Women and Religion in Britain Today

Belonging

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Women's Studies

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank you all for reading our book... your beliefs matter.

Introduction

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Keywords: belief, belonging, cultural, faith, gender, lived religion, religion, religiosity, ritual, spirituality, women, worship.

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This book examines a range of ways in which religion continues to impact on the lives of women in Britain today. We aim to give women a voice in answering the question "What counts as religion?" (Beckford, 2003, p. 12). Yet the terms *religion* and *women* are complex in definition, each commanding debate. The continuing conversations surrounding both terms are multifaceted, particularly where they intersect.

The primary theme of this book is about women and the ways in which they *belong* to religious groups. We, therefore, begin by setting out how we have defined the term women. Schudson, Beischel and van Anders (2019) examined how individuals have used and understood the six gender/sex categories (man, woman, feminine, masculine, female, and male). Their results showed that understandings are less binary and more fluid than in the past with greater diversity in contemporary understanding. Gender is not a dichotomy; it is not a binary variable. For the purposes of this book, we use gender to mean man and woman as each contributor frames sex and gender according to how their research participants understand these terms, and at times there is clarification where experiences of cis-gendered people cannot reflect the experiences of trans or non-binary people.

At the time of research, our respective cohorts were not enmeshed in the current positioning of gender fluidity. Collectively, we acknowledge that the debate about how inclusive categories of sex should be has gathered momentum. Though our intention is not to rehearse these arguments here, contributors to this book support the work to deconstruct rigid binaries of sex and gender, though theoretical emphases may vary.

Religion can be viewed as a social construct, one which changes and adapts over time, holding different meanings for different individuals. Today, religion

remains a term that is widely contested. As religion is a continuing process that has evolved and continues to evolve, there can be no one definition that carries the same meaning to all people. Religion is not a single phenomenon (Smart, 1998). With this in mind, we include spirituality within the parameters of religion, drawn to King's view that:

> [t]oday the notion of spirituality is applied across different religious traditions; it is used inside and outside particular religions as well as in many inter-faith and secular contexts. Thus, spirituality has become a universal code word to indicate the human search for direction and meaning, for wholeness and transcendence. (2017, p. 668)

Linda Woodhead (2011) proposed that religion can be defined by situating it within five separate dimensions: culture, identity, relationship, practice, and power. We are of the opinion that these dimensions enable us to examine religion from a spiritual plane which allows us to incorporate beliefs that do not include an omnipresent being. In whatever way we wish to define it, religion continues to play a part in the lives of many of Britain's women. This book examines the lived religious experiences of women using ethnographic and holistic frameworks. This contemporary study of religion is multidisciplinary; therefore, through various academic fields, we look to gain an understanding of the religious and spiritual beliefs, practises, and everyday experiences of women. We examine religion as a lived experience, utilising the term *lived religion* to describe how people practise or experience religion and spirituality in their everyday lives. This may or may not include worship in a religious setting and can be formal or informal. The following chapters relate to each of Woodhead's five dimensions, exploring the ways religion and spirituality continue to impact on women's lives, offering a heterogeneous look at religion in the twenty-first century.

As this book looks at religion as a lived experience, we wanted to expand the boundaries beyond religion as a social and cultural construct. To explore the essence of belief and its relationship to belonging, we focus on the religiosity of women, in terms of worship, doctrinal adherence, ritual and experience. Bergan and McContha (2000), Holdcoft (2006) and Smart (1998) point out that religiosity is also not a simple concept to define. It is as difficult for an agreement to be reached as it is to agree on a definition for religion. One problem is that words such as religiousness, belief and faith are used as replacements for religiosity. However, as Holdcroft is quick to point out, these are measurements of religiosity rather than synonyms. Religiosity can be defined similarly to Woodhead's (2011) definition of religion, and Holdcroft suggests that these dimensions cover knowledge, faith, and ritual. What one must note is that it is

possible to exemplify one dimension whilst being deficient in the others (Holdcroft, 2006). A sound religious knowledge does not necessarily equate with a cast-iron belief. For this book, we have defined religiosity as: faith, knowledge, belief, and practise. This definition encapsulates spirituality allowing us to examine the close relationship between faith and spirituality through knowledge, belief, and practise (King, 2017).

