Religious and Spiritual Values Central to Personality and Behaviour

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Abstract: Following a review and analysis of Allen E. Bergin’s article “Psychotherapy and Religious Values,” this paper anticipates future directions for integrating clients' religious and spiritual values in psychology and psychotherapy research and practice. The author argues that to support Bergin’s suggestion that such values are no longer “at the fringe of clinical psychology [but rather] at the center” of our comprehension of personality and its aspirations, researchers and clinicians in psychology need to go beyond the “methodolatry” denounced by Bergin and associated with probabilistic practices. For that purpose, she first presents the considerations of Experiential Ontological Phenomenology (EOP), to which the concept of will is added, as a methodological scientific foundation to a value-based model in psychotherapy. She then introduces the principal concept of this model, the fundamental value, presented in relationship with the second most important concept, the psychological nub, derived from psychoanalytic concepts. The third basic concept, the subjective process, borrowed from the humanistic approach, is mentioned as being included in the EOP theory. Finally, a brief case study demonstrates how this model constitutes a point of integration at which theistic values or belief systems and psychological studies and practice meet.

Keywords: Fundamental values, Experiential Ontological Phenomenology, will, intentional consciousness

If scholars agree that Allen E. Bergin’s article “Psychotherapy and Religious Values” generated, after its publication in 1980, an international movement to bring religious perspectives into the mainstream of psychology and psychotherapy, they also agree that much still needs to be done to reach the point proposed by Bergin where “theistic belief systems of a large percentage of the population [will be] conceptually integrated into our work.” Following a reflection on the content of this article, with 35-years’ distance, and anticipating future directions to ensure the integration of religious and spiritual values in psychology and psychotherapy research and practice, we propose acknowledging a value-based model of psychotherapy rooted in phenomenology and ontology. This model is offered to support the argument according to which religious and spiritual values are, in line with Bergin’s reflection, no longer “at the fringe of clinical psychology [but rather] at the center” of our comprehension of personality and its aspirations.

Following a review of the arguments used by Bergin to introduce his study, in terms of six theses leading to nine hypotheses offered for further research, Bergin’s analysis is discussed (1) as it pertains to its aim to broaden “clinical psychology’s scope to include religion more systematically in theories, research, and techniques” and (2) as it opens the way to a conceptual frame of reference by which religious and spiritual

1 Bergin, “Psychotherapy,” 95.
2 Ibid., 103.
3 Ibid., 95.
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values can be considered from the perspective of their central role in personality. From this point of view, the article introduces a value-based model founded in a methodology with scientificity grounded in a rapprochement between concepts from ontology and existential-phenomenology, along with the argument that values constitute the point of integration where theistic belief systems and psychological studies and practice can meet.

From the beginning, Bergin stated that religious values have “recently become a more salient issue in psychology,”4 a change he presented as the pendulum “swinging away from the naturalism, agnosticism, and humanism that have dominated the field for most of this century.”5 He supported his position with the following four arguments, well supported by research:

1. “Science has lost its authority as the dominating source of truth [as] reflected in analyses that reveal science to be an intuitive and value-laden cultural form.”6

2. “Psychology in particular has been dealt blows to its status as a source of authority for human action because of its obsession with “methodolatry”7, its limited effectiveness in producing practical results, its conceptual incoherence, and its alienation from the mainstreams of the culture.”8

3. Hope in spiritual phenomena seems stimulated by modern times having “spawned anxiety, alienation, violence, selfishness9, and depression10, . . . spiritual and social failures of many organized religious systems . . . followed by the failures of non-religious approaches.” Positive possibilities for such hope are found in “the rising prominence of thoughtful and rigorous attempts to restore a spiritual perspective to analyses of personality, the human condition and even science itself.”11

4. “The emergence of studies of consciousness and cognition, which grew out of disillusionment with mechanistic behaviourism and the growth of humanistic psychology, has set the stage for a new examination of the possibility that presently unobservable realities—namely, spiritual forces—are at work in human behaviour. [The] explosion of rigorous transcendental meditation research, the organisation and rapid growth of the APA’s Division 36, . . . the publication of new journals with overtly spiritual contents, . . . and the emergence of new specialized religious professional foci . . . build in part on the long-standing but insufficiently recognized work in the psychology of religion . . . [and] support what appears to be a “broad based movement with a building momentum.”12

To appreciate the importance of these arguments for science in today’s context, let us evaluate, first, if and how they have held in time and then consider to what extent they can be considered accurate and inspiring for today’s research.

First, Bergin’s statement about science having “lost its authority as the dominating source of truth”13 does not seem to hold among scholars in psychology as with the general population. Scientifically based research continues to be prioritized by a large number of researchers in psychology and in the general population. For example, research results concerning the efficacy of psychotherapy to resolve depression or anxiety continue to be important references in clinical psychology.14 The fact that, according to Bergin, analyses have revealed “science to be an intuitive and value-laden cultural form”15 did not seem to change the course of the generally accepted tendency to trust results generated by research based on science.

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4 Ibid., 95.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid. Bergin refers to Kuhn, “The structure” and Polanyi, “Personal”.
7 Bergin borrowed this term from Bakan, “Interview.”
8 Ibid. Bergin refers to Campbell, “On the conflicts” and Hogan, “Interview.”
9 Bergin refers to Kanfer, “Personal.”
10 Bergin refers to Klorman, “The age.”
13 Ibid., 95.
15 Bergin, “Psychotherapy,” 95.
Similarly, in respect to Bergin’s assertion about psychology’s obsession with methodolatry to explain (among other reasons for ineffectiveness, incoherence, and alienation to mainstream culture) that it had been “dealt blows to its status as a source of authority for human action,”16 we cannot say, though we might have expected it, that significant changes have taken place in that direction among researchers or clinicians in psychology or that concerted efforts were made to move away from the preferred methodological orientation—the quantitative models of research, whose basic presupposition, borrowed from natural science, is that only observable and measurable facts are admitted as being reliable. If psychology’s status had indeed suffered such “blows,” it seems that more would have been done to move away from this methodological “obsessiveness” toward probabilistic models. Though qualitative research methods have demonstrated their scientific validity in human sciences, we cannot conclude that a significant shift is made in psychology per se to integrate new methods in research pertaining to personality or psychotherapeutic change. For example, out of the 65 studies presented in the 2015 issues of the Journal of Counseling Psychology, only three used a qualitative method.17 Moreover, the increasing popularity of cognitive-behavioural theory in most departments of psychology in North American and European universities constitute a significant demonstration of that trend. Far from moving away from methodolatry, this trend seems to reinforce the precedence given by researchers and clinicians in psychology to quantitative methodology imported from natural science, with the assumptions that scientific “truth” is limited to observable and measurable facts.

The third and fourth arguments by which Bergin supported the saliency of religious values in psychology are linked. In the third, hope in spiritual phenomena was seen as emerging out of the negative effects of modern society’s exclusion of religious references and the failure of religious or non-religious systems. It was also associated with the rise of prominent “thoughtful and rigorous attempts to restore a spiritual perspective to analyses of personality, the human condition and even science itself.”18 In the fourth, “disillusionment with mechanistic behaviourism”19 along with the growth of humanistic psychology seemed to coincide, according to Bergin, with the emergence of rigorous studies of consciousness and cognition, with research in transcendental meditation published in new scientific journals, and with the growth of numerous organizations and religious professionals in psychology of religion, constituting what he viewed as a “broad based movement with a building momentum.”20

Again, though Bergin saw hope in spiritual phenomena through the failure of society’s exclusion of religious references and religious or non-religious systems, direct association between these two sets of realities does not appear so clearly. His optimism seems to have had stronger support when he commented on humanistic psychology as setting “the stage for a new examination of the possibility that presently unobservable realities—namely, spiritual forces—are at work in human behaviour,”21 which he associated with the rise of prominent “thoughtful and rigorous attempts to restore a spiritual perspective to analyses of personality, the human condition and even science itself,”22 and a variety of new emerging developments in the field of psychology. Nonetheless, questions can arise about the coincidence he made between such new developments and the “disillusionment with mechanistic behaviourism”23 considering, as just mentioned, the popularity gained by statistics-based quantitative research models among psychologists, including in the field of psychology of religion where Bergin thought the humanistic approach was making a breakthrough with the inclusion of “unobservable realities—namely, spiritual forces—as influencing behaviour.”24

In short, some of Bergin’s arguments supporting the idea that religious values were becoming more important/salient in psychology may not have proven to hold in time. However, considering that his

16 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
writing came at a time when modern psychology was growing in popularity in the general population, the strength of Bergin’s article was in his audacity to bring to light at that time an important weakness in its scientific grounds: its obsession to hold on to the presupposition, borrowed from natural science, that scientific methodology needs to be founded on observable and measurable facts which can at times mislead researchers in their full understanding of human beings’ distinctive and subjective features—their spiritual dimension or religious values specific to their human nature. Thus criticizing psychology’s exclusion of unobservable reality from its realm of research, Bergin was creating space for researchers in psychology (or from other scientific or disciplinary backgrounds) to take part in what he called “shifting conceptual orientations . . . especially manifest in the field of psychotherapy.”

