Spiritual Dynamics in Social Innovation

An organizational context, lived spirituality and a school of spirituality

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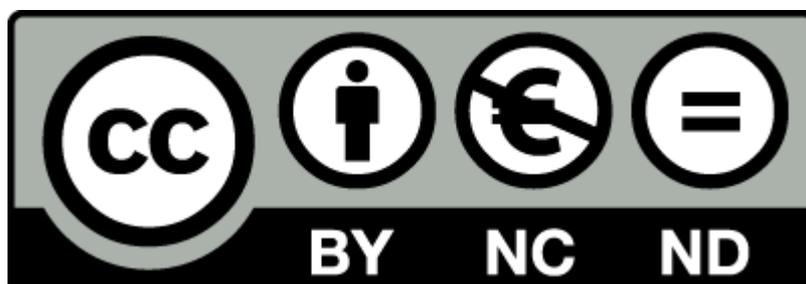
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1. Research into spirituality in organizations and social innovation

Summary

The association of social innovation and spirituality in organizations is one of the main reasons for this study. However, up to now this relationship has not received a lot of academic attention. That sets the agenda for this study. It would be interesting to explore the relationship between spirituality and social innovation. That brings a number of key concepts of this study to the fore: lived spirituality, experiences of the transcendent, schools of spirituality and personal development. A spiritual perspective of social innovation may help us to develop a method for spiritual formation of people who work in the field of social innovation. Such a method may stimulate personal development that is beneficial for their work. This goal makes a part of this study have a developmental (programmatic) agenda. For the sake of this agenda it will choose to work with a specific school of spirituality, as we will learn later in this study. It does so with a pluralistic mindset and a pluralistic approach to spirituality. I will argue that the concept of lived spirituality encourages the experimental interplay between lived spirituality of individuals and other forms of spirituality. In today's pluralistic world this is both a challenge and a necessity.

1.1. Introduction

In his corporate biography Ray Anderson, the late CEO of Interface, describes an experience that he had in 1994. It is an anecdotal illustration of spirituality in organizations[1] in the context of social innovation that I came across in the first phase of this study: *'...Jim Hartzfeld suggested that the new [sustainability] task force ask me to make the keynote remarks, to kick off the task force's first meeting and give the group an environmental vision. Well, frankly, I didn't have a vision, except "obey the law, comply, comply, comply", and I was very reluctant to accept the invitation. The idea that, while in compliance, we might be hurting the environment simply hadn't occurred to me... So, I sweated for three weeks over what I would say to that group. Then, through what seemed to be pure serendipity, somebody sent me a book: Paul Hawken's The Ecology of Commerce. I read it, and it changed my life. It hit me right between the eyes. It was an epiphany. I wasn't halfway through it before I had the vision I was looking for, not only for that speech but for my company, and a powerful sense of urgency to do something to begin to correct the mistakes of the first industrial revolution. Hawken's message was a spear in my chest that is still there.' (Anderson, 1998, pp. 39-40)*

The experience, that Anderson describes in dramatic terms such as 'serendipity', life changing, 'powerful', 'touching', 'hitting' and 'epiphany', is the starting point of a green revolution that transforms Interface, a large manufacturer of carpet tiles, into a sustainability pioneer. It is a good example of the profound experiences that people can go through at work. Although Anderson does not explicitly mention a spiritual referent (for example 'God') his language vibrates with religiosity and spirituality seems to resonate in his account.

Anderson himself is also a good example of a socially innovative pioneer. He developed a sustainable business model that inspired many other companies. In Anderson's testimony spirituality and social innovation seem

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[1] 'Spirituality in organizations' goes by many names, e.g.: business spirituality, organizational spirituality, workplace spirituality, et cetera. In this study I will use the term 'spirituality in organizations'.

to come together as a powerful mixture that eventually fuels widespread change and innovation. His illustrative account gives way to the sort of questions that this study will address, e.g.: (how) can we explore and articulate spirituality in socially innovative organizations? Do we need to be able to address the transcendent in the spirituality of people in socially innovative contexts? Could spirituality be a factor that helps socially innovative pioneers in their work?

These issues arise from four considerations that have shaped this study:

1. the association of social innovation and spirituality in organizations (par. 1.2);
2. the conception of spirituality in organizations as a pluralistic category (par.1.3);
3. the potential of systematic, in-depth attention to experiences of transcendence in research into spirituality in organizations (par.1.4);
4. additional understanding of the transcendent in our experiences (par.1.5).

1.2. Consideration 1: The association of social innovation and spirituality in organizations

Social innovation is a response to the many societal and ecological challenges that organizations are facing. Social innovation is often associated with spirituality in organizations but the relationship between the two has hardly been studied.

In the first two decades of the 21st century organizations are right in the middle of the process of reinventing themselves. Corporate social responsibility, transparency, triple-P bottom line, green marketing, corporate citizenship, sustainability, fair trade, circular economy, an ongoing internet revolution and shifting global economic power; these are just a few examples of the trends and issues that organizations are trying to integrate into their policies and operations. Some companies are true pioneers and initiate changes and innovations that other companies, customers and even

governments cannot ignore. An example of such a 'trailblazer' or 'innovator' (Porrit & Tuppen, 2003, pp.16-17) is Solidaridad. In the 1980s this Dutch development organization pioneered the fair trade products and certification systems that have now become commonplace.

All these innovative efforts have been triggered by a complex of interwoven crises and wicked problems (Kievit, 2011, p.25) that has emerged over a period of roughly the last fifty years, e.g.: the ecological crisis, an energy crisis, global poverty, malfunctioning financial markets, violation of human rights due to corporate activity, and economic instability and inequality.

Social innovation is one of the labels that has been given to a variety of answers to these crises. Some authors suggest that socially innovative initiatives can play an important 'catalytic role' (Martin, 2013, p. 5) in driving and pushing forward the transformations that our societies are involved in. We will explore social innovation more in depth in chapter 2.

There is another message to be heard in the business community that is related to the self-reinvention of organizations. Business paradigms, which are mainly focused on economic rationality, may not be suited for showing us the way out of the contemporary problems that we are facing. Many business leaders and management scholars advocate (radically) new business approaches that show the way toward a broader, critical scope and a heightened sensitivity to issues of ethics, meaning and purpose. One example: Gunning, CEO of TNT Express, recognizes that we need a new culture and new values that includes 'physical, intellectual, social and spiritual value creation' (Gunning, 2011, p.4). According to Gunning we need to *'listen to the inner voice we all have. The center of our compass is our inner voice, Who am I? What is my mission? What is my purpose on earth and what legacy do I want to leave behind on this earth?'* (Gunning, 2011, p.5).

A new field has emerged over the last twenty years that roughly covers and thematises these issues: spirituality in organizations. Its presumption is that we need spirituality in organizations if we want to solve the wicked problems that we are entangled in. Several authors suggest that spirituality in organizations can play or actually plays this role. According to Giacalone and Jurkiewizc the growing interest in spirituality in organizations reflects a global change in worldview and values towards a more post-materialist

attitude (Giacalone & Jurkiewizc, 2010, p.14). Lips-Wiersma and Nilakant (2008) suggest that spirituality in organizations can offer an important alternative to the shortcomings of the neoliberal influences on organizational practice. Kunneman, when elaborating on the two knowledge modes that originate from Gibbons and Nowotowny, introduces a third knowledge mode that focuses on 'existential and moral learning processes' concerning the configuration of post-industrial society and organizations (Kunneman, 2005, p.118). Badrinarayanan and Madhavaram (2008) list a number of reasons that may explain the increasing interest in spirituality in organizations. One of the reasons that they adduce is the necessity of creativity as a competitive edge, which only thrives in an environment in which meaning, spirituality and purpose have their place.

These examples demonstrate that spirituality is regarded as a new perspective that we need for social innovation. Although social innovation and spirituality are often associated with each other, the relationship between the two has received only little academic attention, especially empirical attention. Therefore it would be interesting to see if we can develop a spiritual perspective of social innovation because the two are being associated with each other.

1.3.   Consideration 2: The conception of spirituality in organizations as a pluralistic category

In various academic disciplines scholars try to understand spirituality as a universal, generic category (Hense, 2014, p.3). Many authors have already tried to grasp spirituality in organizations with a single definition that encompasses all manifestations of spirituality in organizations and that is generally accepted. This endeavor can be found throughout the literature on spirituality in organizations. A few examples: Gotsis and Cortezi (2008, p.582) regret a 'particularistic approach' and plead for *a more inclusive approach to workplace spirituality, which will embrace the most universally held aspects of the concept'* (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2008, p.583). Although

Biberman thinks of spirituality in organizations as a multi-faceted and multi-level phenomenon; according to him each religious tradition produces its own spiritual experience but *'each is a deeper, broader experience of or toward a Transcendent universality of higher reality.'* (Biberman, 2008, p. 3).

A somewhat different strategy is adopted by Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2010). They want to keep spirituality in organizations away from religious and denominational theological debate and evangelizing and want to safeguard its universalistic character by making it an objective and scientifically sound part of organizational life. A clear choice for an a-religious, scientized spirituality must warrant this, according to Giacalone and Jurkiewicz.

Hense clearly states that *'there is no such thing as generic spirituality. Instead spiritualities must be investigated separately, form by form.'* (Hense, 2014, p. 3). Within this line of thinking we can discern two approaches. The first one is phrased by Waaijman and focuses on schools of spirituality (Waaijman, 2002). His research cycle (Waaijman, 2002, pp. 595-596) draws our attention to this basic issue in spirituality research. There is a rich and wide variety of spiritual traditions, forms and practices and each spirituality has its own distinctive character with regard to its underlying philosophy, worldview, practices, values et cetera. It does not make a lot of sense to study spirituality in general because of the wide variety of schools of spirituality. Vroom confirms this view by stating that we should not relativize differences and controversies between various religious traditions too easily and should not equate different ideas of the divine from diverse religions (Vroom, 2006, p. 39). Vroom narrows the concept of school of spirituality down a bit more. When investigating a school of spirituality one often studies a specific representative of a school of spirituality (Vroom, 2006, p. 280), e.g.: an influential theologian or the founder of a school. So if we are to investigate spirituality in organizations on the level of schools of spirituality, we can make deliberate choices as to a specific school that we will use in our research.

The second approach goes beyond schools of spirituality as a point of departure for research. It has been developed by various authors, e.g.: McGuire (2008), Van den Hoogen (2011) and Hense (2011) and has been

labeled as 'lived spirituality' or 'lived religion'. This line of research has three main tendencies (Van den Hoogen, 2011, p. 22):

1. people can and should decide for themselves what to believe and how to believe, think and experience
2. people themselves can make sense of rituals, symbols and what they pass through; lived spirituality does not accept any pre-given logic for that
3. lived spirituality focuses on the ever-changing communicative practices that are fragmentary and complex and do not have a coherent pattern that totalizes them.

The problematic nature of generic spirituality and the emergence of alternative, more sophisticated research concepts such as 'schools of spirituality' and 'lived spirituality' should make us aware of the necessity to make clear choices with regard to the level on which we study spirituality. I refer to section 1.6 for how I have dealt with that in this study.

1.4. Consideration 3: The potential of systematic, in-depth attention to experiences of transcendence

Hense, Jespers and Nissen (2014, p. 222) note that 'experiencing the transcendent or ultimate reality' is a typical element of spirituality. Nevertheless this aspect receives little systematic, in-depth attention in research into spirituality in organizations. The element of experiencing the transcendent is mentioned in many studies of spirituality in organizations. Table 1 lists a few examples of how the transcendent is articulated or thematised.

Jurkiewicz & Giacalone	'… a personal connection to the content and process of work, and to the stakeholders impacted by it, in a manner which extends beyond the limitations of self-interest' (2004, p.129) … 'in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy.' (2004, p. 129)
Gotsis & Cortezi	'… an experience of transcendence, interconnectedness, personal completeness and joy…' (2008, p. 579) 'a sense of transcendence, or vocation through one's work… experiencing completeness, fulfillment and self-actualisation in their work.' (2008, p. 587) '… a higher degree of ethical sensitivity and commitment as well as… increased joy, compassion, serenity and meaningfulness.' (2008, p. 587) '… eudemonia… defined as the end of contemplative life, of *otium (vios theoreticos)* experienced amidst the bonds of friendship.' (2008, p. 593)
Vasconcelos	utterly expressing one's 'inner strengths' (2010, p. 607)
Poole	'the felt experience of … increased commitment and discretionary effort' (2009, p. 587)
Karakas	'… a sense of community and connectedness…' (2010, p. 96)
Smith	'…feelings of well-being, connection, and temporal and spatial distortion' (2010, p. 3). '… a perceived absence of time, space and body, pleasant feeling of wonder, awe and engagement, and can be accompanied by a sense of selflessness, timelessness and unity with the environment.' (2010, p. 9)

Table 1: Examples of how transcendence is being articulated or thematised in research into spirituality in organizations.

Table 1 shows that the extent to which the transcendent is articulated, thematised and empirically grounded is often limited. The same limitations apply to scientific constructs and empirical measurements of spirituality that are used in general spirituality research. Farias and Hense (2008) are critical of them because they often define spirituality as a universal experience and tend to focus on unusual states of mind that are not necessarily 'spiritual' or show an impoverished understanding of spirituality.

If we compare these articulations of experiences of transcendence with the variety of views of transcendence that, for example, the philosophy of religion brings forward, we can see that there are opportunities to improve and enrich this aspect of spirituality in organizations. Other disciplines, such as the philosophy of religion, may help research into spirituality in organizations to disclose experiences of transcendence in more variety and depth.

Vroom (2006) suggests that there are at least three views of transcendence[2]: the a-cosmic view, the cosmic view and the theistic view. Each view of transcendence is characterized by the accents it places on the various limit experiences that people have (Vroom, 2006, p. 118). The views of transcendence can be traced back to the various (world) religions and their respective schools of spirituality. According to Vroom they have their own distinct approach to transcendence and they are fundamentally different from each other (Vroom, 2006, p. 241). The three views of transcendence should not be treated as absolute, objective concepts. There is a wide variety of ideas and practices within each view, there are crossover influences and individuals appropriate these concepts and practice them within their own lived spirituality according to their own interpretation (Vroom, 2006, chapter 10).

Maas regrets the tendency of spirituality in organizations to avoid actually naming an ultimate perspective (Maas, 2006, p. 15), e.g.: 'God' or 'relationship with the divine'. Eventually this refrainment decreases the potential for integration of dimensions of existence, e.g.: ethics and

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[2] Vroom recognizes that there are other views of transcendence than the three that he discusses, e.g.: African traditional religions and the native traditions of South and North America and Australia: 'We cannot be acquainted with all movements in all traditions… I am painfully aware of these limitations…' (Vroom, 2006, p. 278).

spirituality. The ethical part for example is well underway in many companies. Many of them have a code of ethics for example, their mission statements speak of company values and their employees attend ethical training sessions. However all these things miss a 'greater perspective' (Maas, 2006, p. 21) that encourages people to connect the ethical component with existential experiences that they have at work. Only then can organizational practice become raw material for organizational spirituality, according to Maas. This greater perspective may be provided by a religious or spiritual tradition. Introducing such a perspective in a company is understandably a delicate matter and it is tempting to turn a blind eye to it. Luckmann refers to this tendency, which manifests itself in modern religious consciousness, as the 'radically shrunken span of transcendence' (Luckmann, 1990, p. 135) in which experiences of 'great transcendence' are getting less and less attention in favor of experiences of transcendence that belong to and refer to everyday reality (Luckmann, 1990).

The challenging task of explicating and empirically grounding experiences of transcendence lies ahead of research into spirituality in organizations. Not many researchers have already taken on this task. Instead, research into spirituality tends to focus on the utility of spirituality in organizations (the utility approach[3]) or it tries to develop a non-transcendent concept of spirituality[4].

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[3] Giacalone and Jurkiewicz phrase the aim of the utility approach clearly: *'Researchers must effectively demonstrate the utility of spirituality in the workplace by framing it as a question of value-added: How does spirituality help us to undertake work processes more effectively?'* (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010, p. 9). According to this view spirituality is a means for improving job satisfaction, innovation, personal effectiveness, teamwork, productivity and the like. Therefore a lot of work in the field of business spirituality is quantitative in nature (Fiornicari as cited in Benefiel, 2006, p. 3). Giacalone and Jurkiewicz list some of the direct or indirect effects spirituality may have: job involvement, organizational identification, satisfaction, economic gains and increased performance (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010, pp. 9-10).

[4] Gialacone and Jurkiewicz (2010) would like to see spirituality become an objective and scientifically sound part of organizational life by developing a non-religious, scientized spirituality. According to Giacalone and Jurkiewicz research into business spirituality needs to separate spirituality from religious or faith-based doctrines and focus on the scientific investigation of effects of spirituality (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010, p. 4). At the heart of this stance is their conviction that 'the rigors of proof necessary for scientific inquiry do not

1.5. Consideration 4: Additional understanding of the transcendent in our experiences

This chapter started with the experience that Ray Anderson had in 1994 when he was CEO of Interface. In a number of ways it is a typical experience of the transcendent: it happens unexpectedly and the experience is dramatic and intense. Meijer (1988, p. 14) calls this the antithetical or peripetian nature of experiences of the transcendent. There are three other modes that help us to gain an additional understanding of the disclosure of the transcendent in our experiences:

1. a nuanced view of the intensity of experiences of the transcendent
2. ex post disclosure of the transcendent in an experience
3. experiences of the transcendent as a part of a trajectory of personal development

These modes may help us expand our understanding of how we can explore and articulate how people experience the transcendent in work-related situations and how people may benefit from that.

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apply' (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010, p. 4) to religious doctrine based on faith. Other authors seem to follow this course by developing concepts of spirituality that contain almost no reference to transcendence or religiosity. De Jongh for example defines spirituality in organizations as *'a way of proceeding with decision making in organizations from within, which is characterized as an on-going activity of integrating the different elements into the process of decision-making'* (De Jongh, 2011, p. 213), thus creating an opportunity for emotions, fears, desires et cetera to play a role in decision making. Notice that there is no religious connotation in this definition of business spirituality. Giacalone and Jurkiewicz themselves are doing something similar in their list of 'Interdisciplinary links to Workplace Spirituality' (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010, p. 17). There is no mention of anything that might suggest that workplace spirituality has a link with the transcendent, religion or schools of spirituality. Pava endorses the non-transcendental strategy and fuels the debate: '*Spiritual organizations that attempt to tap into the supernatural realm, far from being the solution to the problem, are a contributing factor. If one feels as if she is bouncing back and forth from one world to another, from the secular tot the holy, that is what she really is, at least according to Mitroff and Denton's definition of spirituality'* (Pava, 2003 p. 394). '*... to make business more spiritual we must make business more humane.'* (Pava, 2003, p. 399).

1.5.1.   A nuanced view of the intensity of experiences of the transcendent
Spiritual experiences do not necessarily have to be intense or even ecstatic. Smith suggests that spiritual experiences can range from relatively mild engagement to transcendental bliss, or from transient to permanent states of awareness (Smith, 2008, p. 9). Furthermore he suggests that conditions in the workplace may facilitate weaker forms of spiritual experience. Smith does not distinguish between a 'spiritual experience' and an 'experience of transcendence' and the two do not necessarily coincide completely. Nevertheless, Smith's work teaches us that an experience of the transcendent can differ in intensity in the same way as spiritual experiences do. This is confirmed by other authors: for example, in a study of mysticism in the poetry of Dutch poet Vasalis, Meijer mentions 'approaching partial experiences' of mysticism in Vasalis' poetry (Meijer, 1988, p. 25) as part of a continuum. Strictly mystical poems are on one end of the continuum and poems that are only loosely connected to the 'mystical complex' (Meijer, 1988, p. 25), are situated on the other end of the continuum. Poems that express partial experiences of mysticism are situated somewhere between the two ends of the continuum. We find a similar notion in a longitudinal study of spiritual development by Wink and Dillon: *'... only a few of our participants exhibited the type of involvement and experiences that are characteristic of higher stages of spiritual development.'* (2002, p. 92). With most participants only 'low levels' (Wink & Dillon, 2002, p. 92) of spirituality were found. So an experience of the transcendent has a dimension that concerns the intensity of the experience that ranges from 'absent' to 'mild', 'low level' or 'partial' to 'intense'.

1.5.2.   Ex post disclosure of the transcendent in an experience
Empirical phenomenology has brought us the general notion that we can deal with our experiences in a hermeneutic way. Our experiences are full of latent content and meaning that we are not aware of. This surplus can be brought to the fore in a process of disclosure and conscious exploration that takes place after the actual experience (Andringa, Heussèr, & Maso, 2004, p. 15). Similar notions can be found in approaches to spirituality that are oriented to its experiential aspects. Hense for example refers to the constructivist approach to spirituality: 'experiences of the inexpressible'

(Hense, 2011, p. 7) are a cultural construction and they are created before, during and after the experience. Waaijman has a comparable notion that explicates the ex post aspect of experiencing the transcendent. He describes spiritual formation ('mystagogy') as an entrance into the Secret through a process of clarification. It is the cognitive-reflective appropriation of biographical experiences one has gone through (Waaijman, 2002, pp. 586-587).

De Jong - van Campen (2009) uses a similar approach to spiritual formation by stating that reality is being created and realized in the faith stories that people tell. At the same time these stories shape the way in which we experience reality. By participating in those stories and in the accompanying spiritual practices we disclose the reality of our lives and existence (De Jong – van Campen, 2009, p. 36). In line with De Jong – van Campen Smith suggests that ritual behaviours and experiences *'transpire within a network of personal beliefs and contextual values which influence how they are interpreted. In turn, the interpretations feed back into and influence an individual's belief systems.'* (Smith, 2008, p. 18).

In an early publication Ramsey (1957) points to the evocative nature of 'odd' religious language. It may help us to see things (retrospectively) in a different light and disclose new meaning, e.g.: depth, unity, [a] new dimension (Ramsey, 1957, p. 24).

Verkerk (2014) also recognizes that the surplus in our experiences at work can be disclosed[5] ex post. He proposes the practice model as a

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[5] The very idea of 'disclosure' is a key concept in Dooyeweerd's theory of aspects, also known as the theory of modalities. I have come to appreciate Dooyeweerd's theory as a valuable insight into what integrality of organizations may mean. Dooyeweerd proposes fifteen aspects (Kalsbeek, 1975, p. 100) that make up and enable our existence: 1. Quantitative aspect: amount; 2. Spatial aspect: continuous extension; 3. Kinematic aspect: flowing movement; 4. Physical aspect: energy, matter; 5. Biotic/Organic aspect: life functions, self-maintenance; 6. Sensitive/Psychic aspect: feeling and response; 7. Analytical aspect: distinction, conceptualization; 8. Formative aspect: formative power, achievement, technology, technique; 9. Lingual aspect: symbolic communication; 10. Social aspect: social interaction; 11. Economic aspect: frugal use of resources; 12. Aesthetic aspect: harmony, surprise, fun: 13. Juridical aspect: due (rights, responsibility); 14. Ethical aspect: self-giving love; 15. Pistic aspect: faith, vision, commitment, belief.
The theory of aspects discerns aspects in terms of 'preceding/earlier' and 'following/later'. This follows from the idea that 'later' aspects are founded by 'earlier' aspects. For example: there is no psychic aspect without the preceding biotic/organic aspect. On the other hand

philosophically-based framework to 'disclose the richness of spirituality at work' (Verkerk, 2014, p. 76) in various organizational contexts on an individual and a collective level by means of in-depth (auto-)ethnographic research.

We conclude that various authors recognize that our experiences do not have fixed content or meaning that is established at the moment of the experience itself. They transpire in a process of exploration and interpretation, which stretches beyond the moment of the experience itself. This notion, combined with the previous notion of the intensity of experiences of the transcendent, is interesting for this study because it may enable us to look for traces of the transcendent in specific work-related experiences that people have already gone through. It might be worthwhile, for example, to see if a mild spiritual experience can be explored and deepened with the help of phenomenological research so that a mild experience of the transcendent becomes more vivid and articulated.

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later aspects give meaning to preceding aspects. They normatively determine how earlier aspects should function and thereby disclose the purpose or meaning of earlier aspects. Verkerk has applied the theory of aspects to the field of business administration: *'The analysis of Dooyeweerd implies that the integral design and integral development of an industrial organization has to cover all dimensions (aspects). What is more, that the ignorance of one or more dimensions will have a negative influence on the performance of the organization.'* (Verkerk, 2004, p. 415). Verkerk illustrates this with the design and functioning of a production line. From the number of machines (quantitative aspect), ergonomic standards (biotic/organic aspect), authorization of employees (juridical aspect) up to mutual trust between stakeholders (pistic); all aspects are present in the organization and 'have to be designed and developed in close connection' (Verkerk, 2004, p. 421).
'It is very tempting to reduce multidimensional reality to one or two dimensions', (Verkerk, 2004, p. 420) Verkerk warns and management science has done just that by devoting a lot of energy to economic and technical aspects of organizations. A truly integrally developed and functioning organization *'implies a full opening or complete disclosure of the earlier dimensions by the later dimensions'* (Verkerk, 2004, p. 421) but the later dimensions must respect the logic or nature of the earlier aspects. Eventually morality and spirituality, being the latest two aspects in the theory of aspects, open up and deepen all preceding aspects. It is striking and challenging for this study that Dooyeweerd and Verkerk agrees with him, positioning the pistic (faith and/or spirituality) as the latest aspect. This may coincide with a generally sensed intuition that our management paradigms need something more, something 'higher' or 'deeper', that takes them to a higher level or in a new and better direction. In Dooyeweerd's view spirituality may be the aspect that helps to give all other preceding aspects in organizations additional purpose, meaning, direction and fulfilment.

1.5.3. Experiences of the transcendent as part of a trajectory of personal development

An experience of the transcendent can be an isolated experience. If such an experience only loosely influences one's attitudes, personal development and worldview, it is literally 'isolated'. Buijs calls such an experience an 'erratic boulder' (Buijs, 1999, p. 228). However, an experience of the transcendent can also be part of a process of personal development if it does influence one's view of life, spirituality and attitudes. De Jong - van Campen gives an example of such a developmental perspective by introducing the three layers of mystagogy (De Jong - van Campen, p. 112). This developmental perspective explicates a specific Christian trajectory of spiritual development: from sensitivity for the mystery of existence to a renewed, inspired commitment to other people. In somewhat more general terms Waaijman emphasizes the transformative potential of disclosing spirituality (Waaijman, 2002, pp. 561-562) because of the dialogical relationship between man and God (Waaijman, 2002, pp. 548-549). God and man mutually interact; they 'interlock'. The divine pole of this relationship cannot be defined objectively. It appears in the relationship 'in accordance with the phase in which the process find itself' (Waaijman, 2002, p, 365). This developing relationship exteriorizes in the material world and in all layers of existence, for example in new habits, cultural expression, knowledge and rituals that mediates man to God (Waaijman, 2002, p. 365).

The meditative practice of working on koans (Low & Purser, 2012) is another example that connects various experiences of the transcendent into a trajectory of personal development. Koans are a *'teaching device to explore life's deepest existential questions'* (Low & Purser, 2012, p. 343) from Chinese Ch'an Buddhism. A koan is a dilemma that a master gives to his student. 'Solving' the koan requires developing another state of mind and awareness. In working on the koan one progresses through a number of phases. First of all, one must enter a state of contemplation to focus one's mental and physical resources on working on the koan (Low & Purser, 2012, p. 342). Koan students must learn to accept the limitations of rational thought, words and speech. They must get acquainted with the logic of ambiguity (Low & Purser, 2012, p. 340). The paradoxality of the koan

brings about a 'doubt sensation' (Low & Purser, 2012, p. 344). By immersing oneself in this intense experience of doubt, leaving behind the illusions of rationality and duality, one may fully awaken to the underlying unity of reality (Low & Purser, 2012, p. 344). Then, in an extraordinary leap of intuition, the impossible koan is suddenly resolved (Low & Purser, 2012, p. 347); '*a turning about in the deepest seat of consciousness*' (Low & Purser, 2012, p. 348). This leap is followed by an experience of relief, retrospective astonishment and liberation of habitual thoughts (Low & Purser, 2012, p. 348). The phases of meditative working on a single koan reveal a small-scale trajectory of spiritual development in itself. Repeatedly working on koans also offers a developmental trajectory on a scale that transcends working on single koans, in which students can develop an aware, free, wise and compassionate mind (Low & Purser, 2012, p. 343).

So an experience of the transcendent can be an isolated encounter and it can be part of a path of personal development. Then experiences become interconnected and earlier experiences pave the way for later experiences and become an engaged part of a process of personal development.

1.6.   Goal, problem statement and research questions

1.6.1.   Challenges in the field of social innovation and spirituality in organizations

In the previous sections I have discussed the four considerations that have shaped this study:

1. the association of social innovation and spirituality in organizations
2. the conception of spirituality in organizations as a pluralistic category
3. the potential of systematic, in-depth attention to experiences of the transcendent in research into spirituality in organizations
4. additional understanding of the transcendent in our experiences.

We can draw four conclusions from the discussion of these issues. First of all, it would be interesting to develop a spiritual perspective of social

innovation because the two are being associated with each other. However, the relationship between social innovation and spirituality in organizations has not received a lot of academic attention, especially not empirical attention.

How such a perspective of social innovation can be developed brings us to the second conclusion. The notion that spirituality is not a generic phenomenon is fundamental. When doing empirical research into the spirituality of people in a specific organizational context, it is important to realize that one first of all examines the lived spirituality of people. From a pragmatic point of view one may mark out lived spirituality to some degree by taking a list of typical elements of spirituality, such as the one by Hense, Jespers and Nissen (2014) as a starting point. Additionally, the perspective of one or more schools of spirituality might help to interpret the empirical data in such a way that it sheds new light on the lived spirituality of the people involved. Allowing such an interplay between lived spirituality and schools of spirituality means that the end product of an exploration of a spiritual perspective of social innovation probably will be located somewhere on a continuum with 'lived spirituality' on the one side and 'school(s) of spirituality' on the other.

In the third place, the challenging task of explicating and empirically grounding experiences of the transcendent lies ahead of research into spirituality in organizations. If we take on that challenge in this study, we will have to pay attention to experiences of the transcendent that people in the field of social innovation have, or to experiences in which the transcendent can be disclosed. It will be challenging to identify them and to articulate them because they cannot be traced and expressed objectively. We might need one or more schools of spirituality to assist us in identifying and articulating the experiences that people in the field of social innovation have. This function of a school of spirituality will probably only work if there is a close correspondence between the school of spirituality involved and the actions, emotions, experiences and the life-world of people in the context of social innovation.

Finally, if we study spirituality in organizations we can work with actual, present experiences of the transcendent and with experiences from the past. Those experiences may be or may become an engaged part of a process of

personal development. If we succeed in configuring research methods from empirical phenomenology into a method for spiritual formation we might be able to stimulate the personal development of people who work in the field of social innovation. Methodical formation is especially interesting if socially innovative people benefit from such development.

1.6.2.   *Goal, problem statement and research questions*

In conclusion: the relationships between social innovation, spirituality in organizations, lived spirituality, experiences of the transcendent, schools of spirituality and personal development are dynamic and seem to be intertwined with each other. That sets the agenda for this study.

<u>The goal of this study</u> is to explore the different levels and aspects of spirituality in the field of social innovation, to set them into relationships with each other and in so doing make a contribution to the area of spirituality in organizations as a sub-discipline of spirituality research and management science.

<u>This study addresses the following problem statement.</u> The relationship between social innovation and spirituality has received only little academic (empirical) attention. Research on spirituality in organizations has paid little attention to experiences of the transcendent. Therefore this study will try to answer four research questions:

1. Can a spiritual perspective of social innovation be developed that integrates experiences of the transcendent? Does this perspective have any hiatuses when it is compared to typical elements of spirituality?

2. Does answering research question 1 provide input for selecting a school of spirituality that 1) may help to (further) disclose and articulate experiences of the transcendent in the practice of social innovation; and 2) has the potential to provide input for the development of a prototype of a method for spiritual formation of people who work in the context of social innovation?

3. Can a prototype of a method for spiritual formation of people, who work in the context of social innovation, be developed which is based on the school of spirituality that has been identified in the previous research question?

4. What can we learn from the spiritual perspective of social innovation and the prototype of the method for spiritual formation with regards to the relationships between the key concepts of this study: social innovation, spirituality in organizations, lived spirituality, experiences of the transcendent, schools of spirituality and personal development?

The first research question concerns the spiritual perspective of social innovation. In chapter 2 of this study we will develop a spiritual perspective of social innovation that integrates experiences of the transcendent. Developing such a perspective requires an empirical approach in a largely unexplored territory. Therefore a grounded theory approach with a continuous interplay between theory, empirical observations and analysis has been used to systematically develop a model of a phenomenon that cannot be easily objectified because of its experiential nature.

In chapter 3 this study will try to identify a school of spirituality that may help us to develop a protoype of a method for spiritual formation of people in socially innovative organizations. Because various theoretical concepts will be used in the development of the spiritual perspective of social innovation, it may be sensible to see if this theoretical input helps to identify a suitable school of spirituality. Once such a school is identified, it needs to be explored in a systematic way so that it can be determined if it helps us to disclose and explicate experiences of the transcendent in the practice of social innovation and if it has the potential to provide input for the development of the prototype of a method for spiritual formation. This exploration will be done according to Waaijman's methodological design for spirituality research.

Subsequently in chapter 4 this study will try to develop a prototype of a method for spiritual formation of people, who work in the context of social innovation, based on the school of spirituality that has been identified in the previous step. The prototype of such a method intentionally aims at the relationship and interplay between a specific school of spirituality, experiences of the transcendent, and the lived spirituality and personal development of people who work in the context of social innovation. This part of the study requires a methodology that is specifically suited for the systematic development of methods. Design oriented scientific research

provides a methodology to arrive at a well-understood, transparent and tested prototype of a method for spiritual formation that is based on a specific school of spirituality and which is applicable in a specific context under specific conditions.

Finally, this study will reflect in chapter 5 on what we can learn from the spiritual perspective of social innovation and the method for spiritual formation with regard to the relationships between the key concepts in this study: social innovation, spirituality in organizations, lived spirituality, experiences of the transcendent, schools of spirituality and personal development.

1.7.   Considerations of the character of this study

A part of this study has a developmental (programmatic) agenda and for the sake of this agenda it will choose to work with a specific school of spirituality, as we will learn later in this study. This may give rise to a number of critical questions beforehand, for example: does this study not become biased by choosing to work with a specific school of spirituality?

I will account for these issues in this section by explaining the pluralistic mindset of this study and argue that the concept of lived spirituality prevents the dominance of a narrowed down concept of spirituality in spirituality research.

1.7.1.   Explorative, analytical and developmental research into spirituality
A part of this study has an explicit developmental agenda: the part in which we try to develop a prototype of a method for spiritual formation. In the domain of spirituality research this is not as self-evident as it is in other disciplines. Research approaches such as 'lived spirituality' have a more explorative and/or analytical focus. Their aim is to study spirituality in all its dimensions, varieties and (hidden) manifestations without relying too much on for example (religiously inspired) definitions of the transcendent and (religiously inspired) spiritual objectives that may narrow down the field of

spirituality. Nissen poses the 'lived spirituality' approach opposed to the 'normative-programmatic' (Nissen, 2012, p. 2) approach to spirituality.

Various authors recognize a more programmatic approach that goes beyond a mere explorative and analytical focus. Waaijman discerns an inside perspective and an outside perspective within spirituality research (Waaijman, 2002, p. 368). The outer perspective chooses a more distant, analytical perspective on spirituality with the help of various academic disciplines. The inner perspective starts from within a specific spirituality with the objective to edify. The spiritual guidance practices (within the current forms of the Christian tradition) that Hense is referring to (Hense, 2014, p. 53) can be considered as an example of Waaijman's inside perspective. De Jong - van Campen's study is an example of a programmatic approach to spirituality research. She has studied Christian mystagogy so that in follow up research projects the effectiveness of intentional mystagogic praxis can be studied and improved (De Jong - van Campen, 2009, p. 32).

Within the area of spirituality in organizations Poole chooses a programmatic course by calling for a discussion on how to create organizational climates that stimulate *'holistic flourishing, whether or not this is called "organizational spirituality".'* (Poole, 2009, p. 587). In line with Poole Smith (2008, p. 11) encourages neurological research into spirituality because it may provide organizations with *'information about how to cultivate a spiritual, or at least a more rewarding, environment for employees.'* Although Hense may be considered an advocate of the lived spirituality approach, a gentle echo of the programmatic point of view can be heard in her plea for a focus in spirituality research on *'encouraging people to follow their intuitions of fullness of life and thereby aim for more justice, compassion, creativity, authenticity, care et cetera in our global world.'* (Hense, 2014, p. 57).

1.7.2. A pluralistic mindset

One might say that, in terms of Waaijman's inside and outside perspective, if this study takes on the developmental agenda it will choose the inner perspective, but it will do so with a pluralistic mindset. It will take position within a specific school of spirituality that can serve as a basis for a method

for spiritual formation of people in the context of social innovation. It will take this position without defending this school as the only true spiritual tradition, without promoting it per se and without carrying out an agenda that may be attached to this school of spirituality. So in Nissen's terms of 'programmatic-normative' (Nissen, 2012, p. 2) this study is programmatic in the sense that it tries to see if people in a specific organizational context can develop themselves according to a specific spirituality. However, this study is not normative because it does not attempt to narrow down spiritual development to the school of spirituality that it uses for this purpose. Spirituality is a broader concept than (1) the specific school of spirituality that will be used in this study and (2) the lived spirituality of people in the domain of social innovation.

1.7.3.   *Lived spirituality in a pluralistic world*

In spirituality research a school of spirituality should not be used as a model or a method to impose a predefined, supra-natural reality on others. It may serve as an interpretive guide to discover an 'arcanum' (Van den Hoogen & Dane, 2010, p. 236) in everyday (organizational) reality. This perspective on spirituality is more and more important as we are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that someone's lived spirituality may be quite different from an 'official' religion, spirituality or theology. A school of spirituality does not simply and completely determine how individuals engage in their religion or spirituality in their everyday lives, *'nor is each individual's biographical narrative simply a microcosm of the grand narrative of "official" religion.'* (McGuire, 2008, p. 12) Spirituality research is becoming more and more interested in spirituality or 'religion-as-lived' (McGuire, 2008, p. 15) (Van den Hoogen, 2011), e.g. *'bodily and material practices that express and constitute people's spirituality'* (Nissen, 2014, p. 67), as opposed to a narrowed down, elitist view of spirituality (Nissen, 2014, p. 66) or a denominational view of spirituality.

A school of spirituality may provide a useful perspective that highlights or articulates its own accents of one or more of the limit experiences (Vroom, 2006, p. 118) in the everyday lives of people, for example in their work-related context. A school of spirituality may also provide a developmental perspective that may be valuable in a specific context of everyday life. If we

use a school of spirituality in that way, e.g. as an interpretive and developmental guide, it can serve us to study, articulate and develop lived spirituality. Then it can become a useful instrument with which we can experiment instead of an end that needs to be served.

Moreover, the concept of 'lived religion' and 'lived spirituality' should reduce our fear of manipulating people when exposing them to a specific spirituality in a methodical, experimental way. The idea of 'lived spirituality' shows that our spirituality is not determined by the 'master category' (McGuire, 2008, p. 186) of one official spirituality, world view or religion. Our worldview is a complicated and ever evolving, syncretic configuration of experiences, habits, attitudes and beliefs from various cultural, religious and biographical sources. So exposing people to a school of spirituality, with which they are familiar or not, is one of the many stimuli that people get in the ongoing development of their spiritual identity. It is not, cannot and should not be an attempt to replace one worldview or spirituality with another.

According to Vroom (2006) scientific disciplines such as spirituality research (in organizations) have a general task that is related to today's world. We live in a pluralistic world with many world views and in which pluralistic dialogue is 'an urgent task' (Vroom, 2006, p. 258): *'...acknowledgement of pluralism, of the necessity of a worldview, and of the impossibility of worldview neutrality require that the multitude of ideas become as visible and audible as possible and in that way becomes involved in a respectful and critical dialogue'.* 'People need training in lifestyle and spirituality' (Vroom, 2006, p. 230). If we want to achieve a sustainable world, Vroom says, we need an open dialogue between all worldviews (Vroom, 2006, p. 239). If we agree with him, we should not be afraid to actively and thoughtfully cultivate our spirituality and reach out to (new) schools of spirituality and to the lived spirituality of others in encounter, dialogue and exchange.

2. A spiritual perspective on social innovation

Summary

This chapter is dedicated to the first research question: the development of a spiritual perspective on social innovation. It is argued that a carefully considered and well-developed line of research within the grounded theory school is a well-suited approach for developing this perspective. Being focused on reconstructing, describing and interpreting the life-world of people and allowing for a continuous interplay between relevant theoretical concepts, empirical observations and analysis, this methodology is helpful in systematically developing an understanding of the lived spirituality of socially innovative people. Subsequently, drawing from a number of definitions of social innovation and from a comparison of social innovation and corporate social responsibility, 'social innovation' is defined. Based on this definition six socially innovative people have been selected to participate in this part of the study. Analysis of the interviews with these social innovators, combined with various theoretical concepts, reveals a spiritual perspective on social innovation. The actions and experiences of socially innovative people are full of experiences of connectedness, moral sensitivity, personal and work-related growth and development and experiences of loss and failure. A recurring pattern in them can be traced that puts them in a meaningful and coherent, logical whole.

If we compare the spiritual perspective on social innovation to typical elements of spirituality we find that all but one element are part of the spiritual perspective. Experiencing the transcendent is the only element that is almost absent from the perspective. It is argued that a well-chosen additional interpretive initiative, for example a school of spirituality, may help us to identify and to explore experiences of the transcendent in a better way and may also provide us with additional input that can be used for the development of a method for spiritual formation.

2.1.   Introduction

When Eric[6] takes over his father's company, the electro-technical construction company is in bad shape. One of the first things he has to do is to fire its fifteen employees: 'In those days you could literally say on Saturday: "You don't need to come on Monday anymore!". One could almost treat employees as day labourers.' But Eric seems to have the business touch and within five years he employs 160 people. 'That's when I said: "Now I quit, because I know what will happen. I will become a prisoner of my own method and my own company."' Being a company owner makes Eric feel as if he is an owner of people: 'To me it felt like slavery.' He starts asking himself questions about the fundamentals of management, power and leadership. These questions become more urgent when he has to introduce a worker's council in his company: 'I was very upset when I found out that there wasn't any real theory about the backgrounds of a worker's council. So I went to the union because I figured they might know a lot about it but I soon found out that they saw me as an employer. Well, that's fine, but why always fighting? Why always these conflicts?... I had a deep desire to do things differently.'
'So then I really locked myself up in the house of my parents-in-law. My mother-in-law gave me my food almost through a shutter. I sat there with only one question: what are we really talking about when we are running a company? What is really going on? If I go on in the usual way I will end up as a prisoner of my company. I don't want that: fighting with everybody, looking for orders and contracts, making profits… After fifteen days I discovered: "I don't know". One has to have the courage to admit that. Then I really felt: "If that is the case, I quit because this is useless". And literally at the moment that I started packing my bags the answer dawned on me: "It is a matter of steering! We don't know how to steer! It is not about sharing power or giving power away. It is a matter of steering. That's the answer!"' (Interview with S5, pp. 11-16)

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[6] 'Eric' is a fictitious name for a socially innovative pioneer who participated in this study.

This episode may be called the birth of a social innovation. Eric, who we will meet again in this chapter as 'S5', is a successful socially innovative pioneer. He developed a democratic model of organizing according to which his organization and other organizations are being run up to this day. It is interesting to see if we can disclose a spiritual perspective on this case and on similar cases of social innovation. Does spirituality play a role during the onset and implementation of this social innovation? And if so, in what way does it manifest itself in Eric's actions, in how he experiences what happens to him and in how he reacts to that? What values are at stake for Eric and what do they mean for him? What motivates Eric to develop his innovation? Are experiences of the transcendent or ultimate reality involved in the process? How important is the innovation for Eric? Has the innovation process influenced his personal development? It is these kinds of questions that have been articulated in research question 1 (section 1.6.2): *Can a spiritual perspective on social innovation be developed that integrates experiences of the transcendent? Does this perspective have any hiatuses when it is compared to typical elements of spirituality?*

I will present the answer to research question 1 in four steps:

1. the methodology that has been used for answering this research question (section 2.2)
2. a definition of social innovation and the cases of social innovation that have been used for this part of the study (section 2.3)
3. the presentation of the developed spiritual perspective on social innovation (section 2.4)
4. discussion of the spiritual perspective and the theoretical concepts that were used to develop the spiritual perspective, including the second part of the first research question: *Does this perspective have any hiatuses when it is compared to typical elements of spirituality?* (section 2.5).

2.2. Methodology

This part of this study requires an empirical approach in a territory that is largely unexplored and which focuses on a phenomenon that cannot be easily objectified because of its (partially) experiential nature. On the other hand there is a significant body of academic literature about spirituality that may help to develop the spiritual perspective we are looking for. The grounded theory approach is well suited for this research context because it focuses on reconstructing, describing and interpreting the life-world of people (Boeije, 2005, p. 32). At the same time it allows for a continuous interplay between theory, empirical observations and analysis and because of this one can systematically develop an understanding of a phenomenon.

Grounded theory was originally conceived by Glaser and Strauss in 1960s and has been developed into a sophisticated school of research with various streams. I will follow the version that has been developed by Boeije (2005), complemented with the views of Lofland, Snow, Anderson and Lofland (2006). Boeije points at the descriptive, explorative focus of grounded theory. It wants to explore, describe and, if possible, explain how people look at and experience (a part or an aspect of) their life-world: the emic perspective (Boeije, 2005, p. 33).

There is some debate about where or how grounded theory research should start. Should a researcher start with theory and then move on to the empirical phase, or should one start directly with the empirical phase without being affected by theories? Boeije (2005, p. 47) chooses the first approach. According to him it is scientifically efficient and sharp to turn to the academic literature first and subsequently to start collecting empirical data. However, Boeije stipulates the importance of keeping an open mind throughout the process (Boeije, 2005, p. 47). One can do so by bracketing the theoretical knowledge in the empirical phase or by limiting the functioning of the acquired theoretical concepts by transforming them into a tentative set of sensitizing concepts that will be used in the empirical phase. Lofland et al. (2006) confirm this approach: '*The reality of field studies involves, instead, a complex overlapping and interweaving of the three tasks… Gathering data; focusing data in terms of social science concepts,*

questions and issues; and analyzing data and writing them up.' (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 3),

First of all, for this study the (academic) literature about social innovation, spirituality, spirituality research and spirituality in organizations has been explored and studied, e.g.: Crielaard (2008), NCSI (2009), biographies of socially innovative pioneers (Anderson, 1998) (Semler, 1993), empirical phenomenology (Andringa, Heussèr & Maso, 2004), Giacalone and Jurkiewiczs (2003), management studies (Verkerk, 2004) (Hagemeijer, 2005), spirituality and work (Mertens & Blommestijn, 2009), Encyclical Laborem Excercens (Pope John Paul II, 1981), an anthroposophical view of organizations (Lievegoed, 1988), spirituality research (Waaijman, 2003), liberation theology (Fierro, 1977) (Sölle, 1983; 1998) (Gutiérrez, 1978), nature spirituality (Van den Born, 2007) (De Pater, 2006), Franciscan spirituality (Van den Goorbergh & Zweerman, 2002) and Benedictine spirituality (Derkse, 2000). This resulted in:

1. a definition of social innovation (section 2.3)
2. criteria for selecting socially innovative entrepreneurs that will participate in this part of the study (presented in this section) and a selection of socially innovative entrepreneurs (section 2.3)
3. a set of sensitizing concepts of spirituality in socially innovative organizations.

Subsequently the data collection started. When it comes to selecting cases that will be studied in the empirical phase of grounded theory research, one uses the procedure of purposive sampling (Boeije, 2005, p. 50). One does not strive for statistical representativeness but one intentionally tries to select cases based on characteristics of the population, e.g.: theoretical sampling. If one follows this procedure, one selects those cases that one expects to contribute most to the analysis.

During the phase of data collection six people from the field of social innovation participated. They have different (non-) religious backgrounds. An important criterion in selecting these cases is that their innovation must have been 'operational' up until the moment of the interview for at least ten years. This criterion can be considered as an indicator of success of the innovation. One may expect that cases of successful socially innovative

people contribute the most to the development of a spiritual perspective on social innovation. Studying these successful cases resembles the replication logic in which a theoretical framework is tested in a multiple-case study (Yin, 1984, p. 48). In such a study the cases are rare and/or hard to involve in a study. Therefore only a limited number of them (six to ten according to Yin (1984, p. 48)) can be used in the study's analysis. First of all, results are 'predicted' in a rich theoretical framework and subsequently the results from the analysis of the cases are compared to this framework. However, the procedure of analysis used in this study (constant comparison) is different as will be explained later in this section.

Interviews are an important and dominant instrument for collecting data in this line of research (Boeije, 2005, p. 22). The interviews are often semi-structured (Boeije, 2005, p. 57); the interview has been thoroughly prepared but in such a way that the researcher can be responsive to the interviewee and his responses. The researcher usually uses a topic list to monitor the full coverage of all topics that need to be discussed (Boeije, 2005, p. 58). Data from for example interviews are considered as raw data that need to be archived and prepared for analysis, e.g.: by means of transcription (Boeije, 2005, p. 60).

The six participants from this phase of the study have been interviewed. Before the interview the interviewees have been approached with a standardized research account. They have been informed about the research project in general terms (for example: 'spirit', 'innovation'). More explicit and sensitive terms (for example 'spirituality', 'religion' and 'liberation theology') were not used in order to avoid influencing the interviewees.

For each interview an interview guide (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 99) was prepared containing information from public sources (for example: biographies, books, company reports and newspapers) about the life story and the social innovation of the social innovator. The interview guide also contained a topic list that was derived from the set of sensitizing concepts that had been developed. The interviews were held over the course of 11 months. They can be characterized as unstructured, in-depth, intensive (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 99) and focused on 1) the actions of the innovators during the onset and the implementation of the innovation and on 2) how the innovator has experienced these events. The information from the interview

guide enabled the interviewer during the interview to focus more on specific episodes. No explicit questions were asked about religious backgrounds or habits. The length of the interviews ranged from two to three hours. The interviews were recorded and fully transcribed.

During the period of data collection the interviews were qualitatively analysed by means of constant comparison (Boeije, 2005, p. 75). This resulted in an ongoing process of open coding, axial coding, structuring and comparison with (academic) literature (Lofland, et al, 2006, p. 177). Coding is '… *the process of sorting your data into various categories that organize it and render it meaningful from the vantage point of one or more frameworks or set of ideas… whether those ideas emerge from the ground up or are extensions or refinements of existing theoretical frameworks.'* (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 200). When applying constant comparison one actually returns several times to the phase of open or axial coding and adds new data (the interviews with the socially innovative people or new theoretical insights) to the analysis one has already done. By including new interviews and new theoretical insights in the analysis new codes may emerge, the content of existing codes may change and some codes may disappear as a result of the new, additional data. The iterative, cyclic nature is an important characteristic of the grounded theory approach to research. Data collection and data analysis alternate in a process of confrontation and generation (Boeije, 2005, p. 74). Preliminary results are constantly complemented, corrected, nuanced, rebutted or confirmed in a process of analytical induction (Boeije, 2005, p. 74). New paths of inquiry that emerge during the process are explored and used and integrated or abandoned. In doing so I have followed Glaser's line of research in which relevant categories and their relationships emerge in the interaction between the research data and the researcher. Lofland et al. mention another reason for starting the analysis during the data-collection. It can serve as a strategy of managing the researcher's anxiety that may occur if one starts analysis only after all data has been collected (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 199). Then the volume of materials and information may be overwhelming and analysis may seem impossible.