Saroglou et al. (2020) propose that spirituality/ religiousness is composed of four elements: believing, bonding, behaving, and belonging, with each element holding emotional, social, cognitive, and moral connotations. The individual chapters in this book study the element of *belonging* which Saroglou defined as:

> [t]he social aspects of religion, insertion into a community, continuity with a tradition, and the search for collective identity and social self-esteem by belonging to a group with a glorious past and an eternal future. (2020, p. 553)

Belonging is an important social motive; the need for acceptance and belonging is a fundamental concept that drives behaviours. Exploring how we belong grants an understanding of how choices are made, both by the individual and the group. Through belonging we are able, as individuals, to ground – or orientate ourselves in different social groupings. We add to our identities that of, amongst others, child, parent, friend, colleague, neighbour, and peer. Schudson, Beischel and van Anders noted that "belonging and bonding were uniquely associated with increased life satisfaction" (2019, p.552). This book examines the factors which underpin the need to belong, set the rules the group adhere to, and in some cases, the impact non-belonging can have. As Baumeister and Leary argue, people "have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships" (Baumeister and Leary, 1995, p. 497). For many women in Britain, religion remains an essential aspect of their lives, and belonging helps foster meaningful interpersonal connections.

Chin makes an interesting point that although belonging frequently appears as a concept in academic literature "it is rarely defined generally" (Chin, 2019, p. 717). We are therefore using four dimensions to explore belonging within this book:

- Recognition: not only must the individual must recognise they belong to a group, but the other members must also recognise the individual as a co-member.

- Identity: an individual takes on the identity of the group; understanding their place within it.
- Strength: the extent to which an individual emphasises their place within the group. Some groups will demand more of a commitment than others.
- Setting: belonging occurs in a variety of groups. For this book, all groups are of a religious or spiritual nature.

Taking the above dimensions into account belonging is a common bond between individuals, it is the glue that holds groups together. It is the aim of this book to explore contemporary women's spirituality and religiosity in Britain by bringing together an interdisciplinary collection of voices to address this subject. Each chapter will look at belonging in a different religious setting, from a different academic standpoint.

The chapters contain threads that run through and connect them. Belonging is examined in relation to women's only spaces within religion and religious settings. From the women-only rituals the fictional character *Aisha,* in chapter six, is exposed to, to the women-only groups that those of the Gàidhealtachd, in chapter three, join. Within organised institutional religions, the use of such spaces grants women a degree of autonomy within the strict confines of a male-dominated orthodoxy. Conversely, within some church parishes, women clergy are denied access to religious spaces and/or denied the right to lead religious sacraments. The way women navigate exclusion is examined in chapters two and three. We have studied the space women inhabit in religious institutions, their practices, and beliefs with a focus on the impact these have on women's lives and their approaches to belonging.

The social aspect of religion through ritual is a common theme throughout the book, from the fields of law and sociology to literature. The importance of a religious marriage for many Muslim women is discussed in chapter four. The ritualistic aspect of the marriage ceremony brings with it a visible sense of belonging. The use of ritual is further examined in connection to birth and the welcoming of a new life within Humanism. The legal, emotional, and social aspect of rituals are examined with reference to being a wife and mother. The idealised role of wife and mother is a theme in both fiction and academic research. Infertility is blamed on *Aisha*, her infidelity portrayed as a stain on her *good Muslim* identity. My own research (2020) revealed that, within conservative Presbyterian communities, women were perceived as the instigators when a man committed adultery, he "[w]as portrayed as a man pushed into the affairs by a wife that was failing to care for her husband, the bad wife, and pulled into the affairs by temptresses." (2020, p. 165). Rituals may serve as a visual sign of belonging; however, that sense of belonging, that

acceptance into a group or community, as will be discussed throughout this book, requires, at times, a degree of compromise from the women.