As an attempt to set such a stage for change in research, Bergin analysed, under the organizing principles of six theses, “the value of therapy and the values that pervade its processes” pertaining to spiritual values. He did so while highlighting directions for their recognition in the mainstream clinical theory, research, and practice in psychology. The essentials of these six theses read as follows:

1. Values are an inevitable and pervasive part of psychotherapy.
3. The two broad classes of values dominant in the mental health profession, pragmatism and humanistic idealism, both exclude religious values and establish goals for change that clash with theistic systems of belief.
4. There is a significant contrast between the values of mental health professionals and those of the large proportion of clients.
5. Honesty and ethical principles suggest that professionals acknowledge that they are implementing their own value system via their work and be more explicit about their belief while respecting the value systems of others.
6. Professionals are obligated to translate what they perceive and value intuitively into something that can be openly tested and evaluated.

Considering these propositions as a whole, we notice a progression both in the order by which they are presented and in the argumentation of the author. In the first two theses, Bergin stressed the pervasiveness of values in psychotherapeutic processes from three substantial perspectives. First, he indicated that the selection of a practical goal in such processes is made in “value terms [which, resulting from decisions being made about] what is desirable [imply] at least three possibly divergent value systems at play . . . those of the client, the clinician, and the community at large.” He then argued that judgements are always made about pursued outcomes in psychotherapy: that is, explicit or implicit standards relative to what is better or worse, referring to a moral doctrine comprising the presumed question of good and bad. Third, he stated that change in psychotherapy “appears to be a function of common human interactions, including personal and belief factors,” in comparison to the effect of technical behaviour therapy procedure found to generate, in “475 outcome studies [analyzed by Smith et al., in press] only a small percentage of outcome variance.” Moreover, in reference to the moral doctrine underlying judgements about better or worse psychotherapeutic outcomes, Bergin emphasized, quoting Lowe, that “everything from behavioural technology to community consultation is intricately interwoven with secularized moral systems.” This indicates an unfortunate disparity between psychotherapeutic orientations among psychologists and the religious people they serve. It also leads to the third thesis according to which axioms underlying

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25 As a fairly recent discipline, researchers began referring to behavioural therapies in American universities in 1950s and 1960s which were joined by cognitive and behavioural techniques in 1980s and 1990s to become cognitive behavioural therapy.
26 Bergin, “Psychotherapy,” 96.
27 Ibid., 96-97.
28 Ibid., 97.
29 Ibid., 98.
30 Ibid.
31 Lowe, “Value.”
32 Bergin, “Psychotherapy,” 97.
psychotherapeutic orientations and goals supported by clinicians, researchers, or writers in psychology are incompatible with those presumed by religious people who access their services.

Under this analysis Bergin underlined the stunning differences between the standpoints of psychological clinicians and researchers and those of religious people (who constitute 30% to 90% of the population), in regard to “God, the relationship of human beings to God, and the possibility that spiritual factors influence behaviour.” He pointed out, first, how religious values and beliefs, which constitute “the largest sub-ideologies, namely, religious or theistic approaches espoused by people who believe in God and try to guide their behaviour in terms of their perception of his will,” tend to be excluded from the mental health profession, as they are censored and tabooed by psychological writers. Second, paralleling Theistic Versus Clinical and Humanistic Values (Table 1), Bergin highlighted the striking contrasts in values pertaining to personality and change as they emerge from either a theistic standpoint or a clinical humanistic perspective. He thus revealed contradictory underlying axioms between religious approaches and psychological theories. On one hand, for example, believers admit “that God exists, that human beings are the creations of God, and that there are unseen spiritual processes by which the link between God and humanity is maintained.” On the other, among psychologists for whom belief is “discarded in favor of scientific method” the obsession for methodology (methodolatry) seems to have taken the place of God as moral standard. On the basis of such disparity, Bergin gave an implicit penetrating demonstration: Services offered by secularized psychotherapists, who tend to disregard belief in favor of scientific method, are not in harmony with the goals of the believers who because of their belief in God guide their behaviour according to their perception of his will. This demonstration then lead Bergin to make, in the fourth and fifth theses, two indispensable recommendations. Out of honesty and ethical principles, he invited psychologists (1) to respect the value systems of others while being more explicit about and acknowledging the influence of their own value systems on their work, and (2) to translate what they perceive and value intuitively into something that can be openly tested and evaluated.

Bergin supported these recommendations by referring to A. Maslow’s viewpoints (though presented in the third thesis) to sustain, in line with Kitchener’s standpoint, the acknowledgement that theistic approaches and religious values are intrinsic to human growth and purpose. While the latter argued that “behaviouristic, evolutionary, and naturalistic ethical concepts are not relativistic [and that] ethical relativism is not a logical derivative of cultural relativism,” the former affirmed that “the laws of human behaviour . . . do not sustain the notion of ethical relativism.” Quotes from Maslow further supported the idea that these views are “consistent with the axiom of theistic systems that human growth is regulated by moral principles.” Maslow’s belief in the existence of a “single, ultimate value for mankind—a far goal toward which men strive” was presented in line with this other belief according to which the study of human behaviour can never ignore concepts of right and wrong.

If behavioural scientists are to solve human problems, the question of right and wrong behaviour is essential. It is the very essence of behavioural science. Psychologists who advocate moral and cultural relativism are not coming to grip with the real problem. Too many behavioural scientists have rejected not only the methods of religion but the values as well.

The point being made here though focussing on moral judgement as essential to behaviour is that ethical relativism, derived from the cultural relativism by which many non-religious psychologists stand,
cannot be sustained in studies pertaining to human beings’ behaviours and their underlying motivations. When referring to Maslow’s suggestion to replace “cultural relativity [by] underlying human standards that are cross cultural,” Bergin focussed on the transcendent quality of values relative to such cross cultural standards, also referred to in the following statement as synergistic culture. "Maslow advocated the notion of synergistic culture in which the values of the group make demands on the individual that are self-fulfilling. The values of such a culture are considered transcendent and not relative." In this reference Bergin did not go as far as considering the notion of absolute reality to account for the opposition to relativism. However, from his clarification of Maslow’s description of cross-cultural standards as being transcendent, we can infer an opening in that direction. In this inference lies the introduction to the value-based model that will be presented later to support our argument about the central role values occupy in personality and the potential of that model to offer the point of integration for theistic belief systems and values in psychological studies and practice.

In summary, going from the first to the sixth thesis, Bergin moved from highlighting the pervasiveness of values in psychotherapy and demonstrating the axiomatic incompatibility among psychological clinicians or researchers and the important religious population they serve, to inviting professionals in psychology, out of honesty and ethical principles, to make the necessary adjustments to respect the value systems of religious people who request their professional help. Among the different studies presented to support his analysis and concluding invitation, his references to Maslow, whose concepts he stated as being “in harmony with the views [he] presented,” appear to be among his most powerful arguments. When referring to Maslow’s description of people’s pursuit of becoming fully human (commonly known as self-actualization) as an “ultimate value for mankind—a far goal toward which men strive,” Bergin introduced the direct link between this ultimate goal and ethical standards, fundamental to the resolution of the human problem of right or wrong behaviour. The key element to his analysis is found, however, in his highlighting the fact that these standards have a transcendent quality. When clarifying that such transcendent ethical standards are presented by this renowned humanist in contrast to the views of behavioural scientists “who advocate moral and cultural relativism,” Bergin offered a strong argument against secular psychologists who tend to exclude, ignore, or disregard religious or spiritual values, and in favour of his invitation to respect such values in psychotherapy. Maslow’s recognition of the transcendence in human beings’ ultimate goal also constitutes a threshold to acknowledging that values are rooted in and constitute the core of that goal. In other words, it opens the way for admitting that the ultimate aim for self-actualization is a fundamental yearning for absolute realities. This warrants explanation.

