grasping a unity of meaning as a primordial understanding (Heidegger, 1966,
pp. 202, 205). Being in a primordial existential condition, the learner is in truth, while also being the activity of disclosing. This is achieved through having a circumspective concern.

An individual is argued to be centred through the development of spirituality. This is not to promote a view of extreme individualism, where all value and meaning must originate from within each person. Rather, through the disclosure of culturally embedded meanings, the individual can ask ‘how do these count for me?’ and ‘what significance do they offer my particular existence?’. By becoming centred, the notion of ‘absolute truths’ is avoided and replaced by the Nietzschean notion of perspective (1989, p. 2; 1996, p. 9).

Another characteristic of the learner is that she or he is free to choose. This is a necessary characteristic if one is to increase one's authenticity. Becoming authentic requires one to choose oneself - one’s identity, strong evaluation and possibilities. The learner does not need to be given freedom but does need to be made aware of her or his freedom through education. Exercising this freedom may appear to be a daunting experience, so learners need to be made aware that failing to take up the personal responsibility that comes with one’s freedom, and instead, committing oneself to conforming with others, is in fact an exercise of one’s freedom to choose. Authentic development requires the learner to recognise, consider, then commit himself or herself to living personally owned possibilities.
In addition to having the freedom to choose, the learner is also characterised as having the freedom to create and make meanings. Heidegger has argued that being is unable to transmit its meaning to Dasein. Dasein however can give meaning to being. ‘Meaning’ is not intrinsic to other entities, but is always a derivative of the intention of beings (Bruner, 1990; T. Morris, 1992, p. 57; Smagorinsky, 1995, p. 165). Life, as an abstract concept, does not have meaningful purposes for individuals. Nietzsche (1990, p. 65) argued that “it is absurd to hand over” ourselves to some purpose, because “in reality purpose is lacking”. The learner, as a being, is able to make life meaningful. The meanings that other entities in-the-world appear to provide for the learner do not need to be accepted as ‘givens’. The learner is able to make sense, meaning and purpose for all experiences and other entities which are encountered, including oneself. This meaning-making characteristic also extends to the sense of personal identity. One can make and choose how one understands one’s personal identity, through giving meaning, value and importance to one’s relations with other entities.

The ability to learn is a self-evident characteristic of the learner. The act of learning can be described variously. According to the existential framework of spirituality, learning involves the development of one’s understanding. The learner is not an epistemic subject, where knowledge is cognitively constructed through perceiving phenomena. Knowledge can never be the phenomenon revealing itself to the subject, but rather, as Heidegger (1996, pp. 160-161) argued, the individual understands (verstehen) through circumspection. It is argued here that it is more helpful to consider that the
learner understands rather than knows. Although it may appear pedantic to attempt to differentiate between ‘knowledge’ and ‘understanding’, such a differentiation is essential to assisting educators to be able to facilitate the educative development of spirituality.

One’s Existenz, according to Heidegger, engages with one’s choices, both in ‘everyday averageness’ and in crises. Consequently he avoided the notion that humankind is an epistemic being, who comes ‘to know’ conceptually (begreifen) objective interpersonal norms, values and truths. ‘Know-how’, is embedded in the overall understanding or ‘horizon’ of an individual. Humankind does not know a way-to-be, but rather exists by being. Therefore, rather than attempt to address ‘knowledge’ as if it were a separate component to an individual’s existence, it is argued here that it is more helpful and relevant to engage with the understanding of existence, of being, of life itself, that the individual has. Kierkegaard (1980, p. 185) stressed the important difference between impersonal knowledge and personal understanding, and argued that “every man, if he carefully examines himself, possesses within himself a more complete expression for everything human than the summa summarum of all the knowledge that he gains”.

According to this existential framework, in order for learning to occur, the very understanding that the individual has needs to be challenged, and not just his or her ‘knowledge’. This notion of understanding, as represented through the German verstehen, implies an holistic and clear grasp of something, and is not simply a conceptual comprehension in a more
cognitive sense, as represented by *begreifen*. Due to this notion of understanding being so all encompassing, the implication is that the very meanings that people live by - their *beliefs* - must be confronted if educative change is to be made possible. This is much more challenging than addressing only conceptual frameworks on a cognitive level.

The individual learner is also characterised as being both holistic and in relation. The learner, with her or his relations with other inner-worldly entities, together form the opening or clearing space for unconcealment to produce possibilities. Spiritual development involves disclosing the unity of meanings by which one understands how all things ‘hang together’, as it were, and *how* one relates to this unity. The manner of how one is in relation is argued to be important for authenticity. Lesser (1999, p. 89) argues that spiritual development allows for a *fearless* relationship, both to the self, and to other entities. This is similarly described through Paul Tillich’s (1980) notion of ‘the *courage* to be’. Such descriptors as these do not present the learner as an existential ‘hero’ in an individualistic sense, as there is a moral dimension contained within it, through which the learner has courage to be “a part” of something more than self. Authentic spiritual understanding is holistic, as it draws one out of fragmentation (Zohar, 2000, p. 185). It also guards against the arbitrariness of the individual (Gadamer, 2000, p. 266) as well as inauthenticity.

### 7.4 Educational Development of Spirituality

In order for the learner to have her or his spirituality developed authentically, educative learning must occur. Learning - the development of understanding
can be described as a *qualitative leap*, which occurs at the interface between possibility and actuality. It is argued that it is *anxiety* (Kierkegaard, 1980, p. 49) that is present at the interface between possibility and actuality, where change - or learning - occurs. Possibility does not just extend into actuality as if there were a 'logic' available through 'knowledge' gained from perceiving the logic of a discourse. The notion of anxiety highlights the point that individual change is contingent on a great many personal factors, rather than a 'method' of knowledge acquisition. *Anxiety* indicates that one's choice of possibilities is made through a 'fear and trembling' as one's very purpose of existence is often involved. Learning, then, is contingent upon matters that deal with the purposes of one's life. Kierkegaard explained that even a teleological suspension of the ethical may sometimes be experienced when one is engaging the spiritual dimension in decision making. Through this he demonstrated that one's spirituality, the way one understands the purpose of one's life, goes beyond moral codes. It exists "beyond good and evil" (Nietzsche, 1989). The decision that is made without objective or authoritative frameworks to instruct the self is likened to a *leap* assisted with a holistic concern, a *passion* for one's purpose of existence (Kierkegaard, 1992, vol.1, pp. 102, 311; 1987, vol.2, p. 199).

The learning activities that constitute the fourth element of the model of education should provide students with three phases of learning to attain the characteristics indicative of the spiritually educated person. The first phase should produce a coherent understanding of one's current spirituality. People are argued to live inauthentically for most of the time, and therefore disclosive learning activities should 'unconceal' meanings that have been
absorbed from one’s culture unquestioningly. The second phase of learning should lead the learner towards greater authenticity. The learning activities argued to be suitable for this phase are characterised as being confrontational because the existing spirituality of the learners needs to be challenged. The third phase of learning argued as necessary for authentic development, involves activities that allow for re-evaluation. These must follow the confrontational activities, which, in turn follow the disclosing activities. In addition to enhancing greater authentic development of spirituality, the confrontational and re-evaluating activities are argued to provide opportunities to facilitate the spiritual development of others to whom one has responsibilities as a fellow entity in-the-world. These three phases are further elaborated in what follows.

**Disclosive Activities**

The first phase for facilitating the spiritual development of the learner in becoming more authentic includes ‘unconcealing’ through disclosive learning activities the spirituality that already exists. Such an approach is not new to child-centred education, where programmes must begin from the child’s level of understanding. It is argued that people are already spiritual, but because this spirituality may be inauthentic, it needs to be made clear. Through disclosive activities, the spirituality of the student should become both unconcealed and coherent - although these characteristics are never attained absolutely. However, there should be a *unity* of meaning in how all things ‘hang together’ concerning the meaning of one’s existence. This needs to be clarified initially before any further authentic development is possible.
The keeping of a journal offers a private format for the individual to establish a coherent unity for making sense of experiences. Another disclosing activity is the construction of a personal narrative, which may be accessed by an educator. This narrative could include those entries in the journal that the learner wishes to share. When one is producing a narrative for review, there is a discipline required to respond to the demand for articulation. By making the narrative historical, the learner is able to identify the significance that is gained through certain experiences. This activity allows these experiences to be ‘revisited’ through reflection, allowing greater possibilities for interpretation and therefore for understanding significance. This revisiting aspect of the activity may allow the making of more positive interpretations of specific events, as learners develop a greater awareness of their freedom to make meanings.

The construction of a personal philosophy is a third activity that offers greater discipline and an even more engaging way of disclosing one’s spirituality. This is because, through a narrative, the learner can choose to focus on some issues while ignoring others. A personal philosophy, on the other hand, needs to address various broad-ranging issues that thereby provide a more ‘complete’ picture of the unity that one’s meaning of life has. Curriculum designers therefore need to identify the issues that are most worthwhile in this regard. Such a personal philosophy is existentially phenomenological in nature, as it identifies the meanings that the world has for the individual. It is also phenomenological in that one understands how these meanings impact upon one’s own existence. This activity would be
suited for learners who have already engaged in writing journal entries and have produced a narrative.

The value of a personal philosophy is not so much in its content, but rather the disclosure of how one relates to entities and how one thinks (Raeper & Smith, 1991, p. 8). It can be understood to have a specifically existential characteristic because it “consists primarily in choosing a living attitude” [my emphasis] (Nevo, 2001, p. 46). It could be argued that general philosophy itself is an existentially spiritual activity, because it engages the individual with the issues “relating to the meaning and purpose of life” (Splitter & Sharp, 1995, p. 95). It is argued therefore that many learning activities suitable for developing spirituality should be philosophical in character. All three activities – journals, narratives and personal philosophies - are most useful for learners in disclosing their existing spirituality, although it is not contended that these are the only activities suitable for the task.

**Confrontational Activities**

Confrontational learning activities are argued to be necessary to facilitate the development of the next two characteristics of the spiritually educated person - authenticity and a critical attitude. The purpose of the confrontation is to lead the learner to doubt her or his understandings. It is through experiencing doubt that one can seriously consider possibilities for one’s spirituality. If there were no confrontation, no doubt to produce anxiety, then there would be no occasion to re-evaluate one’s actual spirituality and to consider other possibilities. At the interface between one’s possibilities and one’s actual spirituality, one experiences anxiety as one considers how to
exercise existential freedom in choosing and/or creating what one’s spirituality is to be. A challenging jolt is argued to be the catalyst that is able to encourage the learner to move through such an anxious moment. Consequently, it is argued that confrontational learning activities are appropriate to use in developing the spiritual dimension.

The existential crisis is a confrontational means by which one’s spirituality may become more authentic. It is understood as a ‘crisis’ because it offers a potential turning point to educationally change and develop the meanings that one has, and the way that one relates to these. It is ‘existential’ because it produces an Angst, characterised by feelings of doubt and uncertainty, and it individuates, in that the meanings decided upon become one’s own for which one becomes responsible. The existential crisis challenges meanings, whether of society that have been accepted inauthentically as ‘givens’, or created by the individual, and which offer real significance for one’s experiences. Through it, one recognises what is of most significance for one’s life, and this allows one to prioritize the things that matter in order of their importance.