It is typical for this kind of research that one cannot fully predict and plan the data collection and analysis beforehand (Boeije, 2005, p. 33). Working

in the 'real world' does require a degree of flexibility and adaptation. Unexpected, relevant events or findings may make it necessary or desirable to alter the course of data collection. Many of these decisions have to be made by the researcher during the execution of the research phase and not only prior to it. Constant comparison and theoretical selection go hand in hand with the aim of describing the variation of a phenomenon and articulating potential variants (Boeije, 2005, p. 75). It is the researcher's task to develop the best fitting structure for the research data (Boeije, 2005, p. 78). The brainpower, the power to combine and the creativity of the researcher are essential for this process (Boeije, 2005, p. 75). Part of this competence is theoretical sensitivity (Boeije, 2005, p. 80) of the researcher: the ability to interpret research data by looking at it through a specific theoretical lens and induce new ideas and insights. Lofland et al. confirm the role of the researcher in the analysis: *'Researchers are the central agents in the analysis process... It is not a process that can be farmed out to independent analysts nor, as we have noted and will note again, to computers and various software programs.'* (Lofland et al., 2006, pp. 195-196).

In chapter 1 it was noted that we probably need a carefully considered interpretive initiative to get a better understanding of the lived spirituality of socially innovative people. Spirituality is a 'social construction' that can only be accessed through already existing 'constructions' of spirituality. In practical terms this meant using a body of theoretical insights that intertwined with the empirical data that were collected throughout the phase of data collection and inductive analysis. These theoretical concepts helped to develop a fitting structure for the empirical data from the interviews. In this back-and-forth between theoretical concepts and empirical data a number of theoretical concepts proved to be both grounding and critical concepts for a spiritual perspective on social innovation: a number of elements from Sölle's liberation theology, the *via negativa*, certain notions that explicate the role of moral awareness in organizations and the practice model. These theoretical concepts are discussed in more detail in section 2.5.2.

In the process of analytical induction there is no objective, numerical or statistical standard for complementing, correcting, nuancing, rebutting or

confirming the model that one is working on; for example for removing an item from the model, relabeling an item or adding an item to the model. When making these kinds of decisions, the content of an item that emerges from the empirical data, for example, can be more decisive than the mere frequency with which a specific item recurs in the data. Analytical induction is an interpretive activity and not a statistical exercise.

Data collection can be finished if one reaches the point of saturation with regards to new data (Boeije, 2005, p. 52). This was the case with the six interviews with socially innovative people. In the analysis of the last interviews one could notice that they provided less and less new information about the spiritual perspective and this led to fewer and fewer changes in the analysis compared with the first interviews.

The end result of the analysis is a spiritual perspective on social innovation. It is presented and discussed in section 2.4. The spiritual perspective is represented as a three-phase model and each phase is described with a number of items. When developing these kinds of models one must be careful not to overload them with a large number of major elements, divisions and subdivisions. Conceptual 'overelaboration' (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 182) or 'analytic excess' (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 183) can be tempting, especially if a lot of data has been collected and/or if the collected data is very rich. There are no general rules for the design of conceptual schemes in grounded theory research. Lofland et al. mention a rule of thumb, which states that a conceptual scheme has two to five major elements and a similar number of subdivisions (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 182). Lofland et al. refer to another balance issue in (presenting the outcomes of) grounded theory research: the balance between a conceptual scheme and the presentation of data (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 183). In a balanced analysis, and its resulting conceptual scheme and report, there is a *'continuing and intimate alternation of data and analysis as text'* (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 184). This balance shows that there is a clear, meaningful and comprehensive relation between the data and the analysis.

Because the spiritual perspective on social innovation is the result of grounded theory research, it is important to keep in mind that it is not *'a final word'* but remains a *'tentative claim requiring searching examination'* (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 174).

2.3.   A definition of social innovation

The organizational context of this study is social innovation. As is the case with many concepts from management science, social innovation is not clearly defined. It tries to give an account of an awareness that organizations can and should serve multiple purposes. People team up to gain a livelihood, to accumulate wealth, to have a purpose in life, to engage in meaningful activities, to solve societal problems, et cetera. The concept of social innovation implies that organizations often are contributing to only a few of these purposes and consequently fail in others. Apparently we need to renew our ways of organizing in order to have our companies and institutions function less narrowly, less constrained and less harmfully. This renewal has to be initiated on purpose, has to be stimulated and has to be accelerated. In that sense social innovation is not social evolution.

The concept of social innovation also suggests that the desired change will not come from an area that has brought us already many revolutions: technology. If we want to cooperate more sustainably, more fairly, more meaningfully, the change will have to come from the social realm. Real improvements are to be achieved principally through, between and within people.

There may be another message in the concept of social innovation. There actually are places and practices where people purposefully have initiated changes that have enabled them to work together in a more humane, sustainable and valuable way.

Phills, Deilgmeier and Miller define social innovation as: '*a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals*' (Phills, Deilgmeier & Miller, 2008, p. 39). They argue for a focus on the innovation, which creates the value after all, according to the authors, rather than on the social

entrepreneur or the social enterprise that creates or delivers the innovation[7]. Many individuals (including the involved entrepreneurs and shareholders) benefit from numerous innovations that are developed and spread through market mechanisms. An innovation qualifies as a social innovation if the balance is tilted towards benefits for society or the public as a whole. Phills et al. emphasize that social innovation should benefit the public or society as a whole rather than individuals. Typical examples of social innovations are fair trade, microfinance, socially responsible investing and community centered planning (Phills et al., 2008, p. 40). In a similar way Verkerk confirms the focus on social and environmental objectives of social entrepreneurship and impact investing and the intention of those 'to generate social and environmental impact' (Verkerk, 2013, p. 210).

The approach of the Dutch Center for Social Innovation (NCSI, 2009) is somewhat different. It defines social innovation as *'renewal of the labour organization and labour relations resulting in improved performance of the organization and development of talents'* (NCSI, 2009). From this perspective social innovation emphasizes the human factor in innovation (being additional to technology). It articulates an awareness that many people from all levels of the organization and from outside the organization can and need to be actively involved in and committed to developing innovations. From this perspective social innovation creates a sense of community; we are doing this together, together we can become smarter, more social, more competitive, et cetera. According to the NCSI-definition social innovation serves various purposes, including societal (e.g.: vital labour markets, competitiveness of the business community), organizational (e.g.: productivity, speeding up innovation, employee engagement) and individuals benefits (e.g.: job satisfaction, work-life balance).

A more conceptual approach has been developed by Crielaard (2007). Inspired by an ecological view of organizational life he defines social innovation as *'creating new and richer relationships and environments in work situations'* (Crielaard, 2008, p. 166). Social innovation contributes to

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7 Interestingly, an additional reason for focusing on the innovation itself is that 'this lens is agnostic about the sources of social value' (Phills Deilgmeier & Miller, 2008, p. 37). Do we hear the echo of the utility approach's (see section 1.3) fear of getting entangled in moral, religious or ideological discussions here?

the development of the ecosystem that organizations belong to. A system of organizations can function as a low-level tundra with harsh conditions in which efficiency and survival are the dominant features. But it can also resemble a jungle in which abundance and diversity are the dominant features. However, the developmental potential of a system is limited by environmental factors that cannot be influenced.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a concept that seems to be very similar to social innovation at first sight. As is the case with social innovation, CSR is not a clear-cut concept but a broad set of ideas, policies and practices that has evolved over the years. There may be two main distinguishing factors between CSR and social innovation. First of all, twenty years after the emergence of CSR, the concept does not necessarily imply adopting and implementing policies that are new or innovative, as is the case with social innovation. After all, there are revolutionary CSR-trailblazers and laggard-like compliers (Porrit & Tuppen, 2003, pp. 16-17). Secondly, a CSR oriented company considers *‘profit as one of its objectives and the commitment of the shareholders and investors depends (also) on this objective…’* (Verkerk, 2103, p. 218). So a social innovation may be less important in a CSR-minded company than in a socially innovative company, because in the latter the stakeholders can be expected to value the innovation over profit rates.

Although the three definitions of social innovation are different from each other, they are helpful in operationalizing social innovation for this study. The definition by Phills et al focuses on the innovation. However, this tells us that for this study it is important to focus on the innovator, and not on the innovation. For this study the innovator is important because his (lived) spirituality is a focus point of this study.

Regarding the effects of social innovation the NCSI definition leans towards instrumental values such as efficiency and competitiveness. Phills et al. and Verkerk on the other hand lean towards values that promote the common good, such as sustainability and justice. The NCSI approach runs the risk of reducing innovation to first order change: improvement within existing business or societal paradigms and not challenging or transcending them. A focus on the common good may prevent inwardly directed innovation. The conceptual approach of Crielaard reaffirms this. He draws our attention to

the possibility of development towards systemic or organizational states that are more rich, affluent and diverse and which benefit all.

Based on these considerations I will define social innovation in this study as: *intentional innovation by individuals or organizations that is aimed at promoting the common good for the public or society.*

This definition allows for a selection of social innovators that will be approached to develop a spiritual perspective on social innovation. A total of six social innovators have participated in this part of the study. Two of them are active in the field of organizational democracy. Two other innovators are innovative in the field of social justice. The innovations of the two remaining innovators are related to sustainability. In order to warrant anonymity each innovator is indicated with a code: S1 to S6.

An entrepreneur that has democratized his company - The first socially innovative entrepreneur (S1) successfully expanded the family construction company with his brothers in the 1960s. As the company became more successful S1 started fearing family conflicts over business. Inspired by biblical ideas about ownership, stewardship and the equality of men, he in the early 1970s started pioneering balancing the family-shareholder say in the company with employee co-determination. The family-capital stayed within the company and primarily 'worked' for the company. Over the years this formula is refined and legally secured. The company has now grown into an international player, is organized in a democratic way and employs a significant number of handicapped people, which can be considered an additional indicator of the positive social impact of the organization.

A co-founder of the first 'green' bank in the Netherlands - S2 is one of the four initiators of a small fund that wants to stimulate socially, ecologically and culturally responsible initiatives. For about ten years S2 enthusiastically promoted the project, which is regarded as a sort of a hippie bank. In the 1980s, against all odds, the initiative grew into an officially licensed bank, the first green, sustainable bank in the Netherlands. The bank remained a small, a-typical financial player but in the 1990s slowly took the lead in green banking. It is now widely recognized as an example of responsible banking in a financial world that is being shaken by scandals and crisis.

A co-founder of the first feminist magazine in the Netherlands - S3 had been active in the second feminist wave for a few years when she co-founded the

first feminist magazine in the Netherlands. The magazine aimed at being a mouthpiece for women and vigorously addresses gender issues. It does not shy away from controversy and breaks many taboos. It grew into an influential, professional magazine with tens of thousands subscriptions at its peak.

The initiator of one of the first commercially viable fair-trade initiatives - S4 is the driving force behind the introduction of the first fair trade product that was explicitly aimed at the mass consumer market. The project was highly controversial because it tried to cooperate with big food and retail companies, which were regarded in S4's circles as unscrupulous organizations at the time. The big business partners eventually let the project down which caused the fair product to make a slow start. After a few years and a lot of work behind the scenes sales slowly started to catch up, (international) retailers become more interested and the line of fair products expanded. Products with a fair trade label are now commonplace for consumers, retailers and producers.

An entrepreneur that has democratized his company – Much like S1 pioneer S5 started working in the electro-technical construction company of his father. When he became the chief executive he was astounded by the traditional patterns of hierarchy. He found them very dysfunctional and desperately wanted to find a solution for this. He gradually developed a system of democratic organization in which every employee could have a true say. The system was refined over the years, legally secured and was fulfilled when he could dismiss himself as owner and director of the company and give the company to the employees of the company. Other organizations have successfully adopted S5's model.

The founder of an ecological technology center - S6 started his career as an engaged journalist and got involved in the early environmental movement. He initiated a successful ecological center but due to a conflict he was forced to leave. He started a new ecological center explicitly based on the small-is-beautiful philosophy. The center pioneers various ecological technologies and products that bypass large-scale, industrial and environmentally unfriendly solutions. S6 tries to develop his innovations into small local firms that deliver these products.

2.4. A spiritual perspective on social innovation

Analysis of the interviews with the six social innovators, combined with various theoretical concepts, reveals a spiritual perspective on social innovation. The actions and experiences of socially innovative people are full of experiences of connectedness, feelings of completeness, joy and fulfillment, moral sensitivity, personal and work-related growth and development, as well as experiences of loss, senselessness, failure, suffering and stagnation. Incidentally a 'mild' experience of the transcendent occurs but these are scattered and sporadic.

In the actions and experiences of social innovators a recurring pattern can be traced that puts them in a meaningful and coherent logical whole. The individual actions and experiences can be interpreted as a process with a number of elements: 1) critical, moral awareness, 2) self-implication that culminates in existential tensions, 3) a sense of connectedness with and a strong commitment to a weak cause, 4) experiences of empowerment, 5) rejection, disappointments and resilience, and 6) diffusion of the innovation. This process basically consists of three movements or phases: 1) emergence of a critical, moral understanding of the world and of oneself, 2) initial action on an issue, and 3) developing a collective praxis of innovation (see Table 2).

The first phase is the incubation phase of the social innovation. The social innovator develops a critical view of an issue in society. This critical view is influenced by various factors that stem from the innovator's life story. It acquires an inwardly directed quality because at some point in the incubation phase the innovator realizes that he himself is involved in or profiting from the issue that he is critical of. The typical 'mood' of this phase can be described as one of growing sadness, anger, shame or embarrassment. The critical view of society and the self-implication of the innovator tend to expand and deepen throughout the entire process of the innovation.

The second phase marks the start of the implementation of the social innovation. The innovator, who is driven by an intense sense of urgency, makes a symbolic start with the innovation that creates a strong commitment. In doing so he commits himself to a weak cause in the realization of the mutual dependence for growth and development between himself and the cause. Committing himself to a cause means putting everything (concerning his professional career) at risk at one stage or another in the process. Results of the initial actions result in feelings of pride and empowerment. However, counteractions and rejection by others as well as disappointments also enter the process. They put a strain on the resilience of the innovator. They will continue to do so throughout the entire process of innovation.

The social innovator then moves on to the third phase. He develops his initial efforts into a collective, innovative praxis in which he tries to expand his actions and to cultivate his experience, together with fellow workers. He succeeds in maintaining his focus on the primary objective of the collective, innovative praxis, which is to give voice to marginalized groups or interests and to experiment with new structures that promote the common good. Being dependent on and united with a cause and others continues to appear in various forms in the praxis of the social innovation. A remarkable feature of social innovation is its tendency to diffuse. In the six cases that have been studied, the innovation has been transferred to other companies, other sectors, other countries and other or new products. Socially innovative people realize that they need an effective strategy for developing and implementing their innovation. They realize that results count but know that the legitimacy and fulfillment of their efforts is in the act of trying and not in succeeding. A final issue touches upon the relationship of the innovator with existing institutions and systems. This relationship may reflect deep convictions about the state and nature of society and about processes of change.

Phase 1: Emergence of a critical, moral understanding of the world and of oneself

- Development of a critical view on one or more issues in society, politics or economy. *This critical view deepens and expands to other issues in phase 2 and 3.*
- Self-implication: feelings of fear or guilt for being involved in, profiting from or becoming the victim of the issue that one is critical of. *Self-implication continues in phase 2 and 3.*
- Biographical elements shape critical, moral understanding
- Character influences, critical, moral understanding
- Sources of inspiration stimulate critical, moral understanding
- Being witness to the power of inspiring, innovative practices accelerates or inspires the innovation
- Incubation period of the innovation

Phase 2: Initial action on an issue

- Starting the innovation is considered to be an existential necessity, aimed at reviving one's own vitality and power
- A symbolic initiative that symbolizes the nature of the innovation and that creates a strong commitment
- Bonding with the weak cause that the innovation is aimed at
- Experiencing mutual dependence for personal development between the innovator and his cause: innovation implies experiencing surrender and running personal risk
- Counteractions, rejection and disappointments. *These continue to occur in phase 3.*
- Experiencing empowerment. *This also occurs in phase 3*.

Phase 3: Developing a collective praxis of innovation

- Learning to appreciate an external locus of control
- Feeling as if one is part of a larger whole
- Changing internal and external relationships
- Staying focused on the primary objective of the social innovation throughout the years
- Commemorating, discussing, learning, experimenting and developing new action
- Sharing, celebrating and mourning experiences
- Democratic character of the collective praxis
- Tendency not to be financially dependent
- Non-conformist, non-violent, open and forthright attitude and trying to keep an

open dialogue going with people who have different opinions
• Diffusion of the innovation to other domains
• Strategy and effectiveness are legitimate but do not legitimize the collective, innovative praxis
• Critical, constructive relationship with the powers that be
• Retrospectively assessing the impact of the social innovation

Table 2: Three-phase model of the spiritual perspective on social innovation

In the following sections I will describe the phases of the spiritual perspective on social innovation in more detail. I will illustrate each item of the model with examples and quotes from the interviews with the socially innovative pioneers. In this way analysis and data alternate in the following sections. This interpenetration is typical of reporting results of grounded theory research (Lofland et al., 2006, pp. 184-185). The page numbers in the following sections refer to the transcriptions of the interviews[8] with the socially innovative people.

2.4.1. *Phase 1: Emergence of a critical, moral understanding of the world and of oneself*

Phase 1 can be considered as an incubation phase of the social innovation and its innovator. In the run-up to their social innovation the innovators develop a critical view of one or more issues in society, politics or economy, e.g.:

• Business and economy: companies have a tilted balance of power (S2, pp. 10-11); people get caught up in specialist careers (S5, p. 9); we do not have a fundamental understanding of organizing (S5, p. 43); one of the two democratizers of this part of the study: *'If you are the company owner, you are an owner of people. Of buildings as well, but also of people. Why 'slavery'!?'* (S5, p. 41)

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[8] These transcriptions are not included in this report for practical reasons. The transcripts vary in size from 30 to 60 pages. Including six of these accounts in this report would make it seriously oversized. The transcripts have been made accessible to the members of the dissertation committee via an encrypted USB-stick.

- Uncontrollable, large scale organizations (S6, p. 8) and *'bigger is better'* economy (S6, p. 19)
- Environmental issues (S6, p. 5, p. 20, p. 28, p. 30)
- Gender issues: predetermined life patterns of women (S3, p. 5),
- Politics: the failure of (political) revolutions - the fair trade innovator: *'It was my first field trip to Central-America…I came back quite depressed. What was the situation like then?...Nicaragua, six years after the Sandinistas took over, victory over Somoza, but you saw how the revolution deteriorated and became corrupt…In El Salvador a desperate popular revolt with many, many violations of human rights…'* (S4, p. 14)
- Mankind: people in Western societies are superficial and easily distracted with regard to serious problems (S6, p. 36). The founder of the ecological technology center: *'Slowly economists are rediscovering something that indicates that we should go back to human measure… The financial world: completely out of control and treacherous. The annoying thing is that it takes a lot of words if you want to present the whole picture and how things interconnect…And present 'homo videns' doesn't have time for that, is not interested anymore, cannot process that, is unable to do so. He has to see things with a catchy picture. With cute darlings who bring everything with a smile.'* (S6, p. 38)

The critical view of socially innovative people deepens and expands to other issues as the years go by. This is not confined to phase 1 but develops throughout the other phases.

However, socially innovative people are not only critical of issues that are outside of themselves. They imply themselves in what they are critical of. They turn their criticism towards themselves as well, by discovering and acknowledging that they are at least partially involved in or profiting from the issues that they are critical of. This causes feelings of fear or guilt. Two examples: the entrepreneur, who democratized his company, was, among other things, driven by the fear of serious family conflicts about money, careers of family members and succession issues: *'If I am not careful I will ruin my own family. I may be exaggerating a bit but we are getting richer and richer. The problem is that the Bible is not very positive about wealth.*

Are we going to have fights every year about how much profits are we pulling out of the company? Shouldn't we invest it in the company? Which children should become the successors? And family-in-law in the company: is that a wise thing to do?' (S1, p. 4) His innovation is an attempt to avoid these conflicts. The co-founder of the feminist magazine came to realize her self-implication when she was criticized by a fellow feminist for being an authoritarian leader of a liberative movement: '*...suddenly: 'You are one of* [the oppressors]*!'. Then I thought: 'Hey! That isn't nice.' But there is a reason that I didn't forget it: she had a point. If you are involved in this kind of processes of change...you think: I want to change, but not only the fate of others.'* (S3, pp. 24-25)

This critical, moral self-understanding develops itself throughout the process of implementing the innovation. The fair trade innovator for example blames himself for having underestimated the international nature of the problem and of usable solutions. He felt that he had slowed down the development of a real, international solution because of this: '*Of course it was a mistake to use the word 'Max Havelaar'. For the Dutch market it was a tremendous idea. Internationally it was useless...by making the mistake not to introduce an international label, it took a movement twenty five years to overcome that.'* (S4, p. 10) In the midst of all kinds of setbacks he also realized that the problems he had due to the implementation of the innovation were only minor problems compared to the life-threatening problems of his partners in Latin America (S4, pp. 11-12). An innovator who has democratized his company blames himself for having overestimated the goodwill of others (S5, p. 35, p. 48); old subservient attitudes proved to die hard.

The interviews reveal that biographical elements play a role in the development of a critical-moral understanding of the world and oneself, e.g.: having experienced poverty in one's youth (S1, p. 1); witnessing the customers of one's father abuse their position of power (S1, p. 13); having been exposed to injustice; for example having been captured as a youngster during World War II (S5, pp. 3-4); and discovering one's strength, for example a talent for sports (S1, p. 1). One of the innovators, who democratized his company, went to a primary school that was founded by Kees Boeke, a Dutch pedagogue: *'Kees used to say: "If you have got ideas*

about something, you have bring them to life yourself…and if you find out that you were wrong, you have to be able to adjust that.' That has always appealed to me.' (S5, p. 8)

Character also plays a role in the development of a critical-moral understanding of the world and oneself. Three pioneers describe themselves as impatient and hot-tempered (S3, pp. 28-29); *'enfant terrible'* (S5, p. 2); being able to see things from a surprising perspective (S1, p. 2). This influences their moral understanding.

Various sources of inspiration stimulate the innovators in the development of a critical, moral understanding of the world and of oneself, e.g.: Christianity (S.1: p. 5, p. 6, p. 10, p. 18) (S4, p. 2, p. 21, p. 22); anthroposophy (S2, p.1, p. 9, p. 24); a family tradition of civic engagement (S2, p. 4, p. 9); parents that lived out their ideals (S5, pp. 8-9); teachers (S5, p. 8, pp. 14-15, p. 35); a single parent that remains positive, strong and vital despite hardships (S3, p. 3). These sources of inspiration provide moral values, eschatological expectations (one innovator for example interprets the coming of Christ as a command to all men to work on equality of men (S1, p. 5), and spiritual understanding that influence the social innovation. The fair trade innovator: *'At that time I was very active in a base ecclesial community. Which means: I sang Huub Oosterhuis[9]…All of Oosterhuis' songs, big and small, are about this kinds of things: the change has already begun, but you haven't recognized it yet…That kind of lyrics are all in my head.'* (S4, p. 22)

Witnessing the liberative power of inspiring, innovative practices functions as an accelerator in the run-up to the innovation. One pioneer was encouraged to really start with the innovation that he was considering after having visited a similar innovation abroad. Together with a few co-founders they visited a *bankethische Institution* in Germany: *'Anyway, when we came back we were very enthusiastic. We said to ourselves: Lads, this is it. We are going to start as well.'* (S2, p. 2) A book that revealed age-old, ecological farming practices inspired the small-scale ecological innovator to develop ecological techniques (S6, pp. 25-26). The fair trade innovator was

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[9] Huub Oosterhuis is a well-known Dutch theologian who has written many Christian poems that have been set to music.

challenged and inspired by the non-military, economic strategy of marginalized farmers to emancipate themselves (S4, p. 15): *'So they chose an economic road to change: we are going to try to build up a new economic reality and from within that economic reality we are going to try to realize social and political change. And I found that a very attractive road.'* (S4, p. 15)

This phase, which precedes the actual innovation, can be called an incubation phase. The socially innovative people are involved in 1) studying the problem underlying the yet to be conceived social innovation; 2) regular innovation; or 3) working on predecessors of the social innovation. One innovator had a period of ten years of critical thinking before he first took action (S5, p. 13, p. 16, p. 17, p. 19). The innovator of the first green bank also went through a period of years of studying with a group before they started the innovation, although there were outbursts of unrest in this group: *'When are we going to do something?'* (S2, p. 1) One of the entrepreneurs, who democratized his construction company, developed several 'normal' innovations before his social innovation took off (S1, p. 2).

2.4.2.   Phase 2: Initial action on an issue

For the pioneers starting the implementation of the innovation is not merely an exciting experiment. Their initial actions are motivated by a sense of great urgency. Starting to work on the social innovation is considered almost a lifesaving necessity, aimed at reviving one's own vitality and power which are threatened now that one has discovered one's own entanglement in an issue. One of the entrepreneurs, who democratized his company, introduced as Eric at the beginning of this chapter, felt that life could not just go on: the problems of leadership, ownership and organizational conflicts must be solved and answers must be found (S5, p.15-16, p. 55): *'Soon I will be the prisoner of my own…company'* (S5, p.11). If his two weeks of solitary reflection would not result in an answer *'…then I will stop as director of the company'* (S5, p. 55). For the co-founder of the first green bank starting the initiative felt like: *'…it has got something to do with one's destiny.'* (S2, p. 30) The ecological innovator literally had nightmares when the first high rise buildings were being built: *'This is the beginning of something that we will not be able to control in the*

end.' (S6, p. 2) For him ecology and small-scale economy are a matter of mere *'chances of survival'* (S6, p.40). *'Meanwhile you are very afraid and feel as if you live in a society of sleepwalkers. Do not scream the message too loud, otherwise they will fall off the gutter.'*(S6, p. 41)

A process of innovation may start with a symbolic initiative that symbolizes the nature of the innovation and creates a strong commitment of the pioneer involved. One of the democratizers started the process of change with sharing a year's profit in advance (!) with his employees and asking them to make their own sharing rules (S1, p. 9). The co-founders of the first green bank made a solemn pledge to an eminent public figure to really start the social innovation:

'*We wanted to tell Bernard Lievegoed that we were going to start the initiative. He was chairman of the Anthroposophical Society at that time. We requested an audience with him. The four of us are sitting in a little room and Lievegoed joins us. Each of us tells in his own way to Lievegoed that we are going to start. He listens politely and then he said: 'D., are you going to do it?'*

Yes, D. said.

A., are you going to do it?

Yes, A. says.

Well, R., are you going to do it?

Yes.

And L. as well. When we were out on the street again we really felt as if we had made a sort of vow. We couldn't pull out anymore.' (S2, p. 30)

The ecological pioneer was forced to leave his job at a forerunner of his ecological technology center because he protested against an abuse in this organization: '*I still remember very well my wife saying: Well, it is now 10 AM, we have to be gone at 2 PM.'* (S6, pp. 13-14) He then literally left the compound with his wife and all his belongings and started his own ecological technology center.

Socially innovative people want to be close to the cause they have devoted themselves to. They bond with the innovation which is in it is infancy at that stage: small and powerless. One pioneer states that a true understanding of the problem requires direct involvement instead of scientific distance (S1, p.

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4). Another innovator states that if one really wants to change something, one needs to be directly and personally involved (S2, p. 27). The solemn pledge that the co-founder of the first green bank made, can also be seen in this light. It is a (semi-) public commitment that brings about an obligation not to abandon the project anymore (S2, p. 30).

The close bond between innovator and the cause at which the innovation is aimed springs from an awareness and an experience of mutual dependence between the innovator and his cause. For example: knowing that a marginalized group of Mexican farmers depended on the efforts of the fair trade pioneer, motivated him enormously and made him feel very responsible. He also realized that the marginalized group had an important task to fulfill in the innovation and that it was difficult for them to do their part. If the innovation failed, it would ruin the career of the pioneer and it would seriously damage the prospects of the farmers (S4, p. 15-16, pp. 24-25). The pioneer was very aware of the fragility of the innovation that made him feel very responsible (S4, p. 9): *'We hardly had a team, there was only five of us. So, in a way it was nothing.'* (S4, pp. 8-9)

Innovators are also aware of the need to avoid endless theorizing and planning and to just make a start and to see what happens then: learning by doing. If the innovative actions for the cause fail, the pioneer fails as well. If the actions for the cause succeed, the pioneer 'succeeds'. One democratizer acknowledged that he did not have an answer to or a solution for the organizational problems he was trying to tackle. He experienced a sense of helplessness (S5, p. 16). The green banking innovator said that making a first step into an unknown adventure has an element of surrender: *'...but then we run the risk of three years of theoretical debate and having achieved nothing. Let's do it the other way around. We are going to do business for five years with a few rules and afterwards we will evaluate: what have we been doing? Did our actions make some kind of sense or were we just drifting about?'* (S2, pp. 30-31) One does not know what will happen and one must give up trying to control and manage everything. So for the innovator there is an element of experiencing surrender attached to the bond between innovator and cause: surrendering oneself to an experiment in which the innovator and his cause are not in a position of

power and control, the outcomes are uncertain while for both sides significant stakes are at risk.

Results of the initial action in the process of innovation result in feelings of pride and empowerment, as one pioneer states for example: *'After the first twelve issues (of the first feminist magazine) we were very proud'* (S3, p. 16). She also recalls that ridiculing and making fun of their opponents made them feel influential and united (S3, p. 23). One democratizer reports that the first step in the process results in energetic, enthusiastic action by others (S5, pp. 19-20). The eco-innovator discovers that initial actions help to keep pessimism away (S6, p. 42). The fair trade innovator tells that he interpreted threats by opponents as a sign of the legitimacy, strength and potential of his innovation (S4, p.8, p. 20). Initial success gave the co-founder of the first green bank the courage to make new steps (S2, p. 3). These experiences of empowerment continue to occur in the third phase. One democratizer has gained a lot of confidence in his innovation after having developed it for a number of years: *'My innovation can withstand capitalism. Even more: it is stronger… The system cannot break down.'* (S1, p. 15)

Besides pride and empowerment socially innovative people also meet their first counteractions and rejection by others, as well as disappointments. These can take on different shapes, e.g.: 1) superficial media coverage (S1, p. 16, p.18) (S3, p. 23); 2) discussions with, *'inquisition-like'* (S4, pp. 6-7) interrogations by and criticism from fellow-believers and fellow activists (S2, p. 21) (S3, p. 13) (S4, pp. 6-7, pp. 16-17, pp. 22-23); 3) economic threats from competitors and competitors that manipulate and threaten allies (S4, p. 3, p. 8, p. 11) (S6, p. 32); and 4) being erased from the history of the organization (S6, p. 14, p. 16). Counteractions and rejection of the innovation are based on for example: prejudice about the innovation (S4, p. 7), superficial judgment (S1, p. 12) (S5, p. 38), and opportunism (S4, p. 8). The co-founder of the first green bank comes from a distinguished family of bankers with a tradition of social engagement. He gets the (secret) nickname *'the red one'* for his green bank initiative (S2, p. 9). In much the same way one democratizer is called a *'red'* (S1, p. 14).

The setbacks put a strain on the resilience of the innovator and give the implementation of the social innovation the characteristics of a struggle. The co-founder of the first feminist magazine: *'I would not want a relationship*

*anymore in which there is no struggle for "who's buying the groceries",
because you can only write about and discuss a redistribution of domestic
tasks in a credible way if you allow that to enter into your daily life as a
problem.'* (S3, pp. 25-26)

The small-scale innovator confirms that working on his ecological
innovations *'absolutely!'* (S6, p. 32) is a fight with for example vested
industrial interests. At some point in the interview the co-founder of the
green bank quite spontaneously recalls the efforts involved: *'A lot of time,
blood, sweat and tears…an excessive effort…'* (S2, p. 19) *'Nothing is born
without labour pains. That's all in the game. It is good for initiatives in their
birth phase to meet resistance. It makes them stronger.'* (S2, p. 30) And
would the fair trade pioneer do it again? His answer: *'Let me be honest: if I
had known in advance how much effort would be needed to get this far, I
would never have started at all.'* (S4, p. 7) Socially innovative people are
challenged by counteractions, setbacks, disappointment and rejection
throughout the entire process of social innovation.

2.4.3. Phase 3: Developing a collective praxis of innovation

After the initial steps of the implementation of the innovation, socially
innovative people develop a collective praxis of innovation around their
innovation. In this praxis 1) they learn to appreciate an external locus of
control, 2) they feel as if they are part of a larger whole, 3) internal and
external relationships change and 4) after a few years one can
retrospectively assess the impact of the social innovation.

Social innovators have learnt to appreciate an external locus of control.
According to the co-founder of the first green bank it is important to trust
that a little beginning can be the start of a significant difference (S2, p. 27).
One innovator, who democratized his company, gradually retreated from the
organization in order to fulfill the innovation, thereby leaving it to forces
other than his own (S5, p. 40, p. 48). An innovation may also embody a
sense of connectedness to something outside ourselves, e.g.: being part of an
ecological cycle (S6, p. 26). The democratizer, who gradually retreated from
his company in order to fulfill its democratic nature, recalls that he
experienced letting go of power as *'liberating'* (S5, pp. 40-41).

A second, typical feature of a socially innovative, collective praxis is that there is sense of being part of a larger whole. After a few years the co-founder of the first feminist magazine realized that their activities were part of an international movement for women's rights (S3, p. 32). The innovation created a growing self-awareness of women, e.g.: sisterhood, lesbianism and women's friendships (S3, p. 15). At the same time the innovation thrived because of this growing self-awareness. The innovator who founded a small-scale ecological technology center expresses being part of a larger whole in two ways. The first one is being part of the truth. According to him his innovation is based on indestructible, undeniable facts about ecology (S6, p. 31, p. 39, p. 42). Secondly, it is being part of an organic cycle of crops, animals, and people; *'the most essential, basis cycle that we know'* (S6, p. 29). The co-founder of the first green bank has always kept in mind that his innovation did not belong to him but to a larger cause (S2, p. 17).

The socially innovative praxis results in changing relationships between stakeholders. One democratizer reports a new balance of interest, responsibilities, powers and gains from and for various stakeholders, especially owners and employees (S1, p. 8, p. 17). The eco-innovator felt a sense of connectedness with loyal supporters that his center financially depended upon (S6, p. 43). In the green bank there is a deepened awareness of mutual dependence between employees, shareholders and customers, according to the co-founder (S2, p. 25).

A socially innovative, collective praxis succeeds in keeping its focus on the primary objective of its innovation throughout the years. For the co-founder of the first feminist magazine it was to be a mouthpiece for women (S3, p. 9) and to improve the position of women (S3, p. 8). She was constantly *'tracking down congenials who could contribute to the magazine.'* (S.3, p. 10)

For the fair trade pioneer it has been a challenge not to shift the focus to fair trade instruments, such as certification systems, but to keep focused on the needs on poor farming communities: *'I am so convinced that your instruments…really are your instruments. The certification systems are a means to contribute something. But I never absolutize them.'* (S4, p. 18) The focus of the praxis of the ecological technology center has always been to

promote and to develop a small-scale economy with humane and environmental friendly jobs (S6, p. 17) and not, for example, to be in the limelight (S6, p. 35).

In socially innovative organizations there is a lot of commemorating, discussing, learning, experimenting and development going on. In the fair trade pioneer's office a crucifix hangs on the wall. It was given to him by a Central American partner who was later killed by political opponents (S4, p. 14). It is a remembrance of the danger and of the innocent victims of political revolutions. One democratizer has written several books about his innovation and uses writing these books to explicate and improve his ideas (S5, p. 18). The name of the ecological technology center is derived from a Dutch saying that expresses the will to learn from mistakes (S6, p. 44).

Positive and negative experiences are shared and celebrated or mourned, for example, in annual shareholder meetings (S1, p. 14), a big celebration because of the fulfillment of the democratization of the company (S5, p. 38) or a period of a few years that was used to get oneself together to start a new project after the initial near-failure of the first fair trade project (S4, p. 13).

Fairly typical of a socially innovative praxis is its democratic character which manifests itself in a modest attitude of the socially innovative pioneer who starts the innovation (S2, p. 22), an appreciation of different points of view (S3, p. 13) and leaving no group (e.g.: men) systematically out (S3, p. 16). Another illustration of this attitude is that the initiators of the first green bank take a step back at the moment that the organization is on the eve of an important development. In this way the organization gets a chance to go through its own new development with a new generation of management (S2, pp. 12-13).

Typical of financial policies of socially innovative organisations is their desire not to be dependent on subsidies (S3, p. 4) (S6, p. 12, p. 18) (S5, p. 33), although this is not true for all six cases in this study.

Socially innovative people have a non-conformist, non-violent, open and forthright attitude. They try to keep going an open dialogue with people who have different opinions. The fair trade pioneer, for example, consciously refrains from calling opponents 'enemies', although they have tried several times to seriously damage his innovation (S4, p. 24). The first feminist

magazine did not shy away from a provocative magazine cover in order to address an issue (S3, p. 13).

An intriguing aspect of social innovation is its tendency to diffuse, almost like an oil spill on water. The innovations of the six cases of this study have been transferred to other companies (S1, p. 15), other sectors (S1, p. 11, p. 16, p. 18) (S4, p. 10) (S5, p. 59), other countries (S1, p. 16) (S2, p. 18) (S3, p. 26), other/new products (S2, p. 17) (S4, p. 12, p. 32), other domains of society (S3, p. 23) and other technologies (S6, p. 18, p. 23, p. 43, p. 26, p. 40).

Socially innovative people consider strategy and effectiveness to be legitimate but they also recognize that the two do not legitimize their socially innovative praxis. One democratizer thinks that ultimately the marginalized themselves judge the effectiveness of the innovation: *'You don't need to ask the twenty years old plumber at the company: do you like it here? That guy can get a job anywhere. You should ask one of the 150 disabled employees who have a very nice job with a good salary. If they say that I am a good boss, then I am a good boss. And those 20 years old employees, they don't really care.'* (S1, p. 17) If one considers what the success of a social innovation is, one might think that growth of the organization is proof of the effectiveness of the innovation. The co-founder of the first green bank does not agree with that under all circumstances. He considers growth for growth's sake a *'bestial ambition'* (S2, pp. 17-18). In a way he hopes that the organization that embodies the innovation will have become superfluous in a number of years because others will have adopted the innovation (S2, p. 17). The co-founder of the first feminist magazine looks back at a significant improvement of the position of women, but these results remain uncertain: *'Old patterns are persistent.'* (S3, p. 34) The fair trade pioneer has few illusions about the possibility of quick results and easy-to-achieve impact: *'A good idea needs an incubation period of twenty years'* (S4, p. 10). So socially innovative people have nuanced and some counterintuitive ideas of the success and effectiveness of their socially innovative praxis and of what legitimizes their innovation.

One issue of the third phase deals with the relationship between the social innovation and the innovators on the one hand and existing systems and institutions on the other. This is especially interesting because social

innovations are often motivated by a critical attitude towards existing systems and institutions. Innovators discover that they can use systems and institutions to promote or safeguard their innovation or to reform a system from within. The two democratizers used the law to legally safeguard the democratic nature of their companies (S1, p. 11, p. 13) (S5, p. 28, p. 37). On the other hand, it proved very difficult to integrate new concepts of ownership into existing legal frameworks that represent the old paradigm (S1, p. 16) (S5, pp. 38-40). It is the fair trade pioneer's firm belief that friction with the establishment leads to change; confrontation does not (S4, p. 20). Ethical preaching to companies, as he used to do in the beginning, has only limited effects. One needs to integrate the ethics into a sound and convincing business case (S4, p. 19). The co-founder of the feminist magazine realized that one needs the political system and the democratic process to enlarge personal freedom (S3, pp. 17-18). At the same time it is difficult to participate in the political process and not to be encapsulated by it (S3, p. 17).

After a number of years socially innovative people can look back and assess the impact of their socially innovative work. The green bank innovator testifies that to have realized one's ideals in a *'provisional and primitive way'* is very *'gratifying'* (S2, p. 24). One democratizer has prevented family conflicts over business and that gives him the feeling of having achieved a lot (S1, p. 15). The co-founder of the feminist magazine says that it feels *'good of course'* (S3, p. 33) to see the positive women's emancipation statistics.

2.5. Discussion of the spiritual perspective

In this part of the study three theoretical concepts were helpful in structuring and explicating the lived spirituality of the socially innovative pioneers: 1) Sölle's liberation theology, 2) the concept of the 'via negativa', and 3) the practice model. These are presented in section 2.5.1.

If we compare the spiritual perspective on social innovation that has been developed in this part of this study to the list of typical elements of spirituality (Hense, Jespers and Nissen, 2014, p. 222), we find that four out of five elements are part of the spiritual perspective. Experiencing the transcendent is the only element that is almost absent in the perspective. A well-chosen additional interpretive initiative may help us to identify and to explore more experiences of the transcendent and to weave all elements of the perspective into a coherent whole. This is discussed in section 2.5.2.

2.5.1. *Theoretical concepts used for developing the spiritual perspective*

Using existing theoretical concepts in the analysis of empirical data that is collected in grounded theory research is a common phenomenon (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 195). If a theoretical concept can be used in a setting that is different from where it was originally developed, we can call this 'theoretical extension' (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 173). The spiritual perspective on social innovation has been developed using a number of theoretical concepts that come from contexts other than social innovation. Therefore it is important to present and discuss the main theoretical concepts that have been helpful in interpreting the data that were collected from the six cases of social innovation. These main theoretical concepts are:

1. The liberation theology of Sölle
2. The *via negativa*
3. The practice model

Sölle's liberation theology has been helpful in interpreting the data from the cases of social innovation. Sölle's theology is firmly socially engaged and has an explicit spiritual perspective. It suggests that we encounter the transcendent particularly in everyday reality, i.e.: in fighting for a more just world. This is what Sölle calls the democratization of mysticism: *'I mean to say that the mystical sensitivity, that resides in all of us, is being allowed to return, is being dug out of the rubble and wreck of triviality'* (Sölle, 1998, p. 16). Bouckaert (2004, p. 194) has described this as a 'fundamental transformation of our commitment to people and things'. According to Sölle this mystical sensitivity is not exclusively accessible for converts or church visitors: *'That we all are mystics in the sense that we should always and*

permanently demand this from life, does not mean that we should obey to the conventional category of mystics and non-mystics' (Sölle, 1998, p. 36). Sölle explicitly addresses people, organizations and governments in the Western world and the situation that they are in, instead of people and marginalized groups in developing countries, as is the case with Latin American liberation theology. Therefore it is no surprise that there may be a relationship between her theology and social innovation. Her stance for socio-political analysis and reform coincides significantly with the agenda of social innovation. In terms of an agenda (or in terms of the common good), social justice, emancipation (or democratization) and sustainability probably are not exhaustive, but these three significantly cover both the agenda of social innovation and Sölle's liberation theology.

From a selection of Sölle's theological writings a theoretical model has been deduced that provides a framework with a substantial capacity for structuring the data from the cases of social innovation. 'Political theology' (Sölle, 1983) and 'The silent cry' (Sölle, 1998) are two key publications that deal explicitly with Sölle's social engagement and activism, her inspiration and motivation for that and with the spirituality that Sölle developed over the years. Therefore these two publications were used for developing the theoretical model that was used in the analysis of the empirical data. Five sections from these two key publications by Sölle, that deal explicitly with spirituality and social engagement, were used:

'Political theology' (Sölle, 1983):	*'The silent cry' (Sölle, 1998):*
pp. 80–91	pp. 267-289
pp. 159-171	pp. 317-323
	pp. 379-411

Of course these five sections do not represent the full breadth of Sölle's theology and spirituality. These were fully explored when we dealt with the third research question (chapter 3).

By means of qualitative analysis (1. open coding, 2. axial coding, 3. structuring) the five sections have been transformed into a theoretical model. Eventually a three-phase theoretical model emerges from the five

sections that systematically describe the social engagement and spirituality of Sölle's theology:

- Phase 1: emergence of a critical, moral understanding of the world and of oneself
- Phase 2: initial resistance and action on a public issue
- Phase 3: developing a collective praxis of resistance, action and liberation.

Each phase of the theoretical model is described in more detail with a number of items. The theoretical model of the aspects of Sölle's liberation theology that deal with social engagement and spirituality proved to be a powerful element for structuring the data from the interviews with the social innovators. We can see that the spiritual perspective on social innovation, as described in section 2.4, bears resemblance to this theoretical model. There are also various differences. Several items of the phases of the theoretical model have been relabeled, replaced or have disappeared and that several additional items have been added based on the empirical data from the six cases of social innovation. It is important to keep in mind that the empirical data come from the lived spirituality of socially innovative people. When looking at their lived spirituality through the lens of a theoretical model, we do so not in order to narrow down their lived spirituality or to totalize it. We do so to gain a fuller understanding of it. Therefore it is important to change and adapt the theoretical lens when a confrontation with empirical data requires us to do so.

The second theoretical concept that was used in the analysis is the *via negativa*. Maas observes that spirituality in organizations tends to overlook the *via negativa*: experiences of loss, senselessness, failure, suffering and stagnation. In doing so it loses the potential power of these negative experiences (Maas, 2006, p. 17). Certainly these experiences can also be found in business and organizational life. In turning a blind eye to them business spirituality may retreat to and limit itself to positive, non-offensive experiences and terms such as 'energy', 'spirit', 'well-being' and 'passion' and suggest and stimulate a demanding climate of spiritual high performance and positivity (Maas, 2006, p. 18). In doing so it may ignore the lessons of spiritual traditions which value the *via negativa* as a way of

purification, self-discovery and discovery of the transcendent. The concept of the *via negativa* has contributed to the development of the spiritual perspective on social innovation by drawing attention to and valuing negative experiences as (potential) 'spaces' of spirituality.

Thirdly, the practice model has been helpful in interpreting the data from the six cases of social innovation. According to Verkerk (2004) spirituality is one of the aspects that make up an organization. Other aspects are, for example, technology, economics, psychology and business law. A truly integrally developed and functioning organization requires full recognition and exploration of all aspects and their relationships (Verkerk, 2004, p. 421). As with any other aspect of an organization, spirituality has its own unique character, dynamics and logic. It is closely related to other disciplines such as ethics and psychology, but Verkerk warns us that it should not be mixed up with them. Discernment of the aspects does not mean isolating them from each other. It is interesting to investigate how each aspect influences the other aspects. Therefore spirituality should not be isolated from other organizational aspects. Disclosed spirituality has the potential to give additional meaning and direction to other aspects in organizations. De Vries, Hoogland, Van der Stoep and Verkerk (2007, Chapter 9) have translated these ideas into the practice model. This model safeguards the integral and systematic analysis of a professional practice by focusing of the ongoing interplay between:

- direction: the values, basic beliefs and worldview that professionals in a professional practice have
- structure: the institutionalized nature of a professional practice, e.g.: organizational structure, professional standards and support systems
- context: the relationship of a professional practice with its environment, e.g.: clients, suppliers and the government.

The practice model has helped to interpret the data from the cases of social innovation in two ways. First of all, when looking for spirituality one should not only look at spirituality itself but also at the other aspects of practices, e.g.: structure and context. All of these aspects and elements provide the 'raw material' (Maas, 2006, p. 21) for spirituality. Together they make up the life-system in which people live their (working) lives and this life

system brings forth experiences in which spirituality may be disclosed. Secondly, the practice model also tells us to look at how spirituality leaves its traces in the elements and aspects of professional and organizational life. Spirituality may give new direction and additional meaning to for example technology, business law, ethical considerations and relationships between stakeholders. Eventually morality and spirituality open up and deepen other aspects, resulting in a possibility to develop *'high-care and high-trust relations within the organization and between an organization and its stakeholders'* (Verkerk, 2004, p. 421).

It is interesting to see that some of the notions of the theoretical concepts, as presented in this section, are also emerging in management literature and in the literature on business spirituality. Ardon (2009) for example touches upon self-implication when he describes how stagnation in organizational development is often caused by unilateral control in which management, unwillingly and unconsciously, blocks organizational change because of its own behaviour. Discovering and acknowledging one's own involvement in dysfunctional behaviour is the first step towards organizational learning and change: *'...leaders must first make deep changes in themselves'* (Ardon, 2009, p. 77). Deep change in oneself is a key aspect of Sölle's liberation theology as well as a typical feature of spirituality. Therefore Ardon underlines the potential of self-implication in organizational contexts.

Support for the importance of the experiential nature of moral sensitivity comes from a study in another domain. In a study on adolescents with extreme[10] ideals Van San, Sieckelink and De Winter (2010) found that those ideals typically originate from being confronted with injustice (Van San, et al 2010, p. 79) and that those ideals may get an important developmental push from concrete personal events and experiences (Van San et al, 2010, p.

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[10] There may be a fine line between 'extreme ideals' and the ideals or values behind social innovation. The adolescents from Van San's et al (2010) study are often considered as 'radicalizing', ranging from extreme-right, radical Islam to radical animal welfare activists. It would be interesting to see what distinguishes someone that strives for the common good from a radicalized idealist. It may be something that is part of the spiritual perspective of social innovation: feelings of fear or guilt for being at least partially involved in or profiting from injustice. In Sölle's view it is essential to also be self-critical with regard to the issues that one is critical of: am I myself maintaining, causing or profiting from the issues that I am critical of? Maybe this self-criticism prevents an idealist from becoming trapped in a process of radicalization.

80). This is illustrated by an initiative from the global paints and coatings company AkzoNobel. The company recognized the importance of experiencing moral issues when it sent a group of its employees on a training to the Antarctic, an area that is being affected directly by global warming. As one of the participants declared: '*During this trip you are being confronted very directly with the fact that we have to deal with resources in responsible way. That makes you much more inclined to actively live and spread the message'* (Berentsen, 2008). These observations largely coincide with the concept of a *via negativa* and with Sölle's notion that moral concern is the root of social engagement.

In a study on spirituality in organizations De Jongh refers to the concept of 'core ideology' (De Jongh, 2011, pp. 40-43). A core ideology defines the enduring character of an organization, its identity. Organizations are often concentrated on connecting to the outside world by developing a business strategy. However, without a well-developed idea of identity an organization is subject to what happens in the business environment. If an organization wants to develop its identity, it must learn to develop its inner world: *'the organization needs to understand itself 'from within' in order to develop its core'* (De Jongh, 2011, pp. 48-49). These notions are closely connected to the idea of a *via negativa* and to elements of Sölle's liberation theology: a critical awareness of one's socio-political situation, experiencing vulnerability, hunger for change, hope, courage, responsibility and empowerment. These elements are the raw materials for what eventually produces organizational purpose (De Jongh, 2011, p. 78). If these processes go the other way around, i.e. when a predefined purpose is injected into the organization, it prevents community development from taking place. Employees will then live their lives outside the organization (De Jongh, 2011, p. 90). This is in line with the practice model that also states that ethics and spirituality are founded in the organizational 'raw materials' such as technology, cooperation, economics and in the way people experience their organizational environment.

2.5.2. *What makes the spiritual perspective 'spiritual'?*
In section 2.4 it has been demonstrated that in the praxis of social innovation a spiritual perspective can be unfolded. It may not be directly

visible at first sight but it comes to the foreground if we focus on specific elements such as the ones that are mentioned in the list of typical elements of spirituality by Hense, Jespers and Nissen (2014, pp. 221-222). If we compare the spiritual perspective on social innovation to this list, we find that all elements are part of the perspective in one way or another (Hense, Jespers and Nissen, 2014, p. 222) (except for one part):

1. *'Focusing on the spirit or core of a person':* dealing with an individual's matters of life, vitality, spirit and identity (as opposed to being focused on theology, spiritual theories or religious or spiritual organizations and institutions). This occurs in the spiritual perspective on social innovation for example in:

   Phase 1: emergence of a critical, moral understanding of the world and of oneself - Biographical elements shape critical, moral understanding

   Phase 2: Initial action on an issue – Innovation is considered an existential necessity, aimed at reviving one's own vitality and power.