If transcendent ethical standards are intrinsic to people’s ultimate value or far goal to becoming fully human, their fundamental drive for self-actualization can also be acknowledged in its transcendent essence. If this is the case, admitting that this ultimate goal is rooted in transcendent realities appears to be equivalent to saying that people’s fundamental motivation is a yearning for absolute realities. This equivalence is founded on two principles. First, since absolute realities are the antithesis of relativism, it seems more suitable to choose the word absolute over transcendent to describe the essence of ethical standards underlying people’s behaviour and, therefore, define the quality of the ultimate value or goal associated to such standards. Second, religious or spiritual values, referred to as they concern believers who “try to guide their behaviour in terms of their perception of [God’s] will,” correspond to ultimate realities which, from the standpoint of religious philosophy, have an unlimited, infinite, or absolute quality. From that standpoint, values need to be considered from the perspective of realities which, while transcending limited or finite realities, have their origin in the world of unlimited, infinite, or absolute realities. Values thus refers to absolute realities having their source in the absolute, also called God, Allah, Yahweh, or otherwise by believers with a theistic point of view.

Therefore, we suggest using the word absolute to replace transcendent to qualify the ethical standards underlying people’s behaviours and ultimate value or goal for self-actualization, along with revising the

44 Ibid.
46 Ibid., 99.
description of people’s fundamental motivation to refer to a yearning for self-fulfillment through absolute realities. In doing so, bringing Bergin’s analyses a step further while remaining faithful to Maslow’s thought, we create an opening to acknowledge that values constitute the core of people’s most fundamental yearning. On the basis of this revised description lies also the possibility of bridging the disparities between axioms underlying theistic versus clinical and humanistic values (presented in Table 1)47, while supporting Bergin’s invitations to psychologists to respect religious people’s value systems. While respecting the religious or spiritual perspective of believers who may find fulfillment of their yearning for absolute realities in an absolute being, this amended formulation, without imposing any type of religious belief or theistic orientation, respects as well the secularized points of view on ways to fulfill this yearning.

From his analyses, the author of “Psychotherapy and Religious Values” went on to suggest nine hypothesis, derived from personal experience, to be tested in future research. He did so, however, while remaining within the parameters of psychologists’ methodological stance: that of looking for correlations and predictable behaviour under probabilistic methods. Considering the evolution of research in psychology of religion, we can infer his suggestions have achieved their goal as they have inspired many researchers to attempt integrating spiritual and religious values in studies related to psychotherapy processes and change. However, observing the importance statistical models maintain in psychological research, it appears that if Bergin’s 1980 observation about the “shifting conceptual orientations [thought] manifest in the field of psychotherapy”48 is to become reality, psychologists of religion, whose concern with spiritual and religious values, beliefs, and phenomena is explicit, need be more active in finding methodological alternatives allowing them to go beyond the limitations imposed by the ones adopted by the larger group of researchers. They need to find conceptual orientations having the potential for solid integration or reintegration of concepts, factors, or issues specifically pertaining to the realm of psycho-religious or psycho-spiritual research. An example of this is found in Skrzypinska who, recognizing that “spirituality represents an uncomfortable phenomenon for scientists [due] to issues surrounding measurements and the weakness of empirical research methods,”49 presented a “new theoretical, psychological model characterizing the concept, structure and functioning of spirituality in relation to the phenomenon of religiousness.”50

Our standpoint here is to opt for an interdisciplinary approach referring to a phenomenologically based methodology51 which both respects the requirements for empirically based research and allows for integration or reintegration of concepts, factors, or issues that are fundamental to the study of spiritual or religious values, beliefs, phenomena, etc. in psychotherapy processes and changes. This methodological approach, called Experiential Ontological Phenomenology52 (EOP) implies considering ontological realities which, though addressed by early psychologists of religion, were bracketed by a second generation of researchers in the field. This stance,53 according to Hood, has both advantages and limitations.

47 Ibid., 100.
48 Ibid., 96.
49 Skrzypinska, “The Threefold,” 277-278.
50 Ibid., 277.
51 Psychological phenomenology, which applies the philosophical currant to research in psychology, was developed at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, by one of the leading figures in the field, Amedeo Giorgi. Giorgi, “The Phenomenological”; Giorgi, “Sketch”; Dukes, “Phenomenological”; Valle and Halling, Existential.
52 Elaborated by Croteau in L’homme.
53 Assuming that “a claim about a reality that does not exist could not sustain critical philosophical scrutiny (Grübaum, 1984, 1987).” Hood, “The History,” 12.
55 Ibid., 18.
The EOP approach is thus in agreement with Hood’s prediction that “future prospects and expansion in the psychology of religion [should] include a return to the ontological question.”56 A brief introduction to the basic concepts underlying the EOP leads to our presentation of the value-based psychotherapeutic model intended to support our position that religious and spiritual values (1) are at the center of personality and behaviour and (2) have the potential of offering the point of integration for theistic values and belief systems in psychological studies and practice.

**Experiential Ontological Phenomenology**

As argued in “Le psychologique et le religieux,”57 if psychology defines its scientific methodological orientation on the basis of the natural science presupposition that only observable and measurable aspects of human behaviour are admitted, concepts that are necessary to our complete understanding of human beings are dismissed. “This is the case, for example, with the concept of will through which values can be taken into account.”58 The value-based model offered in the conclusion of this article is rooted in the fairly recent methodology of experiential ontological phenomenology (EOP), which allows for reintegration of the will in our conceptualization of human subjects. This reintegration offers a renewed understanding of the role and place of values in personality and behaviour. Founded on the inclusion of the notion of being from realistic philosophy, by which human beings’ aim in life is conceptualized, this approach integrates presuppositions from both ontological rational (comprehending reality from its intelligible aspects) and empirical reasoning (understanding this same reality through senses from its observable and measurable features). Thus EOP opens the way for psychological studies to consider all dimensions of human subjects, including religious or spiritual dimensions, while respecting the founding principle of understanding processes relative to cognitions and affect. On the basis of this methodological foundation, our conception of values will be presented in the light of their absolute characteristic as being at the core of personality structure which, in turn, will lead toward introduction of a value-based model.

**Founding Principles and Concepts**

Integrating ontological concepts with the traditional phenomenological existential approach, this revised methodology considers the notion of being to account for humans’ fundamental aim. Here the “being” refers to what exists and is accessible to the intentional consciousness of subjects but cannot be observed or measured through statistical quantitative models. This concept is used by Croteau to account in phenomenological psychology59 for the specificity demonstrated long ago in ontological philosophy: Human beings’ initial given is their experience of being, their discovery of existence through their subjective incarnate consciousness. Indeed, all humans discover during their life experiences, starting with their primary stages of development, through a global intuition that “Il y a de l’être un et diversifié, j’en suis [et] je le sais à travers une conscience-incarnée.”60 Consequently, the substance of being brings meaning and purpose to the variety of experiences in terms of the fundamental object which is the aim of subjects’ intentional consciousness. Worded differently, we could say that all phenomena experienced by human beings’ intentional consciousness comprise the aim for being from which meaningfulness and purposefulness are found.

“[Having recourse] to the metaphysical notion of being does not constitute a threat to the empirical character of psychology,” states Croteau. On the contrary, this notion reinforces psychology’s empirical nature precisely because it allows the mind (l’esprit) to be in accord (fidèle) with experience being

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56 Ibid., 17-18.
57 Morin, “Le psychologique.”
58 Ibid., 72.
60 Croteau, L’homme, 137, in Morin, “Le psychologique,” 75.
considered from its concrete dimension and in totality.\textsuperscript{61} Recognizing these givens supports scientific methodological acceptability while leading to acknowledgement of the following standpoints, necessary to our argumentation about the role of values at the core of personality.