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List of Abbreviations

BHA	The British Humanist Association
CAS	Complex Adaptive Systems
CRT	Complex Reflective Technê
DH	Department of Health
IHEU	International Humanist and Ethical Union
IMI	The Inclusive Mosque Initiative
NICU	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
NHS	National Health Service
NICE	National Institute of Clinical Excellence
ONS	Office of National Statistics
SBNR	Spiritual but Not Religious
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organisation

Chapter 1

Realising Potent Complexities of Women Being Spiritual and Healthy

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Abstract: This chapter explores women's spirituality and the way it can assist with the attainment of healthy belonging in the myriad of groups that frame women's lives. This chapter is situated around a series of dialogues between the authors Nicole Holt and Miles Greenford. This has been an ongoing succession of conversations spanning many years in which they discuss the relationship between public health and spirituality. The conversations explore this subject professionally, academically, and practically.

The central premise of this chapter is that women can learn to identify problems with their own spirituality, problems that are impacting on their healthy belonging. This leads to an understanding and an ability to prioritise issues. The authors propose that this problem solving involves complex dynamics which they think of as a *technê*, craft. To gain a more in-depth understanding, they act as *guides* introducing the reader to the emerging technique of *Complex Reflective Technê (CRT)* and explain how women can apply this in practise. This technique is conceived within a philosophical home of an emerging *complex critical realism* influenced by Stegmaier (2019).

As a practically applied method, Complex Reflective Technê (CRT) enables a modelling of overt realisations of complex systematically nurtured reflections. CRT influences and potentially transforms our local and wider practises, learning, thinking and actions – a complex praxis network of adaptive agents. Holt and Green guide the reader through the process of CRT by using practical exercises for readers to action. As they propose that a philosophical aspect permeates and influences all inquiry, they began their investigation

into the value of CRT by asking the co-authors of this book to undertake the exercises. The results are discussed in chapter seven as a reflexive process.

Keywords: adaption, adoption, autonomy, behaviour, complex adaptive systems, complex reflective technê, critical realism, dialectic, discernment, health, heuristic, mapping, meditation, orientation, phenomena, philosophy, reality, reflection, reflexivity, spirituality, systems.

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Introduction

This chapter presents a significant philosophical development from an ongoing research dialogue by us, the authors, into spirituality and health and their promotion. Our ongoing dialogue currently extends back more than seven years and involves mutually beneficial academic peer support and supervision. Together we introduce you to our emerging approach for inquiry into the phenomena of spirituality and health, and spiritual health promotion. We refer to our evolving approach as Complex Reflective Technê (CRT).[1]

We chose to accept the offer of contributing to this book due to the diversity in subject matter and the varied academic backgrounds of our fellow authors. We took into consideration the depths of our own perspectives, knowledge, experiences, and skills relating to the theme women being religious in contemporary Britain. We recognise and value the complex diversity that reflects the dynamic reality of women as they are, simultaneously, individuals and peers, belonging to communities, and wider societies. We recognise and respect that there exist inherent tensions, whether within, through an understanding of self, identifying as being women by birth sex, by gender. Or, vicariously through identifying with, respecting, and highly valuing attributes generally given to and sometimes owned by women. Being across a spectrum, from outright rejection of the imposition of societal perceptions on what it means to be a woman to being fully cherished and highly valued by both self and others.

This chapter is informed and influenced through knowledge and experiences within our field of interest, philosophy. Our response to the significant philosophical influence includes our ongoing active engagement with a host of diverse philosophies alongside our interactions as we nurture and grow our own

[1] Technê, a term used by the ancient Greek philosophers is, in present times, usually defined as technique. A practical technique which enables us, with complex systems, to practice and craft attempts at influencing and realising personal perceptions of being.