   This makes the spiritual perspective a systematic description of the lived spirituality of the socially innovative pioneers. It is not an attempt to put forward new, abstract, general theoretical concepts, e.g.: spiritual theories or theories that explain, propose or prescribe spirituality in organizations.

2. *'Having extraordinary experiences':* mental and cognitive processes that stimulate or hinder associations, intuitive or rational thinking, probability judgment, varying states of consciousness, experiences of elation, experiences of connection and altered perception of the self (Farias, 2014, p. 190). This occurs in the spiritual perspective for example in:

   Phase 2: Initial action on an issue - A symbolic initiative that that symbolizes the nature of the innovation and creates a strong commitment

   Phase 3: Developing a collective praxis of innovation - Learning to appreciate an external locus of control

   Phase 3: Developing a collective praxis of innovation - Experiencing empowerment

3. *'Dealing with liminal questions and basic values'* (e.g.: death, suffering, guilt, ethics) that determine more concrete decisions and actions. This occurs in the spiritual perspective for example in:
   Starting in phase 1 and continuing throughout the process - Feelings of fear or guilt for being involved in, profiting from or becoming the victim of the issue that the social innovators are critical of
   Phase 2: Initial action on an issue - Experiencing mutual dependence for personal development between innovator and cause: innovation implies experiencing surrender and running personal risk.

4. *'Striving for fullness of life':* striving for a worthwhile, perfect life. This occurs in the spiritual perspective for example in:
   Phase 2: Initial action on an issue – Innovation is considered an existential necessity, aimed at reviving one's own vitality and power
   Phase 3: Developing a collective praxis of innovation - Changing internal and external relationships

5. *'Experiencing the transcendent or ultimate reality':* this is the only element that rarely surfaces in the cases of social innovation. There are only one or two references to this kind of experience in the six cases that were used in this part of the study. One of them is the following: *'Well, that makes you quiet for a moment. And then you experience the mystery. I felt that very strongly then…At that moment you feel a kind of Sternstunde in the flow of your biography. You get offered a possibility to do something. You cannot enforce such a thing. You are being offered an opening and then you feel: now we will put our heart and soul into it!'* (S2, pp. 20-21).

So the spiritual perspective on social innovation has four of the five typical elements of spirituality. The element of 'experiencing the transcendent of ultimate reality' is almost missing in the perspective. However, 'experiencing the transcendent' may be present in the cases in a more subtle way than clearly noticeable, recognizable and/or expressed experiences of the transcendent. It may be present in other experiences in a latent or mild way, as we noted in section 1.5. Furthermore, how the transcendent is or can be experienced depends on one's conception of the transcendent. To explicate or to disclose the transcendent in experiences requires a carefully

considered additional interpretive initiative, for example a school of spirituality. An initiative of this kind may enable us to identify and explore experiences in which the transcendent may be disclosed, thus bringing to light more experiences of the transcendent than we are able to discern at first sight.

A school of spirituality may take the spiritual perspective to another level in another way. An elaborate recurring pattern may be traced in the actions and experiences of social innovators that integrates the separate elements of the perspective (e.g. the biography of socially innovative people, their (extraordinary) experiences, the ethics involved and issues of meaning and purpose) in a meaningful and coherent, logical whole, e.g. in the form of a path of spiritual developmental or an (elementary) spiritual praxis. An interpretive initiative of this kind may help us discover this integrating whole.

2.6.   Limitations of this part of the study

When the spiritual perspective on social innovation was developed, it was not difficult to imagine what could have been done if there were no limitations that had to be respected: 1) other stakeholders could have been involved in the interviews: 2) a comparative analysis would have contributed to the validity of the perspective; and 3) other research methods could have been applied.

However, there were limitations that needed to be dealt with. In this section I will discuss these limitations briefly and which choices have been made for this part the study.

A first limitation of this study is that for each of the six innovative organizations one social innovator has been interviewed, which means that the interview has been focused on their lived spirituality. Three of the six socially innovative people that have been interviewed for this part of the study worked in small groups of co-initiators. It would be interesting to interview more or all members of such a group to get a more complete picture of the actions and experiences of the initiators and of their interactions between their lived spiritualities. However, this was not possible because in the case of the three groups at the time of the interviews the co-initiatiors had passed away.

It would be equally interesting to involve other groups in the study, e.g.: other organizational members in case of an innovation in an organization that exists already at the time of the innovation; or a second generation of organizational members that extends or sustains the innovation. By means of a series of interviews, for example, one could try to find out how they relate to the motivation of the original innovators.

Secondly, it would be interesting to compare the successful socially innovative people of this part of the study with 'regular' entrepreneurs or with unsuccessful social innovators. Are there differences between these groups, for example concerning their lived spirituality? If so, is their spirituality related to the (lack of) success of their innovation or their business?

A third limitation of this part of this study concerns the research methods that have been used. The socially innovative people were interviewed. Data collection could be enriched by using other research tools, e.g. participatory observation and document analysis.

All of these options might have contributed to the results of this part of the study but they were not integrated into the design of this study for two reasons.

First of all, there were practical reasons in terms of available time and resources. Within these constraints this study has had to balance out studying multiple cases of social innovation or studying one or two cases in-depth. In this study the multiple-case approach has been chosen which is typical of the procedure of theoretical sampling and analytical induction, as presented in section 2.2. In the case of theoretical sampling one chooses the cases that one expects to contribute the most to the analysis (i.e.: successful cases of social innovation). Analytical induction is an interpretive activity and not a statistical exercise. Data collection can be finished if one reaches the point of saturation with regards to new data. A strategy of studying a number of cases, that for example covers some themes of the agenda of social innovation, was expected to contribute more to the analysis than one or two in-depth case studies that cover but one theme of social innovation.

Secondly, the topic of spirituality and social innovation is a largely unexplored territory. The spiritual perspective on it is the result of grounded theory research. Therefore it is important to keep in mind that it is not *'a final word'* but remains a *'tentative claim requiring searching examination'* (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 174). One cannot expect a complete and perfect picture from one research effort. Follow-up research needs to be done, for example according into the aforementioned options, which will allow for testing the perspective, extending it, correcting it and improving it.

3. A school of spirituality for social innovation

Summary

In this chapter we examine research question 2: Does answering research question 1 provide input for selecting a school of spirituality that 1) may help to (further) disclose and articulate experiences of the transcendent in the practice of social innovation; and 2) has the potential to provide input for the development of a prototype of a method for spiritual formation of people who work in the context of social innovation? I will argue that Sölle's liberation theology, that surfaced as a useful theoretical concept when we answered research question 1, is a conspicuous candidate that deserves further investigation. Therefore the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology is systematically described according to Waaijman's methodological design for spirituality research. This description will help us to create a clear picture of this school of spirituality. It will enable us to answer the two evaluation questions of this chapter. Exploring and evaluating Sölle's liberation theology does not mean that her work and ideas are approached uncritically (or promoted). The systematic description also results in a critical evaluation of Sölle's spirituality. Sölle, for example, has not developed an operationalized spiritual praxis that one can live by, which is a shortcoming of this study. Another example of a flaw is Sölle's openness to other religions, which is sympathetic and opportune in today's world but also raises profound theological questions that remain unanswered.

Despite a number of limitations the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology has a concept of transcendence with a significant potential to disclose and explicate experiences of the transcendent in the practice of social innovation. Its path of spiritual development integrates many elements of the spiritual perspective on social innovation into one 'logic' and coherent whole. Sölle's hermeneutics and her idea of the *vita mixta* can also be solid input for the development of a method for spiritual formation. This makes this school of spirituality an interesting candidate to continue working with

in the next step of this study: developing a prototype of a method for spiritual formation for people who work in the field of social innovation.

3.1.   Continuation with Sölle's liberation theology

In the previous chapter I have developed a spiritual perspective on social innovation. It turned out that one typical element of spirituality was almost missing from this perspective: experiencing the transcendent. It was proposed that a well-considered choice for a school of spirituality might help to disclose and explicate experiences of the transcendent in the practice of social innovation. I also proposed that a school of spirituality might also have the potential to provide input for the development of a method for spiritual formation, e.g.: a spiritual praxis or a trajectory of spiritual development and growth for people who are active in the field of social innovation. This concerns the second research question of this study and I will try to answer it by investigating if the spirituality of the liberation theology of Sölle is a school of spirituality that has this potential. This spirituality surfaced when we answered the first research question and proved to be a useful theoretical concept in the development of the spiritual perspective on social innovation. There are a number reasons why this spirituality is a promising candidate that may provide input for the development of a method for spiritual formation.

First of all, when I developed the spiritual perspective on social innovation this spirituality proved to be a powerful theoretical concept for structuring the empirical data from the interviews with socially innovative people. It seems as if there is a connection between Sölle's liberation theology and social innovation that is worth further investigation.

Secondly, the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology is interesting for this study because its stance on socio-political analysis and reform coincides significantly with the agenda of social innovation, as will become clear in the following sections of this chapter.

Thirdly, Sölle's target audience is the Western world, instead of the people, organizations and governments in developing countries, as is the case with Latin American liberation theology.

Furthermore, the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology is a spirituality with a specific view of the transcendent. This may help us to disclose and explicate experiences of the transcendent that may be typical of the praxis of social innovation.

A fifth reason for taking up the challenge of this chapter with Sölle is that she specifically focuses on social praxis and, in her own way, less on theological or spiritual reflection and analysis. This may be an advantage because in the following step of this study (chapter 4) I will attempt to develop a method for spiritual formation of socially innovative people. A spirituality that is explicitly focused on praxis may be more useful than a systematic theology or a spirituality that has a strong focus on contemplation for example.

A sixth reason to explore and evaluate Sölle is her openness to people with non-Christian worldviews and her readiness to absorb inspirational sources that come from other spiritual traditions. In today's pluralistic world this may be an important quality.

Finally, Vroom argues that if one investigates a school of spirituality, for practical-methodological reasons one often studies a specific representative of a school of spirituality (Vroom, 2006, p. 280). Choosing the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology instead of liberation or political theologies in general for example, is also a matter of making this study more feasible and specific.

Instead of exploring and evaluating one specific spirituality, it would have been even more interesting to see if two or more spiritualities could be of any help in the field of social innovation. Eventually, after carefully considering these alternatives, one might choose to continue the study with the spirituality that seems the most promising, or design a comparative continuation of this study in which two or three spiritualities are transformed into two or three methods for spiritual formation. Unfortunately these options far exceed the resources that are available for this study. Therefore we need to limit ourselves to a feasible single spirituality that deserves closer examination.

Therefore the challenge of this chapter is to get a clear picture of the mixture of ideas, spirituality, life and work of a socially engaged theologian-activist; a mixture that has been shaped during a period of at least 40 working years[11]. Subsequently one can evaluate whether this spirituality 1) helps to disclose and explicate experiences of the transcendent in the practice of social innovation; 2) has the potential to provide input for the development of a method for spiritual formation.

For the sake of clarity I want to emphasize that the choice of the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology is motivated by the reasons that I have brought forward here. Working with a specific spirituality may give the impression that one is necessarily an adherent of it and that one wishes to promote it (uncritically). Some might even think that working with a specific spirituality implies rejecting other spiritualities and worldviews. Of course this is not the case. Living, working and doing research in a pluralistic world requires a carefully balanced attitude of one's own identity, openness, curiosity and dedicated focus on the one hand and critical distance on the other. Choosing to explore and evaluate Sölle's liberation theology does not mean that I will work with her ideas uncritically or promote them uncritically. Neither does it mean that there are not other spiritualities or worldviews that may be valuable for this study. Several authors have been critical about certain aspects of Sölle's work. I refer to section 3.9 for a critical evaluation of Sölle's spirituality.

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[11] If we look at Sölle, and at the theological branch that she stems from with the help of Waaijman's categorization of basic forms of spirituality (Waaijman, 2002), we can classify her spirituality and its broader stream of political and liberation theology as counter movements at the time of their emergence, i.e. in the 1960s. Liberation theology quickly gained ground in the 1960s and 1970s but seemed to lose ground in the 1980s when in Latin America new, young democracies started to replace authoritarian regimes. It is not easy to assess quickly and accurately how influential or 'big' liberation theology is at present. The current state of liberation theology is relevant because a spiritual counter movement can evolve into a school of spirituality, and it may take a number of years for a spirituality to mature, but it may also dissolve. Has liberation theology developed into a mature school of spirituality? Has Sölle's liberation theology grown into an advanced school of spirituality? These questions will not be answered in this study. But, whether we intend to or not, some parts of this study may actually contribute to this process, regardless of what stage that process is in.

3.2.   Methodology

In response to the challenge formulated at the end of section 3.1, I turn to Waaijman's methodological design for spirituality research. Describing the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology according to this method will help us to create a clear picture of it and will enable us to answer the two evaluation questions of this chapter. Waaijman's design is a cycle that consists of four lines that are 'intertwined' and 'presuppose' (Waaijman, 2002, p. 597) each other:

1. Form-descriptive research:
    a. describing the contours and core moments of a spirituality by exploring the following topics: historical context and topography, its witnesses and sources, goals and ideals, spiritual practices, configuration of virtues, and forms of reflection (Waaijman, 2002, pp. 646-651)
    b. describing the external horizon of a spirituality by exploring the following topics: socio-cultural situation, communities and the position of the individual, attitude toward the context, context of memory and the horizon of expectation (Waaijman, 2002, pp. 651-658)
    c. describing the internal horizon of a spirituality by exploring the following topics: processes of appropriation, the practice of the virtues, prayer and mysticism (Waaijman, 2002, pp. 658-687);
2. Hermeneutic research: the praxis of the spiritual reading of a school of spirituality: how do the spiritual text and its reader tune in to each other? What is the required reading attitude, how and when is the mystery of the text revealed and what kind of impact does it have? (Waaijman, 2002, pp. 690-771);
3. Systematic research: the systematic reflection in a school of spirituality: forms, styles or modes, issues and purpose of the spiritual conference in which critical articulation and examination take place, and the networks in which systematic-scientific research into a spirituality is being conducted and the issues that are being discussed (Waaijman, 2002, pp. 775- 867);

4. Mystagogic research: the praxis of spiritual accompaniment of a school of spirituality: the position of the accompanist and the person being accompanied[12], the required attitude and competencies of the person being accompanied and the accompanist, the purpose and practices of accompaniment and the way in which the biography of the one being accompanied is constructed and mystagogically interpreted (Waaijman, 2002, pp. 870-942).

By following this method an overview of Sölle's spirituality is created but it is not an in-depth analysis of her theological work or of some aspects of it. It is a systematic sketch of the spirituality of her theology and work, made with the aim of answering the evaluation questions of this chapter.

One of the evaluation questions concerns the disclosure and explication of the transcendent in experiences. Therefore I have added a section (section 3.5.6) that is dedicated to Sölle's concept of the transcendent, to the form-descriptive research.

3.3.   Form-descriptive research: contours and core moments

In this section I will describe the outlines and key moments of Sölle's spirituality: a brief description of the second half of the 20th century that Sölle lived and worked in, the sources that are available to explore her spirituality and a first exploration of the purposes, motives, virtues and modes of reflection that make up this school of spirituality.

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[12] There are various terms in use for people who use or undergo a method for spiritual formation, e.g.: myste, student and 'the one being accompanied' (Waaijman, 2002, pp. 870-942). The same goes for people who assist or guide others in their spiritual formation, e.g.: teacher, instructor, counselor, accompanist ((Waaijman, 2002, p. 873), maieut (Van Campen, 2009, p. 92) and mystagogue. In order to avoid unnecessary associations with specific religious traditions or schools of spirituality I will use two neutral terms: 'participant' for the one that is using the method of spiritual formation for his or her own development and 'facilitator' for the one that is helping or guiding the participant.

3.3.1. Historical context
Sölle's working life roughly spans the second half of the twentieth century. In Europe this period was influenced by the aftermath of the Second World War: the Cold War. Rivalry between a communist East and a capitalist West resulted in ongoing political tensions and a nuclear arms race. Post-war decolonization sometimes fuels these tensions. Another divide marks the second half of the twentieth century: North vs. South; i.e.: rich vs. poor, developed vs. underdeveloped and powerful vs. powerless. In the Western world societies see the rise of youth culture, popular music and women's emancipation.

In this period Christianity is also on the move. The Second Vatican Council of the early 1960s stimulates theological renewal that leads, among other things, to political theologies. However, these renewals cannot reverse the increasing secularization that is typical of Christianity in 20th-century Western Europe.

Towards the end of the century statistics such as the Human Development Index cautiously reveal a worldwide increase in life expectancy, education and per capita income. Awareness of serious environmental problems and ecological challenges grows stronger. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the German *Wende* in 1989 prelude the last decade of the 20th century which is characterized by the spread of neoliberal capitalism around the world and the eruption of a new conflict: 'Jihad vs. McWorld' (Barber, 1995).

3.3.2. Sources
The theological work of Sölle spans about four decades (1959 – 2003) and is quite extensive. In her biography of Sölle, Wind (2008, pp. 209-213) lists a total of 69 publications. The largest part of this oeuvre has attracted a lot of attention from 'nonacademic church readers and audiences' (Pinnock, 2003, p. 3). For Sölle it was a deliberate choice to target these groups and not to engage heavily in the academic, theological discourse. She deliberately focused more on 'lived faith and contemporary praxis' (Pinnock, 2003, p. 3). Korte notes that Sölle did not write an impressive or profound work and did not develop a systematic theology (Korte, 2006, p. 162). This is not to say that her publications are fragmented and go in every

direction but they do not readily provide an academic, systemized version of her theology and spirituality. According to Fierro this is typical of many writings in the field of political and liberation theology. They are in the form of essays, tend to be repetitive and lack in-depth treatment (Fierro, 1977, p. 130). Most of Sölle's books consist of a series of reflections (of three to ten pages) that are built around a central theme, illustrated with a mixture of personal anecdotes and experiences, critical observations of today's society and deepened with theological or philosophical citations, ideas, and intertextual dialogue (Aschrich, 2006, p. 215). It is impossible to select the most important works from the 69 publications. '*Mystik und Widerstand: <du stilles Geschrei>*' (published in 1997) is often referred to as Sölle's *magnum opus*. Other publications that are mentioned somewhat more often than others, are: *Stellvertretung* (published in 1965), *Politischer Theologie* (year 1971), *Leiden* (year 1973), *Realisation* (published in 1971), and *Die Hinreise* (published in 1975).

Typical of Sölle's writings is her theopoetry. Instead of speaking of God in a discursive way, as theology often does, she wanted to speak of God and of theological concepts in an experiential, personal way. For Sölle poetry is a language that enables us to disclose the deepest truths in our real-life experiences. Poetry is a way of communicating about and with this hidden reality. Mystical language, poetry and prayer blend in Sölle's theopoetry (Korte, 2006, p. 189). According to Aschrich Sölle's mystical language is full of nature and body metaphors (Aschrich, 2006, p. 261) and brings into play various spiritual traditions (Aschrich, 2006, p. 220). This may strike the reader as somewhat eclectic (Aschrich, 2006, p. 220) (Korte, 2006, p. 185) and anarchistic (Aschrich, 2006, p. 220).

During her lifetime Sölle did not receive a lot of academic attention. Her death in 2003 sparked a modest renewed academic interest in her work which resulted in a handful of studies and publications, e.g.: Pinnock (2003), Bouckaert (2004), Prinz (2006), Aschrich (2006), Korte (2006) and Wind (2008).

3.3.3. *Goals and ideals*
It is challenging to see if one can identify consistent goals and ideals in a working life that spans over 40 years. Indeed people's motives, attitude and

ideas may change over the course of time. According to Aschrich Sölle's development consists of four phases (Aschrich, 2006, p. 19): 1) a liberal God-is-dead-theology, 2) political theology, 3) liberation theology with an eco-feminist focus, and 4) mysticism. However, this development is not characterized by one or more ruptures. Aschrich sees a consistent, gradual development and extension of Sölle's theology, activism and spirituality (Aschrich, 2006, p. 29). Her 1973 dissertation 'Realisation' for example already contained many elements that would be elaborated in the following years. Prinz (2006) also confirms consistency in Sölle's work when it concerns her biblical hermeneutic approach. So we may assume that there is enough consistency in Sölle's oeuvre to speak of an objective or an ideal. This ideal or objective might be labeled, in Sölle's own words, *'a democratized mysticism'* (Sölle, 1998, p. 16). A spirituality is a complex of interdependent elements that cannot be schematized in an easy way. As a point of departure for a compact description of the motives and ideals of Sölle's spirituality, it may be best to start with the concrete situations that people live in. Sölle is interested in the actual lives, the real-life problems and the pains and joys of people, and not in abstract, existential analysis. Aschrich mentions contextuality as a typical feature of Sölle's work (Aschrich, 2006, p. 21). Contextuality for Sölle means being interested in experiences (Aschrich, 2006, p. 21, pp. 142-143), emotions and corporeality (Aschrich, 2006, p. 21, pp. 142-143, p. 266) and in the integrality of individuals, all people and creation (Aschrich, 2006, p. 21, p. 129). Prinz also recognizes the focus on contextuality in Sölle's hermeneutics: biblical spirituality can only develop itself in a proper way if the biblical text encounters people in concrete socio-political, economic and cultural situations (Prinz, 2006, p. 271). This implies an interdisciplinary (integral) approach instead of a purely spiritual or theological one.

It has been Sölle's objective to develop a shared language with which our profound real-life experiences and emotions can be expressed; a language that makes us more sensitive to the profoundness of our everyday experiences; a language that is a passage from personal subjectivity to common experientialism (Aschrich, 2006, p. 25). Sölle is convinced that if we are existentially insensitive and speechless, we are incomplete (Sölle, 1989, p. 15) and cold (Sölle, 1989, p. 16). For Sölle the language of religion

is the most important language that is available to express human experiences. This language is not discursive but narrative-experiential (Aschrich, 2006, p. 244). Sölle turns to the Bible as an important source of existential language. According to Sölle literature is also a place where we can find traces of the things that religious language means to express. Therefore religion, Scripture, literature, poetry and real life are highly interconnected and Sölle has always made an effort to explore and develop these connections (Aschrich, 2006, p. 17, p. 266). This resulted in Sölle's theopoetic speaking about God. According to Korte this is what marks Sölle: she tried to shape a contemporary, accessible and critical spiritual culture (Korte, 2006, p. 192).

But Sölle is not only interested in finding the words to express our experiences. She is even more interested in socio-political praxis. In the interaction between experience and theopoetry orthopraxis arises (Aschrich, 2006, pp. 142-143). For Aschrich Sölle is most remarkable when it comes to her radical, lifelong search and struggle for justice and for her efforts to find a new way of speaking about God in connection with this struggle (Aschrich, 2006, p. 272). Sölle teaches us that besides the power of rational analysis, we need the extra power and inspiration that mysticism can give us to really get on our feet and start acting (Bouckaert, 2004, p. 193).

Sölles theology is very Christocentric (Sölle, 1995, p. 54). For her Jesus is God's clearest, ultimate voice (Aschrich, 2006, p. 269). In Sölle's view God is not an omnipotent, theistic '*deus ex machina* but rather the one that is hanging on the cross' (Oliver, 2003, p. 224). Socio-political action and mysticism meet in Christ, who is not without context but who suffers (Sölle, 1989, p. 26). Being sensitive to the suffering of others and of ourselves may empower us to mean something for the world and to make an attempt to improve the world. Just as God incarnated in Christ, the Gospel incarnates in us if compassion makes us resist suffering and injustice.

3.3.4. *Spiritual practices*
Sölle's spiritual practice is a combination of politics, theology, mysticism, activism, struggle and contemplation (Wind, 2008, p. 127) (Korte. 2006, p. 163). The basic elements of this praxis were already present in the political night-prayers that she helped to organize from 1968: 1) information,

investigating issues and the situation that one lives in; 2) exchanging ideas and discussion; 3) considering alternatives for action and taking up one's responsibilities (Sölle, 1983, pp. 110-111). In the following years this praxis was more theoretically developed and refined but it also lost it structured, recurrent, collective and perhaps liturgical character. Sölle's hermeneutics became more refined and its connection to spirituality matured. The keywords here are: contextuality (Aschrich, 2006, p. 266), double contextualization (Prinz, 2006), reading, reciting and meditating on mystical texts so that they become part of who we are (Bouckaert, 2004, p. 196) and groups that experiment with alternative lifestyles (Bouckaert, 2004, p. 198). It is interesting that in her 1987 New York diary (Sölle, 1989, p. 6) Sölle, while in the midst of social activism, blames herself for having no (spiritual) discipline and no rule that she can live by. However, her diary gives an interesting inside look into the spirituality that she lived. It consists of: studying-reading-writing; writing poems; teaching; discussing with students, colleagues and friends; attending church services; participating in ritual and liturgical experiments; campaigning; supporting and encouraging social activists; listening to music; enjoying nature; and keeping a diary according to certain rules (write about today, write every day, be honest about yourself, be aware of small instances of happiness and name them (Sölle, 1989, pp. 6-7)). So Sölle engaged in quite a number of activities with an activist and spiritual nature. Together they make up a spiritual praxis but she is right in blaming herself for not having developed these activities into a balanced, methodical and daily (spiritual) praxis.

3.3.5. *Configuration of virtues*

Sölle has proposed various sets of virtues in her writings. A trio from 'The silent cry' represents one of her final sets: I-less, non-violent, non-possessory (Sölle, 1998, p. 272) (Aschrich, 2006, p. 254). These three virtues make room in our lives for solidarity with others, peace and fair economic relations. Developing these virtues is by no means a guarantee for a peaceful and harmonious life. One becomes more sensitive to the sufferings of others and must endure setbacks and mockery. Therefore it is not surprising that Sölle has developed a religious approach to suffering. We can develop ourselves in our dealing with suffering up to a point where it

empowers us to act in the world and try to improve things (Aschrich, 2006, p. 53).

3.3.6. *Forms of reflection*

According to Sölle Western Christianity traditionally distinguishes the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*. The detached *vita contemplativa* has been valued as higher and more spiritual than the *vita activa* (Sölle, 1998, p. 279). Sölle's wants to overcome this distinction with her concept of the *vita mixta*: a learning praxis where socially engaged action on the one hand and an inspiring and contextualized mode of theology on the other meet as critical friends. Sölle is critical of academic theology that, because of its highly regarded objectivity, is no longer socially engaged and therefore it is defenseless against aggressive, totalitarian attacks such as the one by the Nazis in the 1930s.

In the *vita mixta* action, critical discussion and learning evolve around societal issues that socially engaged groups are trying to address. Other scientific disciplines need to be involved in order to analyze and understand the situations and the issues that one is working on. However, this rational orientation needs an additional source of inspiration that reminds us of the perspective on freedom for all (Sölle, 1998, pp. 275-276). It is the task of theology to provide the language and the visions that prevent people from falling asleep in the prison of Western capitalist consumer society (Sölle, 1998, p. 275) where rationality and feasibility have become dominant.

3.4.   Form-descriptive research: the external horizon

The outer horizon of a school of spirituality investigates how it relates to its context. This horizon discloses a complicated interplay between Sölle's spirituality on the one hand and on the other socio-cultural trends in Germany, Europe and worldwide, political and economic developments, the rise of ecological awareness and post-World War II theological trends. After having explored this interplay we focus on how Sölle's spirituality has been

lived by Sölle and by the people and groups that are connected to it. The individual is the next focal point of the exploration of the external horizon. It explicates Sölle's anthropology and man's position in the world. The perspective on the outer horizon of Sölle's spirituality eventually widens with the historical events and memories that have shaped and colored it. It widens even further by investigating Sölle's view of the future: her eschatology.

3.4.1. Socio-cultural situation

In this section we will explore the social-cultural situation in which the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology emerged and how it relates to this context. It is evidently impossible to give an exhaustive account of all trends and events of the period between World War II, when Sölle was a youngster, and the infamous '9/11', two years before Sölle died in 2003. The following outline is mainly based on the trends and events that Sölle herself, or other authors who have written about Sölle (Prinz (2006), Korte (2006) and Wind (2008)), mention as being influential for her work.

Word War II - Sölle's life and work is marked by the drama and horrors of the Second World War. Born in 1929 she witnessed the war and, more consciously, the first post-war years. While many Germans try to return to business as usual as soon as possible after the war (Wind, 2008, pp. 41-42), for Sölle (and for many others) the big question is: how could the unspeakable tragedy of the Third Reich have happened? How could Auschwitz have happened? In the 1930s most major German traditions and institutions proved to be incapable of recognizing the true nature of the Nazi ideology or of stopping its march towards power and annihilation. After the *Shoah* who dared speaking of an omnipotent, all-good God? As Prinz puts it: *'For the German Christian, this was and remains the important question: how is it possible to envision God in the experience of the utter human destruction and suffering that was made possible, at least partially, through the collaboration of a Christian faith and moral system?'* (Prinz, 2006, p. 25) Sölle herself testifies that she wrestled with these questions during her secondary school and during her study at the university (Sölle, 1989, p. 91). Prinz (2006, p. 16) and Korte (2006, pp. 166-168) confirm that for Sölle this has been a fundamental drive in her work.

Worldwide - In the decades that follow World War II, the big question in global politics is: will socialism or liberalism get the upper hand (Fierro, 1977, p. 81)? In Germany the East-West divide painfully symbolizes this tension. For Sölle, living in West Germany, the post-war German re-armament, the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, the Vietnam war, discontent with the rise of a consumer society, the German peace movement and outrage over poverty in the Third World awaken and fuel her political awareness and social engagement. Visits to Vietnam (1972) and several visits to Latin America confront her with the struggles of 'the oppressed', make her more sensitive to suffering and for the power and hope that liberation movements can represent, which are typical of a number of developing countries at the time. She realizes that the suffering Christ and resurrection are really to be found in conflict areas such as Vietnam (Wind, 2008, p. 90). For Sölle the German peace movement represents the conversion of a people and a sign of God's involvement in history (Sölle, 1983, p. 189).

The 1960s and 1970s can be described as a period of optimism, social change and reform and as a period in which the political left has a significant voice in the public political debate. However, in the late 1970s one slowly discovers that the world has become too complex to be simply divided into two groups: the oppressed and the oppressors. Globalization complicates domestic and international relationships and left-wing engagement becomes increasingly academic and intellectual (Bouckaert, 2004, p. 192). Sölle mockingly calls this 'Tuscan socialism' (Bouckaert, 2004, p. 193). These developments slowly result in a sense of crisis (Sölle, 1989, p. 5) by the time of the mid-1980s. The peace movement suffers defeats in the nuclear arms race, revolts in Latin America corrupt into deadly civil wars and Sölle meets a lot of burnt-out activists (Sölle, 1989, p. 5). On top of that the Roman Catholic Church starts opposing liberation theology in the mid 1980s[13].

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[13] For example by means of the 'INSTRUCTION ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE "THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION"', issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1984.

Economy - The period of the 1960s until the beginning of the 21st century is characterized by unprecedented technological advancement. It fuels periods of economic growth that alternate with recessions and economic crisis. In the Western world market economies thrive on competition, which in some respects lead to a race-to-the-bottom. On the one hand in many (developing) countries there are positive trends, e.g.: participation in education increases, average life expectancy rises, infant mortality and world hunger decline, per capita income increases and many countries become democracies (Norberg, 2003). Impressive welfare states are developed in Western countries during this period. On the other hand there is a widespread perception that people are becoming alienated, lonely and mentally-spiritually unfulfilled. For developing countries it can be hard to catch up with economies that are far more advanced, more powerful and richer than themselves. This brings some of these countries to reconsider their economic strategy. A number of them, such as Taiwan, adopt a Western, free market-oriented approach. Latin America has high expectations for development aid (*desarrollismo*) from Western countries at the beginning of the 1950s. However, it becomes clear that the ideal of planned development cannot live up to its expectations. Latin American countries eventually feel that rich, Western, industrialized countries want to mold them to the model, needs and vested interests of the Western world. Critics from Latin America start to advocate a thorough cultural, social, economic and political analysis of the problems. That approach gives way to the replacement of 'development' by 'liberation': a (revolutionary) rupture with structures that disadvantage groups, classes and persons.

Sölle tends to turn her attention to the downsides of economic development and the groups that are left behind in the whirlpool of global economics, e.g.: poverty, starvation, inequality and alienation.

Feminism - Another significant trend that has influenced Sölle is the second wave of feminism. This wave starts in the 1950s and develops into an international women's rights and emancipation movement. It successfully addresses several legal issues that disadvantage and subordinate women, e.g. family law and abortion law. Out of this second wave a wide variety of feminist branches and movements has emerged, e.g.: ecofeminism, post-colonial feminism, anti-pornography feminism and feminist epistemology.

Sölle has always sympathized with the feminist movement. For her the liberation of women is one of the many struggles that are going on, alongside with struggles for the liberation of other groups. Sölle opposes a feminism that solely focuses on the emancipation of women and that excludes men (Wind, 2008, pp. 155-156). *'Truly, God needs all her children'*; i.e. both women and men (Sölle, 1989, p. 45).

Ecology - In the 1960s environmental awareness starts to develop. It is triggered by pollution, aversion to the consumer lifestyle and by new, alternative lifestyles. The 1972 Club of Rome report 'Limits to Growth' gives a developmental push to the environmental movement and to a general awareness that ever-growing economies will eventually deplete natural resources. In the 1980s ideas about sustainable development start to spread, undoubtedly accelerated by environmental problems such as acid rain and the hole in the ozone layer and by persistent protests against nuclear energy. International climate treaties demonstrate that in the 1990s governments are becoming increasingly interested in and concerned with environmental issues. In this period environmental policies and innovations are becoming mainstream in the business community and businesses are starting to take up what interest groups put on the agenda in the preceding decades. In the first decade of the 21st century the environmental debate is dominated by climate change. For companies, sustainability increasingly becomes a 'license to grow' and a sound business case. New ideas about circular economy appear on the stage.

Sölle has moved along with the interest in environmental issues and ecology. In the mid 1980s themes that are connected to ecology and creation start to appear prominently in her publications, e.g.: 'To work and to love. A theology of creation' (Sölle, 1984). Sölle develops two connected lines of thought. First of all, processes and events of liberation are a manifestation of continuing creation. Man is God's co-creator in this process (Aschrich, 2006, p. 102). Secondly, God appears in the world again and again. God and creation cannot be separated. For Sölle this emphasizes the incarnation of God. Day to day life is the sacrament (Aschrich, 2006, p. 263). These two basic ideas influence Sölle's anthropology (Aschrich, 2006, pp. 127-128). Man is on the one hand God's liberating co-creator and on the other hand he is a limited and mortal creature. Man is a bodily, physical and social being

that belongs to the earth. The earth does not belong to man. Finally, the earth belongs to God. Experiencing, enjoying and contemplating the splendor of nature become important features of Sölle's spirituality that have enriched her mystical language (Aschrich, 2006, p. 129, pp. 260-261). But the *unio mystica* with nature does not end in the bliss of esotericism. Being absorbed in creation alienates one from the world that is being dominated by money and violence. This prepares one for resistance (Sölle, 1998, p. 148).

Fin de siècle - The 20th century seems to close with a happy ending. In 1989 Eastern and Western Germany are reunited and in 1991 the Soviet Union is dissolved. A wave of democratization, liberation and optimism moves across Eastern Europe. In South Africa the system of apartheid is abolished, which is regarded as a victory for the anti-apartheid movement. During the 1990s the spread of neoliberalism seems to accelerate and intensify globalization. These developments meet resistance and protests from the anti-globalist movement. Sölle too remains very critical of the globalized, economic, sinful and extremely violent 'giant machine' (Sölle, 1997, p. 268) that we live in and which has made us alienated, addicted and spiritually dead. Sölle lives to witness the 9/11-attacks in the USA that brings a newborn conflict to the foreground: jihadist violence vs. the Western world.

Theological developments - Although Sölle has been called a pioneer and a leader, we should not isolate her from the theological *Zeitgeist* that she lived in and helped to create. In the second half of the 20th century a number of major theological developments took place that help us to appreciate and comprehend Sölle in a better way. Fierro identifies two major trends in theology. From 1930 until approximately 1965 an anthropological shift takes place (Fierro, 1977, p. 4). Theological attention moves from dogma and God to man, his spirituality, his socio-economic situation and his relationships with fellow men and God. Secondly, during the 1950s there is a lot of optimism for the significance of Christianity (Fierro, 1997, pp. 65-67). Some expect a sort of Christian social revolution, e.g.: Teilhard de Chardin philosophizes about a fusion of world religions into a new one with a Christian focus, Billy Graham organizes worldwide evangelization campaigns and prominent Christian intellectuals such as Maritain hope for a new phase in which Christianity can unleash its full potential. The Second

Vatican Council stimulates the spirit of theological renewal and in this climate a new generation of theologians emerges. Around that time Moltmann connects the church with politics and society in a theology of hope. Metz makes the same connection along the lines of suffering, Christian discipleship and a hermeneutics of danger. In 1965 Cox publishes 'The Secular City' in which he asserts that we do not meet God in a high and abstract 'Thou' but in a worldly, plural 'you'. The 1968 Episcopal conference in Medellin, Columbia, marks the 'official' start of liberation theology.

In this theological climate the so-called political theologies are born. Aschrich considers Sölle, Metz and Moltmann to be the founders of (Western) political theology (Aschrich, 2006, p. 15, p. 70). The names of other prominent liberation theologians should also be mentioned, e.g.: Boff, Câmara, Cardenal, Gutiérrez, Schillebeekx and Sobrino.

According to Fierro political theologies have a number of shared characteristics. First of all, political theologies no longer want to see faith as a non-committal system of ideas, dogmas and teachings. Instead they want to move from orthodoxy to orthopraxis. Faith is a truth that has to be put into practice: *'The ultimate horizon of faith takes on flesh and blood in the penultimate horizon of the political.'* (Fierro, 1977, p. 30) The New Christendom movement that preceded the political theologies took theology and dogma as their point of departure and derived from them social ethics and political praxis. Political theologies want to overcome the distinction between dogma and praxis and principally starts in the political realm.

Secondly, political theologies do not think that there are Christian or biblical solutions for societal problems (Fierro, 1977, p. 71). One cannot use the Bible, the Gospel or other Christian sources to develop Christian models of society or Christian political ideas. The concept of 'the Kingdom of God' for example cannot be translated into political ideas or societal models. *'There is no Christian politics…there are simply Christians in politics.'* (Gollwitzer, 1970, p. 31) Faith can inspire and motivate people to enter the political arena.

This is related to a third characteristic of political theologies. They do not present fixed or everlasting solutions to the societal problems that they address. Their mission is to criticize, protest and inculpate the wrongs of a

society and to inspire and integrate efforts to change (Fierro, 1977, pp. 23-28).

Fourthly, Marxism is the humus of the political theologies that emerge in the 1960s. Political theologies accept and use Marxist theories and analysis to some degree. Sölle for instance does so but she rejects being called a Marxist. For her Marxism is a scientific, analytical tool that helps to understand the world. She finds it strange to call someone who uses that tool a Marxist (Sölle, 1989, pp. 97-98). In the 1950s and 1960s there was a dialogue between Christianity and Marxism. However, the crushing of the Prague Spring by the Warsaw Pact in 1968 was a serious blow for this dialogue, Sölle recalls (Sölle, 1989, p. 103). Around the same time many of the Vatican II reforms ground to a halt but faith-based grassroots reforms and initiatives continue.

Finally, contrary to older or other theologies the political theologies are optimistic about the feasibility of achieving significant, structural changes and improvement in society (Fierro, 1977, p. 74). Increased political, self-reflective awareness and technological innovations fuel this optimism. Other theologies are more cautious, unpretentious or pessimistic on the point of intervening in society.

Interest in the political theologies and the theology of liberation dwindled in the 1990s. Other trends emerged on the Christian theological scene, e.g.: the rise of evangelicalism, attempts to divert the decline of mainstream Protestantism (e.g. by means of church planting initiatives), and the broadening of academic theology to religious studies. In 2011 one of the theoretical founders of liberation theology, Frei Betto, stated that liberation theology had been wiped away (Blankendaal, 2011). Pope Francis however may be rehabilitating and re-appreciating liberation theology, for example with an official meeting with Gutiérrez in September 2013.

3.4.2. *Communities*

The communities in which the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology is practiced and lived are protest groups, groups of activists, church-related activists and base ecclesial communities. These groups are the places where actual resistance is being practiced, discussed and experimented with, where victories are celebrated, where defeats are mourned and where patience is

tested and developed. 'New York Diary' (Sölle, 1989) gives an honest, inside view of some of the groups that Sölle has committed herself to for a short or longer period of time around 1987. Sölle complains that Christian, left-wing groups are weak, small and divided (Sölle, 1989, p. 8) and that church-related, social activist groups fear being absorbed by political movements (Sölle, 1989, p. 71).

Sölle explicitly states that groups are the sociological model of the New Testament. It is not individuals or the masses that open new perspectives (Sölle, 1998, p. 270). According to Sölle the Gospel makes new groups emerge that voluntarily and critically try to initiate change and give hope (Sölle, 1998, p. 271) (Sölle, 1983, p. 90). Sölle's preference for the group is also related to her concept of salvation and liberation. Private salvation tends to be narrowed down to become dependent on an extra-human power for an individual afterlife privilege. In this way salvation makes people dependent instead of free, and selfish instead of oriented towards others. Private salvation tends to destroy itself because it is primarily aimed at our self-interest and not at the beginning of a renewal (purification) of our lives, acoording to Sölle. Salvation and liberation are a collective event: *communio sanctorum* (Sölle, 1983, p. 91) (Aschrich, 2006, p. 76).

Sölle has not developed an explicit praxis for how groups can practice their liberation spirituality (Aschrich, 2006, p. 237). In 'The Silent Cry' she explores the community as a source of spirituality but this exploration is more conceptual than practical (Sölle, 1999, chapter 9). Interestingly enough, Sölle recognizes that the growing Christian social movement needs organizational and theoretical development, in the same way as the early church needed it (Sölle, 1989, p. 73). When sifting through her work we find a few elements of such a spiritual and organizational praxis:

- non-violence (Sölle, 1998, chapter 14) and constantly and consciously refraining from violence (Sölle, 1998, pp. 364-365)
- moments of reflection and meditation (Sölle, 1998, p. 365)
- democratic organization (Sölle, 1998, pp. 382-383).

Sölle has an ambiguous relationship with 'the church'. She finds it essential that people participate in the acts of liberation by God. According to her it is the church's mission to be a place and a community where people

participate in liberation and where they confess, learn, share, heal, reconcile, unite and wake (Aschrich, 2006, pp. 112-113). The church does not always live up to the mission that Sölle expects it to fulfil. She calls the church a 'sister' and a 'traitor' (Sölle, 1989, p. 96) and refers to a metaphor that Daniel Berrigan uses: the church is like an umbrella; when you seriously need it, it is often not very effective. But still you would not want to do without it (Sölle, 1989, p. 96). The church is often lagging behind when it comes to renewal, resistance and action, but it also provides its activists some protection. It is one of the few places where true and free communication is safeguarded. (Sölle, 1989, pp. 25-26).

3.4.3. *Position of the individual*

According to Sölle man is first and foremost man: not just soul or body, not just man or woman, not just consumer or producer, not just young/successful or old. Being fully human means having a body and a soul, being committed and related to other men and to God.

However, in our contemporary societies one runs the risk of becoming dehumanized; of losing one or more aspects of what it means to be human (Sölle, 1998, p. 268). Sölle paints a grim picture of modern man in the Western world. Globalization treats man as if he has no relationships. He can do business, buy things and enjoy them without being responsible for the consequences of his production and consumption (Sölle, 1998, p. 268). Sölle describes contemporary man as being blind to reality and having a drunk soul (Sölle, 1983, p. 175); numb (Sölle, 1983, p. 176); addicted (Sölle, 1998, p. 268); having a body instead of being a body which makes man insensitive to touch; doing what needs to be done without joy or sorrow; eating without being hungry; feeding himself with useless information; and with an arid soul (Sölle, 1998, pp. 186-187). People in the Western world are often 'overeducated and underpowered': our knowledge results in aggravated powerlessness (Sölle, 1998, p. 285). Awareness of the deep moral and spiritual crisis in our society does not automatically lead us to make a course correction. If this kind of awareness is limited to a merely intellectual understanding of the crisis and of comprehension of theoretical changeability, chances are that this understanding will paralyse us instead of make us change our ways. The more we become aware of our entanglement

in damaging structures, our collaboration in the suffering of others and of the temptation of power, the more this awareness may incapacitate us. If we realize the seriousness of our situation, Sölle warns, for some the world becomes a frightening place from which we would prefer to hide in our fears. This is understandable because a big 'No!' to society is almost impossible. We cannot participate in society and avoid all of its negative aspects at the same time. But a total retreat from society is not possible either and certainly not desirable. If we desperately try to be someone else we cannot be, despair, cynicism and disbelief will govern us. Hope and a new beginning then will become loose concepts. Sölle refers to 2 Corinthians 7:10: '*Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.*' (TNIV) All knowledge that is not used for resistance turns to knowledge that is determined by death. Our (self-imposed) powerlessness makes us helpless and sad: worldly sorrow. '*...ratio and analysis in themselves are too weak to release us from the prison we have fallen asleep in.*' (Sölle, 1998, p. 275) Modern man finds it hard to believe that a new beginning is really possible (Sölle, 1983, p. 81).

3.4.4.   Attitude toward the context
We do not need a lot of words anymore to say that Sölle is very critical of the (Western) world in which Western man lives. This critical attitude is a recurring theme in her writings.

Over the years from the early 1960s to the first decade of the 21st century Sölle develops a critique of Western society that is built upon a basic scheme of center–periphery. The 'center' stands for the Western, capitalist society; the world of 'haves'. The world of the 'have-nots', the third world and the outcasts of Western society are represented by the 'periphery', which exists solely to serve the needs of the center. According to Sölle it is being exploited and oppressed. The center manifests itself as a two-faced beast. On the one hand it fulfils all of our material needs almost beyond imagination. On the other hand it deprives us of our most basic human needs. Inhabitants of the center are reduced to consumer-producer role players with a relentless *do ut des*-attitude. Sölle describes the center in utterly negative terms: extremely violent, alienated, addicted and dependent.

The spiritual atmosphere in the center is one of repressed violence, relational and mental emptiness and at the same time a hard to ignore awareness of an impending doom and a yearning for change. Sölle uses the metaphor of an imprisoned Western man as a way of depicting his deplorable state (Sölle, 1998, p. 275). Another critical metaphor that Sölle uses is the war that Western man is waging against the poor, nature and himself (Sölle, 1989, pp. 59-60).

Sölle then fills this criticism theologically with concepts such as sin, death and suffering. This is preluded by calling our time the *Pax Americana* and comparing it with the *Pax Romana* (Aschrich, 2006, p.265). In the *Pax Americana* death is a universal, pervasive, worldly, destructive power that impacts not only individuals but groups, countries and nature (Aschrich, 2006, p. 252) (Sölle, 1998, p. 396). In a consumer society people are alive but in many respects they are dead (Aschrich, 2006, p. 233). Sin is a collective, structural power that rules over man. We can point it out and experience it directly (Aschrich, 2006, pp. 102-103). Sölle uses the theological concept of original sin to emphasize the structural and pervasive nature of sin. We are born in a world that is already full of injustice and wrongfulness that we did not create or cause ourselves. Nevertheless we cannot withdraw or disentangle ourselves from it. Inevitably we collaborate with it and benefit from it and become increasingly involved in it (Sölle, 1983, p. 76).

But cross and resurrection still continue today, Sölle would say. Having said 'resurrection' Sölle does not see the world as a place where there is only injustice and hopelessness. The world is also the stage of ongoing resurrection. Against all odds resistance and liberation movements begin to manifest themselves in the periphery. The oppressed and the poor begin to stand up for themselves, raise their voices and bring forward their oppression and misery and initiate change. The agents of change can be poor farmers organizing themselves in a cooperative, union workers fighting for political freedom or ethnic groups trying to preserve their culture. They uncover injustice, they inculpate the center and try to restore justice in their lives or society. And in doing so they report experiencing that in their struggle they overthrow their powerlessness and transcend themselves as if their struggle has made them part of a communion or dynamism that cannot

be destroyed, however fragile, small, endangered or unsuccessful it may seem to be.

So for Sölle the world is a place that is full of death and despair and it needs to be approached very critically. The language and concepts of religion express the graveness of the situation that we are in. At the same time, the world is full of moments and events of resurrection that tell us that death, injustice and despair can be overcome.

3.4.5.   Context of memory

A spirituality is shaped by the context from which it emerges. It can be seen as a response to events and an atmosphere of a certain age. The background and origin of Sölle's liberation theology can be characterized as a situation of tremendous suffering, violence, guilt and godforsakenness. For Sölle's spirituality the dominating, dark memory is Adolf Hitler's Third Reich and especially the genocide in which six million Jews were killed, epitomized by Auschwitz (Aschrich, 2006, p. 30, p. 32). How can one live in such a situation? How can one be human in such circumstances? How on earth can one speak about God? The big question for Sölle was: how could Auschwitz have happened? (Sölle, 1989, p. 91). Her context of remembrance is shaped by the writings and life stories of Anne Frank and Sophie Scholl that made a lasting impression on her (Wind, 2008, p. 38, pp. 90-91), for example a sense of shame to be German (Aschrich, 2012, p. 33). Bonhoeffer's influence on Sölle can also been seen as a part of this context of remembrance. She developed on Bonhoeffer's idea that solidarity, suffering with others and participating in powerlessness is the essence of Christianity (Wind, 2008, p. 106) (Korte, 2011, p. 19).

These memories especially helped to shape Sölle's God-is-dead-theology: the classical, theistic God can no longer be held and new ways of speaking and thinking about God and experiencing God have to be found.

It is interesting to list a few theologians that influenced Sölle in a way that is related to the memory of Word War II. Aschrich (2006, p. 31) refers to Gogarten who has taught Sölle the importance of (religious) experience and a normal, worldly way of speaking about God and Jesus. According to Wind (2008, p. 45) and Korte (2011, p. 19) Sölle learns from Kierkegaard that the experience of anxiety is essential to becoming human and conscious. Wind

(2008, p. 65) also mentions Buber. Sölle met Buber in Jerusalem in 1960. Buber sowed the seeds of a number Jewish notions, e.g.: talking about God is an ongoing search; and the ability of people to change.

Sölle mentions a number of other Jewish thinkers that led her to become 'increasingly Jewish' (Sölle, 2004, p. 72): Fromm, Heschel and Levinas. For Sölle becoming more and more Jewish means becoming more and more involved in the creation and its creator, the spirit, Ruach and becoming less Christocentric (Sölle, 2004, p. 72).

Of course there are a lot of contemporary thinkers who influenced Sölle, but in a sketch of the context of remembrance that influenced her one category from a more distant past should be included: medieval mystics like Jacopone from Todi (Sölle, 1998, p. 199), John of the Cross (Sölle, 1998, pp. 203-209), Meister Eckhart (Sölle, 1998), the Dutch Beguines and Mechtild von Magdeburg (Sölle, 1989, p. 33), and Gerhard Tersteegen (Sölle, 2004). They helped Sölle to refine her sensitivity to the experience of the transcendent and to develop the language to express these experiences.