1. Human beings are characterized by a subjective intentional consciousness, aiming for being which has meaning and purpose, often referred to as \textit{I} or \textit{Self} (or \textit{we}, often indicating an extended or collectivistic self).\textsuperscript{62}

2. This subjective intentional consciousness is incarnated: that is, incorporated in a physical body.

3. From the subjective aim of an individual’s incarnate intentional consciousness for meaningful and purposeful being, the \textit{Self-I} develops and establishes a unique worldview: a subjective way of perceiving and relating to the world in its three dimensions—the world within (\textit{Eigenwelt}), the world of relations to others (\textit{Mitwelt}), and the world around (environmental world; \textit{Umwelt}).

On the basis of these three standpoints, we need to revisit our comprehension of human beings’ behavioural component to be included in research design and clinical practice.

\textbf{Intentional Consciousness and Behaviour}

According to Croteau, the intentionality characterizing human subjects’ consciousness of being is double sided: having both transcendence and freedom/responsibility. This means that human subjects experience their being as they are exposed personally to life’s phenomena: (1) as subjects gifted with an intentional consciousness which, while being incorporated in the world through a physical body, transcends that body and aims toward something or somebody beyond and (2) as subjects who are free and responsible to themselves and to others for actualizing values and becoming actualized. Hence freedom and responsibility are understood in the perspective of that transcendence which characterizes subjects’ intentional consciousness.\textsuperscript{63} Therefore, human beings’ specific way of experiencing existence, from this double and unified movement of transcendence and freedom/responsibility, implies the work of a will taking charge of oneself and being responsible for one’s own realization or actualization. Furthermore, because this intentional consciousness is embodied in a physical structure, subjects discover existence “through a body experienced as . . . being fully integrated in ‘Self-I’ capable of thinking, feeling, [and] loving, [constituting] the exact place where the world is being revealed to [them].”\textsuperscript{64}

This complex rapport of Self-I with the world is foundational to the way EOP considers human behaviour. The Self-I’s intentional consciousness—also referred to as being \textit{incarnate} because its aim for being takes place in a body—is considered to act as an organizing principle. It aims toward purposeful and meaningful being through a dialectic interaction with the world, which involves (1) the subject aiming and (2) the object toward which he or she is aiming. In other words, human subjects discover existence from the standpoints of their own bodily experience and the object being experienced. Consequently, they are not subjected solely to the world in which they are a part through and with their body; they do not passively receive the meaning and purpose being revealed to them. They also act upon this world by giving it meaning and

\textsuperscript{61} Croteau, \textit{L’homme}, 35, in Morin, “Le psychologique,” 76.

\textsuperscript{62} Feng Yu et al., \textit{Cultural}, 311. For information on the subject and for studies about orientations of individualism and collectivism associated with the use of singular pronouns (\textit{I}, \textit{me}) and plural pronouns (\textit{we}, \textit{us}) across cultures, see also, among others: Uz, “Individualism”; Tausczik and Pennebaker, “The Psychological Meaning”; Kashima and Kashima, “Culture and Language”; Kashima and Kashima, “Individualism.”

\textsuperscript{63} Further clarification about this summarized presentation of Croteau’s conceptualization of double-sided intentionality is found in Morin, “Le psychologique,” 76-77. In particular, the notions of transcendence and responsibility/freedom are well founded on the basis of (a) the word \textit{being or existence}, from the Latin root \textit{ex-sistere}, to stand outside of oneself and (2) the word \textit{intentionality}, from \textit{in-tendere}, to move into or aim toward, as applied to transcendent meaning and purpose. From there, Croteau clarifies that because of subjects’ intentional consciousness, humans “aim or tend toward . . . something or somebody from the world within or beyond themselves . . . toward meaning and purpose revealed by existence as objective and subjective being.” Croteau, \textit{L’homme}, 172.

\textsuperscript{64} Croteau, \textit{L’homme}, 178, in Morin, “Le psychologique,” 77.
purpose through their incarnate intentional consciousness. Therefore, understanding people’s behaviour involves a comprehension of the world revealed to and acted upon by Self-I. It means taking into account the meaningfulness and purposefulness discovered and acted upon by their intentional consciousness incarnated in a body experiencing the world surrounding it. Quoting Boss, Croteau summarizes this perspective: “Non seulement l’homme est-il dans le monde, a-t-il un monde ou des rapports avec le monde, mais il est [he is] ses rapports avec le monde et, tout compte fait, il est [he is] son monde.”

This perspective has important implications for psychology. It highlights the fact that a complete understanding of human behaviours implies accounting for the individual’s global worldview as organized around one’s aim toward transcendent meaningful and purposeful being, received and acted upon by Self-I’s free/responsible qualities, through the person’s experience of being in and part of the world (within, interpersonal, and around). In this line of thought, continues Croteau, when we restrict our comprehension of behaviour to its observable or measurable components, we miss out on “the essential relationships of human beings with the world [and we underestimate] the role of subjects’ active interiority [where behaviour becomes] the place of an activity perceiving and revealing meaning and purpose.” Thus behaviour is conceived as a “significant (intentional-meaningful) response to an also significant (meaningful) situation, that is to say, whose meaning was revealed to the subject through his/her behaviour.”

With such foundational principles, psychologists have solid grounds to broaden their comprehension of behaviour. Respecting the founding presuppositions of cognitive behavioural or psychoanalytic theories and including humanistic-existential premises, EOP offers a supplementary viewpoint essential to a more complete understanding of human beings’ specificity—considering their global worldview.

Thus behaviour is part of this movement by which the world is “constantly being created in a perpetual tension [by and in one’s personality being thus allowed to] deploy, become, and finally identify itself/oneself.” In this movement, the transcendent characteristic of subjects’ aim toward being is recognized, as well as its ethical qualities of freedom and responsibility having to do with the judgement of the will about right and wrong and the perspective of religious or spiritual values, beliefs or other phenomena which, from the believing or theistic viewpoint, is the essential, ultimate component of their world.

Reintegrating Religious and Spiritual Values in the Mainstream of Psychology

POE’s demonstration that the world (Eigenwelt, Mitwelt, Umwelt) where behaviour is rooted and deployed comprises qualities of transcendence and freedom/responsibility leads us to acknowledge that religious and spiritual values, originating from the world of ultimate, infinite, unlimited, or absolute realities, need to be considered in studies about human beings’ behaviour and psyche. The conceptual evidence shown with this revised methodology incites support for Bergin’s invitation to psychologists that out of intellectual honesty and under the ethical principal of aiming to understand the totality of human beings’ cognitions, affects, and behaviour, they would do well to recognize the possible existence of a world beyond the observable and measurable realities and consequently to acknowledge that spiritual and religious values and beliefs are part of human behaviour and psyche. This does not require researchers or clinicians to

65 Ménard Boss, in Croteau, L’homme, 189.
67 Nuttin, quoted in Croteau, L’homme, 182.
68 Morin, “Le psychologique,” 79, including quotation from Croteau, L’homme, 189.
69 Croteau, L’homme, 189.
take a personal stance on specific values and beliefs or to adhere to some spiritual or religious affiliation. It only implies that they acknowledge the various ways by which the transcendent and free/responsible meaningfulness and purposefulness is reached, among which are ultimate or absolute realities.

To better understand the association that can be made between spiritual or religious values or beliefs and the world of ultimate, infinite, unlimited or absolute realities from which they originate, two concepts need to be added to the description made earlier of Self-I’s intentional consciousness: (1) the faculty of will and (2) the operations of the intellect directly associated with the will. Support to our position regarding the centrality of spiritual and religious values in people’s worldview, thus in personality and behaviour, will be further explored by discussing the centrality of the will in the psyche—the foundation of the personality, worldview, and consequent behaviours.