When a person’s spirituality is being authentically developed there needs to be an awareness of realising various possibilities of meaning. Until such an event, one remains with often unquestioned and incoherent understandings. After students have attempted to articulate their spiritualities and the reasons for having such understandings, crisis activities challenge whether they are able to make their life meaningful in specific circumstances. Individuals need to become aware that they, as individuals
(rather than as identical members of a crowd) make life worth living through the making of purposes for which they become responsible. The authentic development of the spiritual dimension depends upon one's questioning the way one relates to the taken-for-granted basic concepts or meanings, which are disclosed to the self. Possibilities are only recognised as one's own through authenticity, as one first discloses them and then chooses oneself in one's situation.

The existential freedom to choose or 'create' one's own spirituality can appear daunting, as it calls upon a commitment with one’s whole existence (passion) to a sense of meaning for one’s situation. It is argued that, in order to develop the spiritual dimension authentically, individuals need to be willing to make a stand for what counts as important and meaningful and to have reasons for doing so. Without a crisis to make one become aware of public meanings that give sense to life, the meanings and purposes of the individual would remain essentially inauthentic and under-developed.

Existential crises do not require only extreme life-threatening events like pointing a gun to the heads of students. The notion of ‘crisis’ here is conceptualised with reference to its etymological roots (Gk. krinein) meaning ‘to decide’ and through Middle English usage where it denoted the turning point of a disease. Current connotations of ‘crisis’ can however, often denote a particular moment of time when an intense difficulty of danger is experienced, but Graham Haydon (1993, p. 4) argues that rather than referring to “a sudden and dramatic event” a crisis can usefully be employed to signify “a turning point in human affairs which calls for important
judgements to be made”. It is with this latter description that the notion of a crisis can be more suitably engaged within an educational context and is more in keeping with the crisis that Kuhn (1970, p. 158) refers to has contributing to the changing of paradigms.

A crisis may be made quite indirectly, as has been the method of many existential writers. Kierkegaard (1998, p. 161) has argued that in order for such confronting approaches to be effective “many an art will need to be employed”. One means of experiencing confrontation more directly is through dialogue. This can be achieved through group discussions that are conducted as ‘communities of inquiry’ (Sprod, 1993, pp. 11-12). Dialogue can also be achieved by having an ongoing personal philosophy assignment that communicates with and reflects upon earlier assignments, journal entries and an assessor. What is necessary is that the students be confronted with a situation that causes them to doubt their own understandings and consequently be motivated by an Angst to question how they relate to the purposes of education that they have assumed up to this point. This individualises the students by asking each of them to engage with disclosing activities which ‘unconceal’ and make coherent their purposes. What is important is for learners to become aware of their existence as an interpretive relation to the world they are in. ‘Doubt’ is considered to be “the condition that loosens rigid thinking and makes it possible to explore alternatives and clarify where we stand” (Gadamer, 1992, p. 234), and indeed Kierkegaard (1985, p. 158) regarded ‘doubt’ to be the frame of mind most appreciated by a teacher in a pupil. If students are to
develop authentically, then they need first to examine exactly what their existing spirituality is, and then re-evaluate this with a critical attitude.

Re-evaluation Activities

Once doubt and anxiety are experienced, the learner is ‘ready’ to re-evaluate her or his spirituality and how she or he relates to it. Re-evaluating learning activities are argued to be necessary, along with the confrontational activities, to enable learners to become more authentic and to develop a critical attitude. Through the development that these learning activities offer, choice is exercised to authenticate one’s spirituality. The existential freedom that makes this choice possible allows one to take personal responsibility in deciding how life is to be made meaningful. Many may choose culturally institutionalised frameworks to be the sources that provide meanings and give sense to one’s experiences. However, the authentic development of one’s spirituality requires one to choose these frameworks to be one’s own.

The re-evaluation of one’s spirituality and possibilities can occur in two ways - through inwardness and through dialogue with other horizons. When one is re-evaluating by inwardness, the ideal learning activity is argued to be meditative and reflective thinking. Heidegger (1966, pp. 47, 56) has argued that humankind may be characterised as a meditating being. The meaning of one’s life makes spirituality such a personal dimension that often it can only be accessed in solitude through reflection. This engagement is meditative in the sense that it is not the ‘rightness’ or logical reason of a thought that is of concern, but it is the meaning of one’s existence, and how one is attuned, that are of paramount concern. Spiritual meditation is
understood as being fully present (Lesser, 1999, p. 92), and is essential if authentic development is to occur, because simply living the experience, of and by itself, is not enough. Without meditative reflection one cannot engage in existential thinking. It is an individuating activity that must be conducted away from the crowd.

The keeping of a journal is particularly useful in facilitating and disciplining both disclosive reflection and the re-evaluation of one’s spirituality. In order to achieve the recording of deep and honest thoughts, the journal may need to remain private. However, these entries could provide valuable reference material for other more public disclosing activities that allow for assessment, such as the writing of narratives and personal philosophies, as mentioned earlier. Many thoughts regarding one’s meaning of life are often tentative and provide greater meaning when revisited and re-evaluated, and so the journal should be referred to from time to time and not just become shelved. This journal writing, just like spirituality, should be dynamic, as it offers the learner a means by which to achieve greater spiritual coherence by being forced to articulate what is of most value for one’s life and the reasons for such a prioritization.

The potential dilemma involved in adopting a ‘subjective’ means of re-evaluation of one’s spirituality is that it may become so relative that it may succumb to individual arbitrariness and become educationally unsound. Against this one’s spirituality can become well-grounded in two ways. Firstly spiritual understandings do not exist in isolation from the other understandings of the individual. Through authenticity a unity of all of one’s
meanings and purposes is able to be recognised. Therefore, an important aim of education is to develop a meaningful sense of coherence, as all of one’s understandings are inextricably linked to each other. Consequently, because “understanding always concerns the whole of being-in-the-world” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 142), each aspect of one’s spirituality must be embedded in the holistic unity of each individual’s horizon of understanding. This holistic unity diminishes the likelihood that any understandings will be accepted from an individual’s fanciful arbitrariness. An individual’s spirituality must share an internal consistency with the other understandings that he or she may have.

The second way that one’s spirituality can be well-grounded - and this is recognised as also being the second way that a re-evaluation can occur - is that one’s spirituality is potentially hermeneutical in nature. This means that the ‘truth’ of one’s understandings “is not reached methodologically but dialectically” (R.E. Palmer, 1969, p.165). One is continually sensitive to the possibilities offered through the meanings that others have, and how one’s own understandings stand in relation to these. The meanings and purposes that an individual has are able to be strengthened through the ‘to-and-fro’ of dialogue (Kerdeman, 1998, p.259), where horizons become fused. The questioning of meanings that is characteristic of a dialogue with others, “places hermeneutical work on a firm basis” (Gadamer, 2000, p. 269).

The understandings that an individual has are not isolated from the other meanings found in society, and therefore are grounded even further by being hermeneutical. What is valued through one’s spirituality is necessarily
integrated with the understandings found in society. There is consequently a unity of meaning to be found both in the holistic understandings of the individual, and through the fusion with other horizons found in society. Spirituality can be re-evaluated and hence become validated as educational through the unity it has with all the other understandings that an authentic individual has, and secondly through the fusing with the horizons of others.

It was mentioned earlier that an authentic development of one’s spirituality does not necessarily make one’s spirituality educated. Therefore a re-evaluation, that takes place through the dialogue with other horizons, is argued to be necessary to avoid the development of an ‘uneducated’ or even sinister spirituality. Consequently, the spiritually educated person is also understood to be a life-long learner, in that he or she has a critical attitude and is always ‘open’ to, and participates in the criticisms offered by other horizons of understanding. This person is therefore aware of, and is willing to consider, the various possibilities that are offered through these other horizons.

Teachers are potentially able to offer a very valuable ‘other horizon’, which is able to assess qualitatively the spirituality of students. Teachers can be most influential in the educational development of students’ spirituality if, through their interaction, ‘crises’ can be created. Teachers can be the learner’s ‘best enemy’ (Nietzsche, 1978, p. 56), able to ‘wound’ (Nietzsche, 1996, p. 139) most provokingly. This is somewhat like playing the ‘devil’s advocate’ in order to test and to clarify the understandings of others.
In order for the teacher-student engagement to be as effective as possible, the relationships between them should be ‘I-Thou’ ones. Buber (1969, p. 351) argued that the “relation in education is one of pure dialogue”, which indicates that, from the existential framework, the relation should not focus so much on the epistemological account of the student with knowledge (Kerdeman, 1998, p. 243), but on the fusing of horizons between the engaged spiritualities of authentic individuals. Such an I-Thou relation in dialogue is intimate (Burstow, 1983, p. 181), as participants are opening up to be understood in their entirety, not just as holders of epistemological matter. This could be described as a ‘Socratic dialogue’, which is understood variously, although Kierkegaard (1992, vol.1, pp. 206, 247-249) argued that the important characteristic of Socrates’ success as a teacher was due to both his ability to unsettle his students in their relation to their own assumed understandings, as well as his view that the teacher’s role of midwife is the highest relation that one human being can extend to another.

Nietzsche regarded the individual is his or her own worst enemy and so, by being the best enemy of the learner, the teacher is often able to understand the most effective learning activities for each individual student. In this role, the teacher is not a transmitter of information but individuates learners in order for them to disclose, confront and re-evaluate. The learner is to be centred through the learning activities, not the teacher. This is portrayed through Nietzsche’s (1978, p. 78) educator, Zarathustra, who stated to his students, “lose me and find yourselves” [my emphasis].
7.5 Curriculum

The curriculum is the fifth element of the model of education. It follows from the purposes and goals of education. The strategies that are designed to attain these goals collectively form the curriculum. The ‘curriculum’ can be understood from a number of perspectives (Grundy, 1987), as it encompasses many facets. Amongst others, these include the content, attributes to be developed and the ‘place’ or environment for learning (Warhurst et al., 1998). These aspects of the curriculum will now be considered individually.

Content

A traditional approach to ‘teaching’ many subjects has been to transmit content that is thought to be worthwhile. Such worthwhile content is often considered to be a ‘product’, a ‘what’ that is valued of and by itself, and as having ‘closed’ meanings. This has direct implications for spirituality if it is to be considered to be a subject. Content is usually referred to as ‘knowledge’, often established as ‘true’ through reference to its correspondence with a ‘reality’.