3.4.6. *Horizon of expectation*

According to Sölle cross and resurrection continue to happen up to this day (Aschrich, 2006, p. 96). Processes of liberation can be perceived as continuing creation. It is the immanent working of God in history through men (Bouckaert, 2004, p. 195). Man is destined to be co-creator in this process (Ashrich, 2006, p. 102, p. 262). We need God to express the not yet total and not yet emerged truth of our lives (Aschrich, 2006, p. 242), not just of our individual lives but of the lives of all people. Although circumstances may be very dark, Sölle firmly believes in the Jewish 'against all odds' (Wind, 2008, p. 179).

Sölle's work eventually becomes less eschatological because she perceives the encounter with God as radically contingent and historical (Korte, 2006, p. 191). In 'Political Theology' Sölle cautiously refers to the return of Jesus as a final perspective (Sölle, 1983, p. 169). In her 1985 'New York Diary' the final perspective is a vision of a land full of *shalom* (Sölle, 1989, p. 61). This change in (or lack of) eschatology creates a number of conceptual problems (Fierro, 1977, pp. 207-212) that is common to political theologies, e.g.: can we expect that a full and total liberation will be achieved at some

point in history? What will happen to liberation theology when we arrive at that point? And if we will never arrive at that point, then what is the final perspective, for whom and by whom? Fierro states that, because of these problems, liberation theology cannot be an ultimate theology. It is a transitory theology. Sölle may have recognized these problems. In her last book (Sölle, 2004) she connects eschatology with mysticism and eco-feminism. Inspired by Schweitzer Sölle proposes that mysticism is the deepest source of ethics and discovering this ethics is the 'eschatological idea of salvation' (Sölle, 2004, p. 62). Secondly, Sölle embraces a less anthropocentric view and connects it with death, ecology and creation: *'...acceptance of the finity of life and the transience of the "I" connects us to all other living creatures and finally transforms us from owners and users into brothers and sisters'* (Sölle, 2004, p. 77).

3.5. Form-descriptive research: the internal horizon

The internal horizon of a school of spirituality explores the lived spirituality that it is trying to cultivate and pass on. A spirituality may have an effect on various levels and aspects of man. De Jong–Van Campen for example distinguishes three domains that may affected by spiritual development: 1) conceptually and perceptually knowing and contemplation; 2) renewed life praxis; and 3) relating to reality by means of various kinds of language, non-verbal communication and emotions (De Jong–Van Campen, 2009, pp. 99-104). How these effects relate to Sölle's spirituality is discussed in this part of the form-descriptive research. Subsequently the practice of virtues and the role of prayer in Sölle's spirituality are explored, which, among other things, will bring us back to Sölle's theopoetics. Sölle's spirituality provides us with an elaborated path of spiritual development, which can be considered the main part of the exploration of its internal horizon. This exploration is extended and finalized with an additional part: the articulation of Sölle's concept of transcendence.

3.5.1. Process and layers of appropriation

For those who live the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology, it has an effect on various levels: cognition, morality, empathy, will/desire, communication skills and social relations. Sölle proposes a multi-disciplinary approach of analyzing the situation in society (Prinz, 2006, p. 271). A thorough understanding of our web of life requires involving economical, sociological, ethical, political, psychological, ecological aspects et cetera. This brings about a change on the cognitive level, i.e.: a deeper understanding of one's societal position. Sölle's spirituality also has an effect on one's moral awareness because the analysis is aimed at discovering and exposing injustice and suffering (Wind, 2008, p. 189). This heightened moral awareness makes one more sensitive to the suffering of others and may forge a longing for justice, healing and wholeness. This longing wants to be expressed and this requires developing an aesthetic quality or competence to express and communicate it. This is the final layer of appropriation. Rational analysis alone is no longer enough to move us. One needs existential, theopoetic language to express our desire for the Kingdom of God in such a way that it nurtures one's soul so that it can keep the vision of justice and wholeness alive.

Sölle uses the image of an inward road and the way back (Sölle, 1976). The inward road is a metaphor for becoming aware of one's existential experiences ('*Experience used to be called soul*' [Sölle, 1976, p. 25]), self-reflection and introspection and disclosing God in our experiences, with the help of theopoetic language. The way back is a metaphor for returning to the world and taking our responsibilities there. This connects man with the world: with other people, with creation and, through them, with God.

Eventually the levels of appropriation are not confined to the individual but stretch beyond the individual to others and the world. Sölle's spirituality opens us up to a universal, brotherly communion (Bouckaert, 2004, p. 196).

3.5.2. The practice of virtues

The spiritual journey of Sölle's liberation theology both requires and forges a set of virtues. Throughout Sölle's writings and the writings about Sölle we find summaries or short lists of those virtues. It is tempting to try to make a

definitive list but I will limit myself to presenting some of the mentioned lists:

- I-less, non-violent, non-possessory (Sölle, 1998, p. 272) (Aschrich, 2006, pp. 254-255)
- Vigorous, aware, undaunted, dreamy, consolatory and responsive (Sölle, 1989, p. 14)
- Astounded, connected with nature, experiencing beauty by beholding disinterestedly, joyful because of the gift of life (Aschrich, 2006, p.129)
- Sobriety, not aspiring to a career, radical disobedience, oneness in prayer (Sölle, 1983, p. 168).

An important virtue or quality in Sölle's spirituality is sympathy and being able to suffer. When trying to do good one must be able and willing to endure suffering and to suffer with the oppressed (Wind, 2008, p. 102). Sölle has developed a religious approach to suffering that does not deny suffering and that does not try to explain it away. She has sought to know how suffering can be endured and can be used as a means of transformation (Korte, 2006, p. 177), because hardships and suffering are major themes in Sölle's work (Aschrich, 2006, p. 48). According to Sölle we have to learn to name suffering (to lament) and to accept it without bowing before it. Suffering may empower us to act in the world and to try to improve something (Aschrich, 2006, p. 53). In this way we suffer with Christ in the here-and-now. In doing so we follow Christ and practice compassion (Prinz, 2006, pp. 249-250). We can 'nurture' our ability to suffer by developing a sound understanding of the world in which we live (Wind, 2008, p. 188). A deep analysis of our own web of life allows us to really hungrily 'ask back' from God (Prinz, 2006, p. 221); to struggle with God in a biblical reading praxis (Prinz, 2006, p. 271).

I have already mentioned in section 3.3.4 that in her 'New York Diary' (Sölle, 1989, p. 6) Sölle complains about herself for having no spiritual discipline, habits and rules. She has not developed a well-designed set of habits to live by that nurtures and cultivates the virtues to which she aspires.

3.5.3. Prayer

According to Sölle prayer has three functions. First of all, prayer is an act of resistance. It is a protest against reality and a refusal to accept a situation of injustice (Aschrich, 2006, p. 42). Secondly, prayer needs to give people the courage to take responsibility for the social conditions in which they are living and the social conditions that they are creating for others. (Prinz, 2006, p. 41). Finally, prayer invites God to become an ally in the struggle for the exploited in which one is involved (Sölle, 1998, p. 283).

These three functions of prayer may give the impression that Sölle views prayer in an instrumental way. However, for Sölle prayer is different. If we find the language that expresses our deepest existential experiences, we can communicate about them with others and ourselves, but this language also enables us to connect ourselves to the depth of our existence (Aschrich, 2006, p. 153). In this way mystical language, poetry and prayer are closely related (Korte, 2006, p. 190). According to Sölle Christianity turns all people into poets, because everyone can pray (Aschrich, 2006, p. 151).

3.5.4. Spiritual development

Several attempts have been made to systemize the trajectory of spiritual development that Sölle has developed. Sölle herself has used the scheme of the inward road and the way back (Sölle, 1976) (see section 3.5.1). In 'The silent cry' she proposes another design (Sölle, 1998, pp. 136-140):

1. *Via positiva*: radical amazement at the beauty of the world that tears down the veil of triviality (praising God); but also forges dismay at the disturbance of this beauty

2. *Via negativa*: letting go of wrong desires and habits and in doing so experiencing the difficulty of being with God because of the powers and destruction that govern our lives: missing God

3. *Via transformativa*: experiencing 'living-in-God' by participating in the continuing creation of the world together with God; practicing compassion and resistance against injustice and thus becoming part of Creation that will not die and will not be destroyed.

I will discuss this scheme more in depth and take the liberty of adjusting and complementing it on a number of points, based on Sölle's own writings. The

reason for this is that in 'The Silent Cry' Sölle introduces eco-spirituality as an integrating element. In so doing she downplays a number of elements that are important in the work from her earlier phases (political and liberation theology), e.g.: awareness of sin and self-implication. She also introduces radical amazement as the start of the spiritual journey. This is a change of thought because in her earlier work awareness of injustice and suffering are the starting point of the spiritual journey.

Korte wraps Sölle's spirituality up in three steps: 1) cultural criticism, 2) self-criticism, 3) personal transformation (Korte, 2006, p. 189). This three-step phasing is more in line with Sölle's earlier work, although Korte leaves one important element out: transformation of the world as the fourth step or as part of the third step.

When describing and analyzing a spirituality it is tempting to schematize very strictly. This may give rise to (endless) disputes in which parts or details of a 'system' are magnified to the proportions of fundamental principles. The concept of 'lived spirituality' should prevent us from doing so. A spirituality is not a set of beliefs, experiences and practices that is totally coherent, logical and without contradictions. Describing and schematizing are helpful in enhancing our understanding of a spirituality and in identifying its open or problematic issues. Therefore, in an attempt that represents the line of thinking in all of Sölle's work and without slipping into needless, polemic exactness, I will discuss the developmental phases of Sölle's spirituality according to three phases[14]:

1. *Via negativa* and *via positiva*
2. Resurrection
3. Co-creation with God in *communio sanctorum*.

Via negativa and *via positiva* — In the previous sections of this chapter I have already referred to Sölle's critical view of society that is built upon a basic scheme of center–periphery (Sölle, 1998, p. 386). According to Sölle

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[14] The attentive reader will notice the similarities between the three-phase model that has been presented in section 2.5.1 and the developmental phases that are presented in this section. The developmental phases in this section are based on a wider body of literature from and about Sölle than the model in section 2.5.1, which has been based on five key sections from Sölles work.

most people in Western society experience their wealth as violent. We are aware of our involvement in exploitation and abuse but we repress this awareness. However, it haunts us in other forms, e.g.: spiritual or relational poverty (Sölle, 1983, pp. 184-185), doom and an inevitable, slow death (Sölle, 1998, p. 269) and our realizing that, if humanity wants to survive, it needs a new spiritual foundation (Sölle, 1998, p. 410).

The call from the periphery is essential in this respect. The poor, the oppressed, the marginalized; their calls expose injustice and inculpate the center (Sölle, 1983, p. 176). Sölle calls it the *magisterium* of the poor (Sölle, 1998, p. 392). They uncover injustice, they inculpate the center and try to restore justice in their lives or society. The call from the periphery shocks the 'haves' in the Western world. Listening to these voices opens their eyes to the structures of injustice their lives are built upon: political and economic power blocks, race and gender divides, ecological destruction, access to or blockage from technology and knowledge. They begin to realize that these deeply rooted structures that give wealth to the center, also destroy the chances of prosperity and justice in the periphery. The call from the periphery tells them that besides personal, private wrongdoing there is another type of evil: structural causes of injustice that go above an individual's direct influence but from which one is nevertheless part of and profits from.

A critical, moral understanding of the world, our society and our own lives gains a spiritual quality that distinguishes it from mere intellectual understanding and knowing, if it makes us transcend ourselves. For Sölle this transcendence does not mean joyful enlightenment or superior wisdom. Rather it is characterized by sadness, shame or embarrassment. The transcendental aspect of the emergence of a moral understanding of the world is comprised of four elements. First of all, as inhabitants of the center we start to realize that our lives in the center are on a spiritual dead end. Though economically thriving we discover ourselves to be outside of life's vitality and basis. We find ourselves caught in a giant economical machinery that creates death and destruction. Cut off from the spirit of God we experience our souls are arid. Secondly, we may also discover that life, spirit, vitality, soul, transformation and meaning are much more to be found in the periphery than in the center. Whether it is a cry from the poor or the

marginalized in the West stepping forward, 'they affirm life in the midst of death' (Murray, 1998, p. 53). In them we hear a silent cry from God or see a sudden blossoming of life. Thirdly, at the same time facing suffering and injustice is like losing our childhood and innocence. Discovering our responsibility in and for the world feels like being expelled from paradise and being plunged into the real world; a place of blood, sweat and tears (Sölle, 1995, p. 102). This archetypical image of the human banishment from the good life extends our involvement in the world from an innocent, self-centered, childlike existence to a realistic, open relation to the world that tells us that much in life is characterized by struggle and injustice. Finally, the struggle for a good life is existential and concrete. It is existential in the sense that it has been going on ever since the early days of men and seems to be intrinsically connected with human existence. Injustice is not understood as a regrettable incident that can be fixed. On the other hand hoping, longing and actively working on and fighting for a better world has proven to be equally connected to human possibilities. At the same time the battle for justice is a very personal one that affects daily existence in very practical ways. Joining the resistance effort means becoming a representative of this existential battle.

The *via negativa* is a path of developing moral awareness, becoming sensitive to the suffering of others, discovering our own guilt and entanglement in structures of injustice and learning that we are in a state of existential or spiritual death ourselves. We learn to look at the world through God's eyes: a changed and deep commitment to the world (Bouckaert, 2004, p. 194). Our souls become one with God and we see injustice because the perspective on the poor and the excluded is God's perspective (Sölle, 1998, p. 391). The call of the poor is God's call (Sölle, 1983, p. 176). Sölle refers to Exodus 3:7 (NIV): *The Lord said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.'* (Sölle, 1998, p.391)

Crying and lamenting are the mystical answer to the (silent) cry that we hear come from the world (Sölle, 1998, p. 278) (Aschrich, 2006, p. 53). This response is connected to Sölle's reflection on suffering that I referred to in section 3.5.2. The first step in overcoming suffering, after it has

overwhelmed us and has made us powerless and speechless, is to name it. In doing so we position ourselves in opposition to the world and its suffering which can be changed (Aschrich, 2006, p. 53).

In 'The Silent Cry' Sölle identifies a second path on which the spiritual journey may start: the *via positiva*. It is the way of radical amazement at nature, of historical experience of liberation or of the beauty of everyday things (Sölle, 1998, p. 136). Overwhelming experiences of nature are the beginning of the spiritual journey (Aschrich, 2006, p. 260). It demonstrates that for Sölle an emotional-intuitive element in the experience of God is essential. In the overwhelming experience of creation we recognize a divine spark in it and realize that that refers to a primordial, good condition (Sölle, 1998, p. 276). It is vital to nurture ourselves with these kinds of memories of the good life, that come from religious dreams, desires and visions because they keep our desire to return to the good life alive (Sölle, 1998, p. 276).

The second developmental phase of Sölle's spirituality can be typified as '*Resurrection*'. Developing a critical, moral understanding of the world and of oneself is, according to Sölle, realizing that one is in a state of powerless (near-) death and that the only way to overcome this life-threatening force is to confront it (Sölle, 1998, pp. 286-287, pp. 397-398). Power and vitality can only be regained by resurrection and resurgence from incapacity and numbness. This response is related to the approach of suffering that Sölle developed. After naming suffering, we can accept it without bowing to it. Then it may empower us to become positive agents of change in the world (Aschrich, 2006, pp. 53-54). Resistance is the key element in Sölle's response to suffering and to our awareness of our own near-death. Resistance against structural injustice and oppression can take on many forms, ranging from a small 'no' with possibly big consequences to wilfully pursuing new ideas and sharing arguments and analysis with the 'cheated and betrayed' (Sölle, 1998, p. 276, p. 285). Sölle points out that many people who resist actually hesitate to do so because they feel underpowered or do not have any idea how to resist (Sölle, 1998, p. 286). On the other hand, once they realize that the meaning and value of their lives are at stake, they are aware that refraining from resistance equals self-betrayal and a choice against life and self-realization. In that sense resistance is a lifesaving act (Sölle, 1998, p. 287).

Resistance starts with a creative, one-sided initiative (Sölle, 1983, p. 183). It is the courage to initiate the change ourselves. It is creative in the sense that we do not continue to reproduce the regular patterns but do something unexpected and new and we hope that it will last. In this attempt we can discover our own power, knowledge and courage (Sölle, 1998, p. 284). Through practical resistance we experience empowerment and liberation from our powerlessness. This experience has a touch of grace as we feared starting to resist and feel guilty for being part of the cause we now resist (Sölle, 1983, pp. 84-87, p. 171). Although the first resistance does not undo our involvement in injustice, nor the injustice itself, having done 'something' can be a gratifying experience. It releases us temporarily of our powerlessness and shows us a meaningful road ahead (Sölle, 1983, pp. 84-87). For Sölle the experiential nature of grace is important. In order to truly 'understand' grace, it should not be analyzed but it should be experienced (Aschrich, 2006, p. 107).

The ones that resist are often small and powerless relative to the adversaries that represent the cause they resist. From that perspective the efforts of the resisters seem useless and futile. That is why resistance has the nature of struggle and of surrender. Exactly in surrendering to something or someone that is powerless resides the spiritual core of resistance, according to Sölle. In surrendering to the powerless we experience that the cause we care for is dependent of our efforts. At the same time we experience that our life and our spiritual development are only possible through bonding with the vulnerable and the powerless. Experiencing this mutual dependence and growth equals experiencing the mutual dependence and union between God and man. In this relationship the weak and dependent represent God to us and at the same time we represent God to the weak and dependent. *'It makes me more free, it lifts my boundaries and makes me grow to that which is different'* (Sölle, 1998, p. 409).

If we are sensitive, as Sölle suggests, to the representational character of the interdependence between ourselves and the weak cause we have begun to commit ourselves to, resistance can be considered a form of co-creation between God and ourselves. This awareness may lift our experience from an 'ordinary' act of resistance to a manifestation of divine self-realization. That is not to say that our actions become instant-success miracles. It means to

say that we experience that our actions are part of the *'living, active, breathing divine dynamic of love we experience in relation to one another'* (Heyward, 2003, p. 224).

If our act of resistance is a joint effort we may well experience that a community of fellow resisters carries the resistance. As an individual resister we may sense being part of a larger whole that has more potential than we ever imagined (Sölle, 1998, pp. 288-289).

Our initial acts of resistance are the beginning of an Exodus: life is no longer subservient to the power of sin but to grace as a new way of life. We are becoming available to God and we have committed ourselves to God: we are in Christ (Aschrich, 2006, p. 108). Our resurrection in this life is the central experience, but it is also the victory over capitalism, destructive societal structures and sin (Wind, 2008, p. 166).

Initial action and resistance are followed by a third developmental phase: Co-creation with God in *communio sanctorum*. Two traits of resistance may help initial resistance to grow into a more organized, collective praxis of resistance. Because initial resistance can be experienced as empowering, meaningful, gratifying and connecting, people may want to continue their resistance. Secondly, because resistance has a struggle-like nature the initial resistance will probably not 'do the job'. Some form of follow-up action is necessary. The resisters need to develop a collective praxis of resistance that is durable and will enable them to relive, re-experience, practice and deepen or further develop the original experience (Sölle, 1983, pp. 171-172): both an indestructible, empowering bonding with people and through each other with God and a mutual, vulnerable, wide-open interdependency. This is consistent with Sölle's proposition that, according to the New Testament, groups open new perspectives (Sölle, 1998, p. 270). These groups are the nurturing chambers and laboratories of liberative experiences and experiments. The primary objective of these groups is to give a voice to the denouncements of the periphery and to look for and experiment with structures that promote social justice. The basic question they keep asking is: what is just? The continued focus on battered life is also a continued focus on God for we can experience God in life that is struck with suffering. According to Sölle reflecting on the resistance is essential. Although praxis and action are primary over theory, theology and reflection, it is vital not to

hold some form of action as the one true form (Sölle, 1983, p. 179). The group is the place for a sensible debate on the course of action to be followed and for a deepening of the understanding of the group's actions. Sölle refers to the connection between contemplation/theory and action/praxis as the *vita mixta* (Sölle, 1998, p. 280): a fruitful interdependence between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*. In a world of rationalism and feasibility we need a source of ideals and a non-rational language that constantly remind us of the ideals, origins, desires, perspectives and experiences of liberation (Sölle, 1998, p. 275-276). Unattainable as a group's ideals may be, open discussion within a group is needed to avoid mediocrity, frustration, cynicism, fixation or supererogation. According to Sölle this is the primary task of theology. Theology, as part of the *vita contemplativa*, nurtures the *vita activa* and vice versa. Sölle clearly connects the religious retreat and the following advance; contemplation and acting; *sich-versenken* and *realer Politik* (Aschrich, 2006, p. 239).

An important aspect of salvation and liberation, as Sölle understands it, is its collective and universal character. She is critical of private salvation because it makes people dependent instead of free, and selfish instead of oriented towards others. It is primarily aimed at our self-interest and not at the beginning of a renewal (purification) of our lives (Sölle, 1983, pp. 86-89). Sölle emphasizes the integral aspect of salvation. Salvation is aimed at all sins of the whole person, at all people and at the whole creation as *'the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time'* (Romans 8: 22, TNIV) (Sölle, 1983, p. 83). Salvation is only credible if it engages us in the liberation, conversion and salvation of others and the world. In various ways we need others to realize liberation so that our lives can become meaningful and hopeful despite our involvement in injustice.

The universal character of salvation points to another feature of Sölle's spirituality. Liberation tends to spread like an oil spill on water. Being aimed at the whole person, all people and ultimately the whole creation, liberation may start in one domain or level in life but may well extend to other domains, ranging from economic, political and cultural liberation to worldview liberation (Sölle, 1983, p. 163).

From time to time resistance alienates and unsettles from the world and from God. One does not always feel close and connected to God because the path of resistance is not a triumphant march to liberty and justice. Society itself is also no longer a naturally safe place to live in either, because one has discovered and exposed some of its darker sides. Resisters are not often heard or tolerated in the center (Sölle, 1983, p.168, p. 181). Although not officially prosecuted, in Sölle's experience they are often ridiculed for being naïve or radical and are threatened or blocked in their careers and professional lives (Sölle, 1983, p. 183). That brings us to a final and important point of the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology. Sölle warns us that we should not be overly optimistic about the results of active, critical resistance. One is more likely to meet with mockery, misunderstanding and contempt than with praise and change. Resistance resembles 'hopping between defeats and hopes' (Sölle, 1998, p. 381). An orientation towards success and results is a way of thinking in terms of power that is very tempting but treacherous. We are used to thinking and judging in terms of results and effectiveness. However, the nature of the cause that resistance has committed itself to calls for dependence and surrender instead of power and force. We can only serve this cause, and in the process develop ourselves, if we learn to put aside our tendency to rule, to determine, to plan, to control and to execute. Success or results are not the ultimate spiritual categories. Sölle points at being united with others, with nature, with life, with God in an active, engaged, practical way as the foundation of life and not letting results and effectiveness legitimize our spirituality (Sölle, 1998, pp. 320-322). This is compactly expressed in Sölle's tryptich I-less * non-violent * non-possessory (Sölle, 1998, p. 272).

However, this attitude does not discharge us from using our senses and from acting in a clever way when the moment is right. Sölle, for example, is convinced that we should not shy away from a clever public affairs strategy if it positively influences the resistance (Sölle, 1998, p. 382). But the spirituality of a group that is actively involved in working on a just cause may be endangered if the group becomes very focused on results and planned change. Despite its good intentions this approach may gradually develop into a praxis of violence for it only knows how to stand up and fight (Sölle, 1998, p. 393). It has not learned to really relate or submit to the weak

cause it is fighting for. This causes the bond and the interdependence between the resisters and the cause to be weaker. Sooner or later the violence of the resisters will turn towards the cause it once fought for.

3.5.5. *Short discussion of Sölle's trajectory of spiritual development*

It is interesting to note how Sölle values experience in spiritual development. Early and present experiences constitute and define the experience of the transcendent. Analysis, definitions and theology do not (Aschrich, 2006, p. 259). God can only be known from experience in incarnation ('realization') and not in another way (Aschrich, 2006, p. 19). This line of thought is already present in Sölle's first publication *Stellvertretung* (Sölle, 1965). The incarnated Christ represents God to us because the theistic, omnipotent God is dead. In the same way we have to represent Christ to others. Only by experiencing the incarnated Christ can we know ourselves and God (Korte, 2006, p. 169).

Typical of Sölle's spirituality is her inward road and the way back, which differs from the classical, Western, Christian spiritual path of *purgatio*, *illuminatio* and *unio mystica* (Korte, 2006, p. 185). Sölle's source of mystical experiences is liberating socio-political activism. The *unio mystica* is the way back to acting in the world (Korte, 2006, p. 185) instead of a (perhaps somewhat stereotypic) withdrawn, inward *via contemplativa* (Aschrich, 2006, pp. 269-270).

3.5.6. *Sölle's concept of transcendence*

Now that we have explored the contours, the external horizon and the internal horizon of the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology, it is interesting to see if we can articulate Sölle's concept of transcendence. This is especially relevant because in our spiritual perspective on social innovation we found that one aspect of spirituality was largely missing, i.e. experience of the transcendent. Explicating Sölle's concept of transcendence may help us to disclose experiences of transcendence in the praxis of social innovation.

Sölle's concept of transcendence is characterized by the explicit rejection of the classic, Western, philosophical theistic conception of God. Sölle declares that the theistic, all-good, almigthy, otherworldly God is dead. This

God cannot be experienced directly (Sölle, 1983, p. 164) and our theistic ideas about him have lost all credibility and relevance. Sölle replaces him with a conception of God that is radically Christocentric. God can only be known and experienced in the incarnation-realization. God has chosen to be become incarnated and weak and has chosen to suffer. Places of weakness and suffering are the places where we can find and experience God. These are also the places where resurrection takes place and where love, life and humanness start to blossom. We can find and experience God in these processes of liberation. Almost ironically Sölle refers to them as 'formerly known as God' (Sölle, 1998, p. 159). They are manifestations of the essence of God's being, i.e.: his will to build his kingdom (Sölle, 1998, pp. 278-279).

By connecting God's presence to the here-and-now so clearly and exclusively, Sölle chooses an incarnatory point of departure for her concept of transcendence. This makes the encounter with God radically contingent and historical (Korte, 2006, p. 191). Becoming a participant in an actual process of liberation enables us to connect with God and to the experience of becoming indestructibly one with Him and with the others who participate in the process (Sölle, 1998, p. 273). Becoming such a participant is becoming a co-creator with God, an image of God, which is an important and joyful experience (Sölle, 1983, p. 166).

In liberating movements the mystic eye sees God at work in people (Sölle, 1998, p. 391). Sölle thinks of God as the nothing that wants to become everything (Sölle, 1998, p. 272, p. 303); the unwavering, fluid, growing, driving movement of God that people can participate in, and in which they can be connected to others (Sölle, 1998, p. 272). Then we may experience that our finite self is unified with the infinitude in which all life is one (Sölle, 1998, p. 282).

This being one with creation (in the sense of being 1) a (co-)creator, 2) being one with nature and 3) to be creating), which is God, is the foundation of life. One becomes one with God in perceiving, acting and knowing (Sölle, 1998, p. 391). One looks with God's eyes at the world and one sees its injustices (Sölle, 1998, p. 391).

Sölle refers to the feminist movement as an enormous school that changed the awareness and consciousness of people (Sölle, 1989, p. 10). It is an

example of an actual liberating movement that Sölle considers to be a manifestation of God. Sölle thinks of the German peace movement in similar terms. In her eyes it is the conversion of a people and an example of God acting in the world (Sölle, 1983, p. 189). She refers to another example that a student gave in one of her classes in New York: '*A young woman…told us that as a young girl in the Midwest in the United States, she read in bed for many, many hours at night, which of course was not allowed. One winter morning she woke up at four in the morning, went outside and saw the stars in the clear, freezing sky. She experienced a unique feeling of happiness, a sense of connectedness with the full, with God, an experience of overwhelming clarity, of being supported and lifted. She saw the stars as she had never seen them before. "Nothing can happen to me, I am indestructible, I am one with the whole." These were the words she used to describe the experience. It didn't repeat itself until something similar happened to her, ten years later in an entirely different context. That other context was a mass anti-Vietnam protest. There too, she told us, she had the experience of being lifted: having become a part of a whole, "indestructible", together with others.*' (Sölle, 1998, p. 273).

According to Sölle the relationship between the transcendent and man is mutual. This mutuality manifests itself in the interplay between contemplation and action: the inward journey and the way back (Sölle, 1989, p. 281). According to Aschrich this interplay constitutes Sölle's post-theistic concept of God, in which God's existence and manifestation are fully intertwined with and dependent on people to act rightfully and lovingly (Aschrich, 2006, pp. 239-240). It marks Sölle's departure from a ruling, patriarchal God and the emergence of the conception of a post-theistic, panentheistic-mystical, creation-centered spirituality (Aschrich, 2006, p. 20) in which immanence and transcendence are fused (Aschrich, 2006, p. 117).

In order to articulate Sölle's concept of transcendence more sharply, I will discuss it from the perspective on two of the three broad concepts of transcendence that Vroom (2006) distinguishes[15]: cosmic transcendence and

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[15] Vroom also discusses the acosmic view of transcendence. Sölle's concept of transcendence has a number of acosmic traits but it cannot be considered to be essentially acosmic. The experience of acosmic transcendence is an experience of oneness with the transcendent that is beyond words (Vroom, 2006, p. 127): a oneness-mysticism with a

theistic transcendence. Aschrich typifies Sölle's concept of transcendence as post-theistic and panentheistic. We may also label it as Abrahamic theism (Vroom, 2006, p. 151) with influences of cosmic transcendence. Vroom would probably agree with the label 'panentheistic'. Aschrich is not very explicit about what he means by 'post-theistic'. Nevertheless it is interesting to see if the label 'panentheistic' can withstand scrutiny.

I have already referred to Sölle's rejection of classic, Western, philosophical theism, like other theologians have done, e.g.: Barth and Moltmann (Vroom, 2006, p. 148) (Williams, 2013, p. 95). However, Vroom points at other, less predictable theistic conceptions of God: Creator, Sustainer, Judge, and covenant Partner (Vroom, 2006, p. 151). These images of God suit Sölle's theological ideas much better than philosophical theism; especially if we remember Sölle's discovery that she was on her way to Athens but, along the way, she discovered that she actually wanted to go to Jerusalem (Sölle, 1995, p. 33). Although Sölle has moved away from classical theism, if we look carefully we can still discern theistic traits in her concept of transcendence. She acknowledges for example that God has a will, which is a typical feature of theistic transcendence, when she states that God's will is to build his Kingdom (Sölle, 1998, p. 279). Another trace of theism in Sölle's concept of theism can be found in her view of evil. Theism states that a fundamental distinction between good and evil can be made and that God is not responsible for the existence of evil in the world (Vroom, 2006, p. 151, p. 201). Theism also holds that God can help man to do good (Vroom, 2006, p. 187). It almost goes without saying that Sölle subscribes to these principles.

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perfect, otherworldly God (Vroom, 2006, p. 129). It is an experience that can and must be trained (Vroom, 2006, pp. 120-121). The experience causes a paradigm shift that makes one see and experience everything in a different way: this world is an illusion that is not really important (Vroom, 2006, p. 127). However, Sölle's spiritual ambitions are not a oneness-mysticism with such a perfect, otherworldly God. She seeks to connect with a suffering, powerless God in this world. The experience of the transcendent may not be translated into words easily or readily, but for Sölle it is not wholly inconceivable as the acosmic view holds (Vroom, 2006, p. 130). Perhaps Sölle's most important objection against the acosmic view of transcendence would be its rejection of the world as eventually a reality that is not really important.

When it comes to the issue of how man can acquire knowledge of God, Sölle is largely in line with Protestant-reformed theism. In this theist conception of transcendence God reveals himself to man by means of religious experience or by means of divine revelation in sacred writings (Vroom, 2006, pp. 174-175). In the Protestant-reformed theistic line of reasoning man cannot really know or experience God by means of philosophical or doctrinarian knowledge about God. Sölle is in line with this approach because she focuses on 1) the experience of God as a central source and means of knowing God, and 2) she views the Bible as an entrance to knowledge about God. It must be noted that Sölle also regards other religious and non-religious writings as sources of knowledge about God or as entrances to knowledge about God.

When God reveals himself, he does so as a person and as love, according to reformed theology (Vroom, 2006, p. 175). Sölle radically affirms this with a Christocentric conception of transcendence in immanence. Brockman affirms that the God of liberation theology is 'intensely personal': loving, suffering, longing for justice, acting and creating (Brockman, 2013, p. 945). The theistic view of man sees man as 1) challenged with the command of love, 2) in need of conversion, and 3) as having a special status, i.e. to cultivate and keep the earth (Vroom, 2006, p. 246). This is also in line with Sölle's view of man and it shows that Sölle's view of man is mostly theistic, except for perhaps one point. There is a tension in the idea of man's special status in creation because (Western) man has turned into a 'despot/enlightened master over nature' instead of a steward of nature (Van den Born, 2007, chapter 4). The idea of man as a partner in nature (Van den Born, 2007, chapter 4) is more in line with contemporary ecological ideas and this view of man has some traits of the cosmic conception of God. In her final writings, to which I have already referred, Sölle actually brings forward a less anthropocentric view of man that '…*transforms us from owners and users into brothers and sisters'* (Sölle, 2004, p. 77). This view is closer to man as partner in nature than man as a keeper of the Earth.

Sölle's concept of transcendence has theistic features, but a number of traits of the cosmic concept of transcendence can also be found in it. The concept of cosmic transcendence states that the world is divine and that there is no divinity outside this cosmos (Vroom, 2006, p. 134). The transcendent in the

immanence cannot be separated from the immanence (Vroom, 2006, p. 135). This is in accordance with Sölle's strong emphasis on the incarnation of God and on transcendence in immanence.

The personal nature of the transcendent is traditionally linked with the theistic conception of the transcendent. However, Vroom points at spiritual traditions with a concept of cosmic transcendence in which the transcendent does have personal traits, e.g. because it can be addressed by people (Vroom, 2008, p. 138).

Spiritual traditions that have a cosmic view of transcendence deny the existence of a soul or an otherworldly, spiritual realm (Vroom, 2008, p. 141). Sölle tends to agree with this because she doubts the existence of an immortal soul that eventually will go to heaven (Sölle, 2004, p. 145).

There are two issues related to the cosmic view of transcendence that conflict with Sölle's view of transcendence. First of all, the cosmic view considers the distinction between good and evil as an illusion (Vroom, 2006, p. 191). This illusory and misleading distinction is overcome in the monistic vision of reality (Vroom, 2006, p. 140). This is obviously in contradiction with Sölle's beliefs (and praxis) in which good and evil are pivotal elements. Secondly, within the cosmic view of transcendence a distinction can be made between pure immanentism and a more theistic view of cosmic transcendence. Pure immanentism holds that there is only a non-intentional 'force' in the cosmos that sustains the existence of the cosmos and its functioning (Vroom, 2006, pp. 157-158). There is nothing outside of the cosmos that can give sense or purpose to the world. If man wants to, he must make his own value and purpose systems. The more theistic branch of cosmic transcendence moves away from pure immanentism and states that there is a power in the cosmos that is the source of trustworthiness of the cosmos and the source of wisdom and purpose. It can act intentionally and it can be experienced (Vroom, 2006, pp. 157-158). If we compare the stance of pure immanentism with Sölle's point of view we find that they contradict each other. Sölle does not think of the transcendent as mere unintentional force but as an intentional power with a will that man can know. Sölle's position is more in line with the somewhat theistic conception of cosmic transcendence.

So the 'pan-' part in 'panentheism', which is represented by the cosmic view of transcendence, does not completely contradict the theistic view of the transcendent. Sölle's concept of transcendence has both theistic and cosmic elements. God is not completely transcendent from the world but the immanent reality around us is not all there is (Clayton, 2013, p. 371-302). Therefore the 'panentheism' label that Asschrich assigned to Sölle may be considered a correct one.

Summarizing: Sölle sees concrete, historical and often fragile processes of liberation and attempts to overcome injustice, as ongoing creation in which God manifests himself as a longing, wide-open power that is tenaciously creating a world of wholeness, love and justice. These creational processes are the very foundation of life in which man can participate as a co-creator with God, fellow men and nature. Participation of this kind is a profound, empowering and joyful experience of being united with others, nature and God in an indestructible way. It also means becoming sensitive to suffering and injustice in the world and in our own lives, and this causes us sadness and sorrow.

3.6.   Hermeneutic research

Most schools of spirituality have collections of spiritual texts that are an important means of passing on and appropriating the spiritual experience of the school. These schools of spirituality have developed a specific reading (or reciting) praxis that attunes the reader to a spiritual text. It teaches the reader to adopt the right reading attitude in order to become receptive to the meaning and transformational potential of the text and how it may affect the life of the reader. In this section I will discuss Sölle's hermeneutics. Prinz (2006) shows that Sölle has developed a consistent hermeneutic praxis. Sölle always challenges us to 1) analyze our socio-political situation so thoroughly and critically that we become 'hungry' for change and liberation, subsequently we 2) enter into a dialogue with a spiritual/biblical text that matches our situation: '*a spiritual process that includes prayer, meditation,*

transformation and self-transcendence (that) leads into the life-praxis of the third momentum.' (Prinz, 2006, p. 74) I will present Prinz's research as the framework for describing Sölle's hermeneutics.

3.6.1. Double contextualization
A key factor in Sölle's reading praxis is double contextualization: the context of the reader is brought into dialogue with the context of persons from biblical texts. In this encounter critical awareness of one's own situation, an orientation towards marginalized people and hunger for liberation and change develop. Prinz presents Sölle's hermeneutics as a three-step model.

'Every biblical text is read with the perspective on a personal and communal transformation through an ongoing encounter with God in Christ. The biblical interpretation process is a continuum of the biblical text itself, since it makes out of the interpretation a new possibility of an encounter with God that transforms: from life-text to biblical text to renewed praxis.' (Prinz, 2006, p. 250) This three-step model constitutes the hermeneutics and the spiritual formation that is typical of Sölle's spirituality.

3.6.2. Step 1: Life-text
The point of departure is the analysis of one's 'web of life' (Prinz, 2006, p. 71); a critical analysis of our socio-political situation. This analysis means tracing causes and consequences of our involvement in injustice and trying to get a view of the victims of our socio-political situation: who are the ones that are suffering because of our way of life? This is the well-known preferential option for the poor. To put it in Christian terms: the analysis of our web of life should make the cross tangible*: '...where is Christ crucified anew? Where is the weakest under the given condition, including nature, lifted upon the cross?'* (Prinz, 2006, p. 70). Discovering this cross can make us hungry for change and liberation for both ourselves and the world. According to Sölle the Gospel cannot speak to someone who is politically and socially ignorant (*verdummt*, [Prinz, 2006, p. 35]): *'There is no 'experience' of the biblical text as revelatory and transformative, as long as its reading is not located in the socio-political situation of the reader. The*

biblical text cannot speak into a vacuum but needs to have a historical subject to be able to create an experience.' (Prinz, 2006, p. 35) Discovering one's involvement in injustice and the suffering of others causes an experience of 'deep vulnerability' (Prinz, 2006, p. 207) that brings forth a hunger for change.

3.6.3. Step 2: Biblical text

This hunger brings us to the second movement of Sölle's hermeneutics: an analysis of the situation of (often victimized) people in a biblical text and an attempt to discover if they have any hope. Before we discover their despair and their hope, we have to struggle (Prinz, 2006, p. 77) with the biblical text. We have to read with *Genauigkeit* (accuracy) und *Begeisterung* (enthusiasm) (Prinz, 2006, p. 72) until we discover their hope.

According to Prinz, Sölle's work is centered on three biblical passages that typically and constitutively express the experience of hunger for liberation and justice and the experience of hope (Prinz, 2006, p. 241): Philippians 2; Matthew 25; and the Psalmic Lament tradition.

Philippians 2: 6-11: *'Christ was truly God. But he did not try to remain equal with God. 7 Instead he gave up everything and became a slave, when he became like one of us. 8 Christ was humble. He obeyed God and even died on a cross. 9 Then God gave Christ the highest place and honoured his name above all others. 10 So at the name of Jesus everyone will bow down, those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. 11 And to the glory of God the Father everyone will openly agree, "Jesus Christ is Lord!"'(CEV).*

For Sölle the kenotic incarnation of God in Christ is the ultimate image of God: a God who became poor in every way by resisting power, glory and control and *'embracing the possibility of liberation, a greater capacity to love and a fullness of life in the turning towards "the Other"'* (Prinz, 2006, p. 243). This image also helps us to understand what it means to be fully human. To resist the temptation of power and riches means to become fully human so that we can liberate and love others.

Matthew 25: 31-40: '*31 When the Son of Man comes in his glory with all of his angels, he will sit on his royal throne. 32 The people of all nations will be brought before him, and he will separate them, as shepherds separate their sheep from their goats. 33 He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 34 Then the king will say to those on his right, "My father*

has blessed you! Come and receive the kingdom that was prepared for you before the world was created. 35 When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat, and when I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. When I was a stranger, you welcomed me, 36 and when I was naked, you gave me clothes to wear. When I was sick, you took care of me, and when I was in jail, you visited me." 37 Then the ones who pleased the Lord will ask, "When did we give you something to eat or drink? 38 When did we welcome you as a stranger or give you clothes to wear 39 or visit you while you were sick or in jail?" 40 The king will answer, "Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me."' (CEV).

To hear the cry of God in the cry of the suffering is central in Sölle's spirituality. Our turning towards the suffering can be a mystical union with God. Christ's identification with the suffering is the ultimate consequence of God's kenotic incarnation. '*It is the reality that Christ is still in need and continues to be crucified, and that, through Christ, God remains part of the historical and actual humanity'* (Prinz, 2006, p. 245).

The Psalmic Lament tradition is an expression of the human experience of suffering, agony, fear and distress; people in need of God. If we want to stay 'in touch' with God or remain hungry for God, we need to stay sensitive to the ongoing human suffering. *'Remaining in inconsolability is a way of listening to "the silent cry" of God'* (Sölle, 1998, p. 154). The Psalmic Lament tradition consists of 'text-events of memory, liberation, salvation and hope' (Prinz, 2006, p. 248). This is what constitutes the essence of being human and divine, according to Sölle. Reading or becoming involved in the biblical text-events of this kind is not a matter of extracting an objective meaning from them or a matter of a methodical exegesis. For Sölle it is about struggling with the poetry of these texts, 'eating and chewing' them and struggling and fighting with them until the despair and the hope of the people is discovered in the surplus of meaning of the text.

3.6.4.   Step 3: Renewed praxis

So, schematically, the experience of our own vulnerability creates a desperate hunger for change and liberation. We can discover the experience of agony and hope in biblical texts. That brings us to the third and final step

of Sölle's hermeneutics. Although the hermeneutic process has its point of departure in our own experience, it is challenged by the encounter with the biblical text. According to Sölle the biblical text essentially has the function of 'creating and recreating humanity and humanness' (Prinz, 2006, p. 32). Reading and struggling with the text may change and empower the reader to actually renew his life-praxis. *'The biblical text becomes a "Word of God" for the reader in a specific situation and world, speaking to a concrete praxis…Therefore, challenging, and not maintaining, the status quo through a spiritual process that includes prayer, meditation, transformation and self-transcendence leads into the life-praxis of the third momentum…'* (Prinz, 2006, p. 74).

3.6.5.   Literary competence, non-Christian sources and theopoetics
Sölle provides us with a clear, three-step hermeneutical process that prepares the reader for the transformative potential of the text:
1. Discovering one's own entanglement in damaging structures and in the suffering of others, which causes a desperate hunger for change and liberation
2. Studying and struggling with biblical texts that express similar experiences of despair and hunger, and which also offer a perspective on hope
3. Studying these texts forges hope, courage, a renewed life-praxis and resilience.

Of course this hermeneutics-in-three-steps is a conceptual scheme. It schematizes the reading praxis that brings about spiritual formation according to Sölle's spirituality and inevitably simplifies it somewhat. Therefore this scheme needs an additional perspective. First of all, the role of creativity in bringing one's experiences into dialogue with biblical texts is important. The 'meaning' of a biblical text is constructed in a process of perceiving and reading. This requires a certain level of literary sensitivity and literary competence from the reader.
Secondly, Prinz focuses on the biblical texts in the reading process. However, according to Aschrich, Sölle has made a point of it that other non-Christian sources and texts may have a transcendent power as well

(Aschrich, 2006, p. 268), e.g.: literary texts (Aschrich, 2006, p. 146). God is not confined to one tradition but can permeate in literature for example in a non-religious shape (Aschrich, 2006, p. 165). For Sölle Jesus is God's clearest voice but that may be different for other people (Sölle, 1995, p. 55). Sölle's emphasis on the universality and totality of liberation enables a fusion or blending of the Christian tradition with other spiritual traditions (Aschrich, 2006, p. 269).

Thirdly, Sölle's reading praxis, as Prinz presents it, ends with the renewal of life-praxis. From a hermeneutical point of view it is interesting to note that Sölle was a fervent writer of spiritual texts herself, e.g. Sölle's theopoetry that I have already referred to in section 3.3.2. This suggests that Sölle's hermeneutics may have an additional fourth step: renewed life praxis may turn us into poets who can express their deepest existential experiences and who can connect with them; a characteristic of Sölle's spirituality that I have already referred to in section 3.5.3. In the development of the method for spiritual formation this proved to be an important element of the method (see section 4.4.4 and 4.4.5).

3.7. Systematic research

A school of spirituality has its own ways of reflecting on the spiritual experiences and spiritual formation of its adherents. In this section I will describe the forms, style or mode, issues and purpose of the spiritual educational conversation in the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology in which critical articulation and examination take place. I will also consider the networks in which systematic-academic research into this spirituality is being conducted and the issues that are being discussed. Sölle's ideas with regards to systematic research can be described in two main parts: 1) her rejection of theology as a discursive science; and 2) the *vita mixta* in which the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa* are combined. The *vita mixta* is Sölle's ideal of the learning praxis where socially engaged action on the one

hand and an inspiring and contextualized mode of theology on the other meet as critical friends.

3.7.1. *Rejection of theology as a discursive science*

There is one learning community that Sölle rejects: the traditional academic theology of the 1960s and the preceding decades. German theology could be hijacked by the Nazis in the 1930s because it had developed itself into a detached, quasi-objective academic discipline (Prinz, 2006, p. 158). Despite all its intellectual traditions and achievements, it proved to be of no significance in the light of the rise of a destructive power. Sölle supports Latin American liberation theology that is critical of the historical-critical approach to the Bible, not because it is scientifically wrong or disputable, but because it deprives the Bible of its critical potential and alienates us from the hope that change for the better is possible (Sölle, 1983, p. 182).

Sölle's stance on this matter fits into a more general trend (of the second half of the 20th century) in which the role of science shifts to social critique (Fierro, 1977, pp. 88-90). In this view science (including theology) is no longer neutral or a-political. The concept of 'truth' shifts from essence-objective-ideal-abstract-*an*sich* to practical-operational-critical-social dynamic-real life (Fierro, 1977, pp. 91-94). Sölle is very much in tune with the *Zeitgeist* when she wonders if theology can be a discursive science. If it is, are we not running the risk of losing the essence of theology? That is why Sölle starts looking for a new theological *Sprache* (Aschrich, 2006, p. 146). Her 1973 dissertation connects literature and theology and explores how theology can (and should) be responsive to people's changing questions of what it means to have a practical, living faith that is relevant for our here-and-now lives (Korte, 2006, p. 175). These questions concern the heart of religion. This heart is personal and subjective, categories that are hard to grasp from a traditional, scientific point of view (Aschrich, 2006, pp. 234-235). With her dissertation Sölle's spirituality has a solid theological, academic basis but she moves away from traditional theology into a new direction (Aschrich, 2006, p. 271). Eventually she interweaves theological content and literary expressions of existential experiences with political awareness and activism and how those two are experienced. She develops '*a theology of culture where, with a generosity that transcends religions,*

sacred and profane biblical testimonials are connected in a seamless and natural way' (Aschrich, 2006, p. 271).

3.7.2. *Vita mixta*

Over the years Sölle developed a new concept of a learning community that she calls the *vita mixta* (Sölle, 1998, p. 281) in which the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa* are connected. According to Sölle there are strong tendencies in Christianity that try to suppress the 'basic capitalistic experience' (Sölle, 1983, p. 164) of powerlessness, unease and uncontrollability. For centuries Christianity has suggested that the *vita contemplativa* is better and higher than the *vita activa*. Since contemplation has been exchanged for rationalism, theology has been become particularly fond of what is realistic and feasible. This has driven religion back to the private realm where it has become politically harmless. From a movement of innovation and social renewal Christianity has evolved into a conservative force that adapts people for being an *animal laborans* or a *homo faber* (Arendt, 1958); slaves well adapted to what Sölle calls 'the Egyptian lifestyle' (Sölle, 1983, p. 159).

Sölle introduces the counter-concept of a 'theology of adaptation' (Sölle, 1983, p. 159). In this ideal-typical theology key Christian concepts such as sin, salvation and conversion have been privatized and are hardly relevant and applicable in the public realm, for instance in politics and business. By stressing vertical, individual justification granted by God ('absolution from above'), the theology of adaptation has neglected communal, horizontal purification. It has created a self-centered faith, civil detachment, political incompetency and a convenient preference for an abstract, distant and otherworldly deliverance. This theology is designed to keep us away from the poor, according to Sölle (Sölle, 1983, p. 175). Of course the theology of adaptation is not an accurate, historical representation. It is an ideal type that highlights what Sölle sees as the crisis in Western theology and Christianity. Third world liberation theology helped Sölle to use the Bible, exegesis and theology in a new way (Sölle, 1983, p. 166). It stipulates that the situation of the reader determines the meaning of a text and it emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach. One needs to work with sociology, anthropology, economics et cetera to analyze and truly understand societal

situations and issues. These analyses have to be brought into dialogue with biblical texts (Prinz, 2006, pp. 170-171). Prinz has described this shift of Sölle and other political theologians as the addition to Christian spirituality of an 'intimate connection between theological questions and existential experience'; an evolution from *Da-sein* to a concrete, historical experience of *In-der-Welt-sein* (Prinz, 2006, pp. 266-267). This contextuality is the point of departure (Sölle, 1983, p. 160) and also the beginning of the circle of the *vita mixta*. Praxis is primary over contemplation (Aschrich, 2006, p. 97) (Sölle, 1989, p. 91, p. 179). In the *vita mixta* reflection, action, critical discussion, learning and evaluation evolve around concrete societal issues that groups are trying to address. This is the 'moment' where other scientific disciplines are involved in order to analyze and understand situations and issues. Sölle calls this the profound earthly orientation of Christian groups (Sölle, 1989, p. 101). However, this orientation needs an additional source of inspiration that is non-rational and keeps reminding us of the perspective of freedom for all (Sölle, 1998, pp. 275-276). This is the task of theology and it closes the circle of the *vita mixta*. Mere intellectual understanding of societal problems may incapacitate us (Sölle, 1983, p. 81). A spiritual understanding of our situation, acquired in the *vita contemplativa*, forges the awareness of the existential necessity to liberate ourselves (Sölle, 1998, p. 287) and teaches us to express and communicate this experience. A spiritual understanding of the world sees signs of liberation and hope that may motivate us to stand up ourselves and to share these signs of hope with others (Sölle, 1998, p. 380). It helps us to ask God to become our ally in our struggle for liberation (Sölle, 1998, p. 283), to denounce God, to cry in God and to praise God (Sölle, 1998, p. 408). It also helps to have 'revolutionary patience' (Sölle, 1983, p. 277) because a spiritual understanding of the *vita activa* draws from the well of that which has always been good. The connection between the *vita activa* and *the vita comtemplativa* shows that the relationship between man and God is mutual. Man's and God's giving-and-taking and crying-and-responding close the circle of the *vita mixta* (Sölle. 1998, p. 281).