Faculty of Will and Intellect

The spiritual or religious component of human beings’ aim toward transcendent, free, and responsible meaning and purpose can best be accounted for in reference to the concept of will which, although correlated with the operations of the intellects, contains the specific designation of what seems to be most active spiritually or religiously in personality. Referring to realistic philosophy, St. Arnaud defines the will as an agent assisted by the intellect by which the spiritual or religious components are at play in personality. The operations of the intellect (cognitions) are considered to be what thinks, reasons, analyses, comprehends existence/being revealed to the intentional consciousness, informs the faculty of the will or affects, described as that which desires, receives or appreciates, and evaluates meaningfulness and purposefulness of being or existence. While assumed to be part of the intentional consciousness, though unconsciously active during early development in childhood, the will is thought to be what appreciates and evaluates information received and analysed by the intellect about reality and ultimately decides about the best action in regard to that reality. St. Arnaud further defines the will as a desiring inclination or yearning for ultimate, infinite, unlimited realities, also called absolute realities. Central to personality development and behaviour, the will is understood as the faculty that desires/wills/aims toward pleasure and enjoyment (désir, goût, jouissance) fulfilled by such absolute realities. Though also able to find pleasure in finite, limited, material realities, the will has the specificity to discriminate, evaluate, receive or appreciate, taste, love, and decide to act—out of freedom and responsibility to oneself and others, according to priorities set by the yearning toward absolute realities.

Much has been said in psychology about the operations of the intellect. On the opposite side, too often associated with religious morality or voluntarism, the concept of will seems to have been dismissed, along with the religious references to which such morality was associated. Moreover, since qualities of the will are associated with absolute values, the concept requires more emphasis in order to highlight its role in personality development and self-accomplishment. Indeed, though active in moral and ethical decisions, the will also has a basic function in personality structure and behavioural choices; it is a “desiring/loving” agent. In that perspective, referring to Frankl’s concept of “will to meaning,” Croteau clarifies that the will finds accomplishment “through the actualisation of values or goods . . . which, being correlated with desire and love, are ‘that which is desired by all beings, inasmuch as each being yearns [toward] self-accomplishment.’” Since the will “necessarily yearns toward the good,” Croteau argues, “subjects’ real

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70 Operations of the intellect also receive information from the senses, experiencing existence through the evaluation made by the will of how being/existence affects the subjects, how it feels and tastes.
71 Morin, “Le psychologique,” 80.
72 Croteau replaces Maslow’s concept of self-actualization with self-accomplishment, as it better accounts for a subject’s aim to surpass him- or herself through the actualization of ultimate values. The quotation is from Croteau, L’homme, 200-201, included in Morin, “Le psychologique,” 88-89.
73 “That which is good, valuable—even in evil or bad actions, there is a good intention, a desire for something good.” Croteau, L’homme, 194.
determinism is their yearning for such good.\textsuperscript{74} Thus replacing the Freudian idea of biological determinism, a fundamental stage emerges toward establishing the Self-I's spiritual or religious orientation. While meaningfulness and purposefulness are identified with the help of the intellectual/cognitive component of the intentional consciousness, the affective or emotional component of such meaningfulness and purposefulness is found when Self-I is tasting, enjoying (from French \textit{goûter, jouir}) and, should we add, \textit{loving} through its will faculty. And since absolute values for which the will yearns are thus fundamental to self-accomplishment, the will's function becomes central in the establishment of what we can now call the psycho-religious intra-psychic structure and its corresponding worldview and behaviours. This requires further treatment.

If Self-I's behaviour can be understood from the perspective of its worldview and corresponding aim toward finding meaning and purpose, human subjects' behaviour is similarly comprehensible in light of their will's yearning for ultimate and absolute goods or values and its corresponding worldview, comprising references to a world of ultimate or absolute realities. From the perspective of religious studies, theological and philosophical research, or believers and theistic thinkers, the world of ultimate or absolute realities refers to a world of divine or sacred realities, beings, or forms of existence which may or may not also refer to an absolute being that people may call God, Allah, Yahweh, Higher Being, etc. Moreover, though the specific spiritual component of personality can easily be associated to the Self-I's aim toward transcendent being or the will's yearning, with the assistance of its corresponding intellect, toward ultimate and absolute good, the religious dimension usually implies a personal adherence, a choice made by the will for a belief system promoted by a specific religious affiliation.\textsuperscript{75}

Considering that the will is active from the beginning of subjects' development and throughout their life span as part of the Self-I's intentional consciousness, its central influence in personality development and

\textsuperscript{74} Croteau, \textit{L'homme}, 194, in Morin, “Le psychologique,” 89. With this position, Croteau challenges Freud's concept of biological determinism by saying, “Goods or realities have unequal value, the ‘will to pleasure,’ referring to Freudian ‘pleasure drive,’ while yearning toward pleasure as ‘an end in itself’ cannot lead to self-accomplishment. Only ‘spiritual pleasures,’ which imply the will's yearning toward enjoying (goût-savouring) unlimited goods, which are an ultimate end in themselves, can lead to self-accomplishment.” Croteau, \textit{L'homme}, 203-204, in Morin, “Le psychologique,” 89.

\textsuperscript{75} Consensus on a definition of concepts of spirituality and religiousness conspicuously lacking in psychology of religion (Oman, “Defining”; Spilka, “Spirituality”; Zinnbauer & Pargament, “Religiousness”; Zinnbauer, Pargament & Scott, “The emerging”, in Skrzypinska, “The Threefold”, 279). The explanation to this lies, according to some researchers, “not in scientific but in philosophical differences of opinions that underpin research efforts.” (Klaasen et al., “Spiritual/Religious,” 6). For research purposes, Skrzypinska classifies definitions of spirituality in two streams. From a structural approach spirituality is associated with “human attributes,” “cognitive schema,” “system of belief,” “attitudes,” and “abilities” (Hood, Hill & Spilka, “Psychology”; Ozorak, “Cognitive”; Pepitone & Saffiotti, “The selectivity”; Skrzypinska, “Spirituality”; Zohar & Marshall, SQ: Spiritual, in Skrzypinska, “The Threefold,” 281). From a processual approach, it is associated with “a dimension of personality,” “inner motivation,” “the transcendence of self,” “looking for the meaning of life and goals,” “looking for the sacred and relations with the object of sacrum,” and “a process of self-actualization” (MacDonald, “Spirituality”; Piedmont, “Does spirituality?”, Piedmont et al., “The empirical”; Maslow, \textit{Religion}; Frankl, \textit{The Unconscious}; Emmons, “Emotion”; Doyle, “Have”; Reich et al., “Spiritual”, in Skrzypinska, “The Threefold,” 281). Referring to Vaughan, “Spirituality” and Doyle, “Have”, Skrzypinska also highlighted that most definitions relate to “the subjective experience of the sacred [as the] goal of human life” [and the \textit{motivation to find the meaning of life} and to place oneself in an ontological broader context [while focussing on the energetic (in biological terms) and powerful (in psychological terms) aspects of spirituality, as a kind of causal power](Skrzypinska, “The Threefold”, 281).” Religiousness, though differing from spirituality, is often associated with it (because of boundary problems; Oman, “Defining”; Schnell, “Spirituality”; Skrzypinska, \textit{Pogłąd}; Zinnbauer & Pargament, “Religiousness”, in Skrzypinska, “The Threefold,” 279), as in the following introduction to an empirical study on spirituality and religiosity: “Religious and spirituality traditions have regarded the desire for a relationship with a larger transcendent reality, such as God, nature, or the universe as an innate, defining aspect of being human, with observable effects on human flourishing”(Dy-Liacco et al. “Spirituality,” 35). Among the most commonly accepted, Pargament’s definition of religiousness and spirituality present the following differences. Religiousness is defined as “a search for significance in ways related to the sacred” (Pargament, in Klaasen et al., “Spiritual/Religious,” 6), while spirituality, referred to as “a search for the sacred” (Pargament, in Klaasen et al., 7), appear as a simple reduction of a religiousness definition. Religiousness differs from spirituality on the basis of “search for the objects of significance.” Building on this difference, our standpoint is to add, in line with the reference of one of the founding fathers of psychology of religion, A. Vergote, using the etymological Latin root of the word religion, \textit{religare} (to link, join, connect together), that religiousness refers to that which reunites, joins or connects human beings to God or the sacred, ultimate, infinite or absolute realities or beings.
self-accomplishment can be shown from the angle of its yearning for the absolute quality of existence, from subjects’ primary experience of existence and throughout their worldview development and behavioural choices aiming toward self-accomplishment.