The existential framework of spirituality developed here assumes that people are already spiritual, so there is no essential ‘body of content’ or information that it is necessary to learn in order to become spiritual. No ‘information’ can count as the meaning of life, as meaning is not a kind of ‘knowledge’ (Ellin, 1995, pp. 304, 325). Nor are there any essential skills, processes or ‘systems’ of philosophic logic necessary to be developed in order to become spiritual. This obviously problematises the notion that
spirituality is a ‘subject’, because spirituality is not subject-centred. Spiritual
development is understood as the authenticating clarification of the meaning
for one’s existence. The ‘subject content’ of individual existence for this
model of spirituality is to be found in everyone’s horizon. Heidegger’s (1996,
p. xix) ‘ontological problem’ of raising “anew the question of the meaning of
being”, can only be engaged with by the existing individual, and not through
any category of being, including that of ‘humankind’. An attempt to form an
external body of information to be transmitted from the syllabus to the
student, degrades “existential thinking by moving it from a level of
participation to a level of spectatorship” (Wingerter, 1973, p. 253). The
existential framework could never support a position in which students are
encouraged to accept ‘knowledge’ that they have never made their own
(Wirth, 1955, p. 155). However, this does not necessarily make this
framework of spirituality ‘contentless’.

As an existential model, this framework primarily aims at arousing and
raising an awareness of the meaning of existence for each individual.
Existential awareness cannot be attained through any particular subject
domain. It is achieved partly by authentically coming to understand the
structure and content of one’s own belief system. The ‘what’ or ‘subject
content’, if it can be termed as such, that lends itself to existential concerns,
is therefore the values and belief systems of individuals, or what Kierkegaard
called the ethical-religious aspects. The content is the understandings - the
meanings - that one has for one’s being, which address one’s place and
purpose in life and one’s relation to them. These provide the means by which
interpretations and meaning-making can be conducted, with the ultimate of
all meanings to be constructed being the meaning of one’s life. These understandings are found in the horizon of each person and not in any ‘external’ body of information in a syllabus. This lack of any substantial subject content that is universally relevant has major implications for the construction of the curriculum.

From this existential framework it is argued that education should involve the notion of becoming ‘truly human’ and aim to awaken awareness in the learner, whose meaning of existence becomes a concern. As such, this framework offers engagement with questions that address the central issues of life. Material argued to be potentially universally relevant for all students is constituted by existential questions. This content is not to be conceptually or cognitively speculated upon because it has no ‘closed meanings’. Nor does it ‘arrive’ at any answers, but rather it offers questions to be lived and reflected on. These questions are argued to have more value in this context than any formal ‘content of answers’. There cannot be general answers to these questions, because all responses are contingent upon the particular existence of each individual (Ayer, 1990, p. 196).

The existential questions that form the content of spirituality are somewhat similar to metaphysical ones, but centre the individual learner in a concern for her or his very existence. They include for example such questions as ‘who am I?’, ‘how free am I?, ‘do I exist for the State or does the State exist for me?’, ‘how do I distinguish truth from untruth, and good from evil?’, ‘how do I live a good and meaningful life?’, ‘does God exist, how do I know this and what does this mean for me?’, ‘what is of value and of most importance
to me and why?’, ‘what is the meaning of life, and in particular the meaning and purpose of my life?’ While such questions can be considered to be typical of the ‘content’ of spirituality, they can be asked in many different ways. Many understandings covered by various subjects found in traditional curricula can form a reference for the individual to ask and reflect on the question, ‘what does this mean for me?’. This is more than just rational reflection on one’s knowledge, as it is meditative in the sense that one’s very meaning of existence is an issue. Consequently, spirituality is able to offer a unity of meaning for each individual, which embraces a personal relevance for the entire curriculum.

What provides this unity of meaning is often referred to as ‘myths’. These are understood to be forms of narrative that are able to provide significance to one’s experiences. It is recognised that myth making is an essential element for gaining mental health (May, 1991, p. 15). Myths can be the formalised narrative that “can unify an entire cultural movement” by guiding “man’s interpretation of his life and struggles” (Nietzsche, 1993, p. 109) or they can be created by the individual who seeks to give meaning to her or his own existence. ‘Life’, according to Sartre, is absurd in the sense that as an abstract concept, it is unable to provide a unity of meaning for the existing individual. Consequently the individual must give life a meaning (Singer, 1996, p. 41).

The content of this existential framework of spirituality largely consists in the personal exploration of existential questions and myth making. However, this does not negate exploring ‘external’ sources of information. Spirituality
moves understanding in the opposite direction, as it were, to Descartes’ methodological doubt. Whereas Descartes, through doubt, questioned and reduced the existence of the ‘world’ as he perceived it - the room he was in, the chair, the candle and even his body, to a thinking ego - the method of spirituality increases the world of one’s circumspection in which one is present. Such an increase involves all other entities in one’s world. These other entities include the meanings valued by culture, often found through religions and ideologies. It is argued that educational development requires a healthy engagement with such meanings, in order that they can be fairly ‘sounded out’.

In the preceding chapter, existential spirituality was recognised to engage with the issues of the meaning of one’s life and the meaning of life, as one issue of concern. The exploration of the meaning of life, in a more cosmological or traditional sense, may be explored further because of one’s spirituality. Consequently, much of the content to be engaged with should be chosen at the discretion of the students. They should be able to set the agenda for what topics they wish to investigate as a result of their spirituality. This indicates that spirituality has implications for the curriculum as a whole, rather than being contained within only one subject. This characteristic does not imply that the choice of all the content is to be handed from the professional curriculum planners and designers over to the fanciful whims of the individual learners. Developing a spirituality that is authentic does not mean that the learner can live life by any meaning or purpose. This would be extremely relativistic and, if the learners were at liberty to choose anything, then the educational value of any development would quite rightly
come into question. Consequently the curriculum should aim to develop a process of discipline for the spiritual meaning-making.

In contrast to this existential framework, spirituality is considered to be a subject in its own right by Wright (2000), who argues that there should be a recognised subject content and that this should consist of the particular traditions (especially religious) of the culture in which the students find themselves. Other scholars, as discussed in Chapter One, argue that the subject content should rather be ‘truths’ (D. Carr, 1994; 1995; 1996a; 1996b) of a transcending nature, or universal secular values (Newby, 1996). It could be assumed that, as an existential framework, the themes of death, Angst, freedom, etc., should form the subject content for this particular framework. These themes are argued by Berryman (1990, p. 510) to be appropriate for a religious education, because an engagement with existential questions and themes allows students “to pierce the conventions of language to experience the Creator directly”. However, this existential framework implies that spirituality should not be conceptualised as a ‘subject’ that can be identified with its own informational content with ‘closed’ meanings. The approaches of these scholars appear to be based upon the notion that ‘truth’ can be understood ‘objectively’. An implication from this existential framework of spirituality is that ‘truth’ should be understood ‘subjectively’. It is ‘meanings’ rather than ‘knowledge’ that are more relevant for a holistic notion of education (Erricker et al., 1997, p. 9), and so spirituality includes intuition, beliefs, emotions and rationality, as aspects of understanding.
From this existential framework of spirituality, the notion of ‘truth’ refers to a condition that the individual can be in, through authenticity. ‘Truth’ should not be understood as only a correspondence between what is known cognitively, and what exists in another dimension of ‘reality’. This framework of subjective truth is best represented by the Greek word for truth – *aletheia* - which means the unconcealment or disclosure of a hidden thing. The implication is that the individual participates in truth, and is therefore accountable for it. The individual cannot become detached in the pursuit of an ‘objectivist’ epistemology as per propositional truths, but must be in relationships of truth. This existential framework implies that education should not assume that the subjectivity of the individual is to make sense of an absolute ‘real’ world ‘out’ there. The learner-is-in-the-world, and therefore it is the world that the individual puts into perspective.

Truth is understood through one’s relationships - the how of one’s relationships is able to be positioned ‘in’ truth. From this condition of subjective truth, one makes decisions regarding how one values one’s various relationships, which are to have the greatest importance for one’s existence, and what is to be the meaning and purpose of one’s life. Such an involvement includes the whole person because being in truth is not just a cognitive affair, but involves one’s whole being, including intuitions, intentions, rationality and emotions. Truth therefore refers to how the individual relates rather than what he or she cognitively ‘knows’. This notion of truth presents a challenge for the inclusion of any subject content into the curriculum, as the emphasis is on the how of attunement rather than the
what of traditional epistemological propositions that readily lend themselves to the idea of content. It implies an attitudinal disposition.

**Critical Attitude**

While there is an implication to consider existential questions and the individual’s horizon of understanding to be the ‘content’ of spirituality, there is also an attitudinal disposition that needs to be developed. Developing a critical attitude allows learners to discipline their articulation of their spirituality in response to specific issues and helps to make coherent their ‘strong evaluation’ from which their judgements are made. Without the ‘demand’ to consider one’s spirituality in terms of how one relates to certain issues, the spirituality of learners could well be underdeveloped and insufficient in providing a purposeful and worthwhile life. For many individuals, there are certain issues that they have not considered, simply because they have not become aware of them. Consequently, the unity offered by their spirituality is not as broad and balanced as it could be and it therefore lacks potential verification as to how meanings of life stand in relation to certain issues. In addition to articulating and broadening ones’ spirituality, a critical attitude is necessary to re-evaluate it too.

The implication of this framework of spirituality to have a developed critical attitude is recognised through one’s awareness of how one relates to meanings. This implication is more of an attitudinal disposition that involves the whole person. It does not imply development through an accumulation of ‘knowledge’. Consequently, this how of spirituality has implications for all subjects in the curriculum, through the awareness that one has of the
significance, or otherwise, that these subjects have for the meaning of one’s existence, identity and intentions as realised though the various possibilities that one has chosen. That is to say, through spirituality, the individual learner should become aware of how she or he relates to the entire curriculum. For example, the topic of the French Revolution may be understood in terms of how one’s existence relates to, appreciates, values and becomes committed to the present system of government that currently presides over one, as this has immediate implications for one’s existence.

This should not be interpreted as a subversive scheme to call the masses to political action, as an existential perspective is only concerned in the individual’s being able to choose herself or himself, and is not concerned with transforming society. The authentic awareness of one’s how that comes through spiritual education is understood as one’s truth, demonstrated by a critical attitude or disposition towards all that one believes and stands for. Through spirituality, one never ‘arrives’ at a truth, and therefore one should never be so dogmatic to the point of refusing to negotiate possibilities of understandings. The things that one stands for, and the reasons for such convictions, should be coherently understood and available for scrutiny, both by one’s own reflection and by dialogue with others. This is a life-long disposition, because the individual is unable to break away from inauthenticity totally. One is understood to be ‘in’ truth by critically examining and reflecting upon all one understands.

Giving life meaning and making a myth for oneself can be understood to be artistic activities, as demonstrated through Nietzsche’s notion of the
aesthetic phenomenon. However, this is only part of the process, because a critical disposition is needed to examine the foundations upon which one’s spirituality rests. Hence, in addition to the creative and ‘artistic’ aspects of spiritual development, there is also the need for a more ‘rational’ aspect to be included. As Nietzsche has argued –

When it comes to recognising truths, the artist has a weaker morality than the thinker; on no account does he want his brilliant, profound interpretations of life to be taken from him, and he defends himself against sober, plain methods and results. (Nietzsche, 1996, p. 103)

This may be part of the reason why Nietzsche argued that the individual is his or her own worst enemy. The implication for the curriculum is to develop a critical attitude for each learner to a variety of worthwhile issues, so that her or his spirituality can have greater breadth and balance.