Sölle has not developed the *vita mixta* into a concrete praxis for individuals, groups or organizations. I have already referred to Sölle's self-complaint (section 3.3.4) that she cannot fall back on a disciplining rule that regulates

her way of life and her spiritual life and to the fact that she has not developed a praxis for groups (section 3.4.2). The political night prayers from the late 1960s may represent an early, operationalized form of the *vita mixta* with their explicit structure of 1) information, investigating issues and one's situation; 2) exchanging ideas, discussion; 3) considering alternatives for action and taking up one's responsibilities (Sölle, 1983, pp. 110-111). These three steps are each considered a specific form of prayer. Gathering information and investigating is a way of searching for the truth and trying to choose the right side, in the same way that Christ has always chosen truth and justice. Discussing the facts and exchanging ideas is a manifestation of a non-authoritarian way of being a community. In considering possible options for action we try to become aware of what does not yet exist but which must be realized. We express our grief of the yet not realized kingdom of God and take up our own responsibility for realizing it. Participating in a political prayer is a way of committing oneself to God's cause as if it were our own cause. *'Prayer is the expression of our realizing that God's kingdom implies me.'* (Sölle, 1983, p. 109)

It is not easy to accurately assess the degree to which Sölle's spirituality has developed into a mature and established school of spirituality within academic research or, for example, in the shape of the base ecclesial communities that emerged in the 1960s. From a historical perspective it is still a young (school of) spirituality that started as a countermovement in the 1960s and blossomed in the 1970s and 1980s. It is difficult to estimate how 'big' or influential Sölle's school is at present.

It is my impression that her death in 2003 sparked a modest, renewed, academic interest in her work that has dwindled afterwards. The number of base ecclesial communities and their members in the Netherlands, traditionally inspired by Sölle and other liberation theologians, has decreased significantly. It would be interesting to see in what way her theology and spirituality lives on in the remaining communities. We cannot answer this question in this study.

3.8.   Mystagogic research

The fourth element in a systematic exploration and description of a school of spirituality is its mystagogic praxis. Several issues make up this element. In most schools of spirituality a facilitator (mentor) and a partipicant (pupil) can be distinguished. How do they cooperate and relate to each other? Which mystagogic guidance practices are being used? What are the counseling goals and objectives?

One of the goals of this study is to develop a prototype of a method for spiritual formation of people who work in the context of social innovation, based on a specific school of spirituality. If it turns out that the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology is a suitable school of spirituality on which this prototype can be based, its mystagogic praxis could provide a lot of valuable input for the development of the method. However, the mystagogic praxis is almost absent in Sölle's writings. One can distill several related issues, e.g. a path of spiritual development (section 3.5.4) and conceptual ideas about a learning community (section 3.7), but the mystagogic elements are missing. Therefore we cannot use her writings as a direct source of input for the development of this aspect of a prototype of a method for spiritual formation. I refer to section 3.10 for an evaluation of Sölle's spirituality with regards to its potential for developing a prototype of a method of spiritual formation. In this evaluation its lack of mystagogic praxis is also taken into consideration.

3.9.   A critical look at Sölle's spirituality

Spirituality is often presented as a positive phenomenon but there can be serious, negative sides to spirituality. In this section I want to demonstrate the importance of a balanced attitude to business spirituality in general that pays attention to both the positive potential of spirituality and its potential

downsides. Subsequently I will identify and discuss seven limitations of Sölle's spirituality.

Waaijman distinguishes two basic forms of spirituality: one as a way to life and one as a dead-end street, e.g. in the form of radicalization (Waaijman, 2002, p. 482). Other authors confirm the existence of negative expressions and outcomes of spirituality, e.g. Roehlkepartain et al (2005, p. 11). Hense (2008) explores the dark side of spirituality more extensively. She distinguishes spiritually-inspired vices (e.g.: sexual abuse of children in some religious groups), negative conceptions/ideas (e.g.: a negative self-image) and unhealthy practices (e.g.: extreme fasting). Bosgraaf (2011) has studied ascetic practices in Dutch monasteries in the first half of the 20th century. Many ascetic practices such as fasting, silence and self-flagellation, were once viewed as positive and spiritually formative. In the 1950s and 1960s they came under medical, psychological and theological scrutiny, became controversial and eventually they largely disappeared or transformed into milder practices. It shows that our ideas of what positive or negative sides of spirituality are, are influenced by the *Zeitgeist*, societal developments and science.

Gross (2010) emphasizes the importance of a critical attitude towards spirituality in organizations and points at the relative lack of empirical research into this aspect of spirituality in organizations, e.g. in-depth case studies. In her case study she finds that an organization may present elements of its practices and policies as *'having transcendent meaning or as supporting a community feeling within a company'* (Gross, 2010, p. 77). However, the case study shows that this organizational spirituality is being used to downplay a basic conflict of interest between organizational and individual goals (Gross, 2010, p. 77), for example by colonizing the personal lives of employees with a strong, spiritualized but inauthentic organizational culture (Gross, 2010, p. 78).

Hudson (2013) points to the potentially delusional, feel-good goals of a lot of organizational spirituality: reaching an integrated, fulfilled, authentic self. But 'reaching the true self is painful' (Hudson, 2013, p. 13) because life is fragmented. It is a continuously developing narrative and it often fails, according to Hudson. Eventually well-meant spiritual programs may deeply disappoint employees or lead them to live shallow, self-deceiving lives.

Giacalone and Jurkiewicz try to separate religion and spirituality, partly because of a polarized, polemic climate in society with regards to religion; a climate that seems to think in unnuanced dichotomies, e.g.: one is a fierce believer or a fierce non-believer; religious vs. scientific; good, positive spirituality vs. bad, negative religion. The negative extremes of spirituality in organizations, which unfortunately do exist, *'can foster zealotry at the expense of organizational goals, offend constituents and consumers, and decrease morale, performance, and job satisfaction for employees'* (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010, p. 5).

A balanced approach to business spirituality should be able to discern, expose and evaluate these negative sides, as well as its limitations. If we look critically at the systematic description of Sölle's spirituality, we find that it has a number of limitations.

First of all, Korte wonders if Sölle is not overly optimistic about the mental and physical resilience of people (Korte, 2006, p. 187) and of our ability to restore justice (Korte, 2006, p. 192). Aschrich makes a similar remark when he questions Sölle's permanent call for love and political action (Aschrich, 2006, p. 273). It is true that Sölle gives the impression of expecting a highly motivated socio-political engagement while at the same warning that we cannot expect quick results, thus demanding a lot of endurance. For her the legitimacy and joy of resistance do not lie in effectiveness, success or results but in being connected with God and fellow proponents. At the same time she acknowledges that along with joy and connectedness come pain, setbacks and sorrow. However, Sölle is nuanced about the scope or magnitude of our actions. A small, symbolic 'no' may have the same value and significance as organizing an influential lobby campaign (Sölle, 1998, p. 383).

Secondly, Sölle has not developed her spirituality up to the level of a methodically designed rule that regulates the *vita mixta* that she endorses. We have already referred to her self-observation that she does not have a daily routine that nourishes her spiritual life, which makes it harder to go through a difficult period (section 3.3.4.) Similarly Sölle has not developed a praxis that operationalizes the *vita mixta* for a group (Aschrich, 2006, p. 273). Her ideas about this remain on a conceptual level and she has not developed or systemized her own lived spirituality into a rule.

The absence of an operationalized group praxis is related to the third limitation which has a theological nature: an underdeveloped ecclesiology. In section 3.4.2 I described Sölle's ambivalent attitude towards the church: *'When you seriously need it, it is often not very effective. But still you wouldn't want to do without it.'* It would be interesting to see if a more elaborated ecclesiology in the spirit of Sölle's spirituality could be developed.

Fourthly, Aschrich is critical of Sölle's concept of transcendence. Aschrich qualifies Sölle's concept of transcendence as post-theistic. At the same time Sölle addresses the transcendent with 'Father', which may be called a theistic salutation (Aschrich, 2006, p. 273). According to Vroom and in line with the concept of lived spirituality, we do not need to be very strict on this point because worldviews and spiritualities are not necessarily systems that are 100% logically consistent. However Aschrich extends his criticism and fills it pastorally. Sölle's emphasis on immanent transcendence leaves little room for personal consolance and little hope of an afterlife, thus removing a perspective that may provide solace for many people (Aschrich, 2006, p. 273).

A fifth limitation concerns Sölle's openness to other spiritual traditions and religions. Her ability to absorb or use input from other schools of spirituality itself is not a problem, and possibly it is even a strength in today's pluralistic world. However, problems arise when the consequences of this interreligious border traffic surface because Sölle has not really systematically thought about the consequences of this open attitude. Aschrich wonders if Sölle in fact interchanges Christianity for a universal religion, and if that is a good option for the future of Christianity (Aschrich, 2006, p. 274). In this respect Fierro is critical of the grounding that liberation theology uses for its Christocentric character, or rather its lack of grounding (Fierro, 1977, p. 175-178). What is the rationale behind the focus on Jesus as the ultimate liberator? Liberation theology does not want to use traditional dogmas as a grounding for it, but it does not have another way of supporting this claim. This is an issue that needs further elaboration and Sölle has not done that.

Another issue that needs further thinking through is Sölle's eschatology. In section 3.4.1 I have referred to some issues of liberation theology that are

(conceptually) problematic with regards to traditional Christian eschatology. Sölle gradually moves away from the classical eschatological ideas and develops a mystical, creation-centered and less anthropocentric perspective on final things. However, some fundamental questions remain unanswered: can we expect a full and total liberation to be achieved at some point in history? What will happen to liberation theology when we arrive at that point? And if we never arrive at that point, then what is the final perspective, for whom and by whom? These are issues that deserve further elaboration.

Finally, Sölle looks at the world (and herself) critically. She is never tired of drawing our attention to the weak, the harmed and marginalized. She tends to paint a rather grim picture of the world, e.g.: the world as a prison of globalization and individualization (Sölle, 1998, p. 267); very violent, alienated, addicted and dependent (Sölle, 1998, p. 267), and: the world as a giant machine (Sölle, 1998, p. 269). In doing so she neglects the positive trends that have been realized over the years. The Human Development Index for example shows a gradual improvement in many countries in the world (UNDP, 2015). The Global Peace Index also reports *'a marked and consistent downturn in levels of violence and conflict since the end of the Second World War.'* (IEP, 2015, p. 46) This is not to say that there are no problems in the world, but that a critical examination can be combined with an additional appreciative way of looking at the world.

3.10.   Is Sölle's spirituality up to the task?

At the beginning of this chapter it was proposed that the school of spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology might be able to help with two issues:

1. disclose and explicate experiences of the transcendent in the practice of social innovation that has been presented in chapter 2
2. provide input for the development of a method for spiritual formation for people who work in the context of social innovation, e.g. a spiritual

praxis or a trajectory for spiritual development and growth for people who are active in the field of social innovation.

We have explored this school of spirituality according to Waaijman's methodological design for spirituality research by describing its outlines and key moments, external horizon, internal horizon, hermeneutics, systematic research and mystagogic research. Now that we have a systematic overview of Sölle's spirituality we can try to see if it can help us with the two issues.

First of all, can Sölle's spirituality disclose and explicate experiences of the transcendent in the practice of social innovation? The systematic overview of it shows that it has an explicated concept of transcendence. Sölle sees '*concrete, historical and often fragile processes of liberation and attempts to overcome injustice, as ongoing creation in which God manifests himself as a longing, wide-open power that tenaciously is creating a world of wholeness, love and justice. These creational processes are the very foundation of life in which man can participate as a co-creator with God, fellow men and nature. Participation of this kind is a profound, empowering and joyful experience of being united with others, nature and God in an indestructible way. It also means becoming sensitive to suffering and injustice in the world and in our own lives, and this causes us sadness and sorrow.*' (section 3.5.6) If we look at how social innovation has been defined (see section 2.3: '*intentional innovation by individuals or organizations that is aimed at promoting the common good for the public or society)* we can see that the values of social innovation are very similar to what Sölle's processes of liberation aim at, e.g.: sustainability, equal rights for women, peace, humanity, and economic justice. Therefore it is very interesting that Sölle's concept of transcendence is explicitly linked to these processes of liberation. That is why it is likely that Sölle's concept of transcendence can also be linked to social innovation in a similar way. So Sölle's concept of transcendence has a significant potential to disclose and explicate experiences of the transcendent in the practice of social innovation.

Secondly, does Sölle's spirituality have the potential to provide input for the development of a method for spiritual formation of people who work in the context of social innovation? It does so in at least one way. From the

writings of Sölle an elaborate path of spiritual development can be derived. It has been described in section 3.5.4. The path has three stages: 1) *Via negativa* and *positiva;* 2) Resurrection; and 3) Co-creation with God in *communio sanctorum*. In these three stages ethics, personal development, work-related biographical elements, existential experiences, the start of active social engagement, cooperating with others, inspiration, issues of strategy, effectiveness, virtues that are required for social activism and various kinds of experiences of the transcendent are integrated into one 'logic', a coherent whole.

However, Sölle's spirituality does not provide a well-developed spiritual praxis for individuals and groups (see sections 3.3.3, 3.4.2 and 3.7). The integrative potential of this spirituality for the spiritual perspective on social innovation does not manifest itself with regards to these points. Yet it has two theoretical elements that may be useful for developing a spiritual praxis. Its hermeneutics is well-developed and provides us with a clear, three-step hermeneutical process that prepares the reader for the transformative potential of spiritual texts: 1) discovering one's own entanglement in damaging structures and in the suffering of others, causing a desperate hunger for change and liberation; 2) studying and struggling with biblical and spiritual texts that express similar experiences of despair and hunger, and which also offer a perspective on hope; and 3) studying these texts forges hope, courage, a renewed life-praxis and resilience. The second theoretical element that may be useful for developing a spiritual praxis is the concept of the *vita mixta* (section 3.7), in which social activism and contemplation are connected. Sölle's hermeneutics and the idea of the *vita mixta* are concepts that integrate a significant part of the individual elements of the spiritual perspective on social innovation. They may be valuable for developing a spiritual praxis, which is the challenge of the next chapter.

My conclusion is that the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology, despite a number of limitations (section 3.9), has the potential to disclose and explicate experiences of the transcendent in the practice of social innovation. Its path of spiritual development integrates many elements of the spiritual perspective on social innovation into a coherent whole. This whole, together with Sölle's hermeneutics and her idea of the *vita mixta*, make this school of spirituality an interesting candidate to continue working

with in the next step of this study: developing a prototype of a method for spiritual formation for people who work in the field of social innovation.

3.11. Limitations of this part of the study

This part of the study is limited in two ways. First of all, our exploration of Sölle's spirituality could be expanded. Secondly, as I have mentioned in section 3.1, it would be interesting to examine not just a single school of spirituality but a number of them and to see which input they could provide for the development of a method for spiritual formation. Unfortunately the scope of this study does not allow for such a broad approach.

Let us return to the first limitation of this part of the study. Although we have systematically explored Sölle's spirituality, it is still possible to expand this examination in a number of ways. Perhaps that would refine or change our view of it. The main source of information in the analysis of Sölle's spirituality are her official publications. Although they are a conspicuous source for studying her spirituality, we can think of other sources and research methods that might help us for this purpose. We might for instance interview key persons from her life, study Sölle's media appearances, read interviews with her, her speeches, meditations and the like. Involving European-based ecclesial communities in the research might also generate valuable data, for example by means of interviews, historic research or observations. It would help to see how her spirituality has evolved over the years. It would be equally interesting to see if other Christian and non-Christian organizations and movements have adapted elements of Sölle's spirituality. And although Sölle's liberation theology addresses people in the Western world, it would also be interesting to study how Latin American liberation theology and its relationship with Western liberation theology have evolved. However, in this analysis I have limited myself to her official publications because this analysis is aimed at assessing if this school of spirituality 1) helps to disclose and explicate experiences of the transcendent in the practice of social innovation; 2) has the potential to provide input for

the development of a method for spiritual formation of people who work in the context of social innovation. It turns out that her publications provide sufficient information to make such an assessment.

4. A method for spiritual formation in social innovation

Summary

Research into spirituality in organizations has not shown a lot of interest in developing methods for spiritual formation in a methodical way. So if we want to develop a method for spiritual formation we cannot fall back on a body of knowledge that is readily available. However, in the development of a method for spiritual formation a lot of design options are involved. Design oriented scientific research wants to make these options in design projects explicit so that they can be accounted for. In two rounds of development, testing and learning a prototype of a method for spiritual formation of people who work in socially innovative organizations has been developed following this methodology. Twelve people from socially innovative organizations participated in the development. When using the prototype the participants from socially innovative organizations, with the help of an experienced facilitator, develop a work-related, spiritual biography that is based on Sölle's path of spiritual development. The participants capture and express pivotal actions and experiences in their work-related spiritual biography and their spiritual development. By performing a specific speech act, the apostrophe, the participants disclose and articulate the transcendence in their experiences, which discloses, expresses and embodies their spiritual development.

Once the participants have explored their spiritual development up to now, they may enter the second phase of the method in which they renew their current praxis, inspired by the developmental agenda of the method.

A systematic evaluation of working with the prototype demonstrates that it helps the participants to identify, disclose, articulate and explicate specific work-related experiences of the transcendent that are pivotal according to the spirituality of Sölle. Working with the prototype also resulted in clear indications and contra-indications for the participants and facilitators, which allows for a more precise demarcation of the target group that can use the method in a purposeful and effective way.

The developmental nature of this part of this study also results in an agenda with possibilities for further development of the prototype into a full-fledged method.

4.1. Research into spirituality in organizations and methods for spiritual formation

In the previous two chapters I have developed a spiritual perspective on the praxis of social innovation and I have recognized Sölle's spirituality as a school of spirituality that may help us to develop this perspective in three ways. First of all, its specific concept of transcendence may help us to articulate and explicate experiences of the transcendent in the praxis of social innovation. Secondly, it may help us to integrate the separate elements of the spiritual perspective into a coherent path of spiritual development. Thirdly, Sölle's spirituality provides two conceptual building blocks for a spiritual praxis: her idea of the *vita mixta* and her three-step hermeneutical process.

This chapter presents the results of an attempt to develop a prototype of a method for spiritual formation of people who work in the context of social innovation, based on the school of Sölle's spirituality. It is the answer to the third research question that was presented in section 1.6.

Research into spirituality in organizations has not shown a lot of interest in developing methods for spiritual formation in a methodical way. Most research efforts are devoted to for example: philosophical, theological or juridical reflections on spirituality in organizations; attempts to measure spirituality; development of models that integrate spirituality with other aspects of organizational life; or explorations of the spiritual potential of various schools of spirituality for organizations. The '*Handbook of Faith and Spirituality in the Workplace; Emerging Research and Practice*' (Neal, 2013) is an illustration of this lack of interest. This 700+-page handbook contains 44 chapters. Three of the 44 chapters deal with methods for spiritual formation. Two of those are (retrospective) case studies (Schuijt,

2013) (Gardner, 2013) and one of them is a description of a newly developed spiritual coaching program for a specific group of professionals (Miller & Dorjee, 2013). However, none of those chapters deals explicitly with the methodical development of methods for spiritual formation. A similar search effort in volumes 2006-2016 of the *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion* results in a yield that is even poorer. One article can be found that partially deals with a number of methodical aspects of spiritual formation: a spiritual course for management students (Pavlovich, 2010).

This handful of publications gives a number of hints for the development of a method for spiritual formation. All four methods that are described in the articles are explicitly based on a younger or older school of spirituality: the teachings of the 14th Dalai Lama (Miller & Dorjee, 2013, p. 129); the life story of the Catholic foundress of the Sisters of Mercy (Gardner, 2013, p. 592), mindfulness and presencing (Pavlovich, 2010, pp. 196-197) or (more loosely) the *Devotio Moderna* (Schuijt, 2013, p. 569).

Two methods explicitly try to connect old spiritual traditions with new forms, e.g.: second-century Tibetan philosophy with current coaching processes (Miller & Dorjee, 2013, p. 128) and body and mind exercises, poem writing and video portraits of spiritual leaders on the one hand and optionally attending Christian prayer sessions by the religious order that hosts the spiritual retreat on the other (Schuijt, 2013, p. 572).

In three methods all or the largest part of the program is done in groups (Gardner, 2013, p. 612) (Schuijt, 2013, p. 572) (Pavlovich, 2010). Miller and Dorjee do not explicitly mention whether their method is individual or group based. Most likely it is an individual program in which one client is coached by one coach (Miller & Dorjee, 2013, p. 130).

Another element that surfaces from the articles are the qualifications of the facilitators. They have to become qualified or undergo training for the work that they do, e.g.: 'intense training' of facilitators (Gardner, 2014, p. 611); trainers have gone through a train-the-trainer program (Schuijt, 2014, p. 568), and coaches that meet professional standards and have official credentials (Miller & Dorjee, 2014, p. 131). None of the methods explicitly requires that participants meet certain requirements.

One last issue concerns voluntary or mandatory participation in the programs. Participation in the spiritual programs is voluntary and in one case mandatory for specific groups of employees (Gardner, 2014, p. 611).

These hints show that in the development of a method for spiritual formation a lot of design options are involved. Methodical development means making these options explicit and making choices that can be accounted for, and avoiding implicit, habitual or purely intuitive design choices as much as possible. This requires a methodology that is specifically suited for the systematic development of methods. Design-oriented scientific research (Van Aken & Andriessen, 2011) provides a methodology that meets those requirements. Therefore in this study the prototype of a method for spiritual formation has been developed according to this methodology.

In this chapter I will first discuss design-oriented research and show how its principles have been applied in the development of the method (section 4.2). Subsequently I will shortly present the developmental trajectory of this phase of the study, e.g. the number of participants who helped to develop the prototype (section 4.3). Then I will present and discuss the prototype of the method that has been developed (section 4.4) and discuss the results of working with the prototype of the method (section 4.5). This chapter closes with a reflection on the prototype and the limitations of this part of the study (section 4.6 and 4.7).

4.2.   Methodology of design-oriented research

Design-oriented methodologies (Van Aken, 1994) (Van Aken & Andriessen, 2011) are aimed at developing and improving solutions, methods or heuristics that professionals can adopt in their repertoire. Van Aken (1994) distinguishes between formal, empirical and design sciences[16]. According to Van Aken formal and empirical sciences have a less practical aim: developing a body of knowledge that is consistent and logically or

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[16] I must observe that the humanities seem to have disappeared in Van Aken's categorization.

empirically verifiable. Design sciences on the other hand want to develop knowledge for designing new artifacts and systems and for improving what already exists. Andriessen and Van Aken formulate the essence of the design-oriented research approach as being aimed at generic solutions for practical problems (or 'field problems') (Van Aken & Andriessen, 2011, p. 17). This requires a methodology that is different from the ones used in empirical and formal sciences. Management science that uses the empirical, 'physicalistic' (Van Aken, 1994, p. 18) method struggles with various problems that can be summarized as follows: one cannot seize social reality in or with (simplified) causal models[17]. Being human means to live in an operatively curved space, as Sloterdijk has phrased this awareness (Sloterdijk, 2013, p. 120).

According to Van Aken design-oriented research in the field of business and organizations results in heuristics that professionals can adopt in their repertoire. By its very nature the effect of applying the heuristics in social reality cannot be predicted exactly. A heuristic, however, that is being developed in a design-oriented study can gradually gain confidence in the professional field. Design-oriented research that produces reliable heuristics has a number of typical features, according to Van Aken (1994):

1. the study is part of an academic research program in which peers collaborate based on a shared research paradigm
2. results can be transferred to other persons by means of documents
3. results can be transferred to other, similar situations
4. results can be verified because empirical evidence is accessible, one has worked along the lines of a reliable method and the reasoning is sound, logical and controllable: 'pragmatic validity' (Van Aken & Andriessen, 2011, p. 17)

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[17] This is illustrated by the attitude of QTR Invest. This company has developed a computer algorithm that is said to predict stock prices. Based on historic data and patterns the program decides which shares should be sold or bought and when. The computer program however is top secret: 'We will tell in general terms what we do but we will never reveal the exact code for then people can imitate us and the system will not work anymore'. (Looijenstein, 2010, p. 28). 'Physicalistic', causal models that aim to describe social reality, such as stock prices, are part of social reality themselves. Because of this they are not 'objective'. They do not stand apart from social reality but influence it and subsequently influence themselves, possibly up to the point of 'self-destruction', as a self-destroying prophecy does.

5. the heuristic is based on a series of case studies and attention is focused on the essence of the heuristic: an explanation or analysis independent of a specific context with explicit attention for the underlying, operating mechanisms
6. the study pays attention to indications and contraindications for a promising and favorable application of the heuristic. These indications determine the domain of application of the method.

4.2.1. *Basic design phases*

When doing design-oriented research Van Aken distinguishes between designing artifacts and designing social systems for the social realm (Van Aken & Andriessen, 2011, p. 25). Although the design phases for artifacts and social systems are roughly the same, Van Aken acknowledges that there are underlying, fundamental methodological differences. I will now focus on designing social systems, because a method for spiritual formation is in fact a social system and not an artifact. Van Aken identifies three basic phases in designing and realizing a new social system (Van Aken & Andriessen, 2011, p. 54):

1. the designers make a first design, with the help of various sources of input
2. the people who will work with the design give feedback on the first design and a second design is made
3. the second design is implemented and performing, learning and changing take place

Phase 1 and 2 together are called the domain of designing. Phase 3 is called the domain of realization. This part of this study will follow the major structure of the design-oriented approach. However, there are some differences:

- The first design of the method was tested on two groups of socially innovative people. They were not (only) asked to give feedback on the first design.
- The first round of testing provided feedback that was used for a second design of the method.

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- The second design was tested on a third test group. This is the group where the intended learning, performing and changing continued and the prototype got the shape that is presented in this chapter.

These differences can be explained with another (subtle) distinction that Van Aken makes: design-oriented approach or development oriented approach (Van Aken & Andriessen, 2011, p. 57). For some designs detailed specifications can be made in advance: design-oriented approach. For other designs such detailed specifications are not available in advance. Then a more incremental approach is suited: the development oriented approach. This was the case with this study. Many factors concerning the method for spiritual formation were unknown at the start of this study or turned out to be different than assumed, e.g. the number and frequency of sessions, group size and information policies for participants. They had to be found out by experimenting and learning.

4.2.2. The mechanism of a method

An important aspect of the methodical development of a method is that it is based on a well-understood, transparent 'mechanism' (Van Aken & Andriessen, 2011, p. 65) that brings about the desired process and results. In terms of the CIMO[18] logic, a concept from the domain of design-oriented research, we need to identify a 'mechanism' that triggers spiritual development. Based on this mechanism one can design an 'intervention' (in this case: the method for spiritual formation) that will result in the desired 'outcome': development according to Sölle's spirituality.

Understandably, a 'well-understood mechanism' in the field of spirituality may sound like a contradiction. But maybe the drivers of spiritual development, in this case the drivers of Sölle's spirituality, are not completely obscured by clouds of mystery or elusiveness. Our systematic exploration of Sölle's spirituality in chapter 3 gives an important clue about this mechanism. Sölle's three-step hermeneutic process could be the trigger that we are looking for (section 3.6). According to Sölle deliberately and conscientiously uncovering and exposing ourselves to our own

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[18] CIMO is an acronym that is short for: Context, Intervention, Mechanism and Outcome (Denyer, Tranfield & Van Aken, 2008).

entanglement in damaging and unjust structures and systems creates a desperate hunger for change and liberation. We can discover and develop our sensitivity for the existential depth of our experiences of frustration in biblical texts. We are challenged in the encounter with the biblical text. Reading and struggling with these kinds of texts may empower us to actually renew our life-praxis.

Of course this three-step hermeneutic process is a stylized, conceptual version of a lived spirituality that surfaces from Sölle's writings. Therefore in section 3.6.5 I put forward three additional perspectives that prevent this scheme from becoming a straitjacket: 1) one needs creativity, literary sensitivity and literary competence in the reading process, 2) besides biblical texts literary texts may have the same potential for disclosing the transcendent and hope in our experiences, and 3) the hermeneutic process may not only result in renewed life praxis but also in us becoming theo-poets ourselves. With this perspective in mind Sölle's hermeneutic process can be used as the mechanism that serves as a basis of a method for spiritual formation. Its strength is that it is practical enough to be operationalized as a part of a method. It also promises to disclose the transcendent (i.e.: Sölle's concept of transcendence) in specific experiences, which is one of the goals of this study. Therefore Sölle's hermeneutic process allows us to make reasonable, understandable and comprehensive design choices in a process of methodically developing a method for spiritual formation instead of making wild guesses or mere intuitive choices.

4.2.3. Type of knowledge

An understanding of the type of knowledge that design-oriented research generates helps us appreciate the nature of this kind of research. Two perspectives on the type of knowledge are put forward: 1) specific and generic knowledge, and 2) the power of evidence of the effectiveness of an intervention.

Van Aken and Andriessen consider the defining quality of design-oriented scientific research as being 'aimed at developing generic knowledge for field problems' (Van Aken & Andriessen, 2011, p. 17). So design-oriented scientific research makes it possible to work on specific problems in a specific domain while at the same time this work can contribute to generic

knowledge about generic field problems (Van Aken & Andriessen, 2011, p. 17). This part of this study does so by trying to develop a prototype of a method for spiritual formation for people who work in socially innovative organizations; a specific problem in a specific domain.

This study will also generate generic knowledge about generic field problems. We will reflect on the last research question in chapter 5: what can we learn from the spiritual perspective on social innovation and the prototype of the method for spiritual formation with regard to the relationships between the key concepts of this study (social innovation, spirituality in organizations, lived spirituality, experiences of the transcendent, schools of spirituality and personal development)? This reflection transfers the specific knowledge to generic field problems, thus creating generic knowledge about spirituality in organizations.

Van Aken and Andriessen would probably categorize both results as 'mid-range theory' (Van Aken & Andriessen, 2011, p. 52). If we pose this kind of knowledge next to its counterparts, it is clear what this means:

- Generic knowledge: universally valid knowledge (e.g.: laws of physics)
- Mid-range theory: valid for a specific type of problem or situation
- Specific knowledge: knowledge that is valid for one specific case.

A method for spiritual formation of people working in socially innovative organizations and a generalized reflection on it are typically types of knowledge that falls into the category of mid-range theory.

Applying the method with participants will result in knowledge about their spiritual development. This knowledge can be categorized as 'specific knowledge'. From a research point of view this knowledge is essentially a by-product, although it is an essential building block of mid-range theory.

There is a second way of assessing the results of design-oriented research: looking at the power of evidence of the effectiveness of an intervention. Weber, Ropes and Andriessen distinguish four levels of power of evidence (Weber, Ropes & Andriessen, 2011, pp. 169-171). At its lowest level an intervention (e.g.: a method) is assessed as 'descriptive': the intervention has the potential to achieve a desired outcome. The intervention, the context where the intervention is to be applied and the desired outcome have been

described. It is not (yet) known if the intervention will result in the desired outcome.

If an intervention can be labeled as 'descriptive' in terms of power of evidence and the mechanism of the intervention is theoretically well understood (which is not the case with the previous level 'descriptive'), then an intervention is classified as 'theoretical' (Weber, Ropes & Andriessen, 2011, p. 170).

An intervention is classified as 'indicative' in terms of power of evidence if it is demonstrated that the desired outcomes are being achieved: an intervention with a theoretically well understood mechanism has been applied and the results are assessed empirically but without having demonstrated that the interventions actually caused the outcomes. At this level there may be alternative explanations for the outcomes (Weber et al, 2011, p. 170).

The power of evidence level 'causal' is the highest level in design-oriented research. This is the case if an intervention with a well-understood mechanism has been applied and positive results are assessed empirically. There has to be evidence that the intervention has actually caused the outcomes, there is evidence that the mechanism of the intervention has functioned and alternative explanations have been systematically excluded (Weber et al, 2011, pp. 170-171).

4.2.4. *Evaluating design-oriented research in the spiritual domain*

How can a method for spiritual formation be evaluated in a thoughtful way? One tempting approach is to see if people who use the method show some form of improved performance, e.g.: increased job involvement, more organizational identification, higher job satisfaction or improved ethical behaviour. There are however challenges to overcome when evaluating a method for spiritual formation in this way. I will list these challenges based on a review of Meditative Movement, like Taijiquan and Qigong, and its effects on depression and anxiety (Payne & Crane-Godreau, 2013). Payne's and Crane-Godreau's stocktaking illustrates the methodological issues that require careful attention when evaluating the effects of a spiritual program or method.

According to Payne and Crane-Godreau many effect studies have methodological limitations because of *'poor experimental design, lack of specificity in description of the intervention, small sample size, brief length of study, lack of investigation of biomarkers, lack of studies involving clinical cases, lack of three-arm studies, and inadequate blinding'* (Payne & Crane-Godreau, 2013, p. 5) and lack details of the qualifications of the instructors (Payne & Crane-Godreau, 2013, p. 6). Another limitation in some studies is not using the appropriate clinical standards, if applicable, to measure effects (Payne & Crane-Godreau, 2013, p. 4). Blinding and randomized selection procedures are not always fully described (Payne & Crane-Godreau, 2013, p. 10). Many studies fail to meet the criteria from scientific standards such as the CONSORT standard and/or its extension for non-pharmacological treatment interventions.

Dosage is also complicated because in many spiritual practices a time frame of a few weeks or a handful of exercise sessions, which is common in many studies, is regarded as too short or too little to achieve meaningful results (Payne & Crane-Godreau, 2013, p. 6). Longitudinal studies may be more appropriate.

Some spiritual practices seem to be similar at first glance and are put together in a survey as one of a kind. A closer look at them however may reveal that they are different from each other on essential points that can confound the research results (Payne & Crane-Godreau, 2013, p. 4).

Discerning and defining a spiritual praxis is challenging, for example because of the ambiguity of central concepts of a spirituality or because of the existence of many variations of a spiritual praxis (Payne & Crane-Godreau, 2013, p. 3). A taxonomy should be developed that is 'based on accurate understanding' (Payne & Crane-Godreau, 2013, p. 7) of the spirituality involved.

A specific challenge is developing convincing 'sham' controls to reduce 'frustrebo'-effects (Payne & Crane-Godreau, 2013, p. 5): how can participants in control groups engage in a credible program? This may also pose ethical issues.

Cooperation between researchers and spiritual teachers/instructors may prove to be difficult due to differences in cultural backgrounds. Both groups may live in different fields of language and are likely to have different

views on the process of the spiritual practice, its results and the eligibility of participants for the practice (Payne & Crane-Godreau, 2013, p. 3).

Some studies on culturally specific methods of a spiritual tradition are published in languages that are difficult to access for researchers that are oriented to English. This limits the scope of the research (Payne & Crane-Godreau, 2013, p. 2). We can well imagine that this could be the case for literature on and reviews of other specific spiritualities that could be applied in the field of spirituality in organizations.

Cultural differences, the finesses of a spirituality, sample size, required length of the survey, difficulties in control procedures and groups; all these issues require careful consideration because they make it difficult to assess the real effects of applying a method for spiritual formation in organizations. This evaluation approach does not suit this study very well. It is a big step from developing a prototype of a method 'from scratch', as is the case in this study, to putting it to the test in a large-scale effect study. A successful prototype should basically work but probably it can be improved in many ways, for example in terms of its sensitivity to experiences of transcendence. Therefore it makes more sense to improve the prototype until it has developed into a more advanced method, and then the time has come to put it to the test in a large-scale study that is aimed at evaluating its effects.

Two considerations show other possibilities for evaluating a prototype of a method for spiritual formation. First of all, one of the goals of this study is to try to articulate and explicate experiences of the transcendent in the praxis of social innovation by means of a method of spiritual formation. Therefore one of the goals of an evaluation is to see if the method has helped people to do so.

Secondly, it is important to keep in mind that this study uses a design-oriented approach (Van Aken, 1994, 2011). The aim of design-oriented research is developing a method (or an apparatus) by experimenting and testing. The results of testing are lessons-learnt for improvement of the method, and not hypotheses that are to be rejected or confirmed. By gradually improving the method for a professional context one gradually gains confidence in it. So in design-oriented research evaluation means learning in order to improve and develop. Relevant evaluation questions are

for example: what role do the elements of the method play in bringing about the desired results? Are some elements counterproductive? Does the underlying 'mechanism' function as we think it should? Can we identify circumstances in or conditions under which the method has a small or a fair chance of success? The answers to such questions provide input for new rounds of testing. By going through a number of rounds of testing a method can be improved, experimental bandwidth will probably be narrowed down, developmental lines will converge and gradually the marginal returns of additional testing will diminish as the development and experiments continue.

So appropriate goals for an evaluation in the test phase of this design-oriented study are answers to the following questions, categorized according to the CIMO-logic:

- *Context:* Can we identify indications and contra-indications for people who use or undergo the method and for the people who assist them?
- *Intervention:* What role do the various elements of the method play in bringing about the desired results (see 'Outcome')? Which elements have been found to be counterproductive?
- *Mechanism:* Do we see the underlying mechanism of Sölle's hermeneutic process at work?
- *Outcome:* Does the method help people to articulate and explicate experiences of the transcendent in their praxis of social innovation? Do they develop themselves according to Sölle's path of spiritual development? Which level of power of evidence do the outcomes have?

An evaluation does not need to adhere strictly to these questions. If other valuable issues surface, they should be taken into consideration as well.

4.3.   Outline of the development route of the prototype

4.3.1.   First round of development and testing

The method that is described in section 4.4 is the result of two rounds of (re-) designing, development and testing. For the first round of testing a prototype of the method was designed that was used and tested in a group of socially innovative people. Based on an evaluation of the first round of testing a new version of the prototype was designed that was used by individual participants who are active in the context of social innovation. When the first version of the prototype was designed, input from six sources was used:

1. the requirements of using the method in a business context
2. Sölle's hermeneutic process, as described in section 3.6
3. the 'Changing lives through literature' program (Trounstine & Waxler, 2005)
4. agents and layers in the mystagogic process (De Jong–Van Campen, 2009)
5. empirical phenomenological research (Andringa, Heussèr, & Maso, 2004)
6. guidelines for spiritual counseling of groups (Schreurs, 1990).

This input was molded into a method in which groups of three participants from socially innovative organizations, an experienced socially innovative pioneer and a skilled facilitator discussed specific experiences of the participants and mirrored those with biblical texts according to a carefully developed program for a session.

After the socially innovative workers had agreed to participate, they were interviewed in the same way in which the socially innovative people in phase 1 had been interviewed. Based on a transcription of the interview a few 'hunger experiences' from a participant were then selected. Hunger experiences, described in section 3.6, had been defined as: *'the experience of deep vulnerability in being confronted with the suffering of others or of one's own, which brought forth this hunger for a change'* (Prinz, 2006, p. 207). *'This hunger expresses the need for change, the need for stopping the ongoing process of crucifixion to restore the wholeness of life for all people'* (Prinz, 2006, p. 206). In consultation with theologians that are familiar with spiritual development and/or liberation theology, a biblical text or a

reworking of a biblical text was selected that corresponds closely with the hunger experience of the participant on an experiential level. This text is called a mirror text.

In each group session a hunger experience from one of the participants was phenomenologically explored, discussed and brought into dialogue with a mirror text by the group. Each session was fully recorded for retrieval purposes. A detailed account of each session was made by the researcher for retrieval purposes.

Three group sessions in which this version of the prototype was applied were held in the first round of testing: two sessions with the members of a fair product project group (group 1) and one session with the second group (group 2) that was composed of people who work in a managerial position in different socially innovative organisations and who did not know each other. Although three sessions for each group were planned and preparations for the sessions with a third group were well under way, after two sessions with group 1 and one session with group 2 there were several reasons to cease to apply the first version of the method and to evaluate it thoroughly. First of all, in group 1 some participants began to show and express doubts about continuing their participation in the experiment after the second meeting, partially because of busy schedules. Secondly, one of the reasons for their doubts was that the participant whose hunger experience was discussed in a session got all of the attention and gradually that made the other participants feel that their participation was not directly useful for themselves. Thirdly, a member of group 1 withdrew from the fair product project itself in the summer of 2012. Therefore her hunger experience was never discussed, although the session had already been fully prepared. Her withdrawal (technically) excluded her from the target group of this study.

The sessions of group 2 were concluded after the first session. Several factors led to a premature end of this group's participation in the study. First of all, after working with the first version of the method in three sessions I began to have my own doubts about continuing with this version. Secondly, the facilitator and the socially innovative pioneer from the second group cancelled their participation shortly after the first session because they did not agree with the approach of the method. Thirdly, it proved very hard to find session dates for all participants. And then, on top of that, the

participant whose hunger experience had been discussed in the first session of group 2 announced that her organization was going to stop its activities because of financial problems. Technically that excluded her from the target group of this study as participants are required to be active in a socially innovative organization.

4.3.2. Evaluating the first round of testing

About six to ten weeks after the last group session the two participants from group 1, whose hunger experiences had been discussed in a group session, were interviewed for an evaluation. A semi-structured questionnaire was used for the evaluation interviews. Each interview was fully recorded for retrieval purposes. A detailed account of the interview was made by the researcher for retrieval purposes. The two evaluation interviews and the accounts of the three group sessions were input for the evaluation of the first version of the method. All accounts were analyzed with the evaluation questions in mind: each source of input for the evaluation was scanned for answers or issues that relate to the CIMO-evaluation issues. Additional issues that came up during the analysis have also been included in the evaluation.

The evaluation showed that the participants were enthusiastic about bringing their own experiences into dialogue with mirror texts and that in doing so they showed considerable interpretive creativity. They could be genuinely touched by a spiritual text that corresponded with their experiences. In that sense the first version of the method does stir the participants. A careful analysis of the accounts of the group sessions even reveals some weak signs of disclosure of the transcendent in the experiences but these signs were not fully recognized and explored during the sessions. The first round of testing also revealed a number of practical issues that needed to be addressed in a second, improved version of the method. The participants, for example, expressed their doubts about learning efficiency in a group.

The evaluation results were translated into design options that have become explicit in the first round of testing. They disclose that there is a wide range of design options that need to be considered when developing a method of spiritual formation, e.g.: the degree of methodical strictness by the facilitator; a problem-oriented approach or an appreciative-reinforcing

approach; implicit formation or visible build-up and 'storage' of formation; and working with texts that are implicitly or explicitly spiritual.

4.3.3. *The second round of development and testing*

The challenge after the first round of testing was to configure an improved version of the method with the help of the design options. Which were the flaws in the first version and how could these be reshaped into a new design without compromising the strengths of the first version of the prototype and the nature of its mechanism?

The second version of the prototype underwent the following changes: first of all, a switch was made from working with groups to working with individuals. Secondly, working with single, isolated hunger experiences was replaced by working with a developmental scheme that represents key moments (hunger experiences included) of spiritual development according to Sölle's spirituality. Special attention was given to capturing the development of the participants in a visual way in order to prevent the vanishing of disclosure of experiences of the transcendent or of development. Fourthly, it was decided that the style of facilitating was to be appreciative and encouraging but also methodically strict and strict with regards to the trajectory of spiritual development. This means adhering to the method that is being applied and to the developmental agenda of the method; the issues, actions, experiences and development that are important in Sölle's spirituality. It prevents the trajectory becoming a spontaneous exploration of a wide variety of spiritual, ethical and strategic work-related issues. Such an exploration is not a bad thing in itself of course, but it does not fit the agenda of a methodical approach. Finally, it was recognized that spiritual formation most likely does not occur in one, two or three sessions. The design of a series of three or four sessions was replaced by having the participants and the facilitator enter into a long-term relationship.

Three participants (participant F, G and H) were involved in the second round of testing. Participants F and G, who work in a socially innovative organization that is active in the field of organizational democracy, participated from December 2011 until July 2014. Five sessions were held with participant F and twelve sessions with participant G during this period. From December 2015 until November 2016 the third socially innovative

person (H), who has her own firm in the field of sustainability, participated. She participated in seven sessions. Each session[19] with the participants was recorded (unless only practical matters were discussed) and detailed accounts of the sessions were made.

Beta-testing (Stam, 2011, p. 236) was planned in this phase of the study, which means that an extra facilitator, not being the researcher himself, was to be involved in the testing and developing of the improved version of the prototype. This facilitator would work with a fourth participant. Unfortunately a few weeks after the testing of the second version started, this fourth participant withdrew from the project. Therefore the participation of the extra facilitator was no longer needed. As a result alpha-testing was conducted in this phase of the study: the designer himself also tested the design.

4.3.4. *Number of participants*

A total of twelve people participated in both the group and individual sessions of testing round 1 and 2 that have shaped the prototype of the method for spiritual formation: eight participants, two facilitators (not being the researcher) and two experienced social innovators that served as fellow facilitators in the first round of testing. The participants have various (non-) religious backgrounds, varying in age from being in their thirties to being in their early sixties. Four participants are male and four are female. It must be noted that two of the three participants in the second round of testing are senior employees, male, both in their late fifties and both regular churchgoers. One might critically ask: are they not too biased to participate in this study? Being regular churchgoers, are they not already 'spiritual'? From the point of view of spirituality research and from the perspective on lived spirituality the dichotomy Christian/non-Christian is not so relevant as it may seem. The aim of a method for spiritual formation is not to 'convert' participants to one religion or another. The aim is to facilitate their spiritual development according to a specific spirituality. 'Conversion' is a specific theological concept that it is not relevant to this study. For this study it may be an advantage if the participants have a Christian frame of reference

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[19] One session with one participant was not recorded due my mistake: I had forgotten to bring the voice recorder with me.

because this study is concerned with a specific Christian spirituality. On the other hand, having a frame of reference may also hinder them in this study because the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology may differ from their own lived spirituality. Those differences might even reduce their willingness or ability to develop themselves according to Sölle's spirituality. So having two churchgoing participants is a more complex issue than two 'easy' participants.

The question may arise if a total of twelve participants and three participants in the second round of testing is enough? We are used to large sample sizes to investigate the effects of interventions. There are sound methodological reasons that justify working with a group of participants of this size in this study. First of all, the end results of this study are not solely based on the results of working with the three participants in the second round of testing. They are part of the whole design trajectory in which a larger group of subjects has participated.

Secondly, one must keep in mind that the aim of this study is to develop a tested prototype. This means that we have to succeed in developing a method that we improve on a work-in-progress basis until it has gained our confidence in practice. In section 4.2 I have defined the evaluation questions that are suitable for design-oriented research. An evaluation of this kind is typical of design-oriented research. It also shows that this kind of research has its limitations, as with all kinds of research. It is not feasible to do a well-founded effect study as a part of this study due to constraints in time and resources. I have referred to the difficulties of such studies in section 4.2.4. An effect study would require an extensive research effort of its own. A prototype of a method for spiritual formation may eventually be used for quantitative-oriented effect studies. In terms of design-oriented research: this study is now in the midst of the domain of realization because we have developed and tested a prototype of a method (Van Aken, 2011, p. 54). The end result, a prototype version of a method for spiritual formation, can subsequently be applied again in the domain of realization where another round of performing and learning 'in the real world' can take place, for example by means of a large-scale effect study. So for the purpose of this study the number of participants is sufficient.

4.4. A prototype of a method for spiritual formation according to Sölle's spirituality

In this section I will present the prototype of the method for spiritual formation according to Sölle's spirituality by explaining its six essential elements in detail:

1. Facilitating individuals
2. Working from a developmental perspective
3. Developing a work-related, spiritual biography, based on the developmental scheme of Sölle's spirituality
4. Disclosing the transcendent in an experience by a performative speech act
5. Capturing, visualizing and storing experiences and spiritual development
6. From reconstructing a spiritual biography to renewing praxis.

4.4.1. Facilitating individuals

In the second round of development and testing I switched from working in groups to working with individuals: one participant works with a facilitator and together they apply the method. No group sessions were held in the second round of testing. There are three main reasons for this: first of all, during the sessions the participant and the facilitator discuss a variety of topics that are confidential, intimate or private. In most episodes of the work-related spiritual biography, clients and colleagues play a major role. Their role may be positive but can also be negative, for example in the case of a conflict. Participants also bring up experiences or memories that are not directly work-related but come from their private lives. The presence of other participants would probably be an obstacle for working with these experiences and memories.

Secondly, it is hard enough to identify, face, address and phrase experiences of anger, fear, courage and satisfaction, which are pivotal in exploring and

developing according to the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology. The presence of other participants would probably only hinder this.

Thirdly, each participant 'fits' into the developmental scheme of Sölle's spirituality, but each participant has his unique way of 'fitting in'. From the evaluation of the first version of the method we learned that participants are interested in each other's spiritual development and that they can learn from it. However, the first round of testing also taught us that their interest does not last for many group sessions and their attention span is not many hours. These are strong indications that the uniqueness of each participant's story and development decreases the learning efficiency of working in a group.

Individual counseling does not imply that there is no place for group activity in spiritual formation according to Sölle's spirituality. Sharing experiences, getting to know colleagues, peers or fellows on a more personal, deeper level may create an understanding and connection that is very valuable for people in organizations. This study however strongly indicates that (initial) essential spiritual development may be best guaranteed in a situation of quiet, privacy and concentration on oneself.

Practical considerations also played a role in the decision to start working with individuals. In the first round of testing working with groups proved to be vulnerable to last-minute cancellations from participants, although the sessions had been planned well in advance. If, for example, two out of four participants could not attend a planned session, it endangers the whole session. Re-planning can seriously impede the pace and rhythm of the process. This may seem like a trivial fact-of-life issue but in working with groups this is unavoidable but very undesirable. Secondly, the first version of the prototype was also time-consuming for the participants. For people with a busy schedule it is not easy to spend three or four three-hour sessions on discussing and exploring one's own or someone else's experiences. The business context requires a certain level of efficiency. Instead of prolonged and monthly (low-frequency) group sessions, short-lasting (one hour) activities for individuals may match the business context better. Those became the building blocks of the second version of the protype.

4.4.2. Working from a developmental perspective

As described in section 4.3 the first version of the method worked with single, so-called 'hunger experiences'. This had two unintended effects. First of all, the hunger experiences were discussed and explored in isolation, which resulted in meaningful interpretations, but this approach disregards that single experiences are part of a trajectory of a person's development. One risks that the explored experience remains an interesting but 'erratic boulder' (Buijs, 1999, p. 228). So one of the things that a method for spiritual formation should do is 'connect the dots'. It should not only focus on identifying and studying single 'dots' of a participant, it should also connect the individual experiences that make up the (implicit) spiritual development of a participant thus far. Connecting a participant's dots in this way may reveal valuable, implicit development.

Which experiences are relevant to a participant's spiritual development, how can they be integrated into a meaningful whole and which spiritual development can we see if the dots are connected? Sölle's path of spiritual development, described in section 3.5.4, provides an answer to this question because it integrates the specific, relevant experiences and actions into a meaningful whole. It helps the participant to see which road he has already traveled and which road lies ahead of him if he wishes to develop himself according to this spirituality.

The second, unintended effect of working with hunger experiences was that participants felt as if they were treated as someone with a problem, because hunger experiences focus on experiences such as fear, anger or insecurity. Discovering that some of one's experiences fit into a developmental perspective is a more positive, empowering thing to do, especially if it affirms and discloses implicit spiritual development. Seemingly negative and problematic experiences of fear or distress may become more acceptable if the participants discover that they are functional in a development that emerges from their work-related experiences.

So for the second version of the method the trajectory of spiritual development that was presented in section 3.5.4 has been reworked into a comprehensive developmental scheme that can be used as a part of the

method. The scheme intentionally addresses the first layer of mystagogy[20] because it does not want to put off or offend participants beforehand by using language that is too explicitly religious or spiritual.

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[20] De Jong-Van Campen distinguishes three layers of mystagogy (De Jong-Van Campen, 2009, p. 112): 1) mystagogy in the mystery of existence; 2) mystagogy in the interpunction between man and God, and 3) mystagogy in the communion of fellow mystes. See section 4.5.3 for more information about the layers of mystagogy.