**Psycho-Religious Intra-Psychic Structure and Value-Based Model**

Our discussion of the influence of the will on personality development leads to the introduction of St. Arnaud’s psychotherapeutic values model, through a concise outline of two of its three founding concepts: the *fundamental value* (a fundamental desire/will for absolute goods) and the *psychological nub* (the psychic conflict, developed in primary processes). The third concept of the model, the *subjective processes* (subject’s frame of reference, developed in secondary processes), originating from the humanistic-existential approach, is indirectly covered as we elucidate the EOP concept of subjects’ worldviews and their basic three components. A detailed presentation of St. Arnaud’s value model concepts and its EOP scientific foundation can be found in “Le psychologique et le religieux.”

**Fundamental Value**

Phenomenologically, one of the characteristics of Self-I’s intentional consciousness is to function in personality development as a *synthesizing principle*: a constant summarizer of the subject’s perceptions of existence into what appears essential to its aim for meaning or purpose. It retains from the variety of experienced facets of existence what is most meaningful or purposeful for its accomplishment. Considering the presence of the will, with its main goal of prioritizing absolute goods or values, this intentional consciousness can be understood as prioritizing and coming to prefer one absolute good among all goods. This preferred good is called by St. Arnaud the *fundamental value*. Scientific support has been found for the presence of such fundamental values in subjects’ discourse and their identification, using qualitative models of phenomenological psychology in research designs and psychotherapeutic settings.

Rooted in Aristotle’s philosophical concept of *supreme good*, the fundamental value (FV) is defined by St. Arnaud as a good preferred by a subject over other goods to which one is exposed during one’s experience of being in the world. St. Arnaud also refers to the fundamental value as “the good mostly yearned for” (GMYF) (le Bien-Le-Plus-Recherché [BLPR])—the unique way by which a subject aims or tends toward the ultimate or absolute good or being, the source of all goods or being. In this perspective, “goods” are understood as qualifications of being or existence, generally called *values*. For example, values of truth, justice, goodness, beauty, integrity, authenticity, etc. referred to as goods from an ontological perspective qualify the being or existence toward which the Self-I’s will is drawn. Thus subjects’ yearning for values is considered to be what accounts for their religious dimension because they orient toward the world of unlimited or absolute goods, whose origin and end is the ultimate or absolute being.

Taylor’s definition of Aristotle’s concept of supreme good, which he calls *hypergood*, supports St. Arnaud’s conceptualization of FV. For Taylor, hypergoods are discriminated and found superior to inferior goods by individuals who determine that

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76 Yvon J. Saint-Arnaud taught his value-based model during more than 30 years in the Pastoral Counseling Master’s Degree program at Saint-Paul University, Ottawa, Canada. Though never published, founding principles of this model can be found in the following works from the reference list: Saint-Arnaud, “L’Art de se guérir,” “L’Art de jouir,” La relation, La guérison.

77 The third basic concept of Saint-Arnaud’s value model, called the *subjective processes*, refers to subjects’ unique way of conceiving and acting upon their world and relates to the secondary stage of development. It is derived from the humanistic-existential approach, with its conceptual foundation based on phenomenological philosophy. In that sense, associations made between FV and EOP concepts cover the H-E approach’s perspective. They also cover the cognitive behavioural perspective on the basis of the argumentation in our elaboration of EOP’s broadening of behaviour conceptualization through the subjective worldview.

78 Morin: “Le suicide”; “Valeur fondamentale”; “Rémission”; “Fundamental Value Questionnaire”; “Fundamental Value”; Pour une écoute”; “Counseling.”
Religious and Spiritual Values Central to Personality and Behaviour

[One good is] incomparably more important than other goods. . . . Such an orientation toward this good constitutes the best approximation of what defines my identity, and consequently, orienting myself [or my actions] toward this good becomes very important to me. . . . Precisely because this orientation is essential to my identity, recognizing that I move away from it, in my life, or that I cannot come close to it, can prove to be exhausting and intolerable. . . . Inversely, the assurance that I am oriented toward that good produces a feeling of integrity and fullness . . . that cannot be found elsewhere.79

Consistent with this definition, St. Arnaud stipulates that originating in the desiring/loving/assuming responsibility sought by the Self-I, the FV is considered to be the essential aspiration of subjects and thus the expression of their unicity, identity, and vital dynamism. If people’s identity is revealed in that essential yearning of the will, then the FV, constituting the central component of their Self-I, can be conceived as that which mostly energizes a person—his or her fundamental dynamism (le dynamisme fondamental de la personne80). And since values are rooted in ultimate or absolute realities, this fundamental dynamism is also considered to be spiritual or religious. Thus identifying one’s essence in terms of a fundamental value reveals one’s fundamental spiritual or religious dynamism, associated with finding fulfilment and integrity in the experience of being and acting in correspondence with one’s identity.

According to St. Arnaud, the FV is configured during the first stages of a child’s development. When discovering existence, the will which desires, though unconsciously present and active in the subjective intentional consciousness, comes to prefer one good or value over the others while aiming toward ultimate qualities of existence, and it determines intuitively that self-accomplishment comes with the fulfilment of that value. The FV takes form, in fact, during the establishment of the intra-psychic organization under the primary and secondary stages of development. During the first, subjects’ incarnate intentional consciousness is exposed to their first love object, the mother (and the father), with whom the intra-psychic conflict is activated; during the second, subjects’ conception of the world (self, others, and environment) unfolds through this first experience and through their relationship with their immediate surrounding environment (people and material/physical things and beings). During this process Self-I unconsciously synthesizes and summarizes into one most important quality of being those different aspects of existence toward which it aims and, with the action of the desiring, free, responsible will, comes to evaluate that quality as being the most essential of all values.

The fundamental value can further be clarified by paralleling it with the concept of transcendence. First, recalling Bergin’s reference to Maslow, transcendence is used to highlight the “quality” or essence of the ethical standards that are intrinsic to people’s ultimate value or far goal of becoming fully human. The fundamental value, defined as the expression of one’s essence or identity, though characterised by such a transcendent quality differs from transcendence per se. Indeed, considering Peterson and Seligman’s81 perspective, transcendence is understood as a virtue, associated with character strengths “that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning.”82 The six strengths: beauty, excellence, gratitude, hope, humor and spirituality/religiousness83 related to transcendence, though involving a “connection to something or someone larger than oneself,” do not comprise the particularity of being both the synthesis of a person’s values and the expression of that person’s identity and essence as the fundamental value does.

Psychological Nub and Divided Self

The fundamental value, taking form in the first stages of development, can be situated in regard to other psycho-analytic concepts related to the formation of the psychological nub during the primary stage of development. Admitting Freud’s conceptualization of conflictive drives active in the id, the ego and the superego, we align with Klein’s conclusive description of the result of such conflict in personality: a basic

80 Morin, “Le psychologique”, 80.
81 Peterson and Seligman, Character Strengths and Virtues.
83 Beauty, “connecting one to excellence; gratitude [...] to goodness, hope [...] to future and it’s potential, humor [...] to adversity and incongruity [...], and spirituality [...] to the nonmaterial aspects of live and the universe [...].” Schnall et al., “Virtues”, 23.
ambivalence between good and bad qualities of the world as experienced in mother’s love and care. Thus in light of these Freudian and Kleinian concepts, with inclusion of the role of the will, the psychological nub is defined as an instinctual fixed ambivalence between two values, one perceived as good and one perceived as bad. A subject’s fixation in this ambivalence means that the Self-I is wrongfully considering childhood impressions, rather than the FV, as means of coming to self-accomplishment.