Activities that are suitable for developing a critical attitude can include engagements with controversial matters involving social responsibilities, moral obligations, ethics, religion, preservation of the environment, role of government, personal (holistic) health and aesthetics. While these are not existential categories, the meanings and purposes that one has for one’s existence need to retain a unity while providing sense to issues found within them, identifying how one’s meanings of existence stand in relation to them. The internal motives, which are an indicative aspect of one’s spirituality, become more prominent when one becomes ‘unbound’ from traditions (Nietzsche, 1996, p. 29). For that reason the traditionally accepted meanings attached to various issues should be “touched with a hammer” (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 32) both to ‘sound them out’ and to examine how the learner is attuned to them. This most certainly is not to imply that the
traditions valued by a culture are to be overturned simply because they have not originated within the individual. Rather they are to be examined as to why they are valuable and ought to be retained. Society’s members are more likely to become passionately committed to worthwhile meanings, rather than passive recipients of unquestioned, and unvalued, ‘givens’. There is no finite ‘list’ of specific issues within these categories, and the curriculum needs to identify which are suitable for particular groups of learners.

The ‘Place’ for Spiritual Development

In the previous section it is argued that spirituality does not conform itself to being contained as a ‘subject’, and therefore it should not appear on the timetable as do other subjects. The question then needs to be asked as to what ‘place’ in the curriculum should be made available for spiritual development? Spiritual development can occur in various places in the environment of the regular and ‘extra’ curricular components of structured curricula found in educational institutions. In order to facilitate some of the learning activities such as journal writing, reflection and meditation, an appropriate place may appear to be one’s own solitude. But this is a seldom scheduled activity within any institutionalised curriculum. While some of the learning activities specifically require places where a dialogue with other horizons can occur, this again could occur in solitude, as one engages in confrontational learning activities through the written provocative accounts of others. This, after all, has been the preferred means of existential writers. However, this engagement with literature should not only be a solitary affair, as the development of a critical attitude is argued to be more effectively
developed in an environment where others are present and able to participate actively in critiquing and re-evaluating.

Through Chapter One, it is established that development of the spiritual dimension in State and non-State schools occurs mostly within Religious Education classes. This is argued to be because the issues addressed in such places, readily lend themselves to a rigorous engagement with spiritualities (Webster, 1995, p. 12). In order to create opportunities for this development, programmes of Religious Education should include learning activities specifically designed for spiritual development, in addition to the activities that provide learning in and about religion. Also, the meanings found in religion should not be seen as ‘closed’ from the individual’s participation.

Education in religion and about religion should be necessary aspects of spiritual development. It is argued that learners are already spiritual, and a component of this includes one’s understandings regarding the existence of a deity and the legitimation of religions and their practices. In secularized societies, opinions regarding these issues are often uninformed and misinformed. Engagement with Religious Education offers the opportunity to ‘sound out’ and address the misunderstandings that many have. This is supported through Cully’s (1984, p. 120) claim that “one basic way to help people develop spirituality is to probe theological insight”, and that this should be achieved through a philosophical approach.
It is argued that an existentially philosophical approach to Religious Education can only enhance the authenticity of the individual’s spirituality.

As Zohar asks –

So what is the difference between spiritually dumb and spiritually intelligent religion? It is certainly not a difference between religions, for there are spiritually dumb and spiritually intelligent versions of every religion on the planet. The difference lies in my attitude, in the quality of my questioning and my searching, in the depth and breadth of my beliefs, in the deep source of my beliefs. (Zohar, 2000, p. 292)

The importance of Kierkegaard’s doctrine of how and Heidegger’s concept of attunement can be recognised as especially significant for this context. It is argued that a reflective examination should occur for each person as to how they stand in relation to the teachings in and about religion. This after all was a declared purpose of Kierkegaard (1998, pp. 212, 167) - to “cast Christianity into reflection” even although he regarded reflection to be “the natural enemy to Christianity and would destroy it”. Despite this potentially valuable contribution of Religious Education, it is frequently unavailable for the majority of school-aged learners in Queensland who study in the State system.

Another place that is potentially suitable for facilitating spiritual development is in classes that deal with philosophy and values. In addition to offering the content and processes that are necessary for students to be educated in these subjects, this place can also offer opportunities for students to articulate, clarify and re-evaluate their own spiritualities. However, as with Religious Education, this place is not available to the majority of school-aged learners. The Philosophy for Children (P4C) movement lends itself as potentially a most suitable approach to providing a
place for spiritual development through its promotion of a ‘community of inquiry’. The Federation of Australasian Philosophy for Children Associations (FAPCA) is the body behind introducing P4C into Australian schools. To date, the teaching materials and the few schools that have adopted this approach are predominately primary schools.

One place in the traditional educational settings that is able to provide an engagement with other horizons through reading is in classes in literature. Here students are introduced to many horizons in written form and those verbally articulated from other members of the class. The works of literature need not only be those classified as ‘existential’, but they should provoke and lead readers to challenge their spiritualities (Greene, 1974, p. 68). Many works of literature raise existential questions and lend themselves to engaging readers to examine the meanings of their existence. The place of the literature class is therefore a potentially suitable environment for spiritual development, depending upon the actual readings and the methods of the teachers.

Neiman (2000, p. 572) argues that “spirituality is not simply a knowledge of facts, or mastery of a certain disciplinary subject matter” but is, as Aristotle indicated, a “practice of living which necessarily involves fallible human judgement”. John Dewey also recognised that Aristotle usefully acknowledged contingency in statements of knowledge and judgement, but lamented that his whole theory of ‘forms’ has been construed to develop ‘objective’ knowledge that dominated many curricula. He argued that modern thinkers –
transmute the imaginative perception of the stably good object into a
definition and description of true reality in contrast with lower and
specious existence, which, being precarious and incomplete, alone
involves us in the necessity of choice and active struggle. Thus they
remove from actual existence the very traits which generate philosophic
reflection and which give point and bearing to its conclusions. (Dewey,
1929, p. 48)

Such philosophic reflection that engages with choice, active struggle and an
examination of oneself and one’s motives is often associated with the
Socratic form (Lapan, 1957). It is interesting to note that, when the original
Platonic and Socratic dialogues were developed in the early city state, they
were marginalised, as is also apparently the case in the “tranquillising
sociability” often found in contemporary schooling (Blake et al., 2000, p. 151).

While Britzman (2000, p. 201) acknowledges that there has not been a
place in the traditional curricula to address issues of existence, she asks
rhetorically “what is it that we do with our time that we can do without these
difficulties?”. To infer that secular institutions of education should take up
such issues rather than leaving it to the churches, has been a point argued
for many years (Dreikers, 1952, p. 21). As there continues to be little ‘space’
made in formal curricula for the type of spiritual development that has been
described, Brian Hill (1994, vol.3, p. 275) advises that provision be made for
students via voluntary extracurricular activities.

In light of this, the researcher conducted a short course after school hours
for senior students of a state high school. Given the problem of
omenclature it was decided not to advertise the course as ‘spiritual’ but the
term ‘philosophy’ was used instead. The sessions were spent with
participants discussing, clarifying and exploring issues. Each person was
invited to contribute, but was not required to do so. The students largely chose the topics to be addressed. Each session was designed to follow from the previous one, so the course could not be too rigid in its long-term plan.

Topics included:

- What is Philosophy?
- What is Truth?
- Who am I?
- What is the Educated Person?
- What is Good/Evil?
- Fate versus Freewill
- Does God Exist?
- The Individual versus the State
- The Meaning of Life

Most attention was given to personal identity and the meaning of life. From this outline the course may appear to have been rather traditional in its adoption of Western philosophical categories. It could even be considered to have been modernist, especially if reference had been continually made to metanarratives or if the process had been assuming and endorsing a universal autonomous human reasoning. However, in exploring Western philosophy, categories from a postmodern understanding were engaged in an existential context that considered and critiqued them on the basis of their significance for the existence of each student.

To encapsulate the impact that these extra-curricular activities can have, some comments from the students are included here. These suggest that
there is a need to give attention to this apparent missing dimension in our formal curricula. Firstly two senior girls wrote -

Personally, I have gained a lot from these sessions and have found them to be thought-provoking and encouraging towards personal development...From the very few times spent in discussion groups with Mr Webster, I have cemented many personal beliefs and made some worthwhile decisions towards my life.

and

I found the philosophy lessons very beneficial to me. Mr Webster helped me think deeper and clearer about life and what I want out of it...and am now more positive and happier on my outlook; how I perceive the world and myself.

These girls identified the course as being helpful in facilitating their personal development, as opposed to being yet another content or skill based subject. It may be recognised that their references to “personal beliefs”, "my life”, “beneficial to me” and “I want out of it” (my emphasis) express the adolescent obsession with self. However, in contrast to such self-interest the following comment from one of the boys indicates that the personal development did not simply stop at the individual level but also had ramifications for the wider community.

In the time I spent doing philosophy with Mr Webster I found much meaning in the content which was extremely relevant to real life situations. I feel it is more than just a knowledge based subject, but rather a thought provoking subject which opens new areas of the mind for future accessibility. In my opinion I feel that the entire student body of (the school) could benefit from such lessons. I feel that the benefits from such a course could lead to a friendlier more closely knit school-based community.

Another response is considered here to be quite profound in that it compares these extra-curricular sessions to the twelve years of the formal curriculum. A male student concluded, “[In] considering the philosophy
classes I attended [these] probably changed my outlook on life more than all my other schooling combined”. This comment indicates how much a student’s view of life can be enriched with such a course.

As there are no implied closed meanings, or ‘knowledge’ pertinent to spirituality (except of course if the existential questions are to be included), it is difficult to characterise it as a subject with its own content. No time slots need be made available in a timetable to ‘transmit’ any essential information to students, regarding their spiritualities. By extension, there is no room to be made in work programmes of Religious Education or Literature for example, for attending to spiritual development before moving on to other essential aspects once it has been ‘done’. An implication of this existential framework is that spirituality should occur in many places across the curriculum, through the ways in which the teachers and students engage with each other and with the subjects, and should not be marginalised to extra-curricular activities.

**Conclusion**

The implications of this framework of spirituality for education are potentially profound, as they present and propose a markedly different overall approach to education than that which has been traditionally or is practised. Educational policy should not only identify the ideal society to be developed, or the important knowledge, attitudes and skills to impart to a mass of learners, but it should identify also the individual learner who has a broad range of dimensions to be developed. One of these dimensions that needs to be recognised is the spiritual dimension. This dimension is argued to be
the most influential and foundational, because it is from this that the learner is able to make sense of, and value all other entities and experiences. Among the characteristics of the educated person that are identified in educational policy, there should be the inclusion of the spiritually educated person, characterised through the various attributes as described earlier.