philosophical approach. To fully understand the critical realities of women's spirituality and health, we recognise that any philosophical tool must be responsive to the transcendent complexities of religiosity.[2] We locate our approach within our emerging philosophical home (ecos) of complex critical realism. We recognise the need to be able to reliably orientate and reorientate ourselves when it comes to the field of spirituality and health. As a result, we endeavour to engage with some of these complexities by using a broader, general, application of Complexity Theories alongside our application of John Holland's (2012, 2014) works on *Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS)*. In so doing, we enable, and engage, a reliable complex adaptive system together with a complex reflective technê. These act as a channel for the emergence and evolution of reliable orientation and mapping. Throughout this chapter, we use an emergences approach that has been adopted from our Complex Reflective Technê (CRT) in our presentation style. The information presented emerges and aggregates from a range of different topics we treat as adaptive agents and networks, interacting together within sections and across the chapter, as well as with ourselves and readers.

We aim to furnish you, the reader, with the tools to critically reflect on your spirituality and the emotional health of your belonging by understanding and engaging with CRT.[3] To make this chapter achievable, we need to concentrate our efforts on the cluster of Complexity Theories, to the works of Holland in the field of complex adaptive systems (CAS). Recognising that his work is within a dominant philosophical home, Holland's work is relatively easy to follow when starting our journeys into Complexity Theories and, as such, a good introduction. Sultan (2019) suggests ways to heuristically inquire about our direct personal perceptions of being, which is highly precinct given the title of this chapter and theme of this book. For Sultan, heuristic research "makes for a very personal and communal journey of discovery" (2019, p. 3). As such, how we orientate and guide ourselves, and possibly others, permeate throughout the arts and sciences of heuristics. We also touch on the way spirituality has evolved from the use of meditation and discernment by the early Christians to these methods of orientation being viewed by some, in present times, as lying outside organised institutional religious practices.

This chapter is created to enable approaches that not merely identify and describe or simply subtract or add objective parts. It engages systems and complexity, accumulating gains beyond ideas and commentary shared within

[2] We are referring to health in a multiple of spheres, physical, mental, and spiritual.

[3] We must point out at this juncture that to engage with this chapter you do not need to self-identify as a woman. Our Complex Reflective Technê is inclusive of all gender identities.

this chapter, capable of being realised to further the notion of women being spiritual and healthy. We, encourage you to actively engage with some of the ideas here. Some form of a log or journal needs to be maintained, combined with willingness, to participate authentically in good faith. Authentic, in this context, is applied as a characteristic of Heuristic Inquiry. You are in control and can switch back to the role of passive reader whenever you wish, for whatever reasons.

Please could you record in your log your responses to the following question:

> **"What are some of the complexities of belonging as a spiritual and healthy woman in Britain?"**

Your responses can be from personal or professional experiences, from personal or professional considerations. There are no right or wrong answers.

Orientation and Mapping

Maps and mapping are valuable tools, especially when applied in conjunction with orientating and orientation. Orientation is one set of systems we frequently use to position ourselves when faced with, and experiencing, uncertainty "[o]rientation is usually understood as an achievement in finding one's way in a new situation…. A function of orientation is to give stability, a hold when disorientated" (Stegmaier, 2019, p. 1).

It is important to note that he adds:

> [h]owever, orientation must also be capable of adapting to unpredictable and surprising situations as well, for example, it must be able to change if the situation changes. The achievement of orienting oneself astonishes less by giving a permanent hold or stability than by keeping up with changes. For this purpose, it needs to establish flexible structures [and systems] that indeed provide a hold and stability, but only for a certain time. (Stegmaier, 2019, p. 1)

Rather like wading across a river, where the water is always in a range of flux, currents, and eddies. With changes in the riverbed or its banks, variations in weather conditions and the effects (including emotional) on those personally in the river experiencing it. Orientation is a complex system used as an aid in guiding ourselves. As orientation technical strategies go, heuristics is commonly and enduringly engaged (Kahneman, 2011).