For the purpose of discussion, we may refer to Freud’s viewpoint about the intra-psychic conflict by which an inner tension exists between the drives for pleasure (pleasure or life principle) and the energies manifested through an agent called id, along with the drives for auto-preservation (death or reality principle), whose action takes place in the ego. Interacting with and acting upon the id and ego is the moral conscience, the superego, established as a result of the internalization of the parents’ moral standards. The internal dynamic being established in the personality during this inner conflictive drive process is described, in Kleinian terms, as an ambivalent personality structure: a divided self or a split ego resulting from the child’s experience of the good and the bad side of his/her first love object, the mother (and father). The feelings, impressions, memories associated with good or pleasant experiences of the mother’s care are “introjected” as being part of oneself (the world within). Those associated with bad or unpleasant experiences are “projected” out of oneself, into the external environment (the world of others and the material/physical environment). The ambivalent personality structure resulting from this early conflictive process can be revisited and explained in EOP terms as a divided personality foundational worldview, which includes skewed perceptions of self, others, and the environment, with the will active in and through the incarnate intentional conscience. During this primary developmental process, we could say that when discovering existence through the experience of being cared for by one’s mother, the unconscious Self-I discriminated the good from the bad according to the pleasant and unpleasant experiences of the child’s primary existence and came to establish early conclusions relative to self (the world within), others (the world of relationships), and external material and physical things and beings (the world of environment). A general worldview, based on what we could call an “immature” basic opposition between the good and the bad aspects of childhood existence, is thus established. Dysfunctional behaviours are explained on the basis of this ambivalent worldview as reactions in actual time to past experiences thus registered in the unconscious memory and seemingly reoccurring for the individual. In this perspective, self-accomplishment implies a reunification of the personality around the fundamental value.

Before addressing the role of the fundamental value in such a reunification process in reference to psychotherapy, more clarification about the presence of the will in drives further supports our thesis on the centrality of values in personality.

**Psychoanalytic Drives, Spiritual in Essence**

Freud’s theory assumes that the drives for pleasure/life and self-preservation/death have a biological origin. The atheistic founder of psychoanalysis believed, and his followers endorsed, the idea that the energy deployed by the id (pleasure or life principle), ego (reality principle), and super-ego (moral conscience) is rooted in the biological components of the body. Although these processes can be acknowledged phenomenologically, their underlying presupposition cannot be sustained scientifically. Neuro-psychological correlation cannot be established between these drives and biological functioning, leading us to suggest that a religious anthropological standpoint be considered to explain basic human life energy from which drives would originate. We do so using the Judeo-Christian Catholic anthropology.

86 The child’s experience of and identification with the mother object includes that of the father as perceived by and thus reflected by the mother. Goodwin, “Freud.” 101. On that basis, our references to the mother will, thereafter, include the father.
87 Our choice of this anthropology is motivated by the fact that it is our personal confessional background, thus the one with which we are most familiar. Moreover, in line with Bergin’s suggestion to be open about our personal religious adherence, it also avoids risks of doing injustice to anthropologies from other religious background with which we are not as familiar.
This religious anthropology bases its view of the origin of human beings in the belief that we are creatures of God. Human beings are thus considered to be spiritual, in essence, because their origin is having the “spirit” of God breathed into them at the moment of their conception. The Hebrew term for this “breathing” is rouah,88 which literally means “wind, breath/respiration, acting strength, vital urge/desire.”89 Those terms leave no doubt about the energetic and urging/desiring qualities of the spirit put in us by God. If this is accepted as fact, it would seem feasible to acknowledge, from an interdisciplinary outlook, that the energy acting in the two fundamental drives present in people’s primary development is a spiritual energy. Adding to this analysis a theological given, that God is ultimate love, we can also say that the spiritual energy motivating human beings’ fundamental drives is a loving type of energy: an energy moved by and aiming or yearning toward love. From this statement we can also infer that human beings’ vital energy, originating from this innate divine loving spirit—thus coming out of love—is an acting force, a vital drive aiming and yearning toward its original and ultimate source, which is love. In that line of thought, it can be said that human drives are spiritual in essence. The origin of such a vital energy or acting vital force, coming from God/love and having God/love as its spiritual aim, constitutes human beings’ fundamental dynamic: aiming toward, receiving, and giving love.90

We may further give ground to the integration of the will concept in psychology through a parallel regarding the psychoanalytic concepts of drives pertaining to id, ego and superego.

The aim for absolute can be paralleled with the endlessness of the id’s drive for pleasure. One of the effects observed in a divided personality structure is that of the persisting aim by the life drive to overcome the limitations imposed by the ego and superego to its satisfaction: The drive never gives up trying to gain satisfaction. Associating this unlimited or absolute characteristic with that of the yearning of the will for absolute goods further supports our thesis about the spiritual quality of human beings’ psychological structure. From this can also be inferred the idea that the yearning for a fundamental value, which is the expression of the spiritual Self-I incarnated in a body, is expressed through the endless id drives manifested in a bodily manner.

A parallel can also be made between the will and the self-preservation drives active in the establishment of ego. These drives, also called death drives, emerge when subjects start to be able to discriminate external reality principles from internal energies, in reaction to the frustration created by the experience of the id drives’ endless claims for unlimited satisfaction confined to the limitations imposed on them by reality. As an attempt to find relief from such frustration, the ego drives manifest themselves by erecting a defensive divided structure of personality, through suppression or repression of unacceptable id drives, to preserve the subject’s integrity. Their goal on one side is to prevent the subject’s essence from being overwhelmed by the id’s demands and on the other to ensure it adjusts to demands from external reality. As for the id drives, we can suppose that the organizing energy at work in the ego drive process is spiritual in essence and implies the action of the will. Confirmation of this supposition is found with the Freudian concept of perception conscience, used to describe ego formation.

Freudian theory asserts that the process of suppression/repression is made possible by a system called the perception conscience (or consciousness). To decide which of the id drives will be suppressed, this system has to evaluate or make judgements about reality and about what appears to be good or bad, acceptable or not acceptable. Of course, this evaluation or judgement is based on immature reasoning considering the young age of the subject as it develops. Nonetheless, “a value judgement about the quality of objects encountered”91 is made, according to Freud, by this perception conscience, described as a nub from which the ego emanates. The action of the will, thus inferred in the description of ego emanation, is related to operations of the intellect (other spiritual component, associated to the will), as inferred from Freud’s

88 Morin, “Le psychologique,” 82.
89 The ancient Greeks considered the soul to be the incorporeal or spiritual “breath” which animates (from the Latin, anima, cf. animal) the living organism.” Skrzypinska, “The Threefold” 279.
90 This is in line with Freud’s point of view on the libido, whose basic inclination he associates with love: “l’amour de soi-même, l’amour qu’on éprouve pour les parents, et les enfants, l’amitié, l’amour des hommes.” Freud, Essai, 109.
statement about the ego said to represent “what we call the reason or wisdom [to which are associated] the intellectual processes.”

Signs of the presence of the will can also be found in Freud’s conception of the early development of the superego. Defined as the moral conscience, the superego is considered to be an accumulation of parents’ moral standards. The moral quality of this young conscience is a sign of the evaluation made by the will between the good and bad. Stepping beyond the debate about whether the ego or superego appears first in the child’s development, the “ethical” dimension of the will’s presence and action is clearly shown as this agent applies a higher level of discrimination to decide about the good and bad, doing so from the perspective of standards originating from a source higher or at least other than one’s inner feelings and impressions. Though evaluating existence in id drives and ego drives, the level of discrimination at which the will operates at these two levels is based on pleasant or unpleasant inner feelings. At the level of superego, the will evaluates reality by considering external standards. Although unconscious, the inclusion of these standards requires the will to reach a third level of discrimination: considering the good and the bad from the angle of what is acceptable or not, acknowledged or not, by a third party, the parents, who are external to and higher than the self in terms of their authority over the child. Of course, this higher level of discrimination must grow, and the inclusion of parent moral or ethical standards needs to be re-evaluated throughout one’s development. However, the ethical dimension of the superego will clearly point out the subject’s capacity to estimate standards coming from a higher level, thus supporting the idea that the will, driven by the standards relative to ultimate realities for which the individual yearns, is also open to the source of such realities—a higher power, being, or energy that many call God.