The learner has been argued to be a meaning-maker, and as a consequence, as learning through the making or giving of meanings. Another implication of this framework is that the content or 'what' that is learned, is never able to be separated from 'how' it is learned. When this relation becomes obscured, the learner may become the assumed passive recipient for objective ‘truth’ in the guise of ‘forms of knowledge’. Such an obscuring implies an educational environment where closed meanings, deemed to have worthwhile value, are transmitted to students. This existential framework of spirituality does not deny the importance of passing on the traditional meanings and myths valuable to a society. It implies that for educational development, greater attention is to be given to the process of learning these culturally valued meanings, rather than focussing on them as ‘products’. After all, the things that are valued by one’s culture cannot be meaningful if they are presented as information or ‘content’. This is because meaning is something that only the learner can impute to entities.

The achievement of ‘learning’ is argued to be a qualitative event, and so another implication places emphasis upon understanding in a holistic sense, rather than on a quantitative accumulation of units of ‘knowledge’. There must be a centring of the learner, as the agent who is able both to choose
and to create meaning. The process of learning should be seen as continuative with the learner’s unity of spiritual understanding, and should not be portrayed as a fragmented affair of ‘ways of knowing’ occurring among discrete units of categorical subjects. Through the notion of hermeneutical understanding, learning occurs in the ‘space’ of one’s horizon, which needs to be ‘open’ in character, and not a solid, resistant line demarcating the understood from the ‘unknown’. A leap of learning is made all the more possible when anxiety is produced through the tension of how one is attuned to, and relates to, oneself and one’s possibilities.

Another implication from this existential framework is that the emphasis of any curriculum should not be on what is to be taught, but rather how it should be taught. This ‘how’ is the manner in which the learner develops understandings. Consequently, curricula should not only list the ‘what’ of subject content, but must also identify the critical attitudinal dispositions to be developed by the learner. Such an emphasis will give opportunity for the learning to be centred on the learner. If the ‘what’ of content has the greater emphasis, the ‘knowledge’ that is offered may not even be engaged by the learner, who may possibly consider it to be personally meaningless. If the intention and motivation of the learner are not engaged with, then the enterprise of learning for such a curriculum may become meaningless for many individuals. Learners need to be encouraged to give meaning to the things identified by educators to be culturally valuable.

This framework is argued to contribute to the notion of a spiritually educated person. This can be demonstrated using the four questions that
Pring argues should be asked of any curriculum for which the educational
development of personhood is an aim. His four questions are; does the
curriculum -

(i) respect pupils as people who can think, that is, have their own
ideas and points of view, capable of contributing to the various
explorations, enquiries, or activities that children and adults engage in?

(ii) assist pupils to see others as persons whatever their colour, creed
or appearance?

(iii) enable pupils to see themselves as persons, able not only to think
and to reflect and to develop a point of view, but also to accept
responsibility for their own behaviour and future?

(iv) foster that attitude of respect for oneself and others as persons,
that is, as people that have legitimate points of view and that can and
should be held responsible for what is done?

(Pring, 1984, pp. 30-31)

If this existential framework were to be evaluated using these questions as
the criteria, the framework may be seen as responding positively to each.
The curriculum, as promoted through this framework, not only contributes to
spiritual development, but also significantly contributes to the more universal
ideal of the educated person itself. It clearly prioritizes each of Pring’s four
criteria, as has been made clear in the foregoing analysis.

The concept of the how of spirituality has implications for all subjects in the
curriculum, through the awareness that one has of the significance that
these subjects have for one personally. That is to say, through spirituality,
the individual can become aware of how she or he relates to the entire
curriculum. It is therefore argued that it is important for all curricula to
identify the necessity for engaging with the spiritualities of the learners if a
deeper learning is to occur. This may appear to be a hyperbolic claim to
make, to relate learnings across the various curricula to how individuals
understand the meaning and purpose of their lives. However, if curricula identify learning outcomes thought to be valuable and worthwhile, then it is argued that there must be an engagement with the spirituality of learners. If learning is the development of understandings, of beliefs, then the unity that gives them value and meaning must be engaged with. Learning does not simply involve the accumulation or exchange of packages of ‘knowledge’. If an understanding is changed and developed, then there must be repercussions for the unity of all the other understandings within an individual’s horizon. This aspect is recognised to be important by Roberts (2000, p. 43), who argues that there needs to be a link between the motivation of students, and the curriculum. The student should not just be a spectator of various topics, but should be aware of his or her Befindlichkeit, that is, how he or she is ‘attuned’ in relation to, and is ‘affected’ by them.
Chapter Eight

Evaluative use of the Framework

In the previous chapter, the implications for education of the existential framework of spirituality that I propose in this thesis were identified. These implications were arranged in five broad categories, namely the purposes of education, the spiritually educated person, the learner, the learning activities for educational development and the curriculum. While these implications were quite general, they did indicate a significant shift of emphasis to be made from traditional models of education that have been primarily based on transmitting subject content. This shift is towards a framework in which the learner is central and able to give meaning, significance and value to educative experiences. This existential framework of spirituality provides a set of qualitative standards that can be used to evaluate various educational programmes, policies, curricula and ideologies. It is able to provide an indication of the potential overall effectiveness of such educational projects, as it is argued here that developing the spirituality of learners is essential for their committed engagement to learning and the development of their understanding.

This chapter reports a test of those claims, through the evaluative application of the framework in assessing Education Queensland’s most recent project - The 2010 Strategy. A critique of this important and influential project will be used, both to illustrate and test the evaluative potential of the framework and to evaluate the 2010 strategy from a spiritual education perspective. The chapter begins by providing a general overview of Education Queensland’s 2010 Strategy. This is then evaluated using the standards proposed by the framework as identified in the previous
chapter: the five categories listed above, beginning with the purposes of education. Finally, in the conclusion, the overall effectiveness and potential success of the entire 2010 strategy will be argued.

8.1 Education Queensland’s 2010 Strategy

The Queensland State Government department responsible of education - Education Queensland – has developed what is known as the ‘2010 strategy’, often referred to as simply ‘2010’. This was developed as the strategy for Government schools in Queensland from 1999 until year 1 students at the beginning of the project reached year 12 - in the year 2010 - and beyond. This project was designed to address and incorporate “the implications of major social, economic and technological trends” in an overall review and reform of State education (Education Queensland, 1999a, p. 1). As a result of the perceived challenges for education presented in these recent implications, the then Director-General, stated that “it is time to think critically about the nature and purpose of education” because, up until this time, “the basic purpose of education has been assumed” (Education Queensland, 1999a, p. 1).

The 2010 project team that developed the strategy consisted of three academics (two from university Schools of Education and the other from a university School of Politics and Public Policy), two school principals, a district director (School Operations) and senior executive (Office of Resource Services) from Education Queensland and a chair – Kim Bannikoff (Appendix B). Kaye Schofield Consultancy and Don Edgar Consultancy were also contracted to provide input on ‘the purposes of education’ and ‘social trends and their impacts on education’ respectively. The call for public consultation on the strategy began with the publication of a twenty-five
page discussion paper in April 1999 (Education Queensland, 1999a). Over 250 written submissions were received in response to this paper. Interested parties were identified as: parents; Parents’ and Citizens’ Associations and School Councils; teachers; principals; central and district office staff; bachelor of education students (first year); universities; other educational bodies (interest groups and private sector); State Government agents and agencies; professional bodies; the State Public Service Federation; and the Queensland Teachers’ Union. The submissions from these parties were divided into the following twelve categories: teaching and learning; teachers’ work; the social role of schools; social outcomes; retention; a more complex society; a changed labour market; measuring success; information technology; enrolment share; community partnerships; and distinctive State schools. The Report on the consultations (Education Queensland, 1999b) was released five months later in September 1999 and the Draft Strategy for Consultation (Education Queensland, 1999c) was printed a month after this in November. The final thirty-one page report was published early in 2000 (Education Queensland, 2000a). This consisted of four main sections titled: ‘A future society’; ‘Forces for change’; ‘Purposes of State education’; and ‘Objectives and strategies’.

In the section ‘Forces for change’ of the document, the forces identified were the changing family structures, developing national identities through cultural diversity, economic change, information technology, diminishing role for government at all levels, and changing workforce skills and competitiveness. The challenges that these forces present to schooling were considered to affect teaching and learning, the curriculum, schools, school workforces and school services. It was argued in the report to be necessary that students learn “to live with complexity, uncertainty and diversity” (Education Queensland, 2000a, p. 4) as a result of these challenges.
The decline of student enrolment in the State schools, falling retention rates and increased competition from the non-government sector, were considered to be important trends that contributed to the “greater disparities of wealth and social dislocation” in Queensland (Education Queensland, 2000a, p. 3). It was argued in this report that it was necessary to increase retention rates to match those projected for other OECD countries.

Through the publications mentioned above, the 2010 project team made the case for a radical reform of education in the service of meeting the identified economic and social changes. They proposed a ten-year strategy based on a broad purpose of education, which they argued was suitable for meeting the particular challenges presented by the forces for change. From this purpose, they developed objectives and strategies which provided an integrated framework that included pedagogy, curriculum and assessment, represented through such terminologies as ‘productive pedagogies’, ‘New Basics’ and ‘Rich Tasks’.

8.2 Evaluation of the 2010 Strategy

The task now is to evaluate the 2010 Strategy produced by Education Queensland, using the existential framework of spirituality articulated in Chapter Seven. The approach to this evaluation is structured using each of the five criteria identified in the existential framework. Within each of these criteria, those necessary details of the 2010 strategy are introduced in the course of the analysis. After some concluding comments regarding the overall effectiveness of the 2010 strategy, the evaluative effectiveness of the existential framework of spirituality itself is reviewed.
The Purposes of Education

The existential framework of spirituality constrains the purposes of education by engaging with what is considered to be the intrinsic ‘good’ that education offers the individual. As explained in Chapter Six, the ideal of the holistic ‘educated person’ is readily recognised, of which development of the spiritual dimension is argued here to be a most important aspect. The framework developed in the previous chapter indicates five purposes of education. These five are: that, through education, one should come to know and choose oneself; that one should become aware of one’s freedom to make meaning - including the meanings of one’s personal identity; that one should live life purposefully by making one’s own meaning and purposes; that one should be passionately committed to these; and that one should have a critical attitude to both the meanings for one’s life and one’s identity.

There is a contrast between the purposes of State education in the 2010 strategy, and those implied through the existential perspective of spirituality. In the most general terms, both perspectives argue that the purpose of any educational strategy should serve the interests of both society and the individual. However, while 2010 recognises that education does have implications for the individual, it does not engage with the concepts of ‘the learner’ or of the ‘individual’ as the existential perspective of spirituality requires.

Education Queensland’s strategy does not put forward any purposes of education, as it does not develop or even engage with the concept of ‘education’, even although it titled one of its sections as “purposes of education” (Education Queensland 1999a, p. 21), which later became adjusted to “purposes of State education” (Education Queensland, 1999c, p. 8; 2000a, p. 11). Under this heading,
2010 focuses on ‘schooling’, variously described as ‘State education’ and ‘public education’. This notion of schooling forms the basis from which ideals are provided, while references to ‘education’ and its inherent notion of the ‘educated person’ are absent. This is in contrast to the intention expressed by the Director-General of State education in 1999, who claimed that the purpose of education should be critically examined (Education Queensland, 1999a, p. 1). This aspiration was short-lived, as it has since been replaced by the notion of schooling as a means for maintaining “a strong state system” (Education Queensland, 2000a, p. 13).