Phase 1: Things cannot go on like this!
• Critical view of an issue in society, that deepens and broadens
• Feelings of shame, indignation, fear or sadness
• Growing awareness of the structural presence of evil
Phase 2: I cannot go on like this!
• Discovery of your own entanglement or failure in what you are critical of
• Discovery that your own position is inevitably problematic
• Becoming existentially distressed
Phase 3: Risk your neck or lose your soul
• Making a risky emergency jump
• Beginning with 'nothing'
• Experiencing overcoming your powerlessness and a new beginning
Phase 4: Allies through the eye of the needle
• Becoming just as small and vulnerable as the cause you are working for
• Against all odds
• Experiencing mutual dependence and unity that transcends everything

Table 3: A comprehensive developmental scheme of Sölle's trajectory of spiritual development

4.4.3. Developing a work-related spiritual biography

It is typical of liberation theology to be oriented to actual, historical situations and events because liberation theology is *'seriously involved in talking about current situations and happenings'* (Fierro, 1977, p. 105) instead of developing an abstract, existential theology (Fierro, 1977, p. 183). So is this method for spiritual formation: spiritual development finds its 'nutritive soil' (Fierro, 1977, p. 182) in work-related, real-life contexts and situations. That is why the method focuses on actual events and occasions where the participants have gone through pivotal moments, have done crucial things or have had compelling experiences. The developmental scheme of a spirituality provides a filter that enhances identifying these moments, actions and experiences.

The developmental scheme that is presented in table 3 has been used as a roadmap for reconstructing a work-related spiritual biography of the

participants. Together the participant and the facilitator tried to identify issues or work-related occasions that correspond with one of the phases of the scheme or which are typical of them, e.g.:

Phase 1: Things cannot go on like this! What are the issues that a participant is really critical of, angry and/or worried about and that motivate his socially innovative work? Is there any particular situation or event that typically represents these issues or that has been the starting point of this critical view, worry or anger?

Phase 2: I cannot go on like this! When did the participant discover his own entanglement in the issues that he is critical of, angry or worried about? When did this happen? It often leads to a crisis or a difficult episode in his career. Can this episode be traced back?

Phase 3: Risk your neck or lose your soul: When did the participant take a risk in order to 'save his soul' and make a significant step with regard to the start of the social innovation?

Phase 4: Allies through the eye of the needle: Are there typical work situations or events (emerging or developing) that represent the alliance between the participant and the cause of the social innovation?

Once an occasion, action or experience that belongs to a phase has been identified, its importance and experiential depth have to be disclosed. We assume that this occasion, action or experience has taken the participant to some degree beyond the borders of human existence, as if he has gotten a glimpse from another side; from a 'beyond' to some degree. This needs to be disclosed as fully as possible in order to use its full potential for the spiritual formation of the participant. Exploring and deepening such key moments and experiences has been done with the help of Andringa's empirical phenomenological method (2004). Subsequently, a participant's experience is mirrored with a biblical or spiritual text (section 4.4.4).

Before the facilitator and the participant start working on the work-related spiritual biography, they go through a preparatory phase with an intake interview, a warm-up exercise[21] and an interview in which the warm-up

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[21] At the start of the test of the second version of the method each participant was interviewed. The interview protocol was based on the developmental scheme of the Sölle's spirituality that is presented in section 4.2. The interviews with the participants were fully transcribed. Participant G and H participated in the warm-up exercise. For each phase of the

exercise is discussed. The intake interview, the warm-up exercise and the evaluation interview provide a lot of information about the work-related experiences and actions of the participants and their (implicit) spiritual development. The developmental scheme allows the facilitator to make a first assessment if and how each participant had gone through one or more of the phases of the developmental scheme. The warm-up exercise also prepares the participants for the idea of a work-related spiritual biography of themselves. Once this preparatory phase has been finished, the participant and the facilitator can start to reconstruct the work-related spiritual biography of the participant.

Identifying and exploring an episode of someone's work-related, spiritual biography takes nine steps. These are described in Table 4.

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developmental model (table 3) an average of around five quotes from the interviews were selected. A workbook was developed containing four spreadsheets that represent the four phases of the developmental model. On the left page of each spreadsheet example quotes of the pioneers that have been interviewed in phase 1 of this study (chapter 2) were printed. These example quotes fit and illustrate one of the phases of the developmental model. The right page of each spreadsheet was blank. The quotes selected from the interviews with the participants F and G were printed on little cards that could be inserted in the right page of one of the spreadsheets. The aim of this was to stimulate the participant to start thinking about his own spiritual formation. By placing their own quotes in the phases of the developmental model they could visibly build up their own work-related spiritual biography. The four spreadsheets could be lifted out of the cover and be spread out like a harmonica. In this way the four phases, filled with quotes from a participant, illustrate or explicate the spiritual development of the participant. During one month (mid December 2012 – mid January 2013) participants F and G were sent each working day a quote printed on a little card by mail. They received a total of approximately fifteen cards. Participant H did not do the warm-up exercise because she participated in one session in the first round of testing. Therefore she was already familiar with some basic elements of the method. As a facilitator I was already well informed about her situation because of the intake-interview with her for the first round of testing.

Facilitator

1-Selecting candidate events, actions or experiences - Having an overview of the work-related biography of the participant, based on interviews and the warm-up exercise, the facilitator identifies one or more events, actions or experiences that may belong to phase 1 of the developmental scheme.

4-Phenomenological exploration - The facilitator interviews the participant in order to further explore the event, action or experience of the participant in a phenomenological way, based on the participant's account. This is a matter of carefully examining it together with the participant and trying to deepen what the participant has experienced and to capture the essence of it. The interview(s) is (are) recorded.

5-Eidetic reduction - The facilitator makes a detailed account of the interview(s) and deduces from that the essence of the experience in a shortened, edited way using the original texts of the interview or by remaining as close as possible to the phrasings and wordings of the participant.

6-Selecting candidate mirror texts - The facilitator selects a mirror text that reflects the experience of the participant, using a set of selection rules. The mirror text is placed next to the edited version of the essence of the participant's experience. In placing the two texts next to each other, double contextualization comes in. The facilitator sends/presents the two texts to the participant and asks him to try to find a mirror text himself.

9-Combining the experience and the mirror text – The facilitator places the mirror text(s) next to the edited version of the essence of the participant's experience and sends or presents it to the participant.

Participant

2-Choosing an event, action or experience - The participant and the facilitator discuss the facilitator's suggestions and choose the one that seems most promising to fit the phase of the developmental scheme that the participant and the facilitator are working on.

3-Phenomenological first draft - The participant writes down the event, action or experience, as a first phenomenological exploration: situation, context, the start and the end of the episode and especially how the participant has experienced what has happened. The participant sends this phenomenological first 'draft' to the facilitator.

7-Choosing a mirror text - The participant chooses a mirror text that matches his experience.

8-Shortly discussing the mirror text - The facilitator and the participant (shortly) discuss the mirror texts, especially the participant's choice, and the original experience.

In this way a single phase of the developmental scheme of Sölle's spirituality has been explored and worked out by the participant and the facilitator. The facilitator and the participant can now move on to the next phase of the developmental scheme and repeat the nine steps.

Table 4: Reconstruction of an episode in a work-related, spiritual biography

4.4.4. Disclosing the transcendent in an experience by a performative speech act

One result of the second round of testing is that the difficult, methodological issue of studying spiritual development ex-post has been circumnavigated. How can one tell if a participant has experienced or experiences the transcendent? It is tempting to ask the participants, e.g.: if they feel anything 'special' at some point in the trajectory? Did something happen to them when they read the mirror text? Do they like participating in the study (and hope they will say they have become much more spiritual)? Do they benefit in any way from using the method?

Asking these kinds of questions may be suggestive. Methodically working on spiritual formation certainly aims at achieving a specific result but the nature of what one wants to achieve may be too delicate to address so directly and bluntly. Recognizing, exploring and talking about work-related experiences is already hard enough, let alone discussing the element of experiencing the transcendent in those experiences with others and how it affects one's professional behaviour. It may be tempting for the participants to give socially desirable answers. The momentary and intimate nature of an experience of the transcendent may make it even harder to discuss it openly. From a methodological point of view it is problematic to study a complex, profound, intimate, preverbal, momentary experience by simply asking straightforward questions about it.

The difficult issue of the ex-post study of spiritual development has been bypassed by learning that disclosure of the transcendent in experiences can also be seen as a series of specific, observable speech acts that the participants perform. Those speech acts result in tangible products that express and embody their spiritual development.

This is inspired by the speech act of the 'apostrophe' as proposed by Derrida (1997). When performing an apostrophe one addresses in general those who are not present (but who need to be invoked, or those who were present or who will be present) or something that does not 'exist'. An apostrophe can invoke and address multiple addressees from past, present and future, e.g.: the transcendent. According to Derrida, who links the apostrophe to the transcendent in a text about negative theology (Derrida, 1997), the experience of the transcendent '<<arrives in the dimension of being>>'

(Derrida, 1997, p. 97), although 'being' is neither basis nor essence of God. This arrival has already left many traces in language and has been inscribed in the body of a language (Derrida, 1997, p. 70). These traces of what-is-not take the place of writings. God's arrival *'only happens in his erasure'* (Derrida, 1997, p. 59). God takes place in language by erasing himself. A writing makes a 'what-is' into a threshold to 'what-is-not' (Derrida, 1997, p. 88). A writing is a place of transition from being to not-being (Derrida, 1997, p. 88). Language thus 'makes place for an "incomprehensible guest"', according to Sneller who reflected on Derrida's text (Sneller, 2000). Language, or more specifically, a text may want to bring up something 'that shimmers through the "gates" of the text' (Sneller, 2000).

Performing an apostrophe is a deliberate attempt to go beyond language, to transcend language: *'using speech to overcome speech'* (De Jong, 2010) and to get into contact somehow with the transcendent. Prayer[22] does this: it invokes the absent, begs for the not-present to be present and chases after it (Derrida, 1997, pp. 73-74). And so does praise (Derrida, 1997, p.74).

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[22] It is interesting to see that De Rijk's prototype of a prayer confirms that prayer addresses someone we think of as '*you are not someone like me, one cannot think: "I know where you are"…'* (De Rijk, 2010, p. 65). The prototype prayer acknowledges the alterity of the addressee of a prayer.

Derrida specifically lists two types of apostrophe: prayer and praise. I would like to suggest two other types of apostrophes that I have come across in this study and which may have the same performative effect: lament and confession. We have seen in section 3.6.3 that the Psalmic lament tradition is one of the primary biblical sources of Sölle's spirituality. The way in which Sölle describes her relationship with these texts bears close resemblance to Derrida's approach to texts. For Sölle it is about struggling with the poetry of these texts, 'eating and chewing' them and struggling and fighting with them until the despair and the hope of the people is discovered in the surplus of meaning of the text (section 3.6.3). This resembles Derrida's re-chewing, interrupting, invoking, begging, re-reading and chasing the not-present very much.

I suggest that confessions also fit into the category of the apostrophe. In a confession one asks God forgiveness for one's wrongdoings. In that sense a confession is not a predicative, theoretical or constative illocution but rather a speech act of invoking God. Confessing is about emphasizing the qualitative difference or distance between God and oneself. It is an attempt to humbly and sorrowfully approach God. From the perspective of this study this is important because the concept of sin and self-implication are important in Sölle's spirituality, for example in the first and second phase of the developmental scheme of Sölle's spirituality.

Derrida identifies prayer and praise as 'an apostrophe'[23] (Derrida, 1997, p. 82).

Both prayer and praise are not predicative, theoretical or constative illocutions. They are by nature performative speech acts (Derrida, 1997, p. 74) in the sense that performing them is approaching, entering or passing the lingual thresholds that make room for God, the incomprehensible guest in language.

Another characteristic of prayer and praise is their iteration. Both acts need to be performed (repeatedly) to have their effect. The way in which Derrida's text refers to prayer and praise infers this iteration, e.g.: contemplating, begging, chasing, being ordered to communicate about it, approaching.

Derrida and Sneller help us to understand what actually happens when participants are writing their work-related spiritual biography and selecting mirror texts that correspond to it. Actively and consciously selecting, reading, re-reading, editing and contemplating mirror texts that contain traces of God's arrival in the dimension of being, and combining them with the experiences of one's own work-related spiritual biography is performing the speech act of the apostrophe[24]. By interweaving one's own experiences with such mirror-texts one addresses and invokes those that/who are not present into one's biography.

The act of performing an apostrophe as an observable sign of invoking the transcendent fits the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology in a conceptual way. Sölle's hermeneutics (described in section 3.6) is focused on an intense interplay with one's own experiences and texts (biblical and literary texts) to find words that enable us to disclose the deepest truths in our real-life experiences. This resembles Derrida's approach to texts. Both Derrida and Sölle 'eat and chew', re-chew, interrupt, re-read and interweave texts and experiences in order to address, to articulate and to respond to

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[23] There are some interesting similarities between the apostrophe, as Derrida conceives it, and ethical oaths as conceived by Blok (2013). Both are considered to be performative speech acts that produce 'self' or identity (Blok, 2013, p. 193), both must be performed completely and correctly (Blok, p. 197) and both need to be repeated 'again and again' (Blok, 2013, p. 203).

[24] De Rijk (2010) agrees that prayer can be wordless, talking silently, or can be combined with gestures, music or positions (p. 65).

what shimmers through the gates of these texts and of their experiences. One could argue that Sölle's theopoetry (see section 3.3.2. and 3.6.5.) is a way of performing the apostrophe. In these poetic texts she interweaves her experiences with fragments of mirror-texts and biblical images, thus invoking God in her experiences. A good example is her poem *Bericht aus Argentinien* (Sölle, 1979), which she writes for the political prisoners of the 1970s and 1980s military junta from Argentina:

D sagt es ist eine regel im untergrund
dass du zwei tage schweigst unter der folter
das gibt den genossen zeit
zwei tage frage ich heisst das auch zwei nächte
ja sagt sie sie arbeiten schicht

O gott sag ich wenn ich allein bin
falls du der erinnerung fähig bist
geh zu denen unter der folter
mach sie stark
und erbarm dich derer
die früher sprechen

O jesus sag ich wenn wir zusammen sind
du warst donnerstag und freitag unter der folter
du hast keine namen preisgegeben
du bist lieber gestorben

Du hast die grosstechnologie der grossgottes
nicht angewandt
sonst wären
alle unsere namen verraten
und macht immer noch allmacht
technologie noch immer alltechnologie

D sagt
es ist ein regel im untergrund

dass du zwei tage schweigst unter der folter
und was tun wir frage ich mich
zwei tage und zwei nächte in gethsemane
und was
tun wir

Rumscheidt phrases Sölle's performance of the apostrophe as follows: '*In that rhythm, according to Sölle, human beings and God, human beings and human beings, human beings and all of creation experience their mutuality and interdependence. It is through "calling," "invoking," and "adjuring" or even "conjuring" that this mutuality is expressed and, in fact, made real. And then it is possible to see images of resurrection, to learn hope, to love, and to resist.*' (Rumscheidt, 2003, p. 87)

There are a number of important methodological advantages to considering the performance of an apostrophe by a participant as a sign of disclosure of the transcendent in their experiences and of spiritual development. First of all, one can actually observe participants performing these speech acts when they select, write, sing, recite or present texts. Secondly, one can study the actual materialized or recorded expressions that result from them, e.g.: selected texts combined with experiences from the participants. Thirdly, one can repeatedly perform these speech acts so that participants can practice and train themselves and develop themselves with regards to this element of spirituality, which is important from a methodical point of view. These features make the speech act-approach a valid method with a number of important advantages over evaluation interviews with participants. Therefore the quadriptychs (see section 4.4.5) that are the result of the speech acts by the participants have been used as empirical data in the evaluation of the second round of testing, instead of ex-post interviews with the participants of the second round of testing.

Excursus: 'God's arrival only happens in his erasure'

The idea of using the apostrophe is based on *'Comment ne pas parler – Dénégations'* by Derrida[25] (1997) and on Sneller's interpretation of Derrida (Sneller, 2000). Derrida's text about negative theology emphasizes the radical alterity of God, especially the not-being of God (Derrida, 1997, p. 97). This makes knowledge of God in itself inaccessible, untransferable and uneducable (Derrida, 1997, p. 53). God is a 'secret', 'a mystery that by definition cannot be solved', 'an incomprehensible guest' (Sneller, 2000). Yet 'God' can be experienced somehow. The text compares this to experiencing *chora*; a Platonic concept referring to an a-priori, extra-temporal, extra-spatial, transcendent beyond. It is not a sensory experience or an intelligible experience of something that 'is' (Derrida, 1997, pp. 70-71). One can only discern or perceive *chora* '<<as if in a dream>>' (Derrida, 1997, p. 66). Sneller (2000) provides us with some extra information about how Derrida himself writes about this kind of experience, 'a transcendent call' (Sneller, 2000)[26]:

- *'I, Derrida, am involved in an incomprehensible event, that I do not understand myself or do not control. Rather it has a hold on me. I would want to escape it but I am not able to.'*
- *'... it surprises me because this invention [a reaction to a 'provocation extérieure'] suddenly becomes commanding, imperative, inexorable to me.'*
- *'... a radical absence, that can never be made to appear or to consciousness, an absence that is never simultaneous with myself, but which precedes me and succeeds me.'*
- *... there is the ineptness with regards to the unknown, the inaccessible, an overwhelming feeling of clumsiness, of inexperience, of powerlessness.'*
- Being hit by an experience of the *'infinitely-different'* coincides with an *'order'* to bring it up. If one cannot or doesn't want to communicate about it, one should seriously doubt the authenticity of the experience. The *infinitely-different* 'wants' to be brought up.

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[25] I am fully aware of Derrida's reputation as a notoriously difficult philosopher. I do not claim to be a *connaisseur* of Derrida and his work but I feel free to use the 'Comment ne pas parler – Dénégations'-text for this study and Sneller as an interpretive guide, because Sneller writes: '*What does Derrida do? He writes texts about other texts. He reads, interprets, and rephrases the text in such a way that suddenly other things emerge from it than before... He constantly invites us to read with him, to interrupt if necessary, to re-read, to re-chew, to learn by heart et cetera, et cetera.'* (Sneller, 2000). Using Derrida's text in this study is accepting this invitation to re-read, to interrupt and to re-chew with Derrida.

[26] Sneller's text (Sneller, 2000) is an internet text. Therefore it does not have page numbers.

To experience the transcendent requires a specific attitude, according to Derrida. One needs to be adjusted to radical alterity (Derrida, 1997, p. 73). One must respect the absolute extraordinarity of chora by invoking her always in the same way: by contemplating the traces of the transcendent that have been left behind in our language, grammatically, rhetorically, logically and philosophically (Derrida, 1997, p. 70).

4.4.5. Capturing, visualizing and storing experiences and development

One of the lessons of the first round of testing of the prototype was that the group sessions resulted in various insights for the participants. Unfortunately these all ran the risk of evaporating because they were not captured and stored so that participants could retrieve them if they wanted to, unless they made personal notes themselves. However, active note taking does not enhance participation in a session with full attention. In the improved version of the method a way of 'storing' key moments and experiences of the participants' development was discovered. It not only helps them to remember their spiritual development and to reflect on it, it almost literally materializes this development because the product of the speech act, described in the previous section, becomes part of the visualization of the participants' development.

An element of the method is exploring and deepening moments and experiences of each phase of the developmental scheme with the help of Andringa's empirical phenomenological method (2004). These phenomenological explorations are edited into a shortened version of approximately 150-200 words (which may make it look a bit like a poem, which is however unintentional). It is important to stay as close to the participant's wording as possible. Subsequently one or two mirror texts are placed next to the participant's experience. Selecting, contemplating, combining them with one's experiences and editing the mirror texts may be performing the apostrophe in which *'God arrives into the dimension of being'* (Derrida, 1997, p. 97). In this way a participant's key experience of a phase of the developmental scheme becomes a panel that consists of a number of texts that makes the panel literally a threshold for the transcendent. It literally makes room for the transcendent in the participant's

key moment or experience of a phase of the developmental model. When panels of all four phases of the developmental model have been made, the facilitator and the participant have made a quadriptych in which a participant's work-related, spiritual biography has been captured, visualized and stored. So making the quadriptych itself is not only a practical matter that makes spiritual formation more convenient. The process of making, reading and re-reading it and reflecting on it encompasses disclosing both the experience of the transcendent and spiritual development.

In section 4.5.1 an example of a quadriptych of one of the participants is presented, which has been translated into English. In appendix 1 the other two quadriptychs are enclosed in Dutch.

4.4.6. *From reconstructing a spiritual biography to renewing praxis*

A key activity in the prototype of the method is reconstructing one's work-related spiritual biography according to Sölle's spirituality. The developmental scheme of her spirituality that was used in the second round of testing has four phases, but not every participant has been through all four phases. One may have 'reached' for example phase 3 but not have 'entered' phase 4. Reconstructing the work-related spiritual biography then obviously has to stop at phase 3. Phase 3 then becomes the point where reconstructing a work-related, spiritual biography may turn into 'renewing praxis'. This is important because Sölle's spirituality is not solely aimed at retrospective and introspective reflection and contemplation. Above all it wants to liberate, to change for the better, to develop and to move forward. At such a point the task of the facilitator changes from reconstruction to renewal. When reconstructing, the facilitator helps to disclose, explicate and deepen a development that, in a way, the participant has already gone through. If this turns to renewal of praxis, the facilitator's task is to help the participant discover where and how things needs to be changed and to encourage him to actually change things. So when the last page of the work-related spiritual biography has been written, the moment has come when looking back, exploring and reflection stop. That is the point where the renewal of praxis may start; nurtured and inspired by previous, newly discovered spiritual development and the developmental agenda of Sölle's spirituality.

In the three trajectories in the second round of testing of this study more time was spent on reconstructing the work-related spiritual biographies of the three participants than on renewing praxis.

Participant F's spiritual biography could be reconstructed until phase 2 ('I cannot go on like this'). There were some halfway experiences and actions that fitted phase 3 but we both agreed that F had never really 'entered' or gone through phase 3 ('Risk your neck or lose your soul') (interview with participant F, 2014-01-16, p. 3). So arriving at phase 3 with participant F also meant arriving at the renewal phase. However, by that time participant F began to devote more time and energy to another area of interest outside of his socially innovative work.

Participant G's work-related spiritual biography could be convincingly reconstructed until phase 3 and there were serious indications of development and potential for further growth in phase 4 ('Allies through the eye of the needle'). Typical phase 4-issues could be naturally linked to issues that he was working on at that time. Becoming aware of being in phase 4 meant discovering a new perspective on these current issues for participant G (interview with G, 2014-07-11, pp. 16-17). See section 4.5.1 where the quadriptych of G is presented and discussed in more detail.

Phase 1, 2 and 3 of H's work-related biography could be reconstructed. By the time this study had to be completed, phase 4 was reached and exploration could start there.

Little to no experience was developed in renewal-practices. Nevertheless it is important to have (conceptually) recognized and identified this turning point in the method.

4.5. Evaluation of the prototype of the method for spiritual formation

In this section I present the evaluation of the second design of the prototype of a method for spiritual formation according to Sölle's spirituality. I will do so by answering the evaluation questions that are appropriate for design-oriented research. I have defined these questions in section 4.2. Categorized according to the CIMO-logic the evaluation questions are:

- *Context:* Can we identify indications and contra-indications for both the facilitator and the participants for using the method?
- *Intervention:* What role do the various elements of the method play in bringing about the desired results (see 'Outcome')? Which elements have been found to be counterproductive?
- *Mechanism:* Do we see the underlying mechanism of Sölle's spirituality at work?
- *Outcome:* Does the method help people to articulate and explicate experiences of the transcendent in their praxis of social innovation? Do they develop themselves according to Sölle's path of spiritual development? Which level of power of evidence do the outcomes have?

As mentioned before, an evaluation does not need to adhere strictly to these questions. If other valuable issues surface, they should be taken into consideration as well.

For answering the evaluation questions I have used the following sources of information: the quadriptychs from participant F, G and H; the interviews and sessions with participant F, G and H; the evaluation interviews with two participants of the first round of testing; and the accounts of the group sessions of the first round of testing.

In order to give the reader a clear picture of the outcome of working with the prototype of the method, I will answer the *Outcome*-evaluation questions first by presenting the results of the trajectory that participant G followed, in section 4.5.1. Subsequently I will address the evaluation issues of context (section 4.5.2), intervention (section 4.5.3) and mechanism (section 4.5.4).

4.5.1. Evaluation of the outcome of using the method
In this section I want to show the results of the trajectory that participant G and I (as facilitator) followed by working with the method for spiritual formation. G works as a senior trainer and advisor for workers' councils. This work belongs to the field of social innovation because it is aimed at enhancing organizational democracy and working towards a balanced distribution of responsibilities among the stakeholders of a company. The company that employs G went through several management crises itself, which proved to play a major role in G's work-related spiritual biography. I want to present the quadriptych in which G's essential experiences and actions are explored. How each panel of the quadriptych has been made has been explained in section 4.4.

Phase 1: Things cannot go on like this!

G's phase 1 experience is part of an episode in which he trains and advises a workers' council. There is mounting evidence that the council is being seriousl misled by its management but the members of the workers' council hesitate to act. It is easier and less dangerous to avoid a conflict. G is training the members of this council and is aware of the dilemma that the council is in. Like the workers' council G also has a choice: should he downplay the problem and avoid getting drawn into an uneasy conflict or should he stimulate the council to take responsibility and seek confrontation? The panel describes the moment when G takes a break from the training and takes a few minutes to decide what to do. He retreats to the parking lot, smokes a cigarette and finally decides to urge the workers' council to take action against its management. When G dives into this memory it becomes an experience in which he describes the council as a beast-like creature that shies away from its responsibilities.

There are two accompanying texts in this panel. The first one is a part of canto 3 from the first part of the *Divina Commedia* by Dante. It describes the deplorable state of those who do neither wrong nor right in their lives. The second text is Isaiah 58: 6 -12 (TNIV). This can be seen as a contrast of not taking one's responsibilities. G selected both texts himself.

One can see that the elements of phase 1 of the developmental model are present in the experience:

- critical view of an issue in society that deepens and broadens: people who shy away from taking responsibility and do not act upon the wrongdoings of others.
- feelings of shame, indignation, fear or sadness
- growing awareness of the structural presence of evil.

It is interesting to see that there is an analogy with G's phase 1 experience and historical events (World War II) that dramatically shaped the life of G's parents and, through his parents, the life of G himself. G has not been aware of the biographical link between his work and his family history until this experience was explored (interview with G, 2013-06-14, pp. 4-5).

Things cannot go on like this!

The responsibility weighs.
I feel alone.
The sky grey and low, hanging like a burden on me.
My shoulders hunch, like a cat.
I am going to jump.

I have closed
the little room of reconsideration.
That chamber is like a box of Pandora,
you 'd better keep it closed.

What if I'd look anyway?

It feels heavy, gloomy and dark,
my back is turned to the light.
There is a beast; it is the group, they are like an animal.
A dark entity.

If you look at it for some time it subdues you,
then there is no turning back anymore.
It is like riding a horse,
you do not control the horse anymore.
Demonic powers are released,
you are handed over to the devil.

The animal has no form,
is more color than form: black, purple.

It is as if it's looking at you.
It is something outside of me. It is two of them.
They have identical colors but they are separated.
They merely 'exist', actually do nothing.

You shouldn't team up with it,
it will lead to nothing.
I am not afraid of it. I know that intuitively.
I am not entering the room. I am merely observing.

I close the door
and enter a mental space
where anger and disappointment prevail.
I am having a hard time, no, a very hard time to restrain them

My cigarette is finished. Now I have to decide: time for action!

Many tongues, a terrible crying,
words of sadness, accents of anger,
voices deep and hoarse,
with sounds of hands amongst them,
making a turbulence that turns forever,
in that air, stained, eternally,
like sand spiraling in a whirlwind.

And I, my head surrounded by the horror, said:
'Master, what is this I hear,
and what race are these,
that seem so overcome by suffering?'

And he to me: 'This is the miserable mode
in which those exist,
who lived without praise, without blame.

They are mixed in with the despised choir of angels,
those not rebellious,
not faithful to God, but for themselves.

Heaven drove them out, to maintain its beauty,
and deep Hell does not accept them,
lest the evil have glory over them.'

And I: 'Master, what is so heavy on them,
that makes them moan so deeply?'
He replied: 'I will tell you, briefly.

They have no hope of death,
and their darkened life is so mean
that they are envious of every other fate.

Earth allows no mention of them to exist:
mercy and justice reject them:
let us not talk of them, but look and pass.'

When I had recognized some among them,
I saw and knew the shade of him
who from cowardice made 'the great refusal'.

Immediately I understood that this was
the despicable crew,
hateful to God and his enemies.

These wretches, who never truly lived,
were naked, and goaded viciously by hornets, and wasps, there,
making their faces stream with blood,
that, mixed with tears, was collected, at their feet,
by loathsome worms.

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter-- when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.

Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.

The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

Phase 2: I cannot go on like this!

G's phase 2 experience is part of an episode in which G's own organization is haunted by mismanagement. G is a member of the management team at that time. He tries to address the problems of the organization but to no avail. This is of course all the more painful and self-implicating because he is now himself in the situation where the workers' council of phase 1 was in: being part of a powerless collective. The conflicts are exhausting him and he feels that his superior will fire him sooner or later. When he goes on summer holiday the problems linger on in his mind. The experience described in this panel matches with the elements of phase two:

- discovery of G's own entanglement or failure in what he is critical of
- discovering that his own position is inevitably problematic
- becoming existentially distressed.

There are two accompanying texts in this panel. The first one (orange text) is a reworking of Psalm 31 by Dutch poet Huub Oosterhuis (Oosterhuis, 2011), selected by me and approved of by G. The second text is three verses from the poem 'Wandeling in Vlaanderen' by Dutch poet Ida Gerhardt (2001, pp. 6-7). This poem was selected by G.

It is interesting to note that G mentions another expression of his experience, 'De Dokwerker' (The Longshoreman), a statue by Mari Andriessen. The statue commemorates the February strike in 1941; a wave of protest in the Netherlands against the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis.

I cannot go on like this!

The Wadden always give me peace,
little impetus, a lot of nature.
But this time
I cannot let go of my worries.

There is no way out. I cannot escape it
anymore.
There will be a confrontation:
it is either him or me who stays.

I am exhausted when my holiday starts.
Completely broken, tired.
I feel haunted, no longer resilient.
It won't go away
I can't get my legs straight, can't enjoy.

My manager doesn't understand me;
he is or acts like a lunatic.
I should have said much earlier: I am not
going to do this!
But I knew: he will throw me out.
I choose to avoid the risk.

My colleagues retreat in their offices,
scared, apathetic;
directing the downfall.
Recently I protested
I said: I am not going to do that!
Now they slander me at their
departments
The staff meetings are going nowhere:
collective paralysis.

I am all alone.

There seems to be no solution here.
It will be sink or swim.

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To Thee I Flee

Thanks to you I have escaped
the secretly strung up net.

You will not humiliate me,
never
Rock solid salvation you are.
House of liberation.

Into your hands I commit my
spirit.
You have redeemed me,
You became my truth.

Divining and fragrant hazes,
spells mumbled in ecstasy
reveal nothing to me.

Wandering in the good, wide
land
I become aware of you
experience your friendship.

To thee I flee.

My soul chokes in the narrow –
Dim are my eyes
My bones cracked.

*My life is consumed by
anguish and my years by
groaning;
my strength fails because of
my affliction,
and my bones grow weak.*

That morning, in front of the tent,
suddenly, expressively
the whole world clear. A long view.
To the west the lighthouse,
rising up between the trees.
Between me and the grove
completely flat and burnt brown
the lawn of the runway.
Milky white, veil clouds
in a pale blue dome.
Typically a Wadden island. No wind.
High season the camping, but now
no one around me.
Space, deep peace, complete harmony

in me

An unknown experience of contrast.
I am stuck, no room for maneuver.
Taken by the flow, nothing left to chose.

But also: so much peace in this space.
No panic, no fear, no running away.
This is it. Amen.

I am standing like The Longshoreman:
my feet and legs heavy
as if they sink into the sand of the camping
field.
Not pushed into it, not going down.
Very steady.
Simply going on like I used to is not possible.
Avoiding it is no longer possible.
It is simply over: 'period!'.

Monday at the office
I will step on the turntable and everything
will change.

Everything in harmony: very strange, bizarre.
That is the way things will go,
on Monday, absolutely.
I accept
will never forget.

The landscape had absorbed us
The day clearly belonged to us
The open sky, the grass, the trees,
one living water – and completely
The joy of word and response

How softly do you capture the heart
and direct it to its quite sense – a
wandering look, a playful desire
already strings up its power and
scans the long
horizon; new work begins.

The landscape is written in me,
grass, water, flowers, every thing,
--
We too given away with attention
And over all this busy life
The light in high doming

.

I am a dread to my neighbors
I am a corpse in the closet
I am a road to nowhere

They whisper about me.
They shy away from me.
But in my heart I say:

'He alone my God
what I have left to live
is in his hand.'

Let me not be put to shame,
LORD, for I have cried out to you;
but let the wicked be put to
shame and be silent in the realm
of the dead.

Make your face shine upon me,
Friend God. Still so much life
You have put in me.

In your face I am sheltered
Your eyes a booth where I recover
from all quarrelling tongues.

I was so confused that I thought:
I have been cut off from his eyes
But you have seen me and seen

Be strong, You say, do not falter
I wait for You, I say -
No, I will wait no longer

To Thee I flee

Phase 3: Risk your neck or lose your soul

G's phase 3 experience relates to phase 2. The managing director is seen by many in G's company as the cause of all problems. The members of the management team eventually conspire and in a well-prepared 'coup' the managing director is removed from his position, opening up the way for new ideas and policies. The experiences that G describes in this panel represent the coup and the moments right after the actual coup. Notice that the typical elements of phase 3 appear in G's experience:

- making a risky emergency jump
- beginning with 'nothing'
- experiencing overcoming your powerlessness and a new beginning.

The accompanying texts have been selected by me and were approved of by G. They stem from four sources:

- Exodus 14 (Naardense Bijbel)
- Part of psalm 77 (in italics) (TNIV)
- The canoe-part (from an interview with G, 214-02-03, p. 5)
- Part of psalm 23 (the last five lines of the orange text) (TNIV).

The canoe-part is a conscription time anecdote from an interview with G. It is an illustration of the spiritual potential that people carry with them, without fully realizing it for themselves.

Risk your neck or loose you soul

If we would have kept quiet, the company would have gone bankrupt.
And you don't want to be responsible for that.
We couldn't get to any workable terms with the managing director what-so-ever.

The supervisory board yelled something about mediation and coaching.
But then we would only lose valuable time.

The Israelites … cried out to the LORD. They said to Moses, "… What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"

We were simply fed up with it.
We all understood we couldn't go on like this.
There was no alternative.

I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands, and I would not be comforted. I remembered you, God, and I groaned; I meditated, and my spirit grew faint. Sela

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on.

Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.

I put aside my feelings towards the others.
It didn't make close friends of us but in that period we operated at the same wave length.
We didn't need a lot of words but a lot of things were clear.
The moment we pulled out the plug was carefully planned.
This is what it felt like: accomplishing a mission.
You have to do it right, control yourself.
Act effectively, not emotionally.
Rationally.

'A canoe that can be assembled, a lousy thing.
The sergeant said: If you capsize, don't go swimming!
For you will automatically swim against the current.
You get tired and cold because of the water,
And in no time you will go down.
Just go with the flow,
you will get ashore somewhere.
The current will carry you!'

Then it is finished, this is the moment.
We simply walked out of the office
Everyone found a place
to be with somebody else.
It wasn't clear what to do next.

A peculiar vacuum
I felt magnificently free.

Your path led through the sea, your way
through the mighty waters,

though your footprints were not seen.
You led your people like a flock by the hand
of Moses and Aaron.
The One is my shepherd
I lack nothing;
In pastures green he makes me lie down.

Had a coffee with John for half an hour;
Hanging in a chair
Nothing happened.
A big office… 5 or 6 empty desks…
No telephone calls, people didn't come looking for us.
I had anticipated: they can send me away:
Get the hell out of here!
It didn't happen.

Really nothing happened.

In the end I went back to work, picked up
what I had left unfinished.
With the door open,
I felt completely free.
The future wide open again,
As if you have breached something.

He leads me beside quiet waters,

Freedom!

The problem gone, in any case.
No doubt about that anymore.
Now we can start building again, act.
Unless they throw you out, well…
I am going ashore somewhere,
I don't know exactly where
But I am going to land somewhere.

Because of him my soul returns to me

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Phase 4: Allies through the eye of the needle

G's phase 4 experience depicts the phase after the removal of the managing director of G's organization. He is replaced by an interim manager (fictitious name: Anne) who must restructure the organization because of urgent financial problems. In an atmosphere of uncertainty G decides to team up with the interim manager because he discerns something special in her style of working. The description of the experience is centered on the moment when G openly admits to the interim manager that he wonders if he can trust her. By teaming up with her he enters a learning and development phase that he describes in terms such as: intimate, friendship, mutual, dependence and life-changing.

The accompanying texts have been selected by G himself. They stem from three sources:

- The poem 'Tuin van Epicurus' by Dutch poet Ida Gerhardt (Gerhardt, 1980)
- A few lines from a (titleless) poem by Dutch poet Hans Andreus (Andreus, 1998)
- Matthew 14: 24-33 (NIV).

At first I did three suggestions for a biblical mirror text but none of them were satisfying for G. In response to my suggestions he chose Matthew 14 (from the Dutch Naardense Bijbel) as a mirror text that corresponds well to his experience.

The poem by Andreus is the marriage text of G and his wife. It is another illustration of the spiritual potential that people carry with them that can be disclosed in a trajectory with this method.

Allies through the eye of the needle

Anne was going to dismantle things, that was clear.
I knew my own position was being questioned.
There was insecurity all around.

Why are you looking at me?, Anne asks aggressively.
'I wonder if I can trust you.', I replied.

I openly admit it: I am busy with a matter of trust,
I am choosing what I am going to do with you.
A step in the dark: there is no guarantee that I will get a positive response.
She could have slapped me in the face for it.
Yes, I am very vulnerable.

And?, Anne asks
'I think I can.', it just crops up from my mouth.

For me that was the turning point, because I say:
I think I can trust you, so I am going to move along with you.
And even though I won't understand everything or won't be happy with everything, I still think we should start doing this together.
I will see how it turns out.

Sometime later, the last week of March in the following year.
The meeting starts and Anne is called away.
She returns and says: My mother passed away, now where were we?
I said: you shouldn't deal with it like that, maybe I can be of any help?
Then she said: No.
And on Tuesday morning she dropped by and said: That offer of yours, does it still stand?

Anne never let anything go and now she did.
This was her turning point.

Garden of Epicurus

We chose sobriety as an ally.
The mind governed as a willing instrument
the body, applied for this proud service;
nourished with pure water, pure bread.

We chose sobriety as an ally.
In the circle of hours, closedly
arranges according to a strict mode unto rest and order
what free floating thinking provided us.

We chose sobriety as an ally.
We labor in quiet and patience;
The day is filled like a honey comb
And friendship has been invited into our garden.

We chose sobriety as an ally.
and hour after hour it brings us its gift
we mature as fruit, as grain
Into the good life unto the good death.

We minimalized everything
Dismantled all of the organization's conventions:
offices, privileges, authority, everything.
But for me it was a benevolence for I took my
swing, started doing new things, I started to
learn.

I have experienced the period as very intimate, if
you are learning you become vulnerable.
She brought me into a big assessment.
Not one day and not one hour were the same.
I have undergone it as a purification.
It has opened up new ways for me.
It has changed me for life.

Sometimes I rowed against the current,
because I followed her.
I had a lot of explaining to do
to people, the whole management team, people
who thought they were on the dismissal list, the
board of supervisors;
they were actually against Anne.

Friendship? Absolutely!
We didn't need a lot of words,
Just many short conversations.
We absolutely cooperated on a basis of trust.

I will never leave this path anymore
I will never play political games anymore
No more smoke screens.
I will say what I think is right,
I am prepared to be tested
to be questioned.

I really had a nice year.

In Anne we had a genuinely good human being
A pure human being

Of course not
Superior or inferior
But so beautifully different

I would never want you
In any other way
Than different.

But the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them.

And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.

But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear.

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come."

So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.

But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me."

Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Four quotes from the interview in which G discusses the mirror text from the gospel of Matthew illustrate how he relates the text to his experience of phase four:

'It will be clear for you that I am impressed by Anne. Somewhere in this story I thought: I can cross this brink and I won't sink… I didn't sink but I could have. Sometimes I think: she could have sunk as well, if she had disappointed me for example…'
(Interview with G, 2014-11-20, p. 1)

'This story expresses a very deep existential truth: you have to cross that brink if you want new things to happen… and also: if you want to survive if everything around you is boiling, you have to get over this brink… And I think that is what Peter is doing when he challenges the ghost: If it is you, then tell me: come! Apparently he thinks that is very essential.'
Researcher/facilitator: *He wants to be asked.*
Participant G: *'Yes, and what if Anne hadn't asked: And? Then, I think, I would have connected to her eventually but much slower and less explicit.'*
(Interview with G, 2014-11-20, p. 2)

'Anne has taught me to surrender to other people and to assume that the other has good intentions. That's how I have approached Anne's successor…That is how I approach all kinds of new people I meet now. Anne has taught me not to play political games anymore. The other is an invitation and I am going to say "yes" to invitations…I have learned to trust people and that is a very pleasant experience. From that moment on Peter has also always been crossing that brink.'
 (Interview with G, 2014-11-20, p. 3)

'Therefore in its deepest sense it has been a religious experience. I didn't do very much myself: I have been handled. I have entered it….That is the wondrous thing about it: it has been happening unto me…But this was very intense and very special and not a single week passes without me thinking about Anne for a moment.'
(Interview with G, 2014-11-20, p. 3)

Notice that the typical elements of phase 3 appear in G's experience:

- Becoming just as small and vulnerable as the cause he is working for
- Against all odds
- Experiencing mutual dependence and unity that transcends everything.

It is clear that for G the reconstruction of his work-related spiritual biography changes to renewal of professional praxis in this phase. The experience explicates and further discloses a discovery he has made during phase four: '*Anne has taught me to surrender to other people and to assume that the other has good intentions...Anne has taught me not to play political games anymore...I have learned to trust people and that is a very pleasant experience.*'

Having illustrated the results of using the method for spiritual formation, I will address the three evaluation questions in the Outcome-category:

- does the method help people to articulate and explicate experiences of the transcendent in their praxis of social innovation?
- do the participants develop themselves spiritually according to Sölle's path of spiritual development?
- which level of power of evidence do the outcomes have?

Does the method help people to articulate and explicate experiences of the transcendent in their praxis of social innovation?
In section 4.4.4 I have specified the act of disclosing and articulating the transcendent in one's own work-related experiences as performing a specific speech act in which the participant selects, reads, re-reads, edits and contemplates mirror-texts that contain traces of God's arrival in the dimension of being and tries to relate them to his own experiences in the field of social innovation. By interweaving his own experiences with mirror texts the participant addresses and invokes the transcendent in his own experiences. The three participants who worked with the method in the second round of testing were able to select texts that articulated, disclosed and explicated the experience of the transcendent in their own experiences. These experiences had been identified with the help of the developmental

scheme of Sölle's spirituality and subsequently they were explored in a phenomenological way, thus adding experiential depth to them. The texts were selected by the participants themselves or they were selected by the participant from a set of texts that had been presented to them by the facilitator. The selected texts range from religious poetry (Dante) to poetry that is not explicitly religious: (Gerhardt (1980, 2011), Andreus (1998), Szymborska (1999), Lucebert (2011), Cummings (1963), biblical prophetic texts (Isaiah), biblical psalms, reworkings of biblical psalms (Oosterhuis, 2011), biblical stories (Exodus), a text from one of the gospels, personal anecdotes and lyrics from a Christian rock song. They disclose and articulate the transcendent in the experiences of the participants. By working with these texts the participants start to discover language that 'makes place for an "incomprehensible guest"' (Sneller, 2000) and which brings up something 'that shimmers through the "gates" of the text' (Sneller, 2000) of their own experiences. This *'something that shimmers through the "gates" of the text'* of their experiences is addressed, invoked and articulated in the speech act of searching, considering, selecting, reading and re-reading one or more texts that corresponds on an experiential level with the text of their own experience. *'God takes place in language by erasing himself'*, Derrida says, and the panels of the quadriptych are the visible, communicable traces of the transcendent, forged by the aforementioned speech acts of the participant. The disclosure of the transcendent has already taken place by the time a panel of the quadriptych has been made. But the act of making the panel is a way of performing 'an apostrophe' (Derrida, 1997, p. 82): the act of approaching, entering or passing the lingual thresholds that makes space for God, the incomprehensible guest in language.

It is worth mentioning that two participants each put forward something other than a literary form of expression of an experience that corresponds with one of their experiences: a statue by Andriessen and a painting by Picasso[27].

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[27] Ekphrastic poetry are poems written about works of art, for example about a sculpture. A well-known example is Rilke's poem 'Archaic torso of Apollo', inspired by an ancient sculpture. Beholding a work of art can be an intense experience. It would be interesting to see if participants suggest non-textual works of art as mirror-objects for their experiences, and if ekphrasis can help them express those experiences verbally.

So the method does help the participants to identify, disclose and articulate specific experiences of the transcendent that are pivotal according to the spirituality of Sölle in their praxis of social innovation.

Do the participants develop themselves spiritually according to Sölle's path of spiritual development?

The output from working with the second version of the method for spiritual formation shows that the participants have developed themselves in three ways: 1) it helps them to recognize the development they have already gone through; 2) it helps them to (begin to) disclose and address the transcendent in specific work-related exerperiences; and 3) it helps them to recognize opportunities for spiritual development, reflection, integrating and strengthening the work-related spiritual biography, and for experimenting, development and learning.

First of all, using the method shows that the participants have gone through a development, before they started working with the method, that they were unaware of. For each participant at least the first two phases of Sölle's trajectory of spiritual development could be identified in their work-related biographies and the connection between the two phases.

For the participants this means, for example, a better understanding of the motives for the work that they are doing and discovering how this motivation is related to or rooted in their work-related biography. Participant G for example says that he has not given a lot of thought to the links between his biography and his work. He is surprised to find out that several biographical lines meet each other in his work (interview with G, 2013-06-14, pp. 4-5). Participant F calls the disclosed biographical links *'...markings in my life. That is where it all begins and where it all originates.'* (interview with F, 2013-06-26, pp. 2-3)

The second way in which the participants' development took shape was discovering and explicating a new layer of meaning, a new perspective in one's work-related biography. The three participants successfully worked on the first two phases of the developmental model: 'Things cannot go on like this!' and 'I cannot go on like this!' Two participants also explored phase three and one of them also worked on phase four. So, as more specifically described in the first Outcome-evaluation question, spiritual development

also means developing an awareness of the presence of the transcendent in specific work-related experiences. That is what the participants have done.

Thirdly, when participant G was exploring the fourth phase of the developmental model, it became clear that for him the reconstruction of his work-related spiritual biography changed to renewal of professional praxis in this phase. The experience explicates and further discloses a discovery he has made during phase four:

'Anne has taught me to surrender to other people and to assume that the other has good intentions...Anne has taught me not to play political games anymore...I have learned to trust people and that is a very pleasant experience.'
(Interview with G, 2014-11-20, p. 3)

It would be interesting to reflect with G on how this new attitude relates to various issues, e.g.: how does it relate to the motives and experiences (e.g.: being part of a powerless collective, shying away from one's responsibilities) that are disclosed in the foregoing phases; how can the attitude of trust be related to (the renewal of) the role of workers' councils, which is sometimes disapprovingly called a form of control democracy; how can this attitude be embodied in the philosophy and (management) practice of G's own organization; and how can one continue this attitude, especially when (inevitable) disappointments occur? It would also be worthwhile to explore in a phenomenological way what G means when he says that phase four has happened 'unto him'. This expression may hint at the second layer of mystagogy that De Jong–van Campen distinguishes: mystagogy in the interpunction between man and God (De Jong-van Campen, 2009, p. 112). G's fourth panel shows that the renewal phase helps to articulate several opportunities for personal development, reflection, integrating and strengthening the work-related spiritual biography, and for experimenting and learning.

Which level of power of evidence do the outcomes have?

In terms of the power of evidence of design-oriented research, the results of testing the second version of the prototype of the method can be considered to be indicative (Weber, Ropes & Andriessen, 2011, p. 170).

In design-oriented research the power of evidence level 'causal' is the highest level. The results that are obtained with three participants who used this method meet this level on three of the four criteria (Weber et al, 2011, pp. 170-171) that apply to this. The first criterion is that a theoretically well-founded method has been applied and positive results are assessed empirically. The method that has been developed in this study is theoretically well-founded (see section 4.4 for example) and the positive results are the results of empirical research (see section 4.5.3). One could object that the number of participants that participated in the second round of testing is small and in a way this is true. However, if one takes into consideration that the results 1) cannot be 'produced' in a mechanical way but are created by means of methodical, interpretive and hermeneutic work and 2) cannot be objectified or quantified without losing their real meaning, one realizes that the nature of what the method aims to bring about (awareness, consciousness, discernment and phronèsis instead of exact, objective and universal knowledge) does not accord well with large sample sizes and a quantitative approach.

The second criterion is that there is evidence that the interventions have actually caused the outcomes. I refer to section 4.5.3 where I have shown that this is the case.

The third criterion is that there is evidence that the mechanism of the intervention has functioned. I refer to section 4.5.3 and 4.5.4 where I demonstrate that this is the case.

This study fails to meet the final criterion that states that alternative explanations have been systematically excluded. Having worked with one group of participants in the second round of testing this criterion has not been met. It could have been the case if control groups and sham procedures were used.

Therefore the power level of evidence for this study is 'indicative' (Weber et al, 2011, p. 171).

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4.5.2. Context: indications for participants and facilitators

Van Aken states that design-oriented research should pay attention to indications and contraindications for a promising, favorable application of a method. These indications determine the domain of application of the method. This study has resulted in a number of indications and contra-indications concerning both participants and competence requirements for facilitators.

Indications for participants

1. The participant works in a socially innovative organization.
2. The participant is willing to develop himself according to Sölle's spirituality.
3. The participant is willing to follow the methodical guidelines of the method.
4. The participant is willing to explore in-depth how he has experienced work-related events and actions.
5. The participant is willing to select mirror texts that relate to Sölle's spirituality with *Genauigkeit* und *Begeisterung* (with great care and enthousiasm) (Prinz, 2006, pp. 71-72), e.g. biblical texts. Rejecting certain forms or expressions of religion and spirituality (for example biblical texts) is a contra-indication for applying this method.

   In the first round of testing one participant expressed her discomfort with biblical texts:

   '(Psalms) make me feel itchy anyway…I had my doubts about the orientation of your study. You are hearing those doubts again now.' (Experienced social innovator 2 of group 2 of the first round of testing, session 1, pp. 8-9). Such a discomfort makes it hard to use the method because it requires an intense interplay between the participant and the mirror texts.
6. The participant has interpretive creativity. He has to be able, so to speak, to enter into dialogue with mirror texts. The participants in both rounds of testing in this study showed this interpretive creativity and were aware of what happened between them and the texts they were using:

Participant K: *That is right. I think something will happen between me and the text. The poem does not give answers but that's not what it is about. You have to make your own answers. It does provide a little bit of direction.*

Researcher: *It is not meant as instant answers indeed.*

Participant K: *That is a pity (jokingly).*

Facilitator 2: *I think two issues come together: being value-driven and the strong foundation. That is in your energy. You have your doubts and there is some sort of power behind that. A sort of second face.*

(Group 2 of the first round of testing, session 1, p. 7)

Participant B: *I cannot relate my experience to the text* (the parable of the prodigal son).