We can see in the above quotes that Stegmaier utilises systems, networks, and resilience, adapting, and recognising them as unpredictable. When

clustered together and used this way, it indicates their increased likelihood of being used as key concepts within a Complex Theory. Orientation, maps, and the way they are applied become increasingly valuable through use, as individuals become proficient in their use these tools become more reliable (Stegmaier, 2019). The prerequisite for a mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship between orientation, mapping and engagement is actioned via our continuing development of our evolving CRT.

Reflective practices, including journals and logs, can be highly objectified and, as such, more frequently encountered in fields engaging in quantitative research. We are adapting our technique to be versatile as a tool in both quantitative and qualitative research. For our inquiry, we are concentrating on it qualitatively, specifically, adapting and applying Sultan's Heuristic Inquiry work:

> [t]oday's qualitative research resides at the highly complex intersection of human experience, perception, memory, language, history, culture and other social systems, relational interactions, and social justice. In that sense, engaging in qualitative research in today's world is an act of hope and resilience and a quest for deliverance and reimagination. (2019, p. xiv)

Immediately apparent are the commonalities expressed between Sultan and our endeavours. In actioning our CRT, we actively encourage engaging "hope and resilience and a quest for deliverance and reimagination" (2019, p. xiv).

We also recognise the notion of women being spiritual and healthy continues to be highly complex. Our adaptation, and application of Holland's (2012) CAS system, provides us with a means to engage, apply, and dynamically interact with some of this complexity. Holland's interest lies in objective behaviours. Certainly, a legitimate dimension of reflective practise relates to our objective behaviours in practise, including our performances. We are not willing or prepared to restrict our interest in this chapter to purely our complex adaptive systems of our objective behaviours. This would do a disservice to our topic of interest, women, spirituality, and health. We also want to be able to identify our models of complex adaptive systems relating to our experiencing *being*. This includes our meaning, our meaning-making and meaning's resilience. Applying our adapted approach to Sultan's (2019) Heuristic Inquiry enables us to achieve this and guides you to apply this theory into practice.

We asked our fellow authors to use CRT as a reflexive exercise. This helped test the effectiveness of our philosophical tool as they looked at their own

spiritual health, as academics, as women and as belonging to a new peer group.[4] It is therefore important that before moving on to discuss our complex reflection tool, we define technê and the way we are applying it. We realise that what we provide here is merely a current public snapshot of our understanding and use of technê. Our broader context is our engagement with it using a nurturing approach. In this context, we view technê as a multitude of organic inter- and intra-relating adaptive agents which are evolving within networks of highly complex adaptive systems. We propose that complexity comprises of four simultaneously evolving and symbiotic phenomena:

- Complex Critical Realism philosophical ecos (home).
- Complex Reflective Technê.
- Spirituality and Health.
- Sustainable and Resilient Spiritual Health Promotion.

The above four phenomena, we recognise and value, interact and influence one another. Each is a highly complex adaptive system and forms a wider network together as complex adaptive systems. We are acutely aware that the field of complexity theories and studies is vast and still evolving through informative, reflective scanning and scoping review exercises.

Over the years, our dialogues have formed a series of inquiring exercises to discover if there are any significant conjunctions between complexity and our area of interest, the development of evidence-based spiritual health programs within community/public health nursing. We qualitatively measured the significance of spiritual health by reflecting on the apparent extent of reliability and sensitivity towards the afore mentioned phenomena. Holland's (2012, 2014) works on complex adaptive systems (CAS) studies seem to be most applicable. Holland writes that CAS "concern themselves with elements that are not fixed. The elements, usually called agents, learn, or adapt in response to interactions with other agents" (2014, p. 8).

Agents learn or respond to changing conditions (Holland, 2014). We cover CAS in more detail in our complexity section, but for now, we can consider them to include:

- Adoption
- Adaptation

[4] Their responses, both before and after engagement with this chapter, can be found in Chapter 7.