In April 1999, the first discussion paper regarding 2010 was published, and it presented four possible approaches to defining the purposes of education. These were: UNESCO’s notion of the four pillars (learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be) from The Delors Report (1998) Learning: The treasure within; the Values approach from the 1994 Draft Charter of Values from the Queensland Curriculum; the National Goals for Schooling (Adelaide declaration); and Futures scenarios. Of the four approaches, the four pillars of The Delors Report was the most favoured by the public and Kaye Schofield Consultancy, but Education Queensland claimed that it appeared “a bit bland and unchallenging” and needed to have more ‘bite’ in it (Education Queensland, 1999b, p. 3). They then chose to drop this approach altogether along with the other three.

A closer look at the “four pillars” approach is revealing. The argument is made in The Delors Report that the development of the individual should be one of the central aims of education. Such an aim is seen to be largely contextualised through a tension identified by the Commission between the spiritual and the material. The authors argue –
often without realizing it, the world has a longing, often unexpressed, for an ideal and for values that we shall term ‘moral’. It is thus education’s noble task to encourage each and every one, acting in accordance with their traditions and convictions and paying full respect to pluralism, to lift their minds and spirits to the plane of the universal and, in some measure, to transcend themselves. (Delors, 1998, p. 18)

Continuing from what is considered to be “education’s noble task”, the Commission adds that “it is no exaggeration on the Commission’s part to say that the survival of humanity depends thereon” (Delors, 1998, p. 18). Education Queensland stated that the model presented in this report lacked ‘bite’. This, however, may be interpreted as being such because of the way in which Education Queensland represented it in their literature (or misrepresented - it as argued in Chapter One), as surely the issue of ‘humanity’s survival’ is difficult to comprehend as “bland and unchallenging”, which Education Queensland claims. It is possible also that the model just simply did not comply with Education Queensland’s agenda to produce the particular strategy they had in mind?

The major purpose of State education, as stated in the 2010 strategy, is -

to create a safe, tolerant and disciplined environment within which young people prepare to be active and reflective Australian citizens with a disposition to lifelong learning. They will be able to participate in and shape community, economic and political life in Queensland and the nation. They will be able to engage confidently with other cultures at home and abroad. (Education Queensland, 2000a, p. 12)

Following this statement, the 2010 document explains that ‘citizenship’ is the central organising idea. The whole notion of citizenship is of potential concern for an existential perspective, because, through it, the individual is fundamentally identified as a governed entity.
Education Queensland has produced a purpose of State schooling but not a purpose of education – even although this latter aspect was a stated intention earlier in the project’s development. Through its 2010 strategy, Education Queensland has clarified what it considers to be its responsibility to provide, namely an environment (of buildings, teachers and other resources), which is primarily recognised as being “safe, tolerant and disciplined” (Education Queensland, 2000a, p. 12). There is no systematic approach given as to how the learner should become an educated person and certainly there is no inclusion of any provision for spiritual development. It appears that the 2010 committee actively chose to omit any inclusion of the spiritual dimension as the term was a consideration in the earlier stages of its work – as reported in Chapter One.

The Spiritually Educated Person

An aspect of the ideal of the educated person is the notion of the ‘spiritually educated person’, for which the existential framework of spirituality has five implications for education, as argued in Chapter Seven. These are: that one should recognise one’s own spirituality; that one’s spirituality should become increasingly more authentic; that one should develop a critical attitude towards one’s spirituality; that one should have a sense of personal identity that one has chosen; and that one should have an empathetic awareness for others.

Whilst recognising that there should be a ‘good’ offered to the individual through education, the authors of 2010 do not develop any ideal of the educated person or any indication of an individual with many broad dimensions to be developed. Education for the holistic development of the individual is not an issue for Education Queensland’s articulated purposes of State schooling. Consequently, the notion of
a spiritually educated person is completely absent from the proposed strategy for
education in this state.

The absence of an holistic notion of the individual is an outcome that is in contrast
to the feedback that Education Queensland received in response to its first
discussion paper. The responses received from the public clearly indicated a
preference among its respondents to use the model of the four pillars (Education
argues that, “in every case the central aim of education is the fulfilment of the
individual as a social being”. The most fundamental of the four pillars is recognised
in this Report to be ‘learning to be’, because it is argued that human beings are “not
the means but the justification of development”, and this particular pillar
“emphasises the development of the complete person” (Delors, 1998, pp. 80, 86).

The absence of a notion of the educated person is consistent with Education
Queensland’s positioning itself fundamentally as an instrument of the government.
The 2010 Strategy (2000a, p. 13) argues that “the role of government in an informed
market is to maintain a strong state system” and, being resourced by the
government, Education Queensland evidently considers itself to be obligated to
undertake such a task. Hence the notion of citizenship is favoured as the central
organising idea, rather than the development of the individual learner into becoming
an educated person. Education Queensland does not engage with any ideal of the
educated person nor of the spiritually educated person, but it does promote the
notion of the citizen. Through this it would appear that the ‘morality of custom’, as
Nietzsche described it, is being promoted rather than the development of an inner
sense of obligation as is characteristic of the spiritually educated person. Education
Queensland’s ideal of citizenship is not developed in any systematic manner, although references to such a notion are interspersed throughout several documents. The citizen is described as being active, reflective and having a disposition to lifelong learning. Through its schooling strategies, the 2010 document argues that citizens will become “free, active and equal”, and “have the capacities to choose their identities, entitlements and duties within the prevailing political and legal framework” (Education Queensland, 2000a, p. 12). Education Queensland appears, therefore to be primarily concerned with conforming the mass of learners to participate in a political and legal framework, which others have determined to be worthwhile. The emphasis is upon participation rather than on coming to value the actual political and legal framework itself.

It is argued in this thesis that the exclusion of the spiritual dimension from this 2010 strategy does not provide a place for the presence (in the spiritual sense) of the individual to ‘strike’ the political and legal frameworks with a Nietzschean hammer. It would appear that the meanings and social structures of society are to be accepted inauthentically as ‘givens’. The authentic development of learners is not facilitated in this strategy, nor is there provision given for self-examination to see how individuals are attuned to their culture. Indeed it is argued that there is no opportunity under 2010’s strategy through which to engage the spiritual dimension and presence of individuals, as there is no intent to develop the person holistically.

The Learner

The existential framework of spirituality indicates several factors for the conceptualisation of the individual learner. These factors are those of recognising that the learner is spiritual, culturally embedded, free to choose, is a maker of
meaning and self identity, and understands holistically by centring himself or herself with regard to how understandings have relevance, significance and value in relation to the self.

The purposes of State schooling in 2010 indicate that people are to be developed into citizens and the notion that the individual learner is to be developed into the educated person is absent. There is an occasional reference to the learner as being able to operate as an individual rather than as a member of a citizenship or ‘crowd’. For example, educated citizens are to have “an ability and desire to learn based on critical thinking and independent action - a foundation for lifelong learning” [my emphasis] (Education Queensland, 1999a, p. 12). It appears that the emphasis is upon individual responsibility through an implied autonomy rather than individual authenticity.

Education Queensland may be justified in conceptualising learners as a governed mass to be conformed to the requirements of the State, because State education – or schooling - is fundamentally “an investment by the public” in which Education Queensland “must clearly identify the value to society” that is received from this publicly funded enterprise (Education Queensland, 1999a, pp. 1, 4). However, this could imply that individuals are seen to exist for the State, which is in contrast to UNESCO’s position, where human beings are the justification of, rather than the means for, state education. Throughout the literature on 2010, little attention is given to the nature of the learner and what it is to be a human being.

The characteristics of being active, reflective and having a disposition to lifelong learning, as listed in 2010, compare favourably with those implied through the
existential framework of spirituality. However, the characteristics in 2010 do not offer the individual the same personal significance as implied through the existential framework. The implication that the learner is a maker of self-identity appears to be identified in the description given in 2010, in that people should be able “to choose their identities”. However, the degree to which this ‘freedom’ is able to be exercised, appears restricted to a choice between existing cultural identities in and to which schools will endeavour to make citizens believe and be committed (Education Queensland, 1999a, p. 12). This is in contrast to the choice of an individual ‘strong evaluation’, which is argued to provide a more profound and meaningful sense of personal identity.

Educational Development through Learning Activities

The implications that the existential framework of spirituality has for educational development are based on the notion that learning, as a change of holistic understanding within the horizon of the individual, is a qualitative leap. The learning activities argued to be suitable for the educational development of the spiritual dimension are described in the framework as disclosive, confrontational and re-evaluative.

The 2010 strategy does not recognise the existence of the spiritual dimension, but it does provide its own framework for learning activities that promote the development of citizenship rather than the educational development of the individual learner, as this latter aspect has not been structured into the overall strategy. According to the Queensland strategy, development of people into citizens occurs through an integrated framework that links the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, where ‘learning’ is identified to be central. An important element of
2010’s integrated framework is the ‘productive pedagogies’. These are twenty classroom strategies arranged in the four broad categories of intellectual quality, connectedness, supportive classroom environment and recognition of difference. These are capable of helping improve student outcomes - both the social and the intellectual, which are described as being closely interwoven together (Education Queensland, 2001a, p. I). Through one of these strategies - higher order thinking - students can “discover new (for them) meanings and understandings” by manipulating information (Education Queensland, 2001b, p. 1). Through another strategy - deep knowledge - students discover that “knowledge is deep when relatively complex connections are established to central concepts” (Education Queensland, 2001c, p. 2). Through a third strategy - deep understanding - students do not just recite “fragmented pieces of information”, but “develop relatively systematic, integrated or holistic understandings” (Education Queensland, 2001c, p. 3).

Through the twenty productive pedagogies, there does appear to be a move away from traditionally content driven approaches. However, none of the pedagogies appears able to provide the disclosive, confrontational or re-evaluative learning activities that have been argued as essential if the educational development of the students’ spiritual dimension is to occur. ‘Objective knowledge’ is argued in the 2010 strategy to be problematic through ‘productive’ pedagogies, but there is no comment on an individual’s meaning and purpose for life. The productive pedagogies appear to be suited to dealing with knowledge, as defined in the previous chapter, and not with understanding. Education Queensland regards meanings, connections and holistic attributes to be aspects of knowledge apart from
the individual self. It appears that the 2010 strategy attempts to create a ‘world of understanding’ (knowledge) in which there is no presence of the self.

Another important element of the integrated framework of 2010 is the ‘Rich Tasks’. There are twenty-four of these, each of which is identified to be suitable for a particular age group across school years one to nine. These tasks are designed to include New Basics, Key Learning Areas and transdisciplinary fields of knowledge, and they involve the development of cognitive, cultural, linguistic and social skills. Amongst the twenty-four Rich Tasks, none is designed to provide for any self-examination, each dealing instead with issues external to the subjective inwardness of the students’ spirituality. As with productive pedagogies, these Rich Tasks do not offer any disclosive, confrontational or re-evaluative activities, necessary for developing the spiritual dimension.