Participant A: *Maybe you are the father and not the son.*

Participant B: *I didn't read it in that way, that is a good one. This is about a wise man…who clearly liberates people…I still don't get it.*

(Group 1 of the first round of testing, session 2, p. 5)

Competence requirements for facilitators

1. The facilitator has a thorough knowledge of Sölle's spirituality and related primary and secondary mirror texts, for example biblical texts or reworkings of biblical texts.
2. The facilitator is well informed about social innovation.
3. The facilitator is experienced in exploring someone else's experiences in a phenomenological way.
4. The facilitator has editorial skills for editing the texts that are to be used in a quadriptych.

4.5.3. Intervention

The evaluation question in the Intervention category is: What role do the various elements of the method play in bringing about the desired results (see 'Outcome')? Which elements have been found to be counterproductive?

It turns out that the prototype of the method for spiritual formation is a mixture of a number of elements. In this section I will discuss the elements

that contribute to the effectiveness of the method. These elements largely coincide with the design options that were systematically identified after the first round of testing (section 4.3). Six effective elements of the method have already been presented in section 4.4: 1) facilitating individuals, 2) working from a developmental perspective, 3) disclosing the transcendent in an experience by a performative speech act, 4) capturing, visualizing and storing experiences and spiritual development; and 5) from reconstructing a work-related spiritual biography to renewing praxis.

In this section I will discuss six additional elements that contribute to the effectiveness of the method: 1) methodical strictness, 2) spiritual guidance, 3) openness about the methodical and spiritual background of the method, 4) embeddedness in the work and organizational practice of the participants, 5) working according to the three layers of mystagogy, and 6) mobilizing and using the spiritual potential of the cultural capital of the participants.

Methodical strictness - During the sessions of the first and second round of testing the facilitators were presented with choices regarding methodical strictness. Should they observe an agreed upon protocol or go with the spontaneous flow of the conversation of the participants? Selecting the experiences from the interviews is another example of the choices that have to be made regarding methodical strictness. It is tempting to choose interesting themes or problems from the interviews (combined with an interesting or appealing mirror text) that are more loosely connected to the themes of the phases of Sölle's spirituality than the method prescribes. It seems it is more effective in terms of intentional spiritual development if a facilitator observes the protocol strictly rather than in a loose way. If not guided by the method and the facilitator, participants tend to divert into various directions that may lead to a loss of direction.

Spiritual guidance - The level of spiritual guidance deals with the issue of how explicit, directive and explanatory a spiritual offering should be. Can one expect the participants to spontaneously discover the intended spiritual perspective in their experiences when they go through the program of a method? Or do they need the guidance and explanation of a facilitator? Spiritual guidance may or may not be required on two levels: 1) the

interpretation of individual experiences and 2) the integration of several experiences into a trajectory of spiritual development. The level of spiritual guidance was low in the first round of testing. It was hoped and expected that the participants would spontaneously discover the spiritual aspect in their hunger experiences by means of discussing the mirror texts. In the second round of testing the level of spiritual guidance was raised by means of using an explicit scheme of spiritual development that determines the 'roadmap' of the development that the participant and facilitator will be working on. This proved to be useful because it allowed the participant and the facilitator to focus on specific key events in the work-related spiritual biography of the participant. One avoids focusing on a single interesting experience, action or event which will remain an 'erratic boulder' (Buijs, 1999, p. 228) if it is not integrated into a trajectory of personal development. The developmental scheme helps to discover and explicate the path that the participants have already been travelling. Working in this way may seem mechanistic because the participant and the facilitator merely seem to have to obey or follow a predefined scheme with the phases of spiritual development according to Sölle's spirituality. However, a balanced attitude is required for using such a scheme. Using it is more about developing the subtle art of letting go and getting back on track than about blind obedience to a scheme. Following it often means leaving the participant's comfort zone and starting to explore new, unknown territory. An email from participant H illustrates this:

'...I am having some problems, but I can continue to work. I am glad to have your support and your method. The grip , that you give, helps. Gives connection. Connection everywhere (more parties that ask for us, much more cooperation), and indeed: risking your neck or losing your soul. But with that title alone "Losing your soul"...I wouldn't be able to do anything.'
(email from participant H of the second round of testing, 2016-03-08)

H indicates having some sort of trouble with 'losing your soul', yet the method challenges her to explore this (in phase 3), despite some reluctance on her side. For the facilitator it may also feel risky to follow the scheme, because one is never certain if a specific phase can be successfully traced in the work-related biography. This underlines the importance of one of the indications for using the method: the correspondence between the

professional context of the participant on the one hand and the school of spirituality on the other. If the two do not correspond properly, then spiritual guidance may lead to aimless roaming.

Openness about the methodical and spiritual background of the method - Methodical strictness and spiritual guidance are related to a third element that contributes to the effectiveness of the method: the degree of openness about the methodical and spiritual background of the method. When designing and applying a method, one must decide how transparent one will be about the (to be tested) rationale behind the method for spiritual formation, for example about the use of mirror texts. The dilemma that presents itself here is that if one gives this kind of background information to participants, one runs the risk that they may act less spontaneously or more socially desirably. On the other hand there is an ethical aspect to openness: informed consent. Can one expose people and their intimate, personal real life experiences to an (experimental) method without informing them on its background and not run the risk of being accused of, for example, 'evangelizing'?

In the first round of testing it was decided not to reveal information about the background of the method for reasons of avoiding the risk of socially desirable behaviour. As the sessions progressed the first-round participants were increasingly eager to know more about the background and the purpose of the method and about what they were 'doing' with the experiences that were being discussed.

Participant A: *We are really curious: what exactly is it that you are studying? We can understand the method that you are developing a bit, but it is not clear to the three of us why you are doing this; what are you hoping to achieve?*
(Evaluation interview with A from group 1 of the first round of testing, p. 2)

Participant A: *No, but we became interested in the background of your study. Should we be informed about that in advance or not? If you are supposed to attend three of four evenings, you should be informed. You may get away with it if there are only one or two evenings.*

(Evaluation interview with A from group 1 of the first round of testing, p. 3)

Participant B: *Nice process. There is more structure behind it than we think, I think.*
(Group 1 of the first round of testing, session 1, p. 7)

Experienced social innovator 2: *I am not sure if this is a method, if I may be so frank. I have all kinds of questions. I am looking at you (D refers to the researcher) in a fascinated way: what are you looking for? Aren't you looking for the similarities or meaning that you put into it? I resist that in some way. There are similarities and differences between us but that is why I am not sure if this is a method.*
(Group 2 of the first round of testing, session 1, p. 8)

This wish, combined with the aforementioned ethical consideration, resulted in an open attitude about the method of working, its spiritual background and its developmental goals in the second round of testing.

Embeddedness in the work and organizational practice of the participants - A fourth productive element of the method is its embeddedness in the work and organizational practice of the participants. In the first round of testing this link was not as strong as in the second round of testing. In the first round of testing the participants discussed and explored each other's experiences and backgrounds. They valued the focus on those aspects. In the daily routine there is not often time to communicate with each other on that level. They would however have liked to make the link between the spiritual and the practical more explicit and to spend more time discussing tactical-strategic matters. In the first round of testing an experienced socially innovative pioneer also attended the group sessions. The other participants wondered if spending a whole evening talking about their personal issues was worthwhile for an experienced pioneer. This made the participants feel a little bit burdened by his presence because they felt that more time should be spent on discussing business-like issues with him and less on discussing personal issues.

Participant A: *At the second evening much more time was spent on discussing the (mirror) text and then, I felt, he* (the experienced socially innovative pioneer [D]) *completely dropped out.*
(Evaluation interview with participant A from group 1 of the first round of testing, p. 3)

Experienced social innovator 1: *That is what I feel too. This is also an experiment. In a few years I know what to think of it. I am experiencing it now and attend the sessions. This is about B but I recognize a lot of things and I can understand those things. My contribution may be to reassure B about this.*
(Group 1 of the first round of testing, session 2, p. 9)

The second version of the method is explicitly focused on work-related events. It works from past, work-related experiences and events to present ones and takes those as the starting point.

Working according to the three layers of mystagogy - The fifth element that contributes to the effectiveness of the method is considering the layers of mystagogy that Waaijman and Wollbold distinguish (as cited in De Jong-Van Campen, 2009, p. 112), in choosing the mirror texts that should correspond to the experiences of the participants. If we assume that the participants have not explored the spiritual aspect of their work explicitly and consciously before they started using the method, it makes sense to select texts that work on the first layer of mystagogy (De Jong-Van Campen, 2009, p. 112). In this layer the transcendent partially reveals itself. One starts to recognize that one can open up to the transcendent and relate to it. The 'from across' responds and gives back. This layer of mystagogy is called 'initiation into the mystery of existence' (De Jong-Van Campen, 2009, p. 112). From the first layer one can proceed to the second layer of mystagogy. This layer essentially concerns discovering the punctuation between the transcendent and man. Subsequently one can start working on and exploring the third layer of mystagogy that concerns the translation of one's spiritual development to a renewed life-praxis (De Jong-Van Campen, 2009, p. 115). The three layers of mystagogy should not be used as a rigid

developmental scheme in which one layer can be entered upon only if the preceding layer has been fully passed or developed. They are similar to Dooyeweerd's 'aspects' in the sense that the one aspect presupposes the other and that later layers disclose preceding or earlier layers (see section 1.5.2). One should also keep in mind that the three layers of mystagogy can be associated with Christian spirituality. They may not be usable for other schools of (non-Christian) spirituality.

Distinguishing these layers has helped 1) in becoming aware of 'entry levels' and of a developmental logic of the participants and 2) to define realistic developmental goals that were to be methodically achieved. Sloterdijk phrases what may happen if one ignores entry levels and their developmental logic: one pushes people to climb vertical *'heights that do not stand in any productive relation to the narrowness of the experiential horizon'* (Sloterdijk, 2013, p. 160). Following the developmental logic of the layers of mystagogy has implications for the mirror texts that are selected. Texts that work on the first layer of mystagogy should not be too explicitly religious in their references to the transcendent. Spiritual texts may become more explicit in this respect as participants progress through the other two layers of mystagogy. Texts that are more explicit work on the second layer and address the punctuation between the transcendent and man. They help the participant to interpret, develop and cultivate his own experiences and actions regarding this theme.

During one of the group sessions in the first round of testing an incident occurred that illustrates the importance of paying attention to the layers of mystagogy and of avoiding pushing people to climb vertical *'heights that do not stand in any productive relation to the narrowness of the experiential horizon'* (Sloterdijk, 2013, p. 160). One participant (Y) was telling the others how her socially innovative work exhausted her from time to time:

Participant K: *'...Sometimes I am very tired and then, suddenly, it is gone. I do not understand how it works.'*
Facilitator 2: *'It would be interesting for you to understand that. Then you can control it.'*
Participant H: *'That reminds me of a text from the Bible: hanging on the cross.'*

Experienced social innovator 2: *'That is very gloomy!'* (Everybody laughs.)
Facilitator 2: *'There is nowhere you can go on that cross!'* (makes a move as if he is trying to free himself. Facilitator 2 and experienced social innovator 2 laugh.)
(Group 2, session 1, p. 3)

Participant H, most likely unaware of the layers of mystagogy, responds to K's experience with a dramatic image that is explicitly Christian: the crucified Jesus. The response of the other participants (laughter), experienced social innovator 2 and the facilitator (making a joke) illustrates the unease that ignoring the layers of mystagogy can bring about. Although participant H was probably serious about her remark, it put the others off because they could not relate their own experiences or K's experience to the explicitly religious language of participant H. A response by H on the first level of mystagogy would have been more appropriate or effective.

Mobilizing the spiritual potential of the cultural capital of the participants - A final element that contributes to the effectiveness of the method is mobilizing the spiritual potential of the cultural capital of the participants. The participants appreciate a carefully selected mirror text that matches one of their experiences and they can be genuinely touched by it. They may find it *'very beautiful!'* (participant A, group 1 of the first round of testing, session 1, p. 6), *'Bright'* (participant A, group 1 of the first round of testing, session 1, p. 4), *'very special'* (participant K, group 2 of the first round of testing, session 1, p. 8) or *'very nice'* (participant B, group 1 of the first round of testing, session 2, p. 9). The other participants are also very positive about the similarities in the hunger experience and the spiritual text:
Participant B: *'Beautiful that someone has selected this.'*
Participant C: *'Very beautiful!'*
(Group 1 of the first round of testing, session 1, p. 4)

Participant B: *'I am astonished by the selected poem and how it relates to A's position in the project.'*
(Group 1 of the first round of testing, session 1, p. 6)

A few days after the session with group 2 of the first round of testing participant H told me on the phone that she found it 'inspiring' and 'could not sleep that night' because of all that had been said during the session. *(unrecorded data)*

Participant H: *'I think you have found a very deep text.'*
(Group 2 of the first round of testing, session 1, p. 7)

Participant H: *'That is what makes this form inspiring.'*
(Group 2 of the first round of testing, session 1, p. 9)

However, if the participants succeed in selecting mirror texts that correspond with their own experiences and that are already a part of their lives (e.g. a marriage text, lyrics from a song that they like or their favorite poetry), the appropriation of the transcendent will be more intrinsic because it is their own discovery rather than a text that is suggested by a facilitator. Perhaps it stimulates the participants to continue their search in their own cultural capital; in other words: to repeat the speech act of the apostrophe. Working with the participants has shown that people may already have a cultural capital but were not aware of its spiritual potential.

Counterproductive elements
Having identified and presented the elements that contribute to the effectiveness of the method, we can also list some elements that were part of the method but proved to be counterproductive. They have already been discussed in the previous section so I will not go into more detail. First of all, working in groups proved to be counterproductive. I will reflect on that in section 6 of this chapter. It was also found that methodical looseness, little spiritual guidance and well-intended opacity do not contribute to methodically and intentionally working on spiritual formation.

4.5.4. Evaluation of the mechanism
The evaluation question in the Mechanism-category is: do we see the underlying mechanism of Sölle's spirituality at work? In section 4.2 Sölle's three-step hermeneutic process was identified as the mechanism that should

bring about the intended results of working with the method. The core of this mechanism is bringing our experiences of longing for justice and liberation into dialogue with biblical or literary texts in which the same longing resounds. In the first round of testing it was found that the so-called 'hunger experiences' of the participants can be matched with mirror texts and that these texts stimulate participants to explore and reinterpret their own and others' experiences. The participants are active and creative in interpreting the experiences of the participants and the mirror texts and in relating them to their own experiences. They show a lot of empathy for the participant whose experience is being discussed and explored, and they put a lot of energy in making the one text or experience productive for the other. They come up with some surprisingly subtle interpretations that are hidden in the mirror text or in the experience at hand.

Participant A: *'"Desperately hoping"* (a reference to the mirror text)*, that is very nice. Ambiguous.'*
(Group 1 of the first round of testing, session 1, p. 5)

Participant K: *'What I find remarkable is that one of them starts looking for flows of water* (a reference to the mirror text)*, that is also movement. I like that. It appeals to me.'*
Participant H: *'You do not end up in rocks, solid as a rock, but in wobbly waters.'*
Participant K: *'Yes.'*
(Group 2 of the first round of testing, session 1, p. 5)

The participants are able to recognize their own experiences with regard to social innovation in the experiences of others and in the mirror texts.

Participant H: *'This is also a bit about us.'*
(Group 2 of the first round of testing, session 1, p. 8)

Experienced social innovator 1: *'...I want to prove myself...prove being right. That surprised me, the joy of that. That's what I see A doing.'*
...
Participant B: *'I recognize that: ambition.'*
Experienced social innovator 1: *'It makes you endure, if others oppose you.*
Participant B: *But without striking back* (a reference to the mirror text), *that is also A's thing.'*
(Group 1 of the first round testing, session 1, pp. 4-5)

Participant C: '*Healthy tension'.*
Experienced social innovator 1: *'Exactly. That's part of it. I don't read that in the story but I have that text with me.'*
Participant A: *'I agree with that. I see a little sentence that really suits B.'*
(Group 1 of the first round of testing, session 2, p. 9)

The mirrors texts make the participants more aware of motivational issues and of each other's attitudes. However, an analysis of the accounts of the group sessions in the first round of testing shows no indications of personal development according to the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology.
As the development of the method progressed into the second round of testing another element was added to the method: the performance of an apostrophe. This specific speech act relates directly to the mechanism. It articulates more clearly that in selecting, reading, re-reading, editing and contemplating mirror texts that refer to the transcendent, and in combining them with one's own experiences one involves the transcendent in one's own work-related biography and present work situation. By working the result of the apostrophe into a quadriptych, in which the participant's experience and the corresponding mirror text are displayed, the spiritual development becomes visible in two ways. First of all, one can literally see and read how the participant discloses the transcendent in his experiences. Secondly, the panels of the quadriptych show how the participant has gone through one or more of the developmental phases of Sölle's spirituality, thus disclosing his spiritual development. The combination of Sölle's three-step hermeneutic process, the performance of the apostrophe and the use of a quadriptych, shows that the mechanism of Sölle's spirituality is at work.

4.6.   Limitations of the development phase of the study

There are four issues that point out the limitations of this part of the study. Three of these limitations can be considered as input for a developmental agenda for the method.

First of all, the end result of this part of the study is a tested prototype version of a method for spiritual formation. It is an early version, a primitive form, that has been tested and learned from and it has been demonstrated that it works. It can now be applied further in the domain of realization (Van Aken, 2011, p. 54). It can be improved and refined, for example by refining the developmental scheme that the method is based upon or by making the method more efficient. Especially in a business context the issue of efficiency may be important. One could also consider conducting a longitudinal, quantitative effect study as a way of evaluating the effects and impact of the method. It was not feasible to do this kind of research as a part of this study due to constraints in time and resources. I have referred to the difficulties of such studies in section 4.2.4. It can be expected that a serious effect study requires an extensive research effort.

Secondly, in this part of the study a lot of effort has been put into reconstructing the work-related spiritual biography of the participants and considerably less on renewal of their praxis, as described in section 4.4.6. That part of method has a lot of potential that can be developed, explored, tested and evaluated. There may be a wide array of knowledge and methods available to help participants discover what 'renewal of praxis' can mean in the specific phase of spiritual development that they are in and in their situation, for example from the field of professional consulting and coaching (De Ronde, 2015, pp. 55-56).

Thirdly, when selecting mirror texts this part of the study mainly drew on Christian sources. However, involving primary and secondary mirror texts from other spiritual traditions than the Christian, that nevertheless have the same purport as Sölle's spirituality, may be very stimulating for participants with non-Christian backgrounds, as well as for participants with a Christian

background. A substantial expertise is required to gather and select such texts. This requires a coordinated effort from various disciplines.

A fourth limitation of this part of the study concerns the issue of alpha- and beta-testing. In the first round of testing two facilitators, who were not the designer or developer of the method, led the group sessions. In terms of design-oriented scientific research this is called beta-testing (Stam, 2011, p. 236). The advantage of beta-testing is that the developer of the method does not coincide with the ones that apply (and test) it, thus avoiding the risk that the developer becomes a part of the method. In the second round of testing the developer also applied the method in the role of facilitator: alpha testing. A next step in the testing process could be to train a number of facilitators that apply the method with participants. In this way one can separate the developer and the method.

4.7. Discussion: 1) methodical spiritual formation, 2) working with groups or individuals, and 3) ex-post disclosure of transcendence in experiences

The development of the method for spiritual formation brings three issues to the fore that are worth some reflection and discussion: 1) the methodical approach to spiritual formation; 2) working in groups or with individuals; and 3) the ex-post disclosure of experiences.

The results of this phase of the study demonstrate that methodical development and improvement of a method for spiritual formation are possible. Because the prototype of the method has been methodically designed and has been based on a well-understood mechanism, we can understand which elements contribute to the intended results and/or to unintended results. Testing and evaluation allow for systematic, gradual improvement. A set of design options, a result of the first round of testing, has proven to be a valuable guide in the process of improvement. The design process of this prototype also shows that we should not shy away from design choices that may be counterintuitive, e.g.: working with

individuals instead of group activities. A design-oriented attitude that is both experimental and comprehensive can push the limits of spirituality in organizations to the domain of empirically-grounded application in organizational contexts. Such an approach to spiritual formation requires for example well-defined developmental goals, a carefully designed developmental trajectory and a degree of methodical and guidance strictness in its application. However, these structuring elements go against a trend in the landscape of spirituality in organizations in which spirituality is associated with personal authenticity and freedom from religious and economic frameworks. Nevertheless, a design-oriented approach that aims at developing methods for spiritual formation may be helpful in the maturing of spirituality in organizations. Qualities such as transparency, comprehensibility and a realistic (modest) assessment of the domain of application are perhaps the middle ground between 1) universal methods and views that are imposed in an authoritarian or zealous way and which cannot be discussed critically and 2) individual methods and views that are beyond criticism and discussion via the route of a concept of individuality that emphasizes self-referential authenticity, originality, subjectivism and relativizes dialogue (Taylor, 1994, p. 46).

The issue of working with groups or individuals raises a number of questions that deserve attention. First of all, the results of the two rounds of testing show that spirituality is a phenomenon that also has an intimate, personal nature. Waaijman, for example, situates spirituality in the 'intimate...inner of the human spirit' (Waaijman, 2003, p. 362). Buijs states that an experience of the transcendent may isolate us from others because it can be 'shocking' (Buijs, 1999, p. 227) because it breaks through one's existing order. The experience thus may even become a 'burden' we have come to terms with (Buijs, 1999, p. 227). Group activities that are aimed at spiritual development may easily disturb the delicate and intimate process of disclosing and articulating the transcendent in one's experiences and exploring one's spiritual development. However, this is contrary to the intuition and experience of many that group activities play an important role in spiritual formation and in cultivating spirituality. Sharing experiences, getting to know colleagues, peers or fellows on a more personal, deeper level may create an understanding and connection that is very valuable for

many people in organizations. Waaijman's concept of spirituality, with its emphasis on and grounding in the divine-human relational process, may give away a focus on spirituality that is more personally oriented than collectively oriented. This issue is also addressed by Hudson: *'The spirituality at work movement seems to have a very individualistic view, where the individual seeks to express a unified authentic self'* (Hudson, 2013, p. 8). It is too early to draw conclusions as to whether spirituality in organizations is exclusively or most effectively an individual or a collective issue. Although this study indicates that (initial) essential spiritual development may be best guaranteed in a situation of quiet, privacy and concentration on oneself, we do not want to lose sight of the collective dimension of spirituality in organizations. Therefore it would be interesting to study the relationship between individual activities and group activities, e.g.: are they complementary? The two rounds of testing of this study articulated that discussing spiritual development and discussing experiences of the transcendent is not necessarily the same as actually experiencing the transcendent and actual spiritual development. This study suggests that the latter primarily, though not exclusively, takes place on an individual level. Discussing experiences and spiritual development takes place in groups: e.g. the spiritual educational conversation and systematic reflection that were discussed in section 3.7. How can individual activities and group activities support each other and how do the two interact? This aspect is all the more promising, complicated and challenging if we realize that group size can range from two (e.g.: a buddy system) to large audiences. An interesting example of such an issue is the learning efficiency in groups. In the first round of testing one of the evaluation results was that there was not enough learning efficiency in the group sessions, according to the participants. The design issue then is to see if this efficiency can be increased.

Another dimension of this aspect has been articulated by the concept of the 'faith tribe' (Van Wijnen, 2016, p. 79): small, informal groups, based on natural sociality, in which people engage in activities of a spiritual nature. The faith tribe is an example of a 'neo-tribe', which is the opposite (or counterpart?) of formal, institutional organizations. This shows that group activities do not necessarily need to be very organized and orchestrated and

that one of the challenges may be to use informal, spontaneously emerging groups and group activities as a contributor to spiritual formation.

The third issue of this discussion concerns our incipient findings (section 1.5) that 1) the content and meaning of our experiences transpire in a process of (phenomenological) exploration and interpretation, which stretches beyond the moment of the experience itself; and 2) the varying intensity of experiences of transcendence. It was speculated that these two notions could be interesting for this study for two reasons. First of all, it may enable us to look for traces of the transcendent in specific work-related experiences that people have already gone through. Secondly, it might be worthwhile, for example, to see if a mild spiritual experience can be explored and deepened with the help of phenomenological research so that a mild experience of the transcendent becomes more vivid and articulated.

The results of applying the prototype of the method demonstrate that it is possible to reminisce, to select, explore and enrich past experiences, disclose new meaning in them and make them more vivid. Empirical phenomenology and combining experiences with carefully selected mirror texts (performing the apostrophe) are two techniques that are applied in the method and which give these results.

In this way a mild, almost everyday experience can become more intense and gain spiritual meaning. This is illustrated in the first panel of participant G's quadriptych (in section 4.5.1). A smoking retreat to a parking lot during a training session in which G reflects on how to deal with a training situation turns into the source of an image that expresses his profound, biographically-rooted motivation for his socially innovative work. At the same time it connects it with existential themes such as good and evil, human mediocrity and shying away from responsibilities that may have infernal consequences.

In a similar way in an experience that is already intense, a spiritual dimension can be disclosed further and be more articulated. This happens for example in the second panel of particpant G's quadriptych. In a crisis-like experience during the summer holidays, which already has the nature-spiritual quality to it, an encouraging and empowering response 'from across' is disclosed by interweaving G's experience with a poem and a biblical text.

So our initial presumptions concerning 1) the possibility of ex-post disclosure of the transcendent in people's experiences and 2) enriching mild or low-level experiences of the transcendent into an experience that is intense proved to be true. They are true in the sense that we can methodically develop and apply instruments and methods in which specific experiences can be cultivated according to a specific concept of transcendence. In this study the specificity is provided by a school of spirituality (i.e. the spirituality of Sölle's liberation theology) and a domain of organizational life (i.e. socially innovative organizations).

5. Organizational contexts, lived spirituality and schools of spirituality

Summary

After having developed a spiritual perspective on social innovation, having studied a school of spirituality that can help in the development of a method for spiritual formation and after having developed and tested a prototype of such a method, it is time to turn to the last research question of this study: what can we learn from the spiritual perspective on social innovation and the prototype of a method for spiritual formation with regard to the relationships between the key concepts of this study: social innovation, spirituality in organizations, lived spirituality, experiences of the transcendent, schools of spirituality and personal development?

It is argued that there are two relationships. First of all, if these key concepts are orchestrated well, together they can help research into spirituality in organizations to explore and articulate the lived spirituality of people who work in a socially innovative context. Secondly, in a method for spiritual formation the key concepts come together and help people to disclose and articulate experiences of the transcendent in their lived spirituality and to direct them towards specific goals. An intervention of this kind has a profound ethical dimension.

Finally, it is suggested that we can think of schools of spirituality as repositories that hold useful 'resources' that we can use in the field of spirituality in organizations. This requires a number of comptetencies from researchers, among others the art of 1) appreciatively and critically assessing a school of spirituality and 2) following and working with it without compromising others' and one's own worldview.

5.1. A recapitulation of this study

In the three preceding chapters this study has addressed three questions:

1. Can a spiritual perspective on social innovation be developed that integrates experiences of the transcendent? Does this perspective have any hiatuses when it is compared to typical elements of spirituality?

2. Does answering research question 1 provide input for selecting a school of spirituality that 1) may help to (further) disclose and articulate experiences of the transcendent in the practice of social innovation; and 2) has the potential to provide input for the development of a prototype of a method for spiritual formation of people who work in the context of social innovation?

3. Can a prototype of a method for spiritual formation of people who work in the context of social innovation be developed which is based on the school of spirituality that has been identified in the research question?

Having answered these three questions, we can now turn to the last research question of this study:

4. What we can learn from the spiritual perspective on social innovation and the prototype of a method for spiritual formation with regard to the relationships between the key concepts of this study: social innovation, spirituality in organizations, lived spirituality, experiences of the transcendent, schools of spirituality and personal development?

Before answering this question I will recapitulate the answers to the first three research questions.

With the help of 1) in-depth, empirical data concerning the actions and experiences of six socially innovative people, and 2) a number of theoretical concepts we have been able to develop a spiritual perspective on social innovation. This perspective discloses that social innovation is a process that is saturated with four of the five elements that are typical of spirituality (Hense, Jespers and Nissen, 2014, p. 222): 1) focusing on the spirit or core of a person; 2) having extraordinary experiences; 3) dealing with liminal questions and basic values; and 4) striving for fullness of life. The fifth

element, experiencing the transcendent or ultimate reality, seems to be almost absent in the empirical data.

Sölle's liberation theology, the *via negativa* and the practice model have proven to be theoretical concepts that specifically helped to transform the typical elements of spirituality into a coherent whole. Together the six cases of social innovation prove to tell a common, seventh 'story' that essentially consists of three movements or phases: 1) emergence of a critical, moral understanding of the world and of oneself, 2) initial action on an issue, and 3) developing a collective praxis of innovation.

The spiritual perspective discloses but a few traces of experiences of transcendence. It was proposed that more of these traces could be found in the practice of social innovation, but in order to achieve that an additional interpretive initiative might be of use. Such an initiative should heighten our sensitivity to experiences of transcendence by providing us with a concept of transcendence that can be linked to the work-related experiences of socially innovative people.

That brings us to the second research question: does the development of the spiritual perspective on social innovation help us to find a school of spirituality that can help us to develop a prototype of a method for spiritual formation for socially innovative people? Having used Sölle's liberation theology as a helpful theoretical concept in the development of the spiritual perspective on social innovation, it seemed logical and efficient to continue on this path by evaluating whether this school of spiritualty can help us to provide input for the development of such a prototype.

Therefore Sölle's spirituality has been described and evaluated systematically with the help of Waaijman's methodological design for spirituality research (Waaijman, 2002, p. 597). This analysis shows that Sölle's concept of transcendence seems to be closely linked with what social innovation aims at. Furthermore, it provides us with a path of personal-spiritual development that may serve as a clear developmental agenda for a prototype of a method of spiritual formation. Thirdly, Sölle's concept of the *vita mixta* emphasizes the connection between social activism and contemplation.

A number of critical notes of Sölle's spirituality also emerges from an analysis of it, e.g.: the risk of superogation with regard to resilience and

man's ability to restore justice; and the lack of a thorough thinking through of its interreligious openness and the position of Christianity in relation to other worldviews.

In the third part of this study a prototype of a method for spiritual formation for socially innovative people has been developed and evaluated. The prototype works with individuals (and not with groups) and follows the line of a comprehensive, reinforcing developmental agenda for personal development, which is based on Sölle's spirituality.

With the help of a facilitator the participants develop a work-related, spiritual biography that is based on the aforementioned developmental agenda. The participants identify, capture and express pivotal actions, experiences and development in a quadriptych. Once the participants have explored their spiritual development up to now, they may enter a second phase of the method in which they renew their current praxis, inspired by the developmental agenda of the method. Using the method results in in a tangible product, a quadriptych, which discloses, expresses and embodies the participants' personal spiritual development. The development of the prototype also results in indications for participants and facilitators, which allows for a more precise demarcation of the target group that may use the method in a purposeful and effective way.

In response to the results of the first three research questions I will reflect on two issues:

1. Research question 4: the relationships between the key concepts of this study: social innovation, spirituality in organizations, lived spirituality, experiences of the transcendent, schools of spirituality and personal development.
2. Revaluing schools of spirituality.

5.2. Relationships between key concepts

In this section I will reflect on what we can learn from this study with regard to the relationships between the key concepts of this study: social innovation, spirituality in organizations, lived spirituality, experiences of the transcendent, schools of spirituality and personal development. I discern two main relationships:

Relationship 1: Theoretical concepts, input from a school of spirituality and data concerning the work-related actions and experiences of socially innovative people help to develop a spiritual perspective on the work-related aspects of the lived spirituality of people who work in a socially innovative context.

Relationship 2: With the help of a method for spiritual formation that is based on a school of spirituality, one can intervene in someone's lived spirituality. Such a method may help to disclose and articulate experiences of the transcendent in someone's lived spirituality and may help to direct it towards specific goals. An intervention of this kind has a profound ethical dimension.

Relationship 1: Theoretical concepts, input from a school of spirituality and data concerning the work-related actions and experiences of socially innovative people help to develop a spiritual perspective on the work-related aspects of the lived spirituality of people who work in a socially innovative context.

This study has shown that the lived spirituality of people who are active in the organizational context of social innovation seems to have a number of shared characteristics. These typical features have been articulated in the spiritual perspective on social innovation. Of course, an individual's lived spirituality cannot be narrowed down to a generalized, schematic perspective but the perspective discloses a view of a part of it.

One needs an interpretive initiative to develop the spiritual perspective that gives a clear view of a number of aspects of someone's lived spirituality. This initiative can be composed of various theoretical concepts from different disciplines, e.g.: management studies, spirituality research and

input from one or more schools of spirituality. The spiritual perspective that emerges from the interplay between the actions and experiences from socially innovative people on the one hand and relevant theoretical concepts on the other cannot be considered an absolute reality that totally encompasses the spirituality of the people it refers to. It will always be 'under construction' for two reasons: first of all, additional or alternative perspectives may be developed that improve or challenge earlier perspectives. Secondly, the domain of social innovation itself is subject to change and development. Therefore existing perspectives may have to be adjusted or replaced.

The perspective is also partial in nature because the lived spirituality of people concerns not only the work-related domain of their lives but also other domains.

This first relationship confirms that spirituality is not a generic, objective category but a phenomenon that needs to be disclosed. If it is the subject of research, its disclosure is dependent on two competencies of the researcher. The researcher needs to be able to elicit experiences and actions of people in a specific organizational context on the one hand. He must be sensitive to and well informed about relevant and enriching theoretical and spiritual concepts on the other, and be able to combine these concepts with the real-life experiences of the people who participate in the research.

Relationship 2: With the help of a method for spiritual formation that is based on a school of spirituality, one can intervene in someone's lived spirituality. Such a method may help to articulate experiences of the transcendent in someone's lived spirituality and may help to direct it towards specific goals. An intervention of this kind has a profound ethical dimension.

The spiritual perspective on social innovation shows that one aspect of spirituality may remain implicit, although it is considered a typical feature of spirituality: experiences of the transcendent. A carefully considered choice of a school of spirituality that fills the gaps that the spiritual perspective reveals unfolds the spiritual perspective more. In this way it may help to disclose and articulate the lived spirituality of socially innovative people. A school of spirituality may also provide a trajectory of

spiritual development that people in socially innovative organizations may benefit from. If we look carefully at the functions of the school of spirituality that was used in this study we can see that it has four functions:

1. It helps to identify and select work-related experiences and actions in which the transcendent can be disclosed
2. It provides us with practices that disclose the transcendent in the selected experiences and actions
3. It interweaves the experiences of the transcendent and actions into a coherent trajectory of personal development
4. It discloses the personal development someone has already gone through and which developmental path one can choose to take.

Using a school of spirituality in this way, as a part of a method, is an intentional intervention in someone's lived spirituality. This requires a careful approach that is surrounded by ethical issues. The integrity of someone's spiritual life is an important value in Western culture. People have a fundamental right to make their own choices with regard to the worldview they wish to adhere to. The ethical dimension of intervening in someone's lived spirituality brings an essential feature of a methodical spiritual formation to the fore: any such method is essentially an offer that people can reject or accept. Informed consent is a necessary condition for the beginning of a fair acceptance or rejection of this offer. The freedom of religion may be infringed in the case of religious harassment (Giacalone, 2010, p. 11) or when groups of workers are disadvantaged (Giacalone, 2010, p. 11) because of company policies[28] regarding spirituality. Honouring the civil rights that are involved in the freedom of religion will probably mean that participation in spiritual formation or training programs must be on an unequivocally voluntary basis, for example opting-in instead of opting-out. Informing management, employees and professionals well on the backgrounds and objectives of a spiritual training program will be equally important.

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[28] A related legal aspect is the question whether an organization can or cannot legally be considered as an organization with a particular religious or worldview identity (a 'tendency institution') (De Jong, 2012, p. 56). This determines (for example under Dutch law) to what extent an organization can reflect its identity in its organization and its policies.

Although intervening in other people's lived spirituality is full of ethical issues, the concept of lived spirituality also tells us that the lived spirituality of people is constantly evolving, subject to many impulses and to people's own experiments. It should not be seen as something that needs to be kept in careful isolation but rather as a part of the dynamics of life. Intentional intervening in it should not be rejected beforehand.

In this study a prototype of a method has been developed that helps socially innovative people to disclose the transcendent in their work-related experiences. It demonstrates that it is possible to approach spirituality in organizations in a methodical way, at least in the context of socially innovative organizations and with the help of Sölle's spirituality. A more prolonged and large-scale effect study is needed to see if and how (work-related) personal development is affected by using the method for spiritual formation. Based on this study we cannot make statements about the effects on personal development of the method.

5.3.   Revaluing schools of spirituality

'Now it is time to call to mind anew all those forms of the practicing life that continue to release salutogenic energies, even where the over-elevations to metaphysical revolutions in which they were initially bound up have crumbled. Old forms must be tested for reusability and new forms invented. Another cycle of secessions may begin in order to lead the humans out once again – if not out of the world, then at least of the dullness, dejection and obsession, but above all out of banality...' (Sloterdijk, 2009, p. 441)

According to Sloterdijk many spiritualities, and other forms of practicing life, have been passed on in a 'folded and compressed' form (Sloterdijk, 2009, p. 15). Because of the many crises that threaten humankind it is a challenge and a command of our time to unfold and to explicate these forms of the practicing life (Sloterdijk, 2009, p. 457).

In the field of spirituality in organizations spirituality is often seen as a phenomenon that is disconnected, if not liberated, from established

religions, i.e. specific schools of spirituality. Spirituality in organizations is, at least partially, a counter-movement that advocates integral personal development, worldview freedom and authenticity. Nonetheless, this study has shown that a school of spirituality can make a contribution to the disclosure of the spiritual perspective in organizations and to the development of methods for spiritual formation. Indeed, schools of spirituality can be seen as instruments and institutions of domination. But we can also think of them as repositories that hold useful 'resources' that we can use in the field of spirituality in organizations. Sölle's spirituality for example proved to be a useful repository for the context of social innovation. I can imagine that other organizational contexts may use other schools of spirituality in order to grow in integrality. The stock of these repositories needs to be unfolded, tested for reusability in organizational contexts and, if necessary, new forms and practices must be developed, in a manner similar to the procedure in this study.

Thinking of schools of spirituality as a repository for spirituality in organizations requires a specific attitude from researchers that study spirituality in organizations. I distinguish at least three elements that comprise this attitude: 1) being able to collaborate with various disciplines and experts; 2) the art of appreciatively and critically assessing a school of spirituality and working with it; and 3) cultivating one's own lived spirituality in a pluralistic world.

First of all, researchers need to be able to explore and research appreciatively and critically various worldviews, not only on a conceptual level but also as lived religion, in order to assess the applicability of elements of a worldview in a method for spiritual formation for a specific organizational context. This calls for the collaboration of various disciplines and experts, e.g.: religious experts, experts of the organizational domain involved, fundamental theology, historians, linguistic experts, organizational behaviour and coaching studies on professional and organizational development.

Secondly, researchers need to develop the art of appreciatively and critically studying and assessing a school of spirituality: working from the outside perspective (Waaijman, 2002, p. 368), for example when exploring a school of spirituality. But they also need to be able to work from the inside

perspective (Waaijman, 2002, p. 369), for example when applying (or testing) a method for spiritual formation that is based on a specific school of spirituality. Cullen (2011) refers to the issue of the inside and outside perspective in his ethnographic study of the effects of a spiritual training program in an organization. In his methodological reflection he identifies many choices an ethnographic researcher has to make, e.g.: 1) making a realistic-objective account, a more personal confessional account, an impressionistic account or a critical account (Cullen, 2011, p. 146); and 2) taking an insider or an outsider role (for example: participating in the training sessions or not). Cullen chooses an auto-ethnographic approach: studying a social or cultural setting of which one has some claim of membership. One may say that in doing so he chooses the inside perspective. Auto-ethnography attempts to study social phenomena 'through the lens of personal experience' (Cullen, 2011, p. 148). Cullen concludes that this kind of research 'opens up greater opportunities for data collection which may not necessarily become available using more traditional approaches' (Cullen, 2011, p. 160). But there are also risks for the researcher that are attached to this methodology, and consequent to the inside perspective: the risk of becoming a convert himself to the belief system that one is studying by participating in it to some degree (Cullen, 2011, pp. 160-161). This may harm the identity of the researcher and his scientific outlook.

De Jong–Van Campen notes a similar issue in her study of Christian mystagogy. The objective of her study is to explore Christian mystagogy from an outside perspective but she discovers that the inside perspective is never far away. The interviews with the participants make her feel involved in their spiritual development, for example because the interviews appear to be helpful in the spiritual development of the participants (De Jong–Van Campen, 2009, p. 289). Van Ark and De Roest (2010, pp. 252-253) confirm this effect of these kinds of interviews. But when De Jong–Van Campen interviews one of the participants who finds it very hard to find words for his feelings and experiences, she notices the 'presence of a Third Person' (De Jong–Van Campen, 2009, p. 44, p. 213). She then deliberately switches to the role of mystagogue / facilitator in order to help the participant to express his experiences by facilitating and challenging him to disclose and

articulate the presence of God in his experiences (De Jong–Van Campen, 2009, pp. 212-213). According to De Jong–Van Campen the researcher is an 'odd figure' (De Jong–Van Campen, 2009, p. 289) in a research project on spirituality. Such a project is almost unavoidably an impulse for the lived spirituality of the participants. This may also push the researcher into the role of facilitator, whether this is his intention or not.

The distinction between the inside and outside perspective may become blurred, if for example a personal or a specific worldview is presented as a generic framework or definition that can or should fit all, which is a common misconception in spirituality in organizations that we noted already in chapter 1. So researchers who study spirituality in organizations need to be able to work from the outside perspective, and they need to be able to dive into a school of spirituality in order to study and apply it in a specific organizational context: the inside perspective.

Meganck (2015) phrases the distinction between the inside- and outside perspective as follows: *'Philosophy stops at the gate that the world is and where she finds the name* (of God)*, theology enters through the gate and travels into a different intimacy with God.'* (Meganck, 2015, p. 223) According to Meganck it is the task of philosophy (the outside perspective) not to close the world but to keep it open to the transcendent. It is up to theology, the inner perspective that various schools of spirituality propose, to 'inhabit…transcendence' (Meganck, 2015, p. 217). Van den Hoogen phrases the act of inhabiting in the following way: *'Theology is not a discourse about God but thinking towards God…grounded in an experience'* (Van den Hoogen, 2012, p. 10).

That brings us to the third element of the attitude of researchers that study spirituality in organizations: cultivating one's own lived spirituality in a pluralistic world. Thinking of schools of spirituality as a repository for spirituality in organizations requires from both professionals in an organizational context and from researchers the ability to consciously relate oneself to one's own lived spirituality, for example a school of spirituality that one may adhere to, and a spirituality that one wishes to explore, study or work with. It is the ability to reciprocate between 1) keeping the gate that the organizational life is, open to the transcendent, 2) consciously entering through this gate equipped with the travelling gear from the repository of a

school of spirituality, and 3) cultivating one's own spirituality: maintaining the integrity of one's own worldview on the one hand and developing it in a reflective way on the other.

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List of tables

Table 1: Examples of how transcendence is being articulated or thematised in research into spirituality in organizations.

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Summary

Social innovation and spirituality are often associated with each other. This association is one the main reasons for this study, especially because it has not been studied very much. Therefore the goal of this study is to explore the different levels and aspects of spirituality in the field of social innovation to set them into relation with each other. In doing so this study wants to make a contribution to the area of spirituality in organizations as a sub-discipline of spirituality research and to management science.

This study addresses the following problem statement. The relationship between social innovation and spirituality has received only little academic (empirical) attention. Research on spirituality in organizations has paid little attention to experiences of the transcendent. Therefore this study will try to answer four research questions:

1. Can a spiritual perspective on social innovation be developed that integrates experiences of the transcendent? Does this perspective have any hiatuses when it is compared to typical elements of spirituality?
2. Does answering research question 1 provide input for selecting a school of spirituality that 1) may help to (further) disclose and articulate experiences of the transcendent in the practice of social innovation; and 2) has the potential to provide input for the development of a prototype of a method for spiritual formation of people who work in the context of social innovation?
3. Can a prototype of a method for spiritual formation of people who work in the context of social innovation be developed that is based on the school of spirituality that has been identified in the previous research question?
4. What we can learn from the spiritual perspective on social innovation and the prototype of a method for spiritual formation with regards to the relationships between the key concepts of this study: social innovation, spirituality in organizations, lived spirituality, experiences of the transcendent, schools of spirituality and personal development?

A part of this study has a developmental (programmatic) agenda because a prototype of a method for spiritual formation will be developed. For this

purpose we have chosen to work with a specific school of spirituality. We have done so with a pluralistic mindset and a pluralistic approach to spirituality. The concept of 'lived spirituality' encourages the experimental interplay between the lived spirituality of individuals and other forms of spirituality. In today's pluralistic world this is both a challenge and a necessity.

A spiritual perspective on social innovation has been developed with the help of 1) in-depth, empirical data concerning the actions and experiences of six socially innovative people, and 2) a number of theoretical concepts.

The resulting spiritual perspective discloses that the actions and experiences of socially innovative people are full of experiences of connectedness, feelings of completeness, joy and fulfillment; moral sensitivity; personal and work-related growth and development; and experiences of loss, senselessness, failure, suffering and stagnation. Social innovation is saturated with four of the five elements that are typical of spirituality (Hense, Jespers and Nissen, 2014, p. 222): 1) focusing on the spirit or core of a person; 2) having extraordinary experiences; 3) dealing with liminal questions and basic values; and 4) striving for fullness of life. The fifth element, experiencing the transcendent or ultimate reality, seems to be almost absent in the empirical data.

The perspective is focused on the core or the spirit of the social innovators, e.g.: biographical elements that shape the critical, moral understanding of the innovators (which is an important motivator for starting the innovation) and the motivation for the innovation, which finds its roots in considering the innovation as an existential necessity, aimed at reviving the innovator's vitality and power. Therefore the spiritual perspective is a systematic description of the lived spirituality of the socially innovative pioneers. As such it is not an attempt to put forward new, abstract theoretical concepts such as spiritual theories or theories that explain or prescribe spirituality in organizations.

The spiritual perspective also brings to the fore the fact that social innovation leads to extraordinary experiences. Social innovators for example learn to appreciate an external locus of control and experience empowerment while working on their innovation.

The spiritual perspective on social innovation discloses that this type of innovation is closely linked with liminal questions and basic values. Social innovators for example have feelings of fear or guilt for being involved in, profiting from or becoming the victim of the issue that their innovation is a response to. They also report experiencing mutual dependence for personal development between themselves and the cause that their innovation is aimed at. According to the innovators social innovation implies experiencing surrender and running personal risk.

This is also where striving for fullness of life comes to light in social innovation. The social innovators who participated in this part of the study report that, for example, they consider their innovation to be an existential necessity, aimed at reviving their vitality and power. Their innovation for example also changes their organization's internal and external relationships, which contributes to more meaningful and more humane relationships.

Experiencing the transcendent or ultimate reality is the only element that rarely surfaces in the cases of social innovation. The empirical data contain only one or two references to this kind of experience.

Sölle's liberation theology, the concept of the *via negativa* and the practice model have proven to be theoretical concepts that helped interpret the data from the cases of social innovation. They specifically helped to transform the typical elements of spirituality into a coherent whole. They help to show that the six cases of social innovation tell a common, seventh 'story' that essentially consists of three movements or phases: 1) emergence of a critical, moral understanding of the world and of oneself, 2) initial action on an issue, and 3) developing a collective praxis of innovation. This 'story' is a pattern that recurs in the six cases of social innovation.

The spiritual perspective discloses but a few traces of experiences of transcendence. Maybe more of these traces can be found in the practice of social innovation, but in order to achieve that, an additional interpretive initiative may be needed. Such an initiative should heighten our sensitivity to experiences of transcendence by providing us with a concept of transcendence that can be linked to the work-related experiences of socially innovative people.

That brings us to the second research question: does the development of the spiritual perspective on social innovation help us to find a school of spirituality that helps us to complement the spiritual perspective on social innovation, and which can lend us a hand in developing a prototype of a method for spiritual formation? Having used Sölle's liberation theology as one of the theoretical concepts in the development of the spiritual perspective on social innovation, it seemed logical and efficient to continue on this path by evaluating whether this school of spiritualty can help us with two issues regarding social innovation and spirituality. First of all, can it help us to (further) disclose and explicate experiences of the transcendent in the practice of social innovation? Secondly, does it have the potential to provide input for developing a prototype of a method for spiritual formation of people who are active in the field of social innovation? In order to answer these questions a systematic description and evaluation of Sölle's spirituality has been made with the help of Waaijman's methodological design for spirituality research (Waaijman, 2002, p. 597). The description of Sölle's spirituality also pays attention to the potential downsides of this spirituality; not only with regard to the two questions that need to be answered in this part of the study, but also with regard to its more general weaknesses, inconsistencies or risks.

Sölle's concept of transcendence seems to be closely linked to what social innovation aims at: promoting the common good for the public or society. Exactly this 'promoting the common good' is pivotal in Sölle's concept of transcendence. Sölle sees concrete, historical and often fragile processes of liberation and attempts to overcome injustice as ongoing creation in which God manifests himself as a longing, wide-open power that is tenaciously creating a world of wholeness, love and justice. These creational processes are the very foundation of life in which man can participate as a co-creator with God, fellow men and nature. Participation of this kind is a profound, empowering and joyful experience of being united with others, nature and God in an indestructible way. It also means becoming sensitive to suffering and injustice in the world and in our own lives, and this causes us sadness and sorrow. It is clear that because of this similarity Sölle's concept of transcendence has the potential to disclose experiences of transcendence in the practice of social innovation.

Sölle's spirituality also provides us with a path of personal development that can be derived from her writings. The path has three stages: 1) *Via negativa* and *positiva;* 2) Resurrection; and 3) Co-creation with God in *communio sanctorum.* In these three stages ethics, personal development, work-related biographical episodes, existential experiences, the start of active social engagement, cooperating with others, inspiration, issues of strategy, effectiveness, virtues that are required for social activism and various kinds of experiences of transcendence are integrated into one 'logic', a coherent whole. This path of development may also be suitable for socially innovative people thus providing a clear developmental agenda for a prototype of a method for spiritual formation for this group.

A systematic description and evaluation of Sölle's spirituality learns us that there are two things that Sölle's spirituality does not provide: 1) a well-developed spiritual praxis for individuals and 2) one for groups. Yet it has two theoretical elements that may be useful for developing such a spiritual praxis. First of all, the hermeneutics of Sölle's spirituality is well developed. It consists of a clear, three-step hermeneutical process that prepares the reader for the transformative potential of spiritual texts: 1) discovering one's own entanglement in damaging structures and in the suffering of others, causing a desperate hunger for change and liberation, 2) studying and struggling with biblical or other non-Christian sources and texts that express similar experiences of despair and hunger, and which also offer a perspective on hope; 3) studying these texts forges hope, courage, a renewed life-praxis and resilience. The analysis of Sölle's spirituality reveals that there may be an additional fourth step involved: renewed life praxis may turn us into poets, as Sölle calls it, who can express their deepest existential experiences and in doing so can connect with them. Secondly, Sölle's concept of the *vita mixta* connects social activism and contemplation, which provides an important clue for the development of a method for spiritual formation.

A number of critical notes of Sölle's spirituality emerge from the analysis of it, e.g.: 1) the risk of superogation with regard to resilience and man's ability to restore justice; 2) the lack of a concrete individual and group praxis; and 3) a thorough thinking through of its interreligious openness and the position of Christianity in relation to other worldviews.