- Mutation
- Hybridisation
- Extinction
- Aggregation
- Evolution

We are also attempting to cultivate our four phenomena through a mutually beneficial symbiotic relationships approach. Doing so in our attempt to enable reliable reflections and heuristic metamorphosis to be gleaned and recorded. These phenomena and recordings have the potential to influence and enable us to orientate, map, and be more reliably informed when considering prior, present, and future actions. We try to do so through the development of dynamic and mutually beneficial symbiotic relationships with the four phenomena and ourselves. Complex critical realism as we are currently applying it seems to be more sensitive and responsive to spirituality and health, and sustainable resilient spiritual health promotion, than a plethora of other philosophies, their methodologies, and methods. Our current conclusion is being reached through a combination of our examining, reflection, and reflexive discourse.

Technê

Our current snapshot of technê involves our recognising it as a craft. This is not without contention with the relevant debates and critiques it raises, including technê's place and value within communities, cultures, and societies. We are currently adopting and adapting from Bolton's (2021) work on technê, work influenced by Aristotle, as an emerging concept. Bolton engages dialectic as one of the examples considered by Aristotle in relation to technê. Through the acquisition of appropriate training and repeated practise, in relation to technê, combined with the gradual embedding of good subconscious and embodied habits, methods can be practised with varying degrees of proficiency. Appropriate training and repeated practises are needed to acquire both habituation and *trained memory* to underpin the degrees of proficiency with the relevant methods within a given technê "this shows the importance for Aristotle of habituated memory access to groups of similar past examples for the skilled practise of the technê" (Bolton, 2021, p. 157).

Our adaptation includes dialectic within complex reflective practices, hence, our technê becomes a complex reflective technê. We do so in recognition that dialectic is a technê within complex reflection. There are similarities and differences in dialectic and other reflective practices within a broader field of complex reflection, which enables us to identify dialectic as one amongst a cluster of reflective

practises that continue to evolve over time. These practices, synthesise a range of different practices clustered close enough to be considered as a single domain or ecos (home), that of CRT. However, doing this also requires an analysis of their differences and similarities to improve the reliability of their placement within this cluster and to keep the complexities, including systems, active.

We also acknowledge the need for increasingly skilful proficiency that clearly demonstrates nurturing and finesse as competencies in the practises of CRT. These demonstrations become practise qualities of proficiency indicators, evolving from relevant topics and systems. Initially, the skills and practises necessary will be slow, cumbersome, and highly unreliable, growing from a robotic-like practise to an organic-like practise. As proficiency becomes increasingly more reliable, deeper, richer, and increasingly organic, sensitive, and responsively engaging with increasing complexity, these become a means of recognising and valuing proficiency qualities within the practise of CRT.

To engage with critical realism within our philosophical ecos, we turned to Roy Bhasker, who worked closely with, and influenced, Margaret Archer. We have adopted and applied some of Archer's work in relation to critical realism and Hegelian dialectics as a complex reflective practice. More specifically, we focus on practise as exampled in Hegel's methods of complex reflection, discourse and, importantly, dialectics. It is from Hegel's dialectical methods that he disclosed his deliberations of his internal dialogue involved a contradictory process between opposing sides of an argument. This was adopted and further adapted by the eighteenth-century German philosopher, Johann Fichte, and expressed as a method we generally recognise, as thesis-antithesis-synthesis. Archer et al. recognised the complexity and non-linearity in the practices of Hegel:

> [n]ow Hegel's practice is not in fact conceptually uniformly linear and there is no reason in principle why any term in an organic totality should not be reflected into any other, including compounds of such. In fact, perspectival fluidity and multifacetedness is an essential requirement for any concrete (and, a fortiori, totalising) inquiry, particularly in the socio-sphere. (1998, p. 622)

This is a significant point of conjunction between complexity and critical realism and given our hybridisation evolving application of both in our philosophically located practices that these are not only linear simple practices or processes, reflection and critical reflection can also be complex and non-linear.