The ‘world’ presented by Education Queensland’s 2010 strategy appears to have an existence apart from the students. It is information that is considered to give meaning, not the individual learner. Through a somewhat mechanistic view, the nature of learning is considered to be deterministic - the pedagogies being the implied causative agents that produce the learning. No contingent factors affecting an individual’s ability to learn are recognised. It appears that people will learn through these productive strategies, irrespective of the relevance and significance that individuals may see in them or in the curriculum.

The Curriculum
In the framework developed through the existential perspective of spirituality, the implications for the curriculum are challenging to traditional models of schooling, as
the authentic development of the spiritual dimension is given a priority. Firstly, the ‘content’, if it can be termed as such, consists both of existential questions and the meanings and purposes of life that each individual has. Secondly, the curriculum should provide for the development of a critical attitude in individuals with respect to how they are attuned to meanings around them. Thirdly, the curriculum should identify the ‘place’ - the most suited learning environment - where spiritual development can most effectively occur. Engaging with the spiritual dimension is argued to allow the curriculum to have greater significance for the personal lives of students, as individual learners are encouraged to examine the value that each subject has in relation to them. The framework argues that there is some centring of the self when understanding is being developed. Understanding is characterised as being both existentially phenomenological and hermeneutic because it involves the horizon of the self actively engaging with other horizons. This engagement entwines these horizons to the extent that the self is in-the-world with the other entities.

Through 2010, Education Queensland promotes a model where knowledge, rather than the self, is centred. Just as the notion of the individual self is ‘lost’ in 2010’s purposes of State education and its notion of ‘citizenship’, so too the individual is absent from its ‘knowledge’ construction. The integrated framework of 2010 is influenced both by the challenges presented by the forces for action and the purposes of State schooling. Through this framework, “schools provide students with multiple literacies, the technical skills and the motivation and desire for such learning” (Education Queensland, 2000a, p. 15). It would appear that providing ‘motivation and desire’ is a responsibility that Education Queensland is handing over
to the schools, as it does not offer any more detail as to how these may be appropriately ‘provided’ for students.

The New Basics project, as part of the integrated framework, is considered to be able to support the work of teachers and schools by enabling them “to move beyond a defence of status quo ‘knowledges’ to a critical engagement with the ongoing change that characterises social, technological and economic conditions” (Education Queensland, 2000b, p. 3). Knowledge is considered to be problematic, and is no longer to be referred to as essential subject content that needs to be ‘transmitted’ to students. New Basics consists of four clusters described as: life pathways and social futures (who am I and where am I going?); multiliteracies and communications media (how do I make sense of and communicate with the world?); active citizenship (what are my rights and responsibilities in communities, cultures and economies?); and environments and technologies (how do I describe, analyse and shape the world around me?).

In the descriptions of the four New Basics categories, it would appear that the self is to be engaged. Descriptor such as ‘who am I and where am I going?’, ‘how do I make sense of the world?’ and ‘how do I describe, analyse and shape the world around me?’, indicate, at least on the surface, that the individual is being centred as a meaning-maker. There is an indication here that students need to be motivated by recognising meaningfulness in the ‘knowledge’ of the integrated framework. However, on closer inspection, it is the what of the individual, the ‘category’ as Kierkegaard referred to it, that is being engaged with, not the ‘subjective inwardness’ of the individual. Due to this approach to the individual, it is argued in
this thesis that the ‘motivation and desire’ of students, for which schools are to be held accountable, cannot be provided.

There is a distinctive difference here between how the curriculum is portrayed in the 2010 strategy and how the existential framework of spirituality envisions it. The content of existential questions and the spiritual understanding of individuals are not included in 2010, nor is the development of a critical attitude through which individuals become aware of and examine their attunement to the meaning of their presence in the world. The educational environment – the place – which the framework from Chapter Seven describes as disclosive, confrontational and re-evaluative, is in 2010 only to be “safe, tolerant and disciplined” (Education Queensland, 2000a, p. 12). I conclude that the learning environment as described in Education Queensland’s strategy is not conducive to the educational development of the individual learner into becoming an educated person, nor in particular, a spiritually educated person.

Concluding Comments Regarding the 2010 Strategy

There is no doubt that Education Queensland’s 2010 Strategy offers many positive points for schooling in the State system. These refer to the overall suitability of schooling for the future needs of the students as predicted through the analysis of the forces for change and the perceived challenges that they present. For the first time in its history, State education in Queensland now has a purpose, which until now has been assumed and never clearly understood. However, by using the five criteria of the existential framework as evaluative standards, it is concluded by this thesis that, because 2010 neglects the spiritual dimension entirely, the positive features of the strategy’s impact may be seriously compromised or diminished.
In the previous chapter, it is argued that purposes of education need to identify the learner in a broad sense as one who has several integrated dimensions to be developed. An holistic notion of the educated person is absent from the 2010 strategy. Without the inclusion of the spiritual dimension of learners, it is argued that there is no place for the presence of learners. There is no recognition of the individual learner nor of any of the learner dimensions that are to be developed if personal well-being is to be achieved. It can be concluded that not only does Education Queensland’s strategy omit any mention of the term ‘spirituality’, it also does not provide for the development of this dimension for the students who study in the State system. Consequently it is argued that Queensland’s Strategy is not able to respond positively to Pring’s four questions referred to previously, as the curriculum offered through 2010 is unable to facilitate effectively the educative development of personhood. It could also be argued that, as a consequence of this neglect to promote not only personhood but also spirituality, the Strategy could be regarded to be indoctrinatory if, as was discussed in Chapter Six, learners were being conditioned not to appreciate the importance of the spiritual dimension.

The significance of this neglect of the spiritual dimension is argued here to be profound, as Education Queensland’s strategy emerges as being spiritless. In effect this 2010 strategy promotes the construction of a ‘world’ in which there is no presence of the self - in an inward sense - that is able to give meaning and purpose to one’s life. ‘Knowledge’ is usefully understood to be complex, and as also problematic and able to provide meanings. However, because the learner is not recognised as being central, as with a Nietzschean type of perspective which is able to ‘make’ and ‘give’ meanings, the dynamics of learning itself are not fully grasped by the 2010 strategy. The notions of the qualitative leap, authenticity and anxiety
are absent, and consequently, the depth to which 2010’s ‘knowledge’ and ‘understanding’ can be actualised, is severely restricted.

This limiting consequence of such an approach by Education Queensland is partly demonstrated through its reference to the need to provide motivation and desire for students, yet without developing any details as to how schools may achieve those qualities. ‘Motivation’ and ‘desire’ stem from the sense of meaning that one has towards one’s life. They are attributes of an individual’s spirituality and cannot be provided by schools, as Education Queensland assumes, and neither can they be determined as a consequence of productive pedagogies.

By not recognising the individual learner as a meaning-maker and as the source of motivation and desire, the 2010 strategy in effect inadvertently promotes a sense of nihilism. If life is potentially inherently meaningless, 2010 offers nothing for individuals to address the Angst that they may experience as a result of this. The question of existential anxiety that is experienced in a life that offers no significant meaning for the individual remains unaddressed through the integrated framework with its New Basics, productive pedagogies and Rich Tasks. The personal well-being of the individual is not recognised as a priority in this educational strategy, and there is no opportunity for one’s personal life - or life in general - to be made meaningful.

It is argued that the response of Education Queensland to the challenges presented by the ‘forces for change’ is spiritless and fundamentally misguided. Education Queensland has chosen to respond to these challenges by assuming that citizens should learn to live with “complexity, uncertainty and diversity”, and to
accept the New Basics that are required to compete effectively in the economically changing global market. It is even assumed that learners can be determined through the use of productive pedagogies. However, increased complexity and diversity do not necessarily mean uncertainty. A perspective that centres the individual, which comprehends a unity of presence, need not be uncertain as to personal identity or purpose in life. Such a perspective is necessary in a world of complexity and diversity, where decisions are not technical, but moral (Hughes, 1991, pp. 38-39).

With regards to moral development, to be consistent in its approach, 2010 is argued here to be able only to promote a rule-following behaviour based on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. However, such a deontological approach is argued to be ineffective in contemporary postmodern society, where the forces for change challenge individuals with unique situations. Due to society’s loss of authoritative absolutes and increasing complexities, situational ethics (Bagnall, 1998) is considered to offer the most effective means for responding to ethical situations, and this requires that individuals be morally developed. This dimension of development is argued here to be inextricably linked with the spiritual dimension.

Education Queensland’s 2010 Strategy is observed to be deficient in each of the five criteria used in this evaluation. The Strategy offers a useful curriculum for engaging the complexity of knowledge construction, but the integrated framework lacks personal significance and value for the individual learner. It is concluded that the success of this strategy will be restricted because the spiritual dimension has been omitted. The strategy does not offer anything personally meaningful or
valuable to the fundamental concerns that one has regarding knowing oneself – one’s identity – and the meaning and purpose of one’s life.

Concluding Remarks Regarding the Evaluative Applicability of the Framework

This chapter has sought to test and illustrate the utility of the existential framework of spirituality, as a set of qualitative standards in evaluating an educational policy such as the 2010 strategy. Through this illustration, it is clear that the framework is able to be used in this way. Each of the five components of the framework has sufficient power in its respective domain to allow a critical assessment of educational policy.

It is argued here from this framework that an effective response to the challenges presented by contemporary forces for change is one that focuses upon addressing the holistic development of learners as individual spiritual and moral agents. In order to recognise one’s ethical responsibility to the ‘other’, there first needs to be recognition of the self. This is because “only a self can recognise another” (Neiman, 2000, p. 574). Contemporary forces for change do affect possibilities from among which individuals may choose, and these choices do determine the quality of future life. These choices are argued to be essentially moral choices, not technical ones. Individuals need to be clear about why they should be motivated to be moral, in addition to being able to think skilfully and critically in ethically problematic situations. Such a response that recognises the need for the moral development of the individual is argued here to be largely dependent upon the development of spirituality, because this dimension forms the foundation for ethical judgements, choices and behaviour.
As was explained in the introduction to the thesis, nihilism and meaninglessness are claimed by some to be characteristics of this postmodern era. The existential framework for spirituality provides criteria by which any educational policy, ideology or curriculum can be evaluated: criteria that effectively test the policy, ideology or curriculum, with respect to how learners can make their experiences and themselves meaningful in an otherwise potentially pointless universe.
Chapter Nine

Concluding Comments and Future Research

The research reported here began with an interest in what ‘spirituality’ means, what relevance it has for education and, to the extent that it is relevant, how best it may be developed through educational interventions. This interest emerged through my observing that there has been confusion and uncertainty regarding spirituality in education. It was observed that little had been demonstrated in much of the literature as to how spirituality could usefully be understood in regards to a universal and culturally relevant ideal of the educated person.