In the third part of this study a prototype of a method for spiritual formation for socially innovative people has been developed and tested. Design-oriented research offers a method for developing such a method in a comprehensible and transparent way, for example by making explicit design choices, demarcating an application domain for the method, working with a mechanism that 'drives' the method and systematic evaluation and improvement with the help of participants who use the method. In two rounds of testing and developing, in which twelve people participated, a prototype was developed. The prototype works with individuals (and not with groups) and follows the line of a comprehensive, reinforcing developmental agenda for personal development. This line is based on Sölle's path of personal development. The method has an initial phase in which the participants reconstruct the personal development that they have already gone through. With the help of a facilitator the participants develop a work-related spiritual biography that is based on the aforementioned developmental agenda. The participants identify, capture and express pivotal actions, experiences and development in a quadriptych. Once the participants have explored their personal development up to now, they may enter a second phase of the method in which they renew their current praxis, inspired by the developmental agenda of the method.

The developmental phase of this study also resulted in an improvement concerning the difficult methodological issue of studying experiences of the transcendent. According to Sölle's spirituality experiences of the transcendent can be seen in and as a result of a series of specific, observable speech acts that the participants perform. In those acts a participant combines specific experiences with mirror texts that correspond with the participant's experiences on an experiential level. The acts of selecting, reading, re-reading, combining, and reflection, which are needed to combine one's experiences with mirror texts, encompasses disclosing both the participant's experience of the transcendent and his personal development. Performing these speech acts results in a tangible product, a quadriptych, that discloses, expresses and embodies the participants' spiritual development.

The power level of evidence for the outcomes of the prototype is 'indicative' (Weber et al, 2011, p. 171), the second highest level of evidence

for this kind of research (see section 4.5.1). The development of the prototype also results in indications for participants and facilitators, which allow for a more precise demarcation of the target group that may use the method in a purposeful and effective way.

The explicit developmental nature of this part of this study points out possibilities for further development of the prototype into a full-fledged method, e.g.: 1) exploring the wide array of knowledge and methods available to help participants discover what 'renewal of praxis' can mean; 2) conducting a longitudinal, quantitative effect study; or 3) involving mirror texts from other spiritual traditions than the Christian.

After having developed a spiritual perspective on social innovation, having identified a school of spirituality that can help to develop a prototype of a method for spiritual formation and having developed and tested a prototype of such a method, the last research question of this study can be addressed: what can we learn from the spiritual perspective on social innovation and the method for spiritual formation with regard to the relationships between the key concepts of this study: social innovation, spirituality in organizations, lived spirituality, experiences of the transcendent, schools of spirituality and personal development?

It is argued that there are two relationships. First of all, if these key concepts are orchestrated well, together they can help research into spirituality in organizations to explore and articulate the lived spirituality of people who work in a socially innovative context. Secondly, in a method of spiritual formation the key concepts come together and help people to disclose and articulate experiences of the transcendent in their lived spirituality and to direct them towards specific goals. An intervention of this kind has a profound ethical dimension.

Finally, it is discussed that we can think of schools of spirituality as repositories that hold useful 'resources' that we can employ in the field of spirituality in organizations. The stock of these repositories needs to be unfolded, tested for (re-)usability in various organizational contexts and, if necessary, new forms and practices must be developed, as has been done in this study. This requires an attitude from researchers in the field of research into spirituality in organizations that is composed of at least three elements: 1) being able to collaborate with various disciplines and experts; 2) the art

of appreciatively and critically assessing a school of spirituality and working with it; and 3) cultivating one's own lived spirituality while working actively with other schools of spirituality.

Samenvatting

Sociale innovatie en spiritualiteit worden vaak met elkaar in verband gebracht maar die relatie is nog niet vaak onderzocht. Het doel van deze studie is dan ook om de verschillende niveaus en aspecten van spiritualiteit in de praktijk van sociale innovatie verkennen. Onderzoek naar spiritualiteit in organisaties heeft nog maar weinig aandacht gegeven aan ervaringen van transcendentie. Die invalshoek krijgt daarom een plek in het onderzoek, mede omdat ervaringen van transcendentie een rol kunnen spelen in de persoonlijke ontwikkeling van mensen. Die persoonlijke ontwikkeling kan belang zijn voor het functioneren van mensen die in sociaal-innovatieve contexten actief zijn. Dit onderzoek zal daarom de volgende vier onderzoeksvragen proberen te beantwoorden:

1. Kan er een spiritueel perspectief op sociale innovatie worden ontwikkeld waar ervaringen van transcendentie onderdeel van zijn? Heeft dit perspectief hiaten wanneer we het vergelijken met de typische elementen van spiritualiteit?

2. Helpt het beantwoorden van onderzoeksvraag 1 ons bij het selecteren van een school van spiritualiteit die 1) ons kan helpen bij het (verder) ontsluiten en articuleren van ervaringen van transcendentie in de praktijk van sociale innovatie; en 2) de potentie heeft om ons te helpen bij het ontwikkelen van een prototype van een methode voor spirituele vorming van mensen die werken in de context van sociale innovatie?

3. Kan er een prototype van een methode voor spirituele vorming van mensen, die in de context van sociale innovatie werken, worden ontwikkeld die gebaseerd is op de school van spiritualiteit uit de tweede onderzoeksvraag naar voren komt?

4. Wat kunnen we leren van het spirituele perspectief op sociale innovatie en van het prototype van de methode voor spirituele vorming met betrekking tot de relaties tussen de kernbegrippen van dit onderzoek: sociale innovatie, spiritualiteit in organisaties, geleefde spiritualiteit, ervaringen van transcendentie, scholen van spiritualiteit en persoonlijke ontwikkeling?

Op deze manier beoogt dit onderzoek een bijdrage te leveren aan het domein van spiritualiteit in organisaties als sub-discipline van spiritualiteitsonderzoek en bedrijfskundig onderzoek.

Een deel van dit onderzoek heeft een ontwikkelgerichte (programmatische) agenda omdat het een methode voor spirituele vorming zal proberen te ontwikkelen. Hiervoor werken we met een specifieke school van spiritualiteit. We doen dat vanuit een pluralistische *mindset* en een pluralistische benadering van spiritualiteit. De 'geleefde spiritualiteit'-benadering moedigt de experimentele wisselwerking tussen geleefde spiritualiteit van mensen en andere vormen van spiritualiteit aan. Dat is in de pluriforme wereld van vandaag de dag een uitdaging maar ook een noodzaak.

Het spirituele perspectief op sociale innovatie is ontwikkeld met behulp van diepte-interviews met zes sociaal-innovatieve mensen en met behulp van een aantal theoretische concepten. Het perspectief laat zien dat de sociaal-innovatieve praktijk van de geïnterviewden gevuld is met ervaringen van verbinding en heelheid, vreugde en vervulling, morele gevoeligheid, persoonlijke en professionele ontwikkeling en met ervaringen van schuld, falen, lijden en stagnatie. De praktijk van sociale innovatie is als het ware doordrenkt met vier van de vijf typische elementen van spiritualiteit (Hense, Jespers en Nissen, 2014, p. 222): 1) focus op de 'spirit' of de kern van iemand, 2) bijzondere ervaringen, 3) omgaan met grensvragen en fundamentele waarden en 4) streven naar de volheid van het leven. Het vijfde element, het ervaren van transcendentie of de ultieme realiteit, lijkt bijna afwezig te zijn in de empirische gegevens.

Het spirituele perspectief op sociale innovatie is gericht op de 'spirit' of de kern van de sociaal-innovatieve mensen. Het richt zich bijvoorbeeld op biografische elementen die hun motivatie voor de innovatie hebben gevoed. Het spirituele perspectief is dus geen poging om nieuwe, abstracte, theoretische concepten te ontwikkelen zoals theorieën die spiritualiteit in organisaties verklaren of voorschrijven. Het is een systematische beschrijving van de geleefde spiritualiteit van de sociaal-innovatieve pioniers.

Het spirituele perspectief brengt naar voren dat sociale innovatie gepaard gaat met bijzondere ervaringen. De geïnterviewden leren bijvoorbeeld om controle los te laten en ervaren empowerment als ze aan hun innovatie werken. Het perspectief laat ook zien dat sociale innovatie nauw verbonden is met grensvragen en fundamentele waarden. De respondenten uit deze fase van het onderzoek zijn bijvoorbeeld bang dat ze betrokken zijn bij, profiteren van of het slachtoffer worden van dat waar hun innovatie een antwoord op is. Ze vertellen ook dat ze voor hun persoonlijke ontwikkeling wederzijdse afhankelijkheid ervaren tussen henzelf en het doel waar hun innovatie zich op richt. Volgens hen heeft sociale innovatie dan ook alles maken met overgave en het nemen persoonlijke risico's. Daar komt het streven naar de volheid van het leven ook naar voren in de praktijk van sociale innovatie. De mensen, die aan dit deel van het onderzoek meededen, vertellen dat de innovatie voor hen een existentiële kwestie was, nodig om hun levenskracht te herwinnen. De innovatie maakt bijvoorbeeld ook de interne en externe relaties van hun organisatie betekenisvoller en menselijker.

Sölles bevrijdingstheologie, het begrip van de *via negativa* en het praktijkmodel bleken theoretische concepten te zijn die hielpen om de interviews met de sociaal-innovatieve mensen te interpreteren en te structureren. Ze waren bijvoorbeeld behulpzaam in het integreren van de typische elementen van spiritualiteit tot een samenhangend geheel. Dat hielp om te zien dat de zes casussen van sociale innovatie samen als het ware een zevende verhaal vertellen. Dat verhaal bestaat in essentie uit drie fasen of bewegingen: 1) het bij de sociaal-innovatie mensen ontstaan van een kritisch, moreel begrijpen van de wereld en van zichzelf, 2) initiële actie, en 3) het ontwikkelen van een collectieve sociaal-innovatieve praktijk. Dit 'verhaal' vormt een patroon dat terug te zien is in de zes casussen.

Het spirituele perspectief op sociale innovatie ontsluit maar weinig sporen van ervaringen van transcendentie. We zouden er misschien meer kunnen vinden maar dan hebben we een aanvullend interpretatief initiatief nodig. Een dergelijk initiatief zou onze gevoeligheid hiervoor moeten vergroten door ons te helpen aan een transcendentiebegrip dat in verband kan worden gebracht met de ervaringen en het handelen van mensen die bezig zijn met sociale innovatie.

Dat brengt ons bij de tweede onderzoeksvraag: helpt het beantwoorden van onderzoeksvraag 1 ons bij het selecteren van een school van spiritualiteit die 1) ons kan helpen bij het (verder) ontsluiten en articuleren van ervaringen van transcendentie in de praktijk van sociale innovatie; en die 2) de potentie heeft om ons te helpen bij het ontwikkelen van een prototype van een methode voor spirituele vorming van mensen die werken in de context van sociale innovatie?

Aangezien Sölles bevrijdingstheologie goed kon worden gebruikt bij het ontwikkelen van het spirituele perspectief op sociale innovatie, leek het logisch en efficiënt om te kijken of deze school van spiritualiteit ons kan helpen bij deze twee zaken. Om te kijken of dat het geval is, is Sölles spiritualiteit systematisch beschreven en geëvalueerd met behulp van Waaijmans methodologische ontwerp voor spiritualiteitsonderzoek (Waaijman, 2002). De beschrijving van Sölles spiritualiteit besteedt ook aandacht aan haar potentieel zwakke punten.

Sölles begrip van transcendentie blijkt nauw verbonden te zijn met wat sociale innovatie wil bereiken: het bevorderen van de *common good* in de samenleving. Dit is een kernpunt in haar opvatting over transcendentie. Sölle ziet concrete, historische en vaak fragiele bevrijdingsprocessen en pogingen om onrecht te overwinnen als doorgaande schepping waarin God zich manifesteert als een verlangende, open kracht die vasthoudend een wereld van heelheid, liefde en rechtvaardigheid aan het scheppen is.

Die doorgaande schepping is volgens Sölle de basis van het leven. De mens kan daaraan deelnemen en meewerken als een co-creator met God, medemensen en de natuur. Die deelname is een diepgaande, bemoedigende en vreugdevolle ervaring van onverwoestbare eenwording met anderen, de natuur en met God. Het betekent ook gevoelig worden voor het lijden en het onrecht in de wereld en in ons eigen leven. Die gevoeligheid brengt verdriet en spijt met zich mee. De overeenkomsten tussen Sölles transcendentiebegrip en sociale innovatie maken duidelijk dat Sölles spiritualiteit ons waarschijnlijk wel kan helpen om ervaringen van transcendentie in de praktijk van sociale innovatie te ontsluiten.

Sölles spiritualiteit bevat ook een traject voor persoonlijke ontwikkeling. Dat traject kan uit haar publicaties worden afgeleid. Het traject heeft drie fasen: 1) *Via negativa* en *positiva*, 2) opstanding; en 3) co-creatie met God

in *communio sanctorum*. In deze drie fasen worden ethiek, persoonlijke ontwikkeling, werk-gerelateerde biografische episodes, existentiële ervaringen, de start van actief maatschappelijk engagement, samenwerking met anderen, inspiratie, strategiebepaling, effectiviteit, deugden die nodig zijn voor sociaal activisme, en verschillende soorten ervaringen van transcendentie geïntegreerd in één logisch, samenhangend geheel. Dit ontwikkeltraject zou geschikt kunnen zijn voor sociaal-innovatieve mensen. Het biedt een duidelijke ontwikkelagenda voor een prototype van een methode van spirituele vorming voor deze groep.

De systematische beschrijving van Sölles spiritualiteit leert ons ook dat die twee dingen niet heeft: 1) een goed ontwikkelde praxis voor individuen, en 2) één voor groepen. Wel heeft het twee theoretische elementen die behulpzaam kunnen zijn bij het ontwikkelen van een methode voor spirituele vorming.

Allereerst is de hermeneutiek van Sölles spiritualiteit goed ontwikkeld. Die is als het ware een drietrapsraket die lezer voorbereidt op het transformatieve potentieel van (met name maar niet exclusief) Bijbelse teksten: 1) het ontdekken van je eigen betrokkenheid in structuren van onrecht en in het lijden van anderen, wat honger naar bevrijding en verandering teweeg kan brengen; 2) het intensief bezig zijn met Bijbelse teksten en/of andere niet-christelijke bronnen en teksten die vergelijkbare ervaringen van honger naar verandering en bevrijding uitdrukken en ook een perspectief van hoop in zich hebben; 3) uit het bezig zijn met deze teksten komen hoop, moed, vernieuwing van manieren van leven en vasthoudendheid voort. De analyse van de Sölles spiritualiteit laat zien dat er nog een vierde fase bij haar hermeneutiek hoort die tot nu toe in de bestudering van haar werk minder aandacht heeft gekregen. De vernieuwde levenspraktijken maken van ons dichters, zoals als Sölle het noemt, die uitdrukking kunnen geven aan hun diepste, existentiële ervaringen en, door dat te doen, zich daarmee kunnen verbinden.

Het tweede theoretische element dat Sölles spiritualiteit ons biedt is het concept van de *vita mixta* dat sociaal activisme verbindt met contemplatie. Het bezig zijn in de wereld heeft de inspiratie vanuit de theologie nodig. Die notie kan ons helpen met het ontwikkelen van een methode voor spirituele vorming.

De analyse van Sölles spiritualiteit levert ook een aantal kritische noten op. Deze spiritualiteit loopt bijvoorbeeld het risico mensen te overvragen met betrekking tot hun veerkracht en hun vermogen om de samenleving ten goede te veranderen. Een tweede, reeds genoemd, punt van kritiek betreft het feit dat Sölle haar ideeën niet heeft uitgewerkt tot een concrete praxis voor individuen en groepen. Als derde voorbeeld van een kritische noot noem ik het ontbreken van een goede doordenking van de religieuze openheid van Sölles spiritualiteit en, daarmee samenhangend, de positie van het christendom ten opzichte van andere levensbeschouwingen.

In het derde deel van dit onderzoek is een prototype van een methode voor spirituele vorming van mensen die in sociaal-innovatieve organisaties werken ontwikkeld en getest. Ontwikkelgericht onderzoek is een methode om op een navolgbare en transparante manier een dergelijke methode te ontwikkelen, bijvoorbeeld door het expliciteren van ontwerpkeuzes, door het afbakenen van een toepassingsdomein voor de methode, door te werken met een 'mechanisme' dat de werking van de methode inzichtelijk en navolgbaar maakt, en door het systematisch evalueren en verbeteren van de methode met de hulp van participanten die de methode gebruiken.

In twee ontwikkel- en testrondes, waar twaalf participanten aan mee deden, is een prototype van de methode ontwikkeld. Het prototype werkt met individuen (en niet met groepen) en met een begrijpelijk schema voor persoonlijke ontwikkeling. Die is gebaseerd op Sölles spiritualiteit en bestaat uit vier fasen: '1) Zo kan het niet langer!', 2) 'Zo kan ik niet langer!', 3) 'Je nek uitsteken of je ziel verliezen', en 4) 'Door het oog van de naald bondgenoten'.

De methode start met een initiële fase waarin de participanten hun persoonlijke ontwikkeling tot nu reconstrueren. Met de hulp van een facilitator ontwikkelen ze een werk-gerelateerde, spirituele biografie. Op basis van het eerder genoemde ontwikkelschema identificeren de participanten belangrijke momenten en ervaringen en verkennen en verwoorden ze die. Zodra de participanten hun ontwikkeling tot nu toe hebben verkend, kunnen ze een tweede fase ingaan waarin ze hun huidige praxis vernieuwen, geïnspireerd door het ontwikkelschema van de methode.

Het onderzoeken van ervaringen van transcendentie is methodologisch gezien lastig. Het ontwikkelen van de methode voor spirituele vorming leverde op dit punt een verbetering op. Volgens Sölle kunnen ervaringen van transcendentie worden gezien in en als resultaat van een specifieke reeks taaldaden die de participanten verrichten, nl. de apostrof. De participant combineert specifieke, eigen ervaringen met (spirituele) spiegelteksten die op ervaringsniveau corresponderen met de eigen ervaringen en verbindt deze met elkaar. Zo vindt het transcendente plaats in de eigen ervaringen en in de werk-gerelateerde spirituele biografie. In en door de taalhandelingen van bijvoorbeeld lezen, selecteren, herlezen, combineren en overdenken vindt het ontsluiten van transcendentie in de ervaringen van de participanten plaats. Door de herhaling ervan in een ontwikkelgericht kader vindt ook persoonlijke ontwikkeling plaats. Het verrichten van deze taaldaden en het resultaat ervan kan worden waargenomen en bestudeerd. In de methode, die in deze fase van het onderzoek ontwikkeld is, resulteren ze in een vierluik van ervaringen en spiegelteksten dat de spirituele ontwikkeling van de participant ontsluit, uitdrukt en belichaamt.

De bewijskracht van de uitkomsten van het werken met het prototype van de methode is 'indicative' (Weber et al, 2011, p. 171), wat het op-één-na hoogste niveau is voor dit type onderzoek. De ontwikkeling van het prototype resulteerde ook in een aantal indicaties voor participanten en facilitators. Die zorgen ervoor dat de doelgroep van de methode scherp afgebakend is zodat die op een zinvolle en effectieve manier gebruikt kan worden.

Het expliciet ontwikkelgerichte karakter van dit onderzoek geeft ook de mogelijkheden voor de verdere ontwikkeling van het prototype tot een volwaardige methode, bijvoorbeeld: 1) het verkennen van het brede arsenaal aan kennis en methoden om participanten bij te staan bij het vernieuwen van hun praxis; 2) het uitvoeren van een longitudinaal effectonderzoek; of 3) het betrekken van spiegelteksten die afkomstig zijn uit niet-christelijke, spirituele tradities.

Het onderzoek sluit af met een reflectie op de relaties tussen de kernbegrippen van dit onderzoek: sociale innovatie, spiritualiteit in

organisaties, geleefde spiritualiteit, ervaringen van transcendentie, scholen van spiritualiteit en persoonlijke ontwikkeling. Ik beargumenteer dat er twee relaties zijn tussen deze kernbegrippen.

Allereerst kunnen de kernbegrippen, als ze in de juiste verhouding tot elkaar staan, het onderzoek naar spiritualiteit in organisaties helpen om de geleefde spiritualiteit van mensen in sociaal-innovatieve contexten te verkennen en te articuleren.

Ten tweede vinden deze kernbegrippen elkaar in een methode voor spirituele ontwikkeling. Dan helpen ze mensen ervaringen van transcendentie in hun geleefde spiritualiteit te ontsluiten en te verwoorden, en om ze te benutten voor specifieke doeleinden. Dit soort methodische interventies zijn overigens omgeven met de nodige ethische aspecten.

Tot slot stel ik voor om scholen van spiritualiteit te zien als schatkamers waar bruikbare middelen liggen die we in het veld van spiritualiteit in organisaties kunnen gebruiken. De inhoud van die schatmakers moet uitgepakt worden en getest voor (her-)gebruik in verschillende organisatie-contexten. Als het nodig is, moeten vanuit die schatmakers nieuwe vormen en praktijken worden ontwikkeld, zoals in dit onderzoek is gedaan. Dat vraagt van onderzoekers in dit veld een attitude die in ieder geval uit drie elementen bestaat: 1) kunnen samenwerken met verschillende disciplines en deskundigen; 2) de kunst om waarderend en kritisch een school van spiritualiteit op waarde te schatten en ermee te werken; en 3) hun eigen geleefde spiritualiteit te cultiveren terwijl ze actief bezig zijn met andere scholen van spiritualiteit.

Acknowledgements

Although doing a doctoral thesis project can be an experience of isolation or even solitude from time to time, it is actually carried out with the help of many others. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of them.

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Eelco van den Dool
Ede, August 2017

Curriculum Vitae

E.C. (Eelco) van den Dool (1969) studied Business Administration at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. After having finished his study in 1993 he worked in Dutch healthcare as a policy advisor and an IT coordinator for nine years. In 2002 he joined the Christian University for Applied Sciences in Ede (Christelijke Hogeschool Ede (CHE)) where he has held various positions: lecturer, coach and associate researcher at the department of Business Studies and research advisor. Eelco has published several books and articles that cover the field of spirituality in organizations. In 2017 he became the executive secretary of the CHE. He continues to work in the field of spirituality in organizations.

Appendix 1

Quadriptych of participant F

This section of appendix 1 shows the two panels that participant F made by applying the prototype of the method for spiritual formation. F is a colleague of participant G. F also works as a senior trainer and advisor for workers' councils. This work belongs to the field of social innovation because it is aimed at enhancing organizational democracy and working towards a balanced distribution of responsibilities among the stakeholders of a company. The company, that employs F, went through several management crises itself, which proved to play a role in F's work-related spiritual biography.

Phase 1: Things cannot go on like this!
F's phase 1 experience is a part of an episode in which he is asked to advice a workers' council that has to decide on a management proposal for restructuring the company. It took some soul searching and going through F's life story before the facilitator identified this situation as typical of F's work and typical of what F often sees going wrong in how management deals with problems and with employees and how employees react ot that, regardless of their level of education. F clearly expresses how situations like this make him sad. There is one mirror text in this panel (the orange text). It has been selected by the facilitator and agreed upon by F. It is a reworking of psalm 12 by Huub Oosterhuis (Oosterhuis, 2011). It expresses F's indignation of haughty words by people who only seem to want to hold on to power and who do not seem to be interested in seeking or doing justice in this particular situation. Speaking words of reason, fairness and reconciliation, which could be the task and responsibility of a workers' council, is a fight and a process of purification, enduring injustice and being patient against all odds.

Zo kan het niet langer!

Een industrieel bedrijf
er moet bezuinigd worden.
Een donderende missive van
boven:
wij gaan leasecategorieën
schrappen,
meer kilometers rijden, langer
met je auto doen.
Je kunt tekenen bij het kruisje.

Grote heibel in de tent,
de domme directie
haalt zich onnodig moeilijkheden
op de hals.

Het zoveelste bewijs
dat je het met macht wel kunt
winnen,
alleen ten koste van heel veel.

Teleurstellend;
heel intelligente
hooggeplaatsten, maar vaak
weinig gevoel
 voor gevoelens van anderen.
Bouwen koninkrijkjes, ruïneren
organisaties,
geen boodschap aan anderen,
organiseren hun eigen
weerstand.

Ja, ik word daar erg triest van,
moedeloos.

12

Onkreukbare woorden, waar
ben je?
Betrouwbare vrienden,
bezweken
onder een spervuur van tongen?
Bestendig is niemand, bestendig
is enkel de vuurstenen leugen.

Hij zal ze, die goden der aarde,
die gluipen, die mooi praten,
moorden,
die slaan met stomheid de
armen,

Een overvloed aan argumenten
gericht op het eigen gelijk
overtuigd van de superioriteit
van de macht op grond van de
positie

die denken 'mijn woord is het
laatste'.
Hun tongen uitrukken zal Hij.

Hij zegt: Ik hard het niet langer,
dat kermen van weerloze
kinderen.
Ik weet wat recht is,
menswaardig.
Ik ken de afgrond der harten.
Ik kom, met vuur uit de hemel.

Ik zie de hoogopgeleiden zich terugtrekken
de staart tussen de benen.
De OR aarzelt, durft niet,
blaft niet maar praat en praat.
Ze zeggen: ja, maar ja,… de
bestuurder, misschien heeft hij
toch wel gelijk.
Ja - nee, dat moeten we dan
toch maar niet doen.

Zal ík gehoord worden?
Wil de ander openstaan?

Er is gebrokenheid
dingen die stuk gaan
harmonie ontbreekt
mensen op afstand van elkaar.

Ja, daar word je wel verdrietig
van.

Zijn woord is geen woord als van mensen.
Het is bevochten, gelouterd
in wanhoop en moeten aanzien,
in dulden, hopen en vergeven.
Het doet. Het wijkt voor geen wereld.

Voor ons die ontroostbaar, hoelang nog,
niet weten, niet zien, toch geloven
dat ooit zal opdagen uw waarheid,
voor ons werd uw Schriftwoord geschreven,
een handschrift van licht aan de hemel.

Phase 2: I cannot go on like this!

F's phase 2 experience takes place during the aftermath of a crisis in F's own organization. At the time of this crisis F is a member of the workers'council of his own organization. Mismanagement by the managing director of F's organization is seen by many in the company as the cause of all problems. In a desperate attempt to save the company the council tries to discuss the replacement of the managing director with the supervisory board of F's organization. The board reacts with an intimidating 'No!' and the members of the workers' council back off. The problems linger on. A few years later the managing director will be replaced. It is a few years after this replacement that F accidentally meets the person who was the chairman of the supervisory board at the time it dismissed the workers'council's request to replace the managing director. His nonchalant and airy retrospect on the crisis surprises and horrifies F.

There are two accompanying texts in this panel. The first one (orange text) is a reworking of psalm 69 by Dutch poet Huub Oosterhuis (Oosterhuis, 2011) and has been selected and proposed by the facilitator and approved of by F.

The second mirror text is is a gospel rock song: 'Resuscitate me' by the American rock band 'Remedy Drive'. This text was selected by F himself.

Both texts reflect and articulate the elements of F's phase two-experience:

- discovery of his own entanglement or failure in what he is critical of
- discovery of that his own position is inevitably problematic
- becoming existentially distressed.

It is interesting to note that the link with Derrida's apostrophe and this study occurred to me in an interview with participant F. I had made an edited version of F's experience that relates to phase 2, selected a mirror text for it and had sent it to F. In a subsequent session we were going to explore phase 3 ('Risk your neck or lose your soul') and see if F had experienced or done anything that might fit in this phase. I had selected some candidate-events, actions or experiences to discuss with F. I intended to discuss the edited phase 2-experience and the accompanying mirror text shortly and then to get on quickly with phase 3. But to my surprise F wanted to present to me three songs that he had selected that suited his phase 2-experience. He had

brought the equipment to let me hear them. At first I was a bit annoyed because I was afraid I wouldn't have enough time for the interview that I had planned and, to be honest, the music wasn't to my taste. But when we got to the second song I realized that this second song was an excellent 'expression' of what F had experienced and also an expression that 'made place for the transcendent'. It began to dawn on me that in carefully selecting and listening to some songs, contemplating them and relating them to his own experience (and presenting them to me), F had done exactly what he needed to do so that I could see 'mystagogy at work' (De Jong– Van Campen, 2009). I also realized that the other participant (G) had already been doing this because he was more active in selecting and suggesting mirror-texts.

Zo kan *ik* niet langer!

Ik loop naar een toilet. Daar
een man
met kort stekeltjeshaar.
We herkennen elkaar.
Wat apart u hier te zien?
Werkt die... nog bij jullie?

Die zin,
laconiek uitgesproken, maakt
mij boos.
Na al die jaren, het haakt nog
steeds,
zit mij dwars.
Ongeloof, boosheid,
verbouwereerdheid.

Ik wil iets wezenlijks zeggen.
Het overvalt me.
Hoewel ik er wel naar uitkeek,
ben ik verlegen om de
woorden.

Verlegenheid, onvermogen,
ben ik dan geloofwaardig?

Ik ben uit het veld geslagen.
Storm, als een boom die het
opgeeft,
die valt en klaar: afgelopen.
Afvoeren die handel!

Ik doe er niet toe.
Ik ben niet in staat geweest,
voor de tweede keer gefaald.
Het is mij niet gelukt.

69

Red mij, God, mijn ziel staat
onder water.
Ik zink weg in zuigende
modder
Meegesleurd, kan niet meer
staan, ga onder -
Ik ben uit de lucht gegooid in
de zee.
Als een steen.

Leeg schreeuwen ben ik
Mijn keel een brandwond
Ogen dood van uitzien naar
jou.

Mijn broeders ben ik een
vreemdeling
De dochters van mijn moeder
een vreemde.

Zou ik liegen, jij zou het
weten
Voor jou kan ik niets
verbergen-
Wat gaan ze van jou denken
Als ze mij zien, te schande
Beschimpt, vernederd,
Mij die van jou ben?

Jouw huis is mijn hartstocht
Jouw woorden mijn brood-
jouw loochenaars honen mij
weg.
Ik heb je nog niet losgelaten,
nog niet.
Ik bid nog, wacht op je ogen.
Bij jou zou ik veilig zijn
Als in de schoot van een
moeder.

Resuscitate me

All of my impulse is in vain
Is there a pulse left in my
veins
There's not much left to
go on
Seems like I'm too far
gone
Oh can you bring me back
again

I need you to save me
It's not too late to
resuscitate me
Don't let go, your touch
awakes me
It's not too late to
resuscitate me

Mouth to mouth you bring
me around
Your breathe life into me
when I'm on the ground
I'm beat up but not
defeated
Wearing thin but not
depleted
I'm out cold but I still hear
your sound

I might be lost but I'm not
a lost cause

I'm barely breathing,
barely seeing, barely even
alive
I'm barely breathing,
barely seeing, but you can
wake me inside.

Naakt voel ik mij,
nutteloos, opzij gezet.
Brandhout. In de kachel
ermee! Afgeschreven!
Zet mij maar bij het vuil.

Het is nog steeds
onafgemaakt

Slachtoffer
van het 'misdrijf' van de
klokkenluider:
je brengt dingen aan het licht
die we niet willen horen.
Je tast onze machtsbasis aan.
Daar moet jij afblijven.
Wegwezen! Je verstoort onze
rust.

Hoe kom ik op gelijke voet
met hem,
want hij zit hoger en hoe kom
ik daar?

Er zal een keer gerechtigheid
komen.

Hoe ze mij sarren, mijn hart
vertrappen
Jij weet het.
Ik wachtte, ik dacht God weet
Ik wachtte een trooster, maar
niemand
Een troosteres – maar er is
niemand gekomen.
Ze kwamen met giftige
kruiden en zure wijn.

Laten ze zich aan hun tafels
Een ongeluk vreten, sla ze met
blindheid,
Vloek ze stijf, verlam hun
lenden
Laat ze branden.
Overwoeker hun tenten,
verjaag ze
Dat ze nooit
Nergens meer Wonen.

Jij sloeg me – zij sloegen me
harder.
Zij joegen me na
Snoevend hun
leugenverhalen.
Sla ze weg, in de leegte.
Streep hun namen door in je
boek
Dat ze daar niet opgeschreven
staan in jouw handschrift.

Pijn ben ik, stil mij
Gekrookte stengel, breek
mij niet.

Ik wil ontvlammen in
zangen.
Van de bodem van de zee
Klink ik omhoog naar jou

Jij bevrijder van slaven

Niet de reuk van
offerdieren in je neus
Maar de bloei van
stemmen in je oren.
Niet de strotten van de
moordenaars
Maar de verstomde
monden van de armen
Zingen:

Jij bevrijder van slaven

Die de boeien slaakt van
je beminden
Die steden voor hen
bouwt
En voor hun kinderen –

Dat wij daar zullen wonen
Met vluchtelingen en
vreemden tezamen.

Jij bevrijder van slaven

Tot in lengte van dagen.

Participant F's spiritual biography could be reconstructed until phase 2 ('I cannot go on like this'). There were some halfway experiences and actions that fitted phase 3 but we both agreed that F had never really 'entered' or gone through phase 3 ('Risk your neck or lose your soul') *(interview with participant F, 2014-01-16, p .3).* So arriving at phase 3 with participant F also meant arriving at the renewal-phase. However, by that time participant F began to devote more time and energy in another area of interest outside of his socially innovative work.

Quadriptych of participant H

This section of appendix 1 shows the three panels that participant H made by applying the prototype of the method for spiritual formation.

H has her own consultancy agency with a long track record in the field of innovative agricultural and urban green projects. By the time she became involved in this study one of her latest projects was the development of a technique for recycling grass into fibers and grass juices that contain various minerals. Using grass in this way is more sustainable than burning or composting the grass, which is common practice. Grass fibers and juices can be used as raw materials in various production processes. Besides technological challenges a major challenge is to get all partners to participate in the production chain; e.g. farmers who own the grasslands, gardeners who mow the grass, a technical company that develops the grass presser and customers that will use the grass as new raw materials in their production processes. Creating such a new production chain requires solving a lot of logistical, quality and financial problems.

H has participated in the first round of testing in the group that gathered for one session. When this group stopped, she was asked to participate in the second round of testing.

Phase 1: Things cannot go on like this!
H's phase 1 experience is combination of a memory of her youth (an early experience of the beauty of nature and man's destructive influence on it) and an experience that articulates the motivation for her socially innovative work. It turns out that the anger, which is part of her motivation, is not solely focused on people who farm in an unsustainable way. Most of all H is angry at the inertia of 'the whole system' to evolve and adapt towards more sustainable modes of operation.

There are two accompanying texts in this panel. The first one (printed in green) is a poem by the Polish poet Wizlawa Szymborska (1999). H told me that Szymborska is one of her favorite poets. I selected this poem and H approved of it. It expresses man's connection to nature, the need to connect to nature and man's inability to do so. In this way the poem shows the

profoundness of the problem that H is trying to tackle. The second mirror text is a biblical text from Matthew 11 (Naardense Bijbel) that has been selected by me and approved of by H. It expresses the sorrow of our inability to live together with nature in spontaneous and harmonious way.

In the background of the panel we can see painting by Picasso. It was brought up by H after a visit to a museum in Paris where the painting is exhibited. For H this painting portrays two dancing partners who make music together in a way that man and nature should do.

Zo kan het niet langer!

Ik zit uit te rusten in de rijen geschoffelde
bieten,
in het land waar we als kinderen meestal
niet komen
maar we mogen mee, meestal met een
cluppie.
We wonen bij elkaar op de stoep
en we werken en leven en doen alles samen.
Dus het is hartstikke oer-beetje.
De sfeer is: we horen erbij.
Dit is de fase van: nu.
We zitten heel erg in het nu van dat gewas.

Ik sjouw er omheen.
Ik kijk naar het wonder van de planten rond
de bieten
die weggeschoffeld worden.
Ik barst van de vragen daarover.
En op de achtergond: Goh, het is hier toch
niet zo mooi,
want we maken het zo kaal, echt ontzettend
kaal!
Terwijl het ook zo mooi kan zijn. Moet dat
wel zo?
Een soort boosheid: waarom moet dat?
Waarom is het zo tegen de natuur in?

Het zwijgen van de planten

De eenzijdige betrekkingen tussen jullie en mij
ontwikkelen zich lang niet slecht.

Ik weet wat een bloem, blad, aar, eikel, steel is,
en wat er met jullie in april gebeurt, en in december.

Hoewel mijn nieuwsgierigheid onbeantwoord blijft,
buig ik me speciaal over sommigen van jullie
en leg voor anderen het hoofd in de nek.

Bij mij hebben jullie namen:
klis, kleefkruid, drieblad,
heide, jeneverbes, maretak, vergeet-mij-nietje,
maar ik heeft voor jullie niets.

Onze reis is gemeenschappelijk,
Als je samen reist, praat je toch met elkaar,
wissel opmerkingen uit, desnoods maar over het weer
of over de stations die onderweg voorbij schieten.

Onderwerpen te over, want er is veel dat ons verbindt.
Dezelfde ster houdt ons binnen haar bereik.
We werpen met hetzelfde recht onze schaduw.
We proberen iets te weten, elk op zijn manier,
en wat we niet weten, lijkt ook op elkaar.

Ik leg het uit zo goed ik kan, vraag alsjeblieft:
wat het betekent iets met ogen te bekijken,
waarom in mij een hart klopt
en waarom mijn lichaam niet geworteld is.

Maar hoe kan ik antwoorden op ongestelde vragen,
als ik daarbij ook nog iemand ben
die voor jullie zo zeer niemand is?

Struikgewas, jong bos, weiden, rietland –
alles wat ik jullie zeg, is een monoloog,
en wie er ook luistert – jullie niet.

Met jullie praten is noodzakelijk en onmogelijk.
Is dringend nodig in ons haastige leven,
en wordt uitgesteld tot nooit.
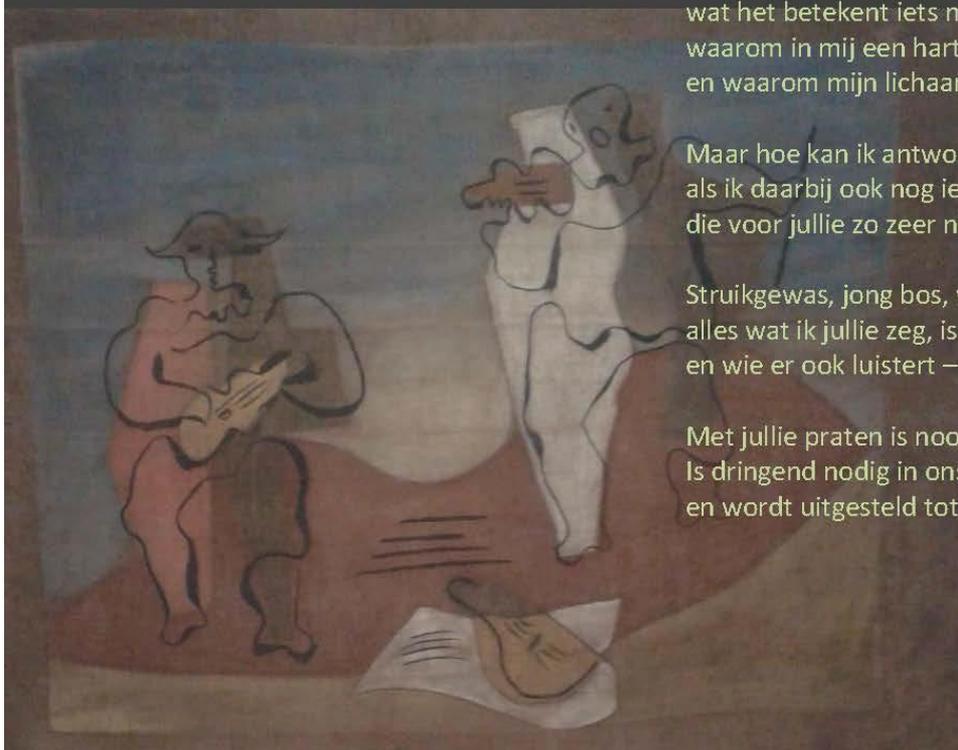
50 jaar later
Ik rijd in de auto op weg naar Haarlemmermeer.
Ik kijk naar de landbouw, ik zie de velden
waar ik normaliter ook wel van geniet:
mooi strak, afgeschaafd en strakgetrokken.
Je ziet amper gras meer groeien, tot aan de grasrand
allemaal kaal
Dan heb je geen enkele overstappende beesten meer,
behalve spinnen en nog een torretje.

Dan wordt ik dus echt boos!
Ik denk: Wat zie ik nu in mijn eigen polder? Nog steeds geen
verandering!?
Oh, potverdikke! Jullie doen er potverdikke helemaal niks
aan!
50 jaar later zouden jullie moet begrijpen wat je aan het
uitvreten bent!
Je hebt de referenties van 15 procent ecologische
natuurwerkers. Je kent het beeld van hun
landbouwbedrijven.
Je kent eigenlijk het alleen maar het compleet kaal gespoten
beeld van je eigen bedrijf.
Het is allemaal doodspuiterij.

Ik zeg: jullie zijn echte landbouwambtenaren…
maar dat zijn ze helemaal niet meer.
Ze hebben totaal geen contact meer met de landbouw.
Ik heb ze echt uitgefoeterd: ben je nou helemaal belatafeld
dat jullie het gewoon zo laten?!
Wat een rare toestand, dat heb ik nog nooit gezien!
Kijk eens naar Groningen! Ga eens bellen met Noord-
Holland.
Wat een rare boel!

Het is gewoon een onachtzaamheid, waar ik boos om word.
Je creëert een omgeving waar onleefbaarheid de toon is
Geen woonruimte voor geen enkel beest.
De bijen zijn er ver te zoeken.

Ik neem dat als een feit.
Ik ben niet boos op de mensen.
Ik ben boos op het feit dat dat hele systeem nog zo sloom is.

Wie oren heeft moet horen!
Waarmee zal ik deze generatie
vergelijken?- want ze lijkt op
jongetjes die op de markten zitten
en naar de anderen dit gezegde
roepen:
we spelen fluit voor jullie
en jullie dansen niet;
we weeklagen
en jullie treuren niet!

.

Phase 2: I cannot go on like this!

H's phase 2 experience comes from the end of a period in which her consultancy company almost goes bankrupt. She has to lay off her employees, abandons her office and continues to work from her house. Exploring the episode makes her realize that she has been working too much in isolation. Her innovation has turned her into an obsessed, headstrong person.

This experience is accompanied by three mirror texts. The first one (printed in green) is a poem by Dutch poet Lucebert (2011, p. 668). H told me that Lucebert is also one of her favorite poets. I selected three of Lucebert's poems and H chose this one. It expresses H's despair and inability at that time; her failed, obsessive work drive; and her failure to successfully connect to nature, other people and eventually to herself. The second text is a reworking of psalm 143 by Huub Oosterhuis (Oosterhuis, 2011), which also expresses H's being at the end of her rope and her longing for a new start. It was selected by me and approved of by H.

The third text (in small, green fonts) is 'Poem 52' by American poet E.E. Cummings (Cummings, 1963). It expresses H's search for her inner child that she has lost contact with and which seems to be in (admiring) contact with nature. I selected it from a collection of poems that H suggested to me.

It is interesting to note that in this way the three mirror texts in this panel refer to the first part of the experience of the first panel, in which H recalls an experience from her early childhood in which she experiences the beauty of nature and man's destructive influence on it.

H's experiences and the mirror text thus correspond with the second phase of the developmental trajectory (of Sölle's spirituality) as used in the prototype of the method:

- discovery of her own entanglement or failure in what she critical of
- discovery of that her own position is inevitably problematic
- becoming existentially distressed.

Zó kan ik niet langer!

De crisis heeft mijn bedrijf flink
geslagen.
Daardoor heb ik wel een soort
verslagenheid bij me.
Ik heb ik al mijn mensen moeten
ontslaan
en een jaar later het pand verlaten.
Dan zie je wel: ik heb het fout gedaan.
We zijn teveel met ontwikkeling bezig
geweest en te weinig met buiten.
Ik ben te optimistisch bij acquisitie.
Ik ben ontzettend aan het jokken met
mezelf.

Innovatie is ook een harde wereld, een
roofmarkt.
Erg moeilijk: schraap, schraap.
Je moet trucs uithalen om mensen mee
te krijgen.
Het lijkt op die kale akker en steeds ga
je weer zaaien.

Ik slaap er slecht van als er weer een
project dreigt te mislukken.

Mijn man zegt: je bent onhoudbaar, niet
te corrigeren.
Ik ben gefixeerd, bezeten.
Soms voel ik: ik moet ermee stoppen!
Ik hang steeds langs het randje.
Mijn krampen zijn eindeloos.
Het is gevaarlijk voor mijn gezondheid
en mijn relaties.

Wat ik niet zo makkelijk doe
is mijn werkkracht open gooien
en delen met anderen. Daar zit iets.
Ik vertrouw het niet, mijn eigen boterham is
belangrijker,
ik loop te ver vooruit.

Ik zie mezelf in mijn uppie dingen doen.
Ik deel het niet met de ecosystemen die
erover zouden kunnen nadenken.
Veel te eenzaam.

Ik verlang eigenlijk opnieuw en opnieuw
naar de machteloosheid
en een nieuw begin.
Ik meld me opnieuw
om met nieuwe mensen nieuwe beginnen
te kunnen maken,
verder de brug over met wat ik heb.
Verder uitwerken en samenwerken.

Het gaat om de wijsheid van de natuur,
als ik vanuit die barmhartigheid kon werken.

het kind van zijn tijd:

wat ik was ben ik kwijt
het is uit het nest gevallen
vermenigvuldigend getallen

met bezeten regelmaat
ontzien wij elkaar met open ogen
meer uit vrees dan mededogen

wij knoeiers in de tijd
hadden de bloem gemarteld
waar de vlinder nog dartelt

en van lieverlede mettertijd
na seizoenen gezwoeg
wij beiden zijn zoek

who are you, little i
(five or six years old)
peering from some high
window; at the gold
of November sunset
(and feeling that if day
has to become night
this is a beautiful way)

143

Daag me niet uit. Vraag niets.
Ik ben een opgejaagde
Ik heb een vijand in mijn ziel.

Er was ooit een kind in mij

Mijn borst leeggeroofd
Mijn ziel een opgedroogde rivier
Einde oefening, afdaling in de
groeve

Blaas je adem in mijn longen.
Stroom mijn ziel weel vol.

Phase 3: Risk your neck or lose your soul

H's phase 3 experience comes shortly after her phase 2 experience. After the near-collapse of her consultancy agency she is reflecting on how to continue. When reading an article in a newspaper she suddenly realizes that she has to approach the implementation of the innovation in a totally different way. Instead of trying to coordinate and to persuade others to step into the innovation and to play their part in it, H realizes that she has to step into it herself. She has to step in as a trader of the raw materials, that she wants to produce. She also realizes that she has to run the commercial risk that belongs to that role. At the same time she realizes that she really wants to pursue this innovation, despite the difficult situation that she is now in.

There are two accompanying mirror texts in this panel. The first one (printed in orange) is another poem by the Szymborska (Szymborska, 1999). I selected this poem and H approved of it. It describes the 'lightness' that animals have because of their 'clear consciousness'. It can be interpreted as an articulation of the freedom that goes with the economic role that she is going to play as a trader. In a way H becomes a player in the economic system that she is trying to reform by following the economic logic of the system. In the same way H realizes that each stakeholder has to play its part and that an accepting view of them by her will help to build productive, mutual relationships. This mercifulness is also expressed in the second accompanying text (in white italics), which is a fragment from H's previous panel.

The third text (green) is a verse or fragment of a poem by Lucebert (Lucebert, 1989). It was selected and proposed by F herself a few weeks after she had approved the two other accompanying texts. For H Lucebert's capricious poems express the chaos of man and the beneficence of that. It makes her feel the disappointments and solutions of man that is acting in the world (mail by H, d.d 7-11-2016). The part of this poem describes a turnaround in one's thinking, or is it, so the poet seems to wonder, being 'awakened by creation'?

Notice that the typical elements of phase 3 appear in H's experience and resonate in the accompanying texts:

• making a risky emergency jump

- beginning with 'nothing'
- experiencing overcoming your powerlessness and a new begin.

Je nek uitsteken of je ziel verliezen

Ik zat voor de kachel, op de grond, allerlei papieren
om me heen.
Lekker alleen
Ik zat me dat ene bedrijf dat flink onder nul zat,
dat kostte ons geld. Al ons spaargeld ging daarin.
Wat moet ik doen? Hoe ik krijg ik dat een beetje
vlot getrokken?

Dan lees ik in de krant een econoom die zegt:
het is wel leuk en we zijn in transitie,
we zijn dingen aan het bekijken en aan het doen...
maar economen moeten ook mee gaan handelen.

Ik las dat als: je moet niets iets laten zien en dan
hopen
dat anderen ermee aan de slag gaan.
Dat kan gewoon niet;
iemand moet dat gaan doen!

Pats!

ik ben de wachter die als van was was
maar nu tegen alles opgewassen
het heelal heeft dichtgelakt
mijn denken kurkt en kroont de schepping
of is het andersom mij wekt
ontwaakt de bedwelmende ingenieur
die toeval aanbrengt tussen wet en willekeur

met wat bijslaap en likeur
stelt het leven niet teleur

Ik moet er gewoon echt índuiken. Ík moet echt
gewoon aan de slag.
Dus dat is wat ik gedaan heb: handelaar worden.
Dit is wat ik moet doen...
Ja, heel helder,
dit is iets dat ik zie.
Dit zal lang duren... om het voor elkaar te krijgen.
Heel nuchter...

Honderd kilo weegt het hart van de zwaardwalvis
maar in een ander opzicht is het licht.

Niets is dierlijker
dan een zuiver geweten
op de derde planeet van de zon.

De rust komt om een bocht te maken: ik ga het anders aanpakken.
Dit is zo nieuw, het bestaat helemaal niet.
Niemand begrijpt al die producten die je ervan kan maken,
niemand heeft die grondstof ook in de vingers gezien,
en niemand heeft die ervaring die ik heb opgebouwd.

Op dat moment zijn we loonwerkers gaan opzoeken
die met ons en voor ons grondstoffen wilden gaan maken.
Dat is wat ze kennen: ik bestel grondstoffen.
Het zijn mensen die hartstikke enthousiast kunnen zijn,
Hun doorzettingsvermogen zit niet in de innovatie.
Zulke mensen zijn heel erg op het dubbeltje of het tientje
zoveel tientjes per man of per uur of per machine.
Ze zijn ook gewend om te sjoemelen
met die tientjes en die uurtjes en die mannetjes.
Ze moeten voor ieder uurtje knokken.

Je levert een half jaar aan een boer en die zegt:
ik ben er eigenlijk wel blij mee.
Hij heeft wel wat commentaar
maar daar kunnen we aan werken.
We hebben door kunnen pakken… best wel veel werk op onze nek gehaald.

Het gaat om de wijsheid van de natuur,
als ik vanuit die barmhartigheid kon werken

Lof van de geringe eigendunk

De buizerd heeft zichzelf niets te verwijten.
Scrupeles zijn de zwarte panter vreemd.
Piranha's twijfelen niet of hun daden wel rechtmatig zijn.
De ratelslang aanvaardt zichzelf zonder voorbehoud.

Jakhalzen met zelfkritiek zijn onbestaanbaar.
Sprinkhaan, kaaiman, haarworm, horzel
leven zoals ze leven en zijn er gelukkig mee.

Honderd kilo weegt het hart van de zwaardwalvis
maar in een ander opzicht is het licht.

Niets is dierlijker
dan een zuiver geweten
op de derde planeet van de zon.