With our emerging CRT, we have identified the following clusters which help us with critical reflective practice and orientation:

- Complex Reflection
- Modern Reflection
- Discernment
- Meditation (and Contemplation)
- Discourse
- Heuristics
- Reflexivity
- Biases (Systematic Errors)

Complex Reflection: We recognise that complex reflection is an organically diverse cluster that constitutes an evolving group of past and present skilled practices.[5] These practices require, or significantly engage, reflection. We aim to demonstrate the critically real presence of the cluster, and in so doing, we can start to consider it as emerging and aggregating complex reflection. We are engaging complex as shorthand for our application of some of Holland's studies into CAS and critical realism. Holland does not mention reflection in the context of looking inward. We actively engage some of Holland's work on CAS, adopting, and adapting this with the works of Archer et al. (1998). From this emerges a complex critical realism philosophical eco within CRT. Hartwig includes, in his book *The Dictionary of Critical Realism*, the following proposal:

> [i]n the human embodied person, it [reflection] is the (prime) personal emergent power (PEP) – transcendentally necessary for genuine accountability, presupposing the causal efficacy of reasons – to self-consciously monitor our activities and deliberate internally upon the always already natural, practical, and social context in which they occur. It is thus irreducible to the social or the biological, constituting rather the mediatory process between "structure and agency" that arises from our practical transactions with the objective, above all the natural, world. (2007, p. 408)

For Archer, reflection in critical realism is important and is the prime personal emergent power. However, it is qualified by complex adaptive systems studies, whereby adaptive agents are generally considered semi-powerful,

[5] Cluster in this chapter means a group of things.

semi-autonomous. Autonomy is partial "in the sense that their activity is only modulated by surrounding activity rather than being completely controlled by it" (Holland, 2014, p. 39). Similarly, internally, where complex internal activities modulate rather than completely control our experiences. This gives us power and autonomy as being semi and contingent, closer to our complex critically real experiences of being human. Our accountability is complex, inner, embodied, enriched and temporal, it is contextual and partial. We also must also consider mental and physical illnesses and the influence these have on individuals and the societies they live in alongside any personal accountability. Accountability thus becomes, in complex critical reality, semi-accountable. Our ability of complex reflection is contingent, but not reducible, to the biological or social. Our ability to undertake complex reflection constitutes practical transactions between our complex adaptive systems inherent within our embodied selves and our experiencing life within our niches, and temporal locations.

Modern Reflection: Within complex reflection we identify modern reflection. This is presented and advanced by Schön (1987, 1994) and is, we propose, an obvious initial adaptive practice from earlier systems of reflection. We can also locate critical reflection as a hybridisation of modern reflection where theorists, such as Brookfield (2011); Lawson (1985); Rolf, Freshwater, and Jasper (2001); Fook et al. (2016) and Thompson and Thompson (2008), have adopted and adapted other critical theories. Doing so alongside Schön's works. The works by these theorists highlight the significant influence philosophy has on our *being* and by situating modern reflection as an inner cluster of complex reflection, we identify an inner subcluster we refer to as modern critical reflection.

More recently, creativity (and imagination) has re-emerged as a niche in some modern critical reflection literature. It appears to be associated with criticality, knowing, believing, emotions, reality, imagination, ethics (including morality), and actions (including critical judgement, behaviours, and attentiveness). Where once dominant words were critical reflection, creativity is gaining ground as exampled in works by Bassot (2016); Bolton and Delderfield (2018); Johns (2017) and Moon (1999). There appears an ongoing emergence within the modern reflection, of creativity interacting with criticality. Creative and critical reflection is a growing subcluster very closely allied with the critical reflection subcluster.

A further notable hybridisation comes from the works of Mezirow et al. They suggest critical reflective practices are weighted in action, actions associated with learning as transformational (Mezirow et al., 2000, 2009). We can also witness the growth of inquiry as relates to complex reflection through drift. Autoethnography drifting into the cluster of complex reflection where the subject and field of inquiry is ethnographically located in the self of the inquirer as noted by Adams, Jones, and Ellis (2015); Coffey (1999) and Throne

(2019). This is an important consideration as some of this book's following chapters have an auto-ethnographic component. We consider complex reflection as an organic broad family cluster within which are an ongoing emerging evolutionary network of confluences, conjunctions, disjunctions, genetic roots, etc. Further members, we cluster within complex reflection, are meditation (and contemplation), and discernment.