By means of the research reported here, a coherent view of spirituality has been developed, through which this concept has been demystified. The research has been able to elucidate a conceptualisation of spirituality, which is argued here to be most relevant for a general ideal of the educated person. This clarification of spirituality offers an understanding that has multicultural application, being relevant to religious and non-religious persons. The spiritual dimension of the individual, understood through the research developed here, has been demonstrated to be able to provide unity for the other dimensions that comprise an holistic notion of the educated person.

The thesis has also developed a framework for how spirituality might best be developed through education. This framework has been formulated from
an existential perspective, because existential philosophy is considered to have important significance for spirituality. The grounding of this thesis in the philosophical perspectives of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Heidegger, gives rigour to the framework that is able to provide important value to our understanding of the spiritual dimension and the educated person. This is because an existential perspective centres on the concern an individual has for ‘knowing oneself’ and discloses and creates a meaning and purpose for his or her life. It is argued from this framework that the spiritual dimension is the most fundamental and most important of all the dimensions of the existing individual.

This thesis also offers clarity to the notion of ‘Existentialism’. While this was an inadvertent development, it is observed that most of the criticisms against this philosophy are aimed specifically at some of Sartre’s work that is seen to promote an extreme form of individualism. Existentialism, as argued from the works examined in this research, does not share the same difficulties as those associated with the targets of much of the criticisms expressed against this particular version of a general philosophy. Consequently, an existential perspective, free from many of the negative connotations of past criticisms, offers a useful and relatively untried source of views, argued here to have great relevance for educational reform.

Educational Utility

This existential framework of spirituality should be valuable in a number of ways. It identifies a number of implications for education, and these are understood to be fundamentally important for the educational enterprise of
producing the educated person. Neglect of incorporating these implications into educational ideologies, policies and curricula may therefore be expected to reduce significantly their relevance and usefulness. This framework of spirituality should, in other words, be able to enrich educational projects, because it offers values that are also intrinsic to education itself.

The enterprise of education is understood to have some universal aims, many of which pertain to an ideal of the educated person. The existential framework of spirituality developed here enhances this further in many ways. It promotes the idea of the development of a critical attitudinal disposition and therefore it opposes indoctrination. It provides for a curriculum that is relevant to the lived experiences of the learners, and is not simply ‘interesting’ to engage with in a monastic or detached type of setting. The framework supports decision-making processes that embrace complexity, responsibility and ‘care’ for others. It also promotes effective thinking, centres the individual, is philosophical, incorporates all the variety of ‘ways of knowing’, and improves the effectiveness of educative learning through a perspective that considers understanding to be hermeneutic. The framework develops the notion of ‘authenticity’ that is argued to offer more value for the educated person than does the more traditional notion of ‘autonomy’.

The framework provides a potentially valuable grounding for education reforms. Educational aims are argued to draw upon understandings of human nature and the meaning and purpose of human life. This framework of spirituality has particular significance in this regard, and should be most helpful in grounding various educational projects. It allows the aims of
education that drive reforms to be embedded in more rigorous approaches to fundamental issues affecting life in societies for all individuals. The framework should also be valuable for reforms in this present era in the Western world, in which many people are being exposed to the threat of the insignificance of their individual existence in an apparently meaningless universe. This framework is formulated to address the Angst that is especially produced by such an experience.

Education should also be influenced positively through using the framework’s evaluative applicability. As was illustrated in Chapter Eight, the framework’s qualitative standards are able to provide evaluative criteria relevant to educational programmes, policies, curricula and ideologies. Such evaluation is important to ensure that educational reforms provide significant and valuable meanings for individual learners. If there is no provision for the individual spiritual dimension, no place for individual presence (as was the case with Education Queensland’s 2010 strategy), then it is quite possible that individual learners may refuse to participate effectively in such programmes and curricula because they fail to offer any personal significance.

The final point of significance to be noted here is the capacity of the framework to structure the development of education through which individuals can make their lives more meaningful. The framework offers individual learners opportunity to live more purposefully in complex and rapidly changing conditions. This attribute obviously has implications for learners beyond schools. It also has applicability for adults who especially
are experiencing personal existential crises in their lives and/or are experiencing Angst as a result of seeing their existence as a part of a nihilistic universe. Through the educational implications drawn from this framework, individuals may be enabled to understand how their lives can be made more meaningful. This is exemplified through the positive response of a senior student in the State system, who, after attending a course designed by the researcher specifically to develop spirituality, reported that the course “probably changed my outlook on life more than all my other schooling combined” (in Webster, 1999, p. 29). Having such a life-changing potential supports the importance of spirituality as an essential aspect of education in making life itself more worthwhile.

**Further Research**

The framework that has been developed through this research requires further testing and refinement. The many relevant and important implications for spiritual development in education that have been argued for need to be examined in a variety of other educational contexts. These could consist of monitoring and investigating the effectiveness of the prescribed practices for the classroom. The framework could also be examined in relation to other specific policies and curricula documents. Through these tests its implied educational strategies may be further refined and developed.

From the early stages of this research, the focus of interpretation was an existential one. It is acknowledged here that there are other possible perspectives that may serve equally well, or better. An existential perspective is able to provide a meaningful and useful framework for
conceptualising spirituality and spiritual development, and it seems to meet the universal purposes relevant to any education project. However, there would be value in exploring other alternatives to this particular existential perspective, in order to examine further how spirituality may be usefully understood in relation to the educational enterprise.

It has been acknowledged that there are in fact many varieties of existentialism, and further research into this school of philosophy may identify a more useful existential perspective than has been argued for here. The particular features of existentialism, spirituality and the educational framework here developed should be critically challenged from within existentialism, with a view to strengthening and sharpening them.

The existential framework developed here can embrace religious and secular convictions, and their implied interpretations of spirituality. However, because existentialism is often presumed to be fundamentally secular, there is opportunity to further examine the relationship of a religious interpretation of spirituality with the existential perspective. The whole notion of spirituality is seen to embrace something much broader than that which is sometimes conceptualised through particular religious or secular views. Adopting an existential focus should not be interpreted as favouring one side of the religious and secular divide, and further research could be useful here to testing this claim.

The impact that this framework has potentially for education practice and reform needs to be further researched. Over a period of time the research
and framework developed here may be studied to assess its influence on educational practice. The framework may then be improved in order to meet any future emerging issues to challenge educational practice.
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Appendix A

Survey Questions and the Responses Recorded

**Question 1** In what year did you complete high school?
Various

**Question 2** Which high school did you attend? *Please indicate if this was State, Catholic, Lutheran etc.*
47 respondents indicated non-State schools, of which there were 2 Presbyterian, 7 Christian, 7 Lutheran, 11 Anglican, 14 Catholic and 6 Grammar. There were also 47 respondents who indicated they had attended Queensland State schools.

**Question 3a** While a student at this school, did you consider that your spiritual development (as understood from the above description), was provided for?

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**Question 3b  If it was, how was this provided?**

Respondents sometimes indicated more than one way in which they thought that spirituality was provided. Responses were grouped in like categories, with the number in each indicated by the number in brackets.

**State School Graduates**

(Great) teachers (8), Pastors/Chaplains (5), RE (5), Guidance counsellors (4), Life-skills, HRE, CARE (4), Career decisions (2), Knowledge (2), Friends (2), Education (1), Principal (1), Chapel (1), Assemblies (1), School generally (1).

**Non-State School Graduates**

RE (19), Teachers (11), Chapel services (9), School in general (8), Christian living classes (5), Life skills/personal development (5), Bible studies (4), Pastor/Chaplain/Brother (4), Daily prayers /reflections (4), Career lessons (2), Discussions (2), Retreats (2), Friends (1), Support (1), General class activities (1), Assemblies (1).

**Question 3c  If not, would you have wanted it to have been provided for?**

Number of responses

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Question 4  Are you interested in spiritual development as it is defined above?

Number of responses

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Question 5  If you become a secondary teacher, what will be your subject areas of specialisation?

Various

Question 6a  Have you given any thought to how you, as a teacher, might provide for spiritual development for your students before now?
Number of responses

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**Question 6b  If you have, how would you promote this particular development?**

Be a role model (8), Develop friendships with students (8), RE (5), Open ended questions for discussion (4), Encourage self-confidence, self-esteem, self-expression, morals, values (4), Students should find their own way (3), Help students decide right from wrong (2), Give students knowledge of conflicting theories and let them decide themselves (2), Take time with students to explore themselves (2), Be open minded, encourage tolerance, broaden peoples attitudes (2), A separate unit on morals & ethics (1), Get students to write an essay (1), Discuss religious issues related to topic (1), I have a nursing background (10 years). We were taught to take on a holistic approach so I feel is almost second nature to me now (1).
**Question 7**  *Is spiritual development something that you would want to be able to offer for your students? Why/why not?*

Number of responses

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**No**

It is the job of parents (4), It is not my business to tell them what they should believe in this regard (3), It should be left to someone with experience (3), Fine legal line between spiritual development and pressing my own views on others (1), Because I don’t believe in something controlling my fate. I am my own god! (1), It would not be appropriate for all students (1), Because I am not spiritually developed myself (1)

**Yes**

Important, especially to have goals (17), It’s necessary for development as a person, identity formation, purpose and to be a citizen (12), Everyone needs it for holistic development (5), It is the foundation for self-respect, respecting others and understanding who you are (5), foundation for building later thinking and
development (4), Important to provide direction (4), Help to deal with life (3),
improves society and relationships (3), To inspire/motivate students (2), To be a
good role model (2), Yes but not in the sense of religion (1), If it improves
learning and self-esteem (1), The most important aspect of life - determining
happiness, fulfilment and how to live (1), The ethic/morality thing might be a good
idea (1), Everyone will have to face the issue one day (1).

Other comments

‘I think spiritual development should be an important part of child development.’
Christianity/Christian beliefs & values is synonymous with spiritual development
for me.’

‘Let us know what you find.’

‘Religion in schools has no place in a multi-cultural Australia.’

‘My approach will always to be a contemplative one hopefully. In spiritual
matters I will always be as much a student as a teacher. My hope is to engage
upon a journey of human growth with people.’

‘If we must have specialised areas studied to be able to teach then so to[o]
should those who are to teach or “nurture” spiritual development. I feel it is an
important part of growing up but like all learning should be left for experts!
I did a unit called “Contemporary Moral Issues” with Noel Preston at QUT last
year. Thought it was good.’

‘Is this necessary or are you merely attempting to establish the level of
discontment [sic] with traditional religious beliefs, prevalent in today’s young
adults?’
Appendix B

Membership of 2010 Reference Group

Mr Kim Bannikoff (Chair)  Project Manager of Queensland State Education: 2010 Project

Ms Susan Rankin  Assistant Director General of Education (Office of Resource Services)

Dr Ray Barrett  Acting Assistant Director General (School Operations)

Ms Bernadette O’Rourke  President, Queensland Secondary Principals Associations

Mr Tom Hardy  President, Queensland Association of State School Principals

Associate Professor Bob Lingard  University of Queensland, Graduate School of Education

Associate Professor Rob Gilbert  James Cook University, School of Education

Dr John Kane  Griffith University, School of Politics and Public Policy