In relation to the fundamental value, we can add that the Self-I, whose will yearns for such an ultimate good, acts as the replacing evaluating agent in the person’s developmental process. In fact, the fundamental value for which the Self-I yearns becomes the guiding principle by which the will now evaluates and discriminates among good and bad ethical standards and comes to decide which actions to use in different circumstances, which behaviour to develop or adopt in certain relationships, etc. to attain self-accomplishment. For believers, God’s standards or religious moral principles will be part of the world of information being evaluated and considered in the overall journey toward self-accomplishment.

The centrality of spiritual and religious values seems well supported considering the above demonstrations of the presence and action of the will in intra-psychic and personality development, with the inference about the spiritual essence of drives and phenomenologically based indications about the synthesizing role of Self-I’s intentional consciousness which comes to prefer a FV indicating its essence. Yet that support can further be strengthened with the following clarifications about the way FV works as a guiding principle toward one’s self-accomplishment and access to the ultimate source of all goods, God, Allah, etc. in a psychotherapeutic process.

**Fundamental Value, Central to Self-Accomplishment**

If behaviours are determined by subjects’ unique worldview, including the world of ultimate goods, and if early intra-psychic development results in a more or less divided personality, then the fundamental value, which expresses the Self-I’s essence or identity, should indicate the way by which this divided personality can be unified and thus the type of behaviours that lead toward self-accomplishment. Clarifications of such assumptions will be presented as they pertain to a psychotherapeutic process, in order to conclude this discussion. We will develop this discussion in the form of a case study of subject Ann, whose fundamental value is fullness of love and truth. This fundamental value is worded in terms similar to those identified in previous qualitative research where phenomenological psychology methodology was used.

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93 Fictional name.
94 Phenomenological research shows that two or more qualifications are necessary to define subjects’ FV. It appears that one of the qualifications would refer to a “means” by which the other, most fundamental, would be yearned for as an “end” in itself. Examples can be found in Morin “Le suicide,” “Valeur fondamentale,” “Rémission,” *Pour une écoute*, and “Counseling.”
Adding to our considerations about the presence of the will during the formation of the intra-psychic developing personality and worldview, we suppose Ann unconsciously determined “fullness of love and truth” as her preferred good based on two factors: (1) her subjective essential sensitivity to this particular type of value (manifested in id drives for absolute pleasure) and (2) her conceptions of herself and the world based on her personal primary experience of living with her mother, comprising limitations of reality (self-preservation drives active in frustrating elements of reality). Ann’s preference for fullness of love and truth also implies that she experienced some or a significant deficit of love and truth. Moreover, the degree to which she felt frustrated, hurt, or even traumatised by that deficiency correlated with her degree of sensitivity to that particular type of good, for which the indicator is her subjective essence or identity contributing to the formation of her specific FV. Thus we assume that Ann’s experience of “lacking true love” left her with a sense of emotional “emptiness,” which is part of her divided personality.

Ann’s worldview and dysfunctional behaviour, rooted in this primary experience and emotional distortion, can be summarized as follows. Incapable of conceiving herself as lovable (due to low self-esteem) and apprehending others as unauthentic or even as liars, Ann has difficulty establishing durable relationships with other individuals. Rarely able to keep a job for more than two or three years, she tends to isolate from others and tries to resolve anxiety feelings through medication and exercises. Ann asked for therapy when she was on the verge of depression, at the age of 40, and her husband filed for divorce.

In this situation, the psychotherapeutic process follows its regular course. First, to establish the therapeutic alliance, psychotherapists will explore Ann’s worldview and try to elucidate the reasons for her problematic behaviours. During this first stage they will also try to identify her FV and its corresponding world of ultimate or absolute realities. This attention adds a new dynamism to the therapeutic process, giving Ann opportunities to make connections between her “learned” false beliefs about herself, others, or environment, on one side, and her yearning for ultimate or absolute goods on the other. The difference for psychotherapists working with spiritual or religious references is that this exploration process includes (1) asking Ann about her conceptions, beliefs, and expectations pertaining to the world of ultimate realities; (2) clarifying issues related to her personal affiliation and practice; and (3) identifying where her spiritual or religious resources might be useful in fulfilling her FV. Should Ann be a believer and a religious person, this particular information will be taken into consideration and included among other facets of her world throughout the therapeutic process. Should she be an atheist, a non-believer, or a non-religious believer, Ann will still be invited to expose her conception of ultimate realities and worldview and to talk about the different resources she has to deal with them. Information about this dimension of existence will help to highlight her ways of dealing with the absolutes of life. For example, the degree to which her behaviours might have absolute implications can reveal something about her acceptance or non-acceptance of reality’s limitations.

Second, throughout this exploration process and additionally when moving toward behavioural changes, the psychotherapist will try to come close to identifying and helping Ann move toward recognizing her specific fundamental value: her particular “good mostly yearned for,” which is unconscious because it was formed during childhood. This additional orientation will generate a broader sphere of information about the direction to take in moving toward reunification of her divided personality. Indications thus generated concerning changes to make in her behaviours will include her ways of relating to ultimate or absolute components of the world of ultimate or absolute realities, including her relationship with the ultimate or absolute being and the way this relationship is likely to lead toward fulfilling her FV. Let us illustrate.

By identifying Ann’s yearning for fullness of love and truth, her psychotherapist can occasionally reflect the importance this desire seems to have for her. By doing so, the psychotherapist makes Ann feel deeply understood and conveys to Ann how valuable she is. Indeed, having her FV be reflected to her, will inevitably give Ann a sense of being recognized in her essence or identity, and consequently her sense of worth should increase. This process is a powerful therapeutic intervention because, elevating Ann's self-esteem should inevitably bring changes in her conception of herself and in her conclusions about others, the world around her, and the world of ultimate and absolute realities.

Though clients’ full insight about their FV might occur only after a long period of psychotherapy, or may never occur at all, identifying clients’ FV is still important in the process toward worldview and
behaviour changes; it may even serve psychotherapists better than clients. When a client's specific fundamental yearning has been identified, the direction for self-accomplishment becomes apparent. First, Ann's yearning for fullness of love and truth reveals to the therapist which of her worldview conclusions and behaviours are contradictory to the process leading to its fulfillment and thus need to be addressed and modified. Second, this FV reveals the type of goods or values that have the potential to appease her anxiety and to lead her personality toward unification and self-accomplishment. For example, when finding ways to access the values of love and truth in their absolute state, Ann will be making progress toward unification and self-accomplishment, even if her specific fundamental yearning is not clearly identified. Experiencing the kind of goods or values that correspond to her essence will be accompanied by a sense of plenitude which will have a unifying effect around the center of her personality, the Self-I, of bringing down barriers that had kept parts divided. Such an experience of unification will further consolidate her self-confidence and give her the necessary strength to overcome obstacles to her overall self-accomplishment.

If Ann believes in God or in some other higher power, the therapist's openness about the spiritual or religious dimension associated with values will also help integrate during the therapeutic process any spiritual or religious beliefs or practices potentially useful in pursuing her personality unification and self-accomplishment. If Ann was a practicing Catholic, for example, we could consider the following therapeutic avenues in light of her yearning for fullness of love and truth. First, her faith in Jesus Christ could be an important resource for learning how to trust people. Considering Christ as the ultimate source of love and truth, whose authenticity is unquestionable, Ann's reliance on Him could help slowly enhance her ability to trust others, and her experience of being and feeling loved by Him could reinforce both her self-worth and her ability to love others. Also Christ's invitation to love and forgive could help Ann, as she changes her erroneous perceptions and dysfunctional behaviours, move from seeing people as unauthentic or as liars to discovering their potential reliability and trustworthiness. These new perceptions would normally contribute to lessening her need to isolate and strengthening her ability to establish more durable relationships. Such changes, which usually come with relief from anxiety and enhancement of self-confidence, should help Ann slowly learn how to better meet her job requirements and thus have more stability in maintaining her employment. Finally, following the Church's invitation to pray, Ann should come closer to experiencing Christ's true love for her, thus experiencing her dignity and worth at the source of ultimate love and truth, finding her self-esteem strengthened and acquiring the courage necessary to overcome, by reaching at the heart of her emptiness and divided self, the obstacles encountered on her way to unification and self-accomplishment.

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