Discernment: Discernment has been associated with some early Christian practices and continues to involve the interpretation of our internal being. This is specifically the interpretation of the spirits involved in the movements of the soul as debated by academics such as Njeri (2012); Orsy (2020); and Rich (2007). Ignatius of Loyola's discernment is an ability to differentiate between good and bad spirits.[6] This does not involve the use of reason or rationality but instead uses inner spiritual judgment (discernment). The official International Jesuit website describes discernment as follows:

> [d]iscernment is about finding the voice of the Spirit of God speaking to us in the ordinary and practical details of our lives. It is a key gift that St. Ignatius brought in the Spiritual Exercises. By trying always to listen to the Spirit, without being attached to our own desires and ideas, Jesuits wish to find where the Spirit of God is leading and respond with humility and joy. (Society of Jesuits, 2022)

Ignatius formulated a strict rigorous 22 rules-based systematic method involving a selected number and range of deliberate exercises that needed the individual to carry out through self-discipline (Loyola, 1914). Without proficiency in these spiritual exercises, discerning the good from bad spirits that are influencing one's soul becomes highly problematic and extremely challenging. The exercises, as formulated and directed by Ignatius of Loyola (1914) include mixtures of stated meditations. These are contemplations that enable the practitioner to be trained to tell the difference (discern) between inner communications between good and evil. They can then act on these discernments appropriately. Proficient discernment is experienced as an inner sense of judgement emerging through the proficient combined

[6] Ignatius of Loyola was a Spanish Catholic priest and theologian, a founding father of the religious order of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). His discernment involves prayer and weighing facts and feelings about the several good choices which ultimately leads to a choice about what is the best fit for an individual. This includes a seven-step process, openness, courage, interior freedom, praying as reflective practice, priorities and not confusing the ends with the means.

systematic practices of mediation and contemplation. Contemplation was different for Ignatius than for other Christian orders of contemplatives of his time and remains so today. Discernment in this way is not rational intellectual judgement, nor intuitive judgement. It appears to be deeper inner senses that can resonate or dissociate but to a degree whereby they are experienced as something immanent and transcendent. This is significantly beyond normal emotional and intuitive feelings and thoughts (Lahav, 2018). With intensive and extensive proficient practice, these exercises become habituated.

Daydreaming and pondering, alongside being attentive, were highly significant for Ignatius:

> Ignatius was convinced that God can speak to us as surely through our imagination as through our thoughts and memories. In the Ignatian tradition, praying with the imagination is called contemplation. (O'Brian, 2022)

Discernment and discerning practises already existed within strict contemplative practices, which Ignatius was aware of. He adopted and adapted these practices hybridising them into his unique system of discernment which promoted daydreaming, pondering, imagination, and attentiveness. These internal actions influence choices and decisions that lead to further actions, including possibly further discernment. Orsy (2020) offers a similar approach, whereas Njeri (2012) proffers his hybridisation of Ignatian Discernment with Aristotle's Virtuous Action. Rich (2007) explores discernment as it relates to the Christian Religion commonly referred to as *The Desert Fathers*.[7] This demonstrates a highly significant evolutionary route through a spiritual-religious practice, to modern current sciences, as the religious and spiritual are gradually removed from discernment and mediation, becoming viewed as spiritual exercises. We see the stripping out process start in Descartes' meditations, where he is trying to discern through mediations using purely simple sceptical logical rationalism/reason. This is an early enlightenment emergence of what we come to know of today as modern reflective and critical reflective practices.

We, therefore, recognise and locate within discernment a complex critical reality of dynamic interactions between knowing, believing, emotions, reality, imagination, ethics (including morality), and actions (including critical

[7] Desert Fathers were early Christian hermits whose practice of asceticism in the Egyptian desert formed the basis of Christian monasticism. Following the example of Jesus' life of poverty, service, and self-denial, these early monks devoted themselves to vows of austerity, prayer, and work